

Young Indon to meet Dr M

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BY CECIL FUNG

SEPANG: In school, he was always teased about his name.

His schoolmates and teachers even call him *Perdana Menteri* (Prime Minister) cheekily.

Yesterday, the nine-year-old orphan from earthquake-hit Nias island in Sumatra, Indonesia, touched down at the KL International Airport here on the first step of his journey to meet the man he was named after - former Malaysian prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The shy Mahathir Mohamad Domo was overwhelmed by the attention he got from press photographers.

According to Malaysian Red

Crescent Society (MRCS) media committee chairman Datuk Ahmad Talib, the boy is scheduled to meet Dr Mahathir this afternoon.

Mahathir's intention to meet the former prime minister was first highlighted by *Utusan Malaysia* early this month.

Ahmad said the boy's trip here was made possible by the MRCS who contacted their counterparts, Palang Merah Indonesia, and the Malaysian Consul-General's Office in Medan as well as Malaysia Airlines, which had provided the air tickets.

"Mahathir will be here for about four or five days. When he returns to Indonesia, MRCS will give some contributions for

him to bring back to Panti Asuhan Al-Washliyah, the orphanage where he resides, which was damaged slightly by the recent earthquake," he said.

Young Mahathir is accompanied here by his guardian Yurhamun Harefa, 37, who heads the orphanage.

Yurhamun said the boy, who was raised by his foster parents after being orphaned as a baby, was named after Dr Mahathir by his late adoptive father Ikwon Domo.

Asked about his ambition, Mahathir replied: "I want to be a doctor when I grow up so I can help people."

If his dream comes true, there will be one more Dr Mahathir Mohamad around.



FAMOUS NAMESAKE: Yurhamun showing pictures of the former Malaysian prime minister to the young Mahathir.