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NEED FOR ARRANGEMENT TO MONITOR PASSAGE OF SHIPS IN MELAKA STRAITS

Mahathir-straits

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KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 6 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today there was a need 'to have an arrangement to monitor passage of ships in the Straits of Melaka.

This was to ensure that not only countries of the region were burdened with the cost of maintaining security and safety of the waterway, he added.

Dr Mahathir said he would discuss with the other two littoral states, Indonesia and Singapore, the form of arrangement to introduce which would be fair to all quarters, including shippers and other, countries.

Without any arrangement, it was now a lawless situation in the straits, he told reporters at the RMAF base here on his return from Brunei Darussalam where he had attended the 25th anniversary celebrations of the ascension to the throne of Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah.

Dr Mahathir said the lawless situation put the brunt on the littoral states to bear the high cost of maintaining security in the straits and also to fight oil spills after an accident.

It was for this reason that Malaysia often stressed the importance of imposing a levy for ships passing through the straits, he said. -- more

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+Although the Straits of Melaka is an international waterway and everyone has the right to use it, we suffer whenever there is a mishap and would have to incur heavy expenditure,+ he said.

The Prime Minister said that as an international waterway, the straits should be made an international responsibility..

+At least they (the users of the straits) should meet the cost of maintaining security and cleanliness of the waterway so that we will not be burdened with a heavy expenditure,+ he said.

He also said that the pollution of the waters of Langkawi not only resulted in heavy financial cost to the country but also had an adverse effect on fishing and tourism. -- Bernama

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