

Straits projects offer high security

MALACCA: Six navigational safety and environmental protection projects in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore are providing top-level security for ships.

The Navigation Aid Fund is paying for the projects.

Transport Minister Datuk Seri Kong Cho Ha said the fund, which was launched in 2008 under the cooperative mechanism by Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore, had reached US\$12.4 million (RM38.7 million).

The three littoral states and countries using the straits contributed to the fund, he added.

"The focus is on the safety of all vessels sailing through the Straits of Malacca and Singapore.

"We are also concerned about the environmental aspects, including pollution."

He said this after opening the 4th Cooperation Forum under Cooperative Mechanism to Enhance Safety of Navigation and Environmental Protection in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore here yesterday.

The six projects include transferring damage in the straits Singapore, collaboration and building preparedness and response capabilities for hazardous and toxic substances in the straits, and exhibiting an automatic identification transponder system for small vessels.

Kong said the safety patrols conducted under the cooperative mechanism had proven effective in tackling piracy over the past several years. Right now, he said, piracy in the straits was non-existent.

Also, Kong said the ministry would build more expressways with the allocation announced by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak when tabling the 2012 Budget.

He said the expressways were the West Coast Expressway from Banting, Selangor, to Taiping, Perak, and East Coast Expressway from Mersing, Johor, to Kuantan

The ministry also plans to build an expressway from Bentong, Pahang, to Gua Musang, Kelantan. — Bernama

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