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Malik gets special award, cash at Sukan Putera

IPOH, Mon. - Marathon swimmer Datuk Abdul Malik Mydin was awarded the Anugerah Khas (Special Award) Sukan Putera Merdeka 2003 at the opening of Umno Youth's Sukan Putera Merdeka at the Stadium Sultan Azlan Shah here last night.

Perak Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Tajol Rosli Ghazali, who is State Umno Liaison Committee chairman, presented the award to Malik before 5,000 people.

Malik also received a cash award of RM20,000 - RM10,000 from Umno Youth and RM10,000 from the State Umno Youth.

A former national cyclist from Butterworth, Malik, 28, was the first Malaysian and Southeast Asian to swim the 58km English Channel from Abbots Cliff in England to Wissant Beach, France on Aug 3. He did it in just under 18 hours.

He was recently conferred the Darjah Setia Pangkuan Negeri (DSPN) award, which carries the title "Datuk", by the Penang Government which presented him with a flat and job offer with the State Sports Council.

Malik set his sights on the English Channel four years ago and trained in England and Australia and participated in many marathon swims in Lake Zurich and Langkawi.

Tajol Rosli said the award was in recognition of Malik's feat.

He was another example of the Malaysia Boleh spirit and proof that Malaysians could achieve whatever they set their minds to doing.

Malaysians had succeeded at many things, whether swimming across the English Channel, climbing Mount Everest or exploring the Antarctic.

"There are many professionals who have made their mark globally and we must thank Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for inspiring us with the spirit and determination to reach greater heights," he said.

Tajol Rosli hoped more sports meets similar to Sukan Putera Merdeka, would be organised to spur more sportsmen to bring the country honour and fame.

Earlier, deputy Umno Youth chief Datuk Abdul Aziz Sheikh Fadzir, said the sports meet would foster closer ties between Umno Youth members and the grassroots, and to inculcate the spirit of Malaysia Boleh.

This is the fourth Sukan Putera Merdeka. The first was held in Pahang in 2000, Kedah in 2001 and last year in Kelantan.

More than 1,500 athletes are participating in sports including football, badminton, sepak takraw and bowling which began on Saturday and ends tomorrow.

Youth chief Datuk Hishammuddin Hussein, the Youth and Sports Minister, is expected to close the event.