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Swimmer-Channel

ABDUL MALIK TRAINS FOR CROSS-CHANNEL SWIM TO FRANCE

By: Wan A. Hulaimi

LONDON, May 8 (Bernama) -- Malaysian swimmer Abdul Malik Mydin's cross-channel hope was boosted this week when he gained the endorsement of 40-times Channel swimmer Allison Streeter who said that he had passed his test with "flying colours".

Malik, who arrived here last week, has set his sights on the summer 2003 for his marathon swim across the 34km expanse of water to Calais on the French coast.

After swimming in the Channel seven times in practise sessions off the coast of Dover on the southeast Malik now says that he feels confident about attempting the crossing and is now training himself to get used to the cold water.

Streeter, a member of the Channel Swimmers and Piloting Association, is now arranging for Malik to train for his marathon swim in Australia.

"He needs to brush up his technique and also to get used to the cold salty water," she said.

When contacted in Dover yesterday Abdul Malik said: "I now need to go on a special diet to put on some body weight to prepare me for the crossing."

A self-taught swimmer from Butterworth, Abdul Malik first made his mark in endurance sports by becoming a member of the Malaysian cycling team.

He took the silver medal in the Sukma individual road race in 1994 and was part of the gold medal winning Team Time Trial.

Then, in 1995, he slipped a notch and took the bronze medal in the Sukma road race in Pahang.

In the Tour Azerbaijan in Iran in 1997 he was placed fifth. In 1999 he launched the English Channel Project and got the endorsement of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in this mission to strike gold for Malaysia.

Last October after swimming the 48km distance from Kuala Perlis to Langkawi, he felt his confidence grow and immediately made plans to come to Dover to feel the water.

"I can now swim non-stop for six hours," he says. Malik has now won sponsorship from, among others, the Bukhari Foundation, ABI Construction, and Fila Corporation.

With his mind now set on the cross-channel swim he estimates that he will need more than RM1 million to see him through his training and for his support team. -- BERNAMA

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