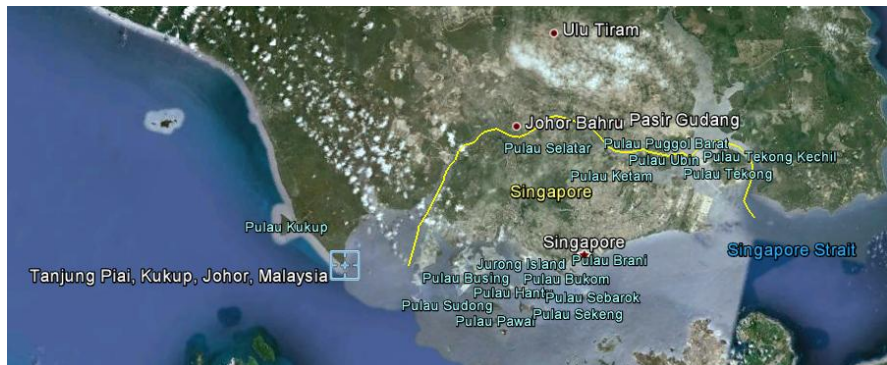


4. Pirates' Plan To Steal Fuel Foiled By Agency

JOHOR BARU: The Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) managed to intercept an attempt by six pirates from siphoning and selling fuel from a hijacked vessel to another vessel in the waters off Tanjung Piai in Pontian on Friday.



This latest modus operandi of sea pirates from a neighbouring country to hijack a vessel and sell its fuel to another vessel for quick profit was uncovered when the MMEA spotted unusual ship-to-ship activity between MT Scorpio and MT Sea Jade at 2.15pm.

MMEA southern region enforcement chief First Admiral Adon Shalan said a nearby MMEA patrol boat approached the two vessels and saw six masked men fleeing in a wooden boat, installed with a high-powered engine, next to MT Scorpio.

He said investigations onboard MT Scorpio showed that the vessel had been hijacked, with all 12 crew members -- including 10 Indonesians, a Chinese national and a Sri Lankan, all aged between 20 and 56 -- with their hands tied.

"Three of them sustained injuries after they were attacked by the pirates, who also took their cash and belongings, such as laptops and handphones.

"The pirates left six parang onboard. They appeared to have ransacked the whole vessel.

"Investigation showed that one of the pirates was armed with a pistol and that they had hijacked the vessel at midnight on Thursday."

Further checks showed fuel-siphoning activity on MT Scorpio to MT Sea Jade.

Adon said the pirates, after tying up all the victims, had apparently impersonated crew members of MT Scorpio and offered to sell fuel to MT Sea Jade at a below-market price.

"We have detained all the 12 crew members of MT Sea Jade to assist in the investigation. It is wrong to siphon fuel from one vessel to another without a permit.

"We believe the crew onboard had a connection with the pirates."

The crew on board MT Sea Jade included 10 Myanmar and two Indonesians, aged between 27 and 47.

The six pirates were believed to be members of a syndicate with a wide network in monitoring vessel movement along the Straits of Malacca, especially off the west coast of Johor.

Source: 16 Sep 12

<http://www.nst.com.my/nation/general/pirates-plan-to-steal-fuel-foiled-by-agency-1.144191>