

25 OCT 2002
Sports-Malik (Swimming)
ABDUL MALIK'S ALL SET TO CONQUER MERSING WATERS

By: Zulhilmi Supaat

MERSING, Oct 25 (Bernama) -- Abdul Malik Mydin, who plans to be the first Southeast Asian swimmer to cross the English Channel, is ready to battle the 1.5 knots or 3km per hour strong underwater current of the Mersing waters tomorrow.

Abdul Malik, 27, will swim at 6.30am from Pulau Besar for the 15km distance and is expected to reach Mersing beach at noon.

"The Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN) has advised me not to swim tomorrow as the current is quite strong. But I need this challenge before facing the real situation at the English Channel," he told reporters after his training session in Mersing waters, here, today.

During the session, he swam for about 30 minutes to get used to the cold Mersing water. He expects the underwater current at the English Channel to flow at two to three knots during the second week of August next year.

Abdul Malik, who is under the patronage of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, has set his sights on the summer of 2003 for his 10-hour marathon swim across the 34km expanse of water from England to France.

"I need to be ready before crossing the English Channel from Shakespeare Beach in Dover, England, to Cap Gris Nez, Calais. in France in the second week of August next year," he said.

However, he admitted that he was not fit enough for tomorrow's swim as he had just recovered from shoulder injury sustained during a 26km swimming competition at Zurich Lake, Switzerland, last August.

"But this (injury) would not stop me from swimming tomorrow and I hope to clock below six hours for the 15km distance," he said.

He said he would continue his training at the National Aquatic Centre in Bukit Jalil, Kuala Lumpur, during Ramadan.

"I plan to swim after the Tarawikh prayers, roughly from 10pm until morning," said Abdul Malik who will be leaving for China after Hari Raya.

He said his month-long stint in China was to acclimatise himself with the cold weather, somewhere near Beijing.

Last April, Abdul Malik swam across the Penang Channel from the Marine Department Jetty at Batu Uban to the former penal Island of Pulau Jerejak. He clocked four hours for the 12km distance.

In March next year, Abdul Malik will face a greater challenge swimming in Malaysian waters when he will swim for 48km from Kuala Perlis to Pulau Langkawi.

-- BERNAMA
ZAS MFJ JK