

Cabinet to get report of Coast Guard plan soon

Nst 26 FEB 2002

LUMUT, Mon. — A study is being carried out on the possibility of setting up a Coast Guard to ensure a more effective surveillance of the Malaysian coastline.

The study, which among others will look into the viability of establishing a separate agency, is being carried out by the National Security Division in the Prime Minister's Department.

The division's director-general, Datuk Jaafar Ismail, said although no time-frame was given for the study, the division was determined to complete it as soon as possible so that it could be submitted to the Cabinet for perusal.

The study is being carried out on Cabinet directive following the increase in the influx of illegal immigrants.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, concerned with the situation, had expressed the need for a separate enforcement unit to police the coastline.

Presently, surveillance and enforcement activities are being undertaken by various agencies, including the Marine police, the Navy and Rela.

Jaafar was speaking after presenting accreditation certificate to contractor AMP Corporation Sdn

Bhd for the installation of a radar system known as One Fathom Bank at the Lumut Maritime Coordinating Centre.

The certificate was presented to AMP's chief executive officer Mustaffa Abdul Rahman. Also present were Peninsular Malaysia Marine Department director-general Kapt Raja Malik Saripulazan Raja Kamaruzaman and centre director Laksamana Pertama Noor Aziz Yunan.

The installation of One Fathom Bank marked the completion of a network of radar system located along the Straits of Malacca from Langkawi to Johor.

It also enables communication links between passing ships and the authority and served as an early warning system of impending danger.

The system is equipped with a Universal Automatic Identification System (U AIS) which can detect and identify ships installed with transponder in any weather condition.

According to Jaafar, this was in line with the requirement by the International Maritime Organisation that all ships exceeding 300 gross tonnage be installed with U AIS effective July this year.