

Newspaper	New Straits Times
Date	3/3/2013

# MMEA tightens security off Lahad Datu

NS7-3/3/2013



**Sultan of Pahang Sultan Ahmad Shah** (centre) arriving for the official renaming of the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency's training centre in Gebeng, Kuantan, Pahang, yesterday. With him are **Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin** (left) and **MMEA director-general Maritime Admiral Datuk Mohd Amdan Kurish** (right). Pic by Luqman Hakim Zubir

**KUANTAN:** The Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) has tightened security in the waters off Lahad Datu to ensure that no Filipino intruder can leave or infiltrate the area.

At present, three MMEA vessels and six boats are patrolling the area round-the-clock with the cooperation from the Royal Malaysian Navy and police.

MMEA director-general Maritime Admiral Datuk Mohd Amdan Kurish said to date, no reports had been received on new intrusions, or Filipino intruders leaving Lahad Datu.

"We have cordoned off the area and will send more vessels if the need arises," he said after the official renaming of the MMEA's training centre in Gebeng here yesterday.

Sultan of Pahang Sultan Ahmad Shah has officially renamed the centre as Akademi Maritim Sultan Ahmad Shah (Amsas) at a function that was attended by Tengku Mahkota of Pahang Tengku Abdulah Sultan Ahmad Shah and Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.



Amdan said it was difficult for MMEA to totally stop encroachment into Malaysian waters with its limited assets.

He also said although MMEA had 81 ships and 161 boats, they had to cover a total of 640,000 sq km of Malaysian waters and shorelines which stretched 2,992km.

For Sabah waters, the agency only has 23 vessels and 27 boats to patrol more than 84,000 sq km of marine zone and 1,448km of shorelines.

"Some areas in Sabah are very near to the Philippine islands and intruders can reach our shores within 10 to 30 minutes in speed boats."

Amdan said the agency had made several proposals to improve the security in Malaysian waters, including purchasing new vessels and replacing old ones.

"Most of our vessels are old as they were handed to us by RMN and police. Some of them are already more than 40 years old and the maintenance costs are high."

In his speech earlier, Sultan Ahmad Shah said with the latest facilities and competent staff, Amsas would help make MMEA a leading agency by world standards, by 2020.

To date, the academy has produced 2,217 enforcement officer, including 140 women.

"For the past eight years, MMEA has helped protect our waters and maintained our sovereignty," he said.