

Pacquiao springs birthday surprise for Dr Mahathir

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PUTRAJAYA, July 12 (Bernama) -- World boxing champion Manny Pacquiao sprang a birthday surprise for Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad during a courtesy call on the premier at the Perdana Leadership Foundation Complex here today.

Pacquiao, who is also a Philippine senator whose real name is Emmanuel Pacquiao, turned up at the complex with a birthday cake and a present for Dr Mahathir.

He appeared very happy when meeting and wishing Happy Birthday to the prime minister who turned 93 last Tuesday.

Both of them then spent half an hour in a closed-door meeting.

When they emerged from the meeting, Dr Mahathir's face was gleaming with joy when he showed the awaiting members of the press the birthday present he received from Pacquiao, which is a pair of yellow boxing gloves that he'd slipped onto his hands.

To the press, Pacquiao said he had been admiring Dr Mahathir whom he described as a good man and good leader of the country.

"This courtesy call is to thank him (Dr Mahathir) for the support of Malaysian government for the (boxing) event this coming Sunday and also to have a good relationship with the Prime Minister," he said.

Pacquiao, who is also known as 'The Pacman', is scheduled to face the World Boxing Association (WBA) welterweight champion Lucas Matthisse from Argentina in a much anticipated battle regarded as the 'Fight of the Champions' at the Axiata Arena Bukit Jalil,

Kuala Lumpur, on Sunday.

Pacquiao said that he had sent an invitation for Dr Mahathir to watch the fight alongside Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte.

"Dr Mahathir told me that he would try his best to fulfill the invitation.

"I am so ready for the fight and I would like to invite the Malaysian people to watch it on Sunday. It is going to be a good fight which will be attended by thousands of boxing fans. Of course it is an an honour and privileged to have the fight here in Malaysia. Terima kasih," he added.

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