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Trio take up PM's Antarctica dare

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - The trio plan to look at nothing but whitewashed landscapes for around 100 days, have meals of raisins and drag supplies weighing 113.6kg each. If they complete their mission, they will be setting a world record.

It will not be long now before general practitioner Dr M. Kamaruddin, dietitian Suhardi Alias and sports lecturer Sharifah Mazlina Syed Abdul Kadir, spend 100 challenging days traversing 3,800km of the icy continent of Antarctica, all in the name of answering a challenge by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The team will leave for Norway on Nov 4 for final preparatory training and will make the move to Antarctica on Nov 15.

Dr Kamaruddin said today they were keen to pay tribute to Dr Mahathir, who in May had challenged Malaysians to cross Antarctica by foot.

"We are answering his challenge. That is the main purpose of this expedition.

"We will be starting from the Blue Station up north and travel to Scott Base south of Antarctica. Three previous attempts to do this were aborted after the teams faced several problems," he said after the team met National Unity and Social Development Minister Datuk Seri Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman, who wished them good luck at her ministry.

Suhardi said the team had trained for many months and had done research on the mistakes and experiences of other teams, such as heavy loads or bad weather.

"We also made sure we have Sharifah Mazlina, who has a Masters in psychology so that we are prepared mentally.

"I am a dietitian, so I am making sure we have high-energy but light food," he said.