

29/05/2000

Dr M to launch VTS

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will launch a RM100-million ship monitoring system, known as Vessel Traffic System (VTS), for the busy Straits of Malacca on Thursday.

Using a network of nine radar stations along the Straits of Malacca, the VTS has been recognised as an effective tool that contributes towards significant risk reduction in a busy waterway.

The nine radar stations - Tanjung Pengerang, Tanjung Piai, Bukit Segenting, Pulau Undan, Bukit Jugra, Pulau Angsa, One Fathom Bank, Cape Rachado and Gunung Raya - were commissioned since the end of 1998.

The VTS is a vital service with a capability to interact with and respond to traffic situation around it.

It has full time operational control centres, staffed with properly-trained personnel and equipped with reliable devices to gather information on vessel movements and navigation hazards via radar, VHF radios and communications with ships.

Through the provision of information from shore-based control centres to mariners in the waterway, the VTS will contribute towards a well-informed decision-making process for safe navigation.

With close monitoring, it will be instrumental in preventing a close-quarters situation from developing into a catastrophic accident. The Malaysian VTS system together with the Singapore VTIS radar coverage will extend the entire stretch of the normal routes in the Malacca Strait (off One Fathom Bank southwards) and the Singapore Strait.

Initiated by Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore, the VTS is seen as an essential component in the implementation of ship's routing in the Malacca Strait.

However, co-operation from users is the key element in a successful implementation of any VTS.

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