

reports by FARIK ZOLKEPLI, NATASHA JOIBI and NADIRAH H. RODZI

# Cops suspect capt and chiefs

## Skipper, first mate and head engineer missing after pirates flee

**PETALING JAYA:** An oil tanker's captain, chief officer and chief engineer may have been in cahoots with pirates who pulled off a daring theft on board the vessel *Naniwa Maru 1*.

The three – all Indonesians – were missing when the pirates fled after stealing three million litres of diesel from the tanker. Their passports, personal belongings and clothing were also missing from their rooms.

The three have been identified as captain Farizal, chief engineer Mohamad Alfian and chief officer Ariyandri Alhafsyah.

No ransom demand has been

made for them either.

The Indonesian pirates tied up 18 crew members as they siphoned diesel from the Singapore-owned vessel at about 1am on Tuesday.

Federal Marine Police deputy commander Asst Comm Abdul Rahim Abdullah said it was very suspicious that three of the ship's key officers had gone missing with the eight pirates.

"The ship was en route to Myanmar from a Singaporean port when it was hijacked by men armed with parangs and a pistol.

"The crew, comprising 10

Indonesians, seven Thais and an Indian national, were overpowered and robbed before being locked in a room," he told reporters yesterday.

The stolen loot comprised hand-phones and money of various currencies amounting to US\$17,000 (RM55,572).

According to ACP Abdul Rahim, two ships had berthed near the *Naniwa Maru 1*, which was carrying 5.3 million litres of diesel, as the pirates ransacked the oil tanker.

"The pirates then siphoned 3.2 million litres of diesel out of the *Naniwa Maru 1* into the two vessels.

"The estimated loss from the siphoned fuel was RM8mil," he said.

ACP Abdul Rahim said the Singaporean shipping agency which owned the *Naniwa Maru 1* was informed by the remaining crew members of the incident at 10am on Tuesday.

The crewmen, too, have come under suspicion as they waited too long to lodge a report.

"Even more suspicious is that no distress signal was activated the entire time," he said, adding that it would take at least eight hours for the two ships to siphon the diesel into their vessels.

## Police: Pirates may be hiding in nearby foreign waters

**PETALING JAYA:** Police here are now looking for the possible hideouts of the pirates who raided the Japanese vessel *Naniwa Maru 1* and escaped with three million litres of diesel.

"We have not rejected the possibility that the two vessels are berthed in nearby foreign waters including Indonesia," said Federal Marine Police deputy commander Asst Comm Abdul Rahim Abdullah.

He said Bukit Aman would be solely responsible for investigating the case but would receive aid in the form of information and intelligence from their counterparts including Interpol, Aseanapol, Thai and Singaporean police and coast guards.

"So far we have yet to establish contact with the victims or the Singaporean shipping agency.

"We will be working with SWASLA (Malaysian Sea Vessel Tracking System) to monitor ships that are under investigation," he said.

The international Traffic Separation Scheme requires all water vessels to move slowly with a maximum speed of 13 nautical miles.

"The *Naniwa Maru* could only move between eight and 10 nautical miles in speed. This may have given the pirates enough time to board the ship," ACP Abdul Rahim said.

Federal Marine Police commander Senior Asst Comm Datuk Abdul Aziz Yusof said police would record statements from the crew members.

"We are not ruling out any possibility at the moment.

"We can confirm that all crew members are safe except for three Indonesians," he said yesterday.

"It is still too early (to say much) but our priority is to find the missing crew members," he said, adding that the ship had been anchored at North Port in Port Klang.

The Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency southern region enforcement chief Maritime First Admiral Adon Shalan said the MMEA was working with other law enforcement departments to get to the bottom of the matter.

"The ship will remain anchored in Port Klang for investigation," he said.

## Malacca Straits piracy down due to sea-air patrols



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**PETALING JAYA:** Cases of piracy have dropped significantly since coordinated naval and air patrols were conducted along the Strait of Malacca.

Under the Malacca Straits Sea Patrols (MSSP), participating countries – Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand – conduct coordinated naval and air patrols while facilitating the sharing of information between ships and the Monitoring and Action Agency (MAA).

The countries involved conduct patrols within their own waters and have set up several control points.

Their joint air patrols – the Eyes-in-the-Sky (EiS) initiative – provides coordinated aerial surveillance of the Singapore and Malacca Straits.

In August 2006, Lloyd's Joint War Risk Committee dropped the classification of Malacca Straits as a war-risk area. According to the International Chamber of Commerce's International Maritime Bureau (IMB), the number of pirate attacks in the Malacca Straits dropped from 38 in 2004 to just one in 2011.

### Piracy - Actual and attempted attacks (Jan-Dec 2009-2013)

Location	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Malacca Straits	2	2	1	2	1
Malaysia	16	18	16	12	9
Singapore Straits	9	3	11	6	9
Indonesia	15	40	46	81	106
Thailand	2	2	-	-	-

### Type of violence to crew (Jan-Dec 2013)

Location	Hostage	Threatened	Injured
Malaysia	59	-	3
Singapore Straits	5	-	-
Indonesia	34	6	3

Source: Source: International Chamber of Commerce's International Maritime Bureau Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships Annual Report 2013

The Malacca Straits came off better than the rest of Malaysia, Singapore Straits and Indonesia in staving off attacks from 2009 to 2013. Only Thailand fared better, which had two incidents each in 2009 and 2010 and none since then. Although the incidents in Malaysia were fewer last year, there were

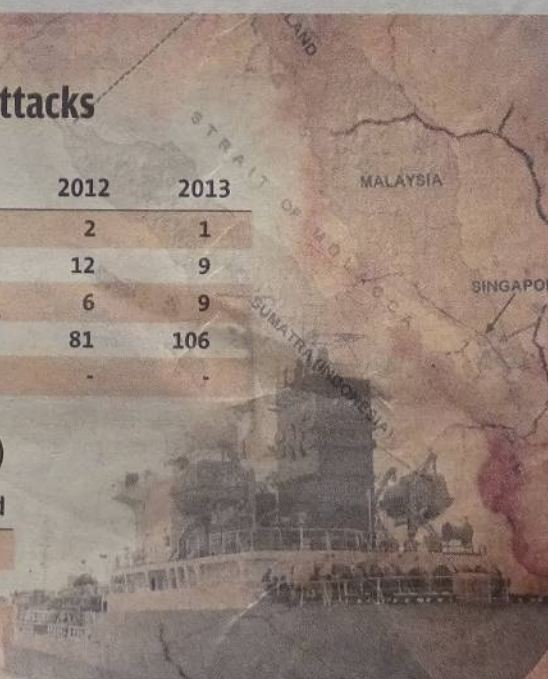
more hostages taken (59) compared with Indonesia (34) and Singapore Straits (5).

According to Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency director-general Maritime Admiral Datuk Mohd Amdan Kurish, they had stepped up patrols along the Straits of Malacca.

Although the number of attacks

there has dropped substantially, the IMB in its 2013 annual report advised ships to "continue maintaining strict anti-piracy/robbery watches".

From January to April 22, Indonesia has experienced 24 attacks, with Singapore Straits suffering five and Malaysia none until the incident on Tuesday.



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