

## MARITIME ENFORCEMENT

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# OP NAGA TO CONTINUE AFTER 2019'S SUCCESS

Constant monitoring will safeguard the economy and nation's sovereignty

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**O**p Naga, the multi-agency task force led by the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) to scour Malaysian waters for illegal foreign vessels last year, has proven to be a roaring success.

Home Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said Op Naga Barat and Op Naga Timur, which were jointly coordinated with the police, navy, fisheries and Immi-

gration Department, had benefited the people, especially local fishermen.

"Op Naga has helped fishermen to increase their catch at sea. The operation helped to curb smuggling activities, the selling of subsidised diesel and petrol to foreign fishermen, and unlawful acts at sea.

"MMEA recorded 127 from the 197 total number of arrests (during Op Naga).

"Malaysian waters also recorded 'zero piracy' last year and it indicates that MMEA is on the right track to conduct enforcement and safeguard the country's waters," he said in his speech when opening MMEA's 15th Anniversary celebrations at the Sultan Ahmad Shah Maritime Academy (AMSAS) here yesterday.

His speech was read out by Home Ministry Secretary-Gener-



Op Naga is a multi-agency effort led by the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency to scour Malaysian waters for illegal foreign vessels. FILE PIC

al Datuk Jamil Rakon.

Muhyiddin said MMEA played a vital role in economic prosperity by ensuring the Malaysian waters were safe for merchant vessels to do business at ports in the country.

"I was informed that some 77,000 cargo vessels and oil-tankers travel along the Straits of Malacca from east to west every year.

"The number shows an active trading situation that requires an efficient, strategic and consistent monitoring by MMEA to ensure economic continuity, prosperity and sovereignty of the nation."

He said the infrastructure works on a permanent Maritime Zone in Semporna, Sabah and Miri, Sarawak would be completed this year.

"The Maritime Zone in Semporna will strengthen enforcement in Eastern Sabah, especially assisting the Eastern Sabah Security Zone (ESSZone). The assets and infrastructures will make it easier for MMEA to operate and patrol the sea."

On AMSAS, Muhyiddin said the Home Ministry had initially set aside RM3 million for repairs, but since the amount was not sufficient, an additional RM3 mil-

lion was allocated this year.

Jamil said Op Naga would be continued this year with additional assets, while patrol vessels requiring maintenance would be repaired to ensure enforcement operations at sea is not jeopardised.

On a separate matter, he said, the Home Ministry had approved some RM600 million to purchase four medium-lift helicopters.

"Discussions are in the early stages and it might take between two and three years before the assets are delivered to us. Currently, we have six helicopters."