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MMEA beefs up patrol at hotspots

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LANGKAWI: The Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) has deployed more of its assets at sea and air to beef up patrols and increase enforcement during the movement control order (MCO) period nationwide.

Kedah and Perlis MMEA deputy operations director Kapt Zulinda Ramly said the increase of the assets was meant to prevent cross-border criminal activities, which include human trafficking, contraband smuggling, piracy and encroachment of foreign fishermen, especially at hotspots in the maritime zone along the Straits of Malacca, South China Sea and Sulu Sea.

"This move is in line with the provision of Section 7(2)(i) of the MMEA Act 2004.

"At the same time, these assets can also help increase monitoring duties during the MCO period under Section 3 of the Prevention and Control of Infectious Disease Act.

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“Stern action can also be taken against anyone carrying out unauthorised activities, except for those who have been categorised under essential services such as fishermen who have valid fishing licences from the authorities.”

Kapt Zulinda Ramly

who have been categorised under essential services such as fishermen who have valid fishing licences from the authorities," she said in a statement yesterday.

Zulinda said a total of 13 sea assets and five air assets had been

deployed to monitor and control the country's border along the Straits of Malacca, which involved MMEA assets of two helicopters and three ships.

She said the Royal Malaysian Navy had deployed two of its air units and three ships, while the Royal Malaysian Air Force had deployed its CN-235 aircraft.

She added that in enforcing the MCO in the country's waters, MMEA had also strengthened its standard operating procedures in the integrated operation with other agencies in order to test and evaluate the efficiency of the operations at the northern maritime zone.

Zulinda also said constant monitoring would be increased in Malaysian waters to prevent it from being encroached by foreign intruders.

"We will hunt down cross-border criminals, illegal immigrants and also smugglers to the land and bring them to court," she added.

Members of the public can report any suspicious activity to the MERS 999 hotline, 04-966 2750 or 04-966 5307.