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`Marathon' man ready for straits swim challenge

KUALA PERLIS, Fri. - National marathon swimmer Abdul Malik Mydin is ready for the 20-hour Kuala Perlis-Langkawi swim across the Straits of Malacca tomorrow despite unfavourable weather conditions.

He said the water temperature here was higher compared to his training area in Australia.

He also realised the hazards of swimming at least nine hours under the sun, the one to two-metre-high waves and the changing wind direction.

"But I am prepared for it," the Butterworth-born 26-year-old businessman said after visiting the starting point with his coach John Van Wisse today.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will flag off Abdul Malik at the LKIM jetty here at 9.30pm tomorrow. He is expected to come ashore in Langkawi at 3pm on Sunday.

The event, to be telecast live over RTM, is sponsored by Tenaga Nasional Bhd and Eau Claire Mineral Water Sdn Bhd while MEC Marketing Sdn Bhd is the main sponsor. RTM is the official broadcaster.

It is supported by the Youth and Sports Ministry, Defence Ministry and Kedah and Perlis State Governments.

Abdul Malik, who will also attempt to swim across the 38km English Channel in August, will be observed by three English Channel Federation officials here.

To qualify for that attempt, one must pass an initial test of five hours' non-stop swimming. Abdul Malik did this when he completed the Sri Chinmoy marathon swim in Zurich on Aug 4 last year.