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Malik ready to conquer English Channel

IN the past 128 years, less than 500 people have successfully swam across the famed English Channel, which is 32.8km-long.

Come July 18, Malaysian swimmer Abdul Malik Mydin, 28, from Butterworth, Penang, will attempt to swim across the channel, known for its cold water with a temperature of between 14 and 18 degrees Celcius and waves of up to eight metres high.

At his farewell Press conference at Mutiara Kuala Lumpur last Tuesday, Abdul Malik said making the country proud would be the driving factor in his attempt to swim across the freezing channel successfully.

"I know this is not an easy swim and I simply want to do my best to conquer the English Channel," he said.

"I hope to have the support of all my fellow Malaysians and if I succeed, I will feel that I have done a service for my country.

"I have been training for the last three years in cold and warm waters.

"I am ready to face this challenge," he added.

Abdul Malik, who left for Melbourne in Australia the same evening, said he would continue his acclimatisation training for the next three weeks before the feat.

His dream has been made possible by Yayasan Al-Bukhary, which is sponsoring Abdul Malik for the challenge.

Foundation vice-chairman Datuk Ismail Yusof said the foundation decided to sponsor Abdul Malik as the event promoted an outstanding achievement by a Malaysian.

"To date, we have sponsored some RM1.6 million for Abdul Malik.

"Our country has, to date, attained many world-class feats, including conquering Mount Everest, sailing around the world and excelling in endurance equestrian races.

"With Abdul Malik, we want the nation to witness another world-class achievement."

Ismail said he shared the sentiments of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and believed that Abdul Malik's quest to conquer the English Channel would be a great example for the younger generation.

Abdul Malik is no stranger to long-distance swimming. He was recently named the first person to swim from Kuala Perlis to Langkawi, covering the 48km journey across the Malacca Straits in 14 hours and three minutes.

That swim, billed as the "Langkawi Challenge", took place on May 25 as part of Abdul Malik's preparation to swim across the English Channel.

He had also taken part in the 26km International Sri Chinmoy Marathon Swim in Zurich last August and managed to clinch the fifth place.

Abdul Malik also swam his way into the Malaysia Book of Records after swimming from the Bukit Tambun Jetty to Pulau Ama in Penang on May 4, 2001 covering a distance of 11km in four hours and six minutes.