

Dr M's words spur on Malaysian 'Channel swimmer

Nst 15 MAY 2002

By Zaharah Othman
zaharawan@yahoo.co.uk

LONDON. Tues. — “You practise and I’ll pray for you.” These are the encouraging words that will spur on Malaysian swimmer Abdul Malik Mydin, 27, in his quest to swim the English Channel next year.

These words were said by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to the swimmer during a brief meeting at the Malaysian High Commission last Sunday.

Dr Mahathir, who was en route to the US, is patron of the Channel Swim and had asked Malik about his training.

“Datuk Seri is a source of motivation for me. He has been very encouraging from the moment I decided to do this three years ago and I do not want to let him down,” said Malik, who had completed a week’s training and assessment under the guidance of 40-time Channel swimmer Alison Streeter.

“I have learnt a lot during this past week, especially on the psychological aspects of the training,” he added.

Malik, who came back to London from Dover after clocking more than 100 hours in the cold waters of Dover Harbour, said he now had a programme of training as laid down by Streeter to prepare him physically and psychologically for the 34km swim from Dover to Calais in France.

Under the guidance of Streeter, who is known as Queen of the Channel, Malik has improved on his strokes and has learnt to keep his head above water while swimming.

“Malik will have to do about 60,000 strokes in total during the Channel swim and he needs maximum pull for every stroke,” said Streeter who belongs to the Federation of Channel Swimmers and Piloting.

Malik is also being advised by Streeter’s mother Frieda, who prepares swimmers mentally for the swim.

Frieda said Malik was so focused and dedicated that there would be no problem.

“He adapted to the water and the people in Dover so quickly but we do not want to keep him in the cold water for too long as his body needs to be ready for the warm tropical waters of Malaysia for an important swim,” she said.

Upon returning to Malaysia tomorrow, Malik will start training for the Langkawi Charity Swim, to be held in October.

He will then go to Melbourne, Australia, where he will train under the brother-and-sister team of Tammy and John Van Wisse.

He is expected back in Dover in July when the water temperature will be warmer than now.

He will also participate in a Zurich swim meet, which will make him the first Malaysian to do so.