

PRESS RELEASE

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**SPEECH BY MR WONG KAN SENG, MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS,
AT THE NAMING CEREMONY FOR THE SECOND BATCH OF
COASTAL PATROL CRAFTS AT POLICE COAST GUARD HEADQUARTERS,
STADIUM LINK ON MONDAY, 25 APRIL 1994 AT 10.00 AM**

Over the last few years, the capability of the police in sea patrols has undergone many improvements. The upgrading of the former Marine Police to Police Coast Guard (PCG) in February 1993, and the re-structuring of patrols into three patrol squadrons in May 1993 following the acquisition of four coastal patrol crafts (CPCs), are significant milestones.

However, the effort cannot stop here if the PCG is to maintain a high degree of operational readiness. The PCG must keep up with changes in its operating environment. Rapid economic development in the region, particularly in the Growth Triangle between Johor-Singapore-Batam, is seeing an increase in maritime traffic in and around our territorial waters. Unfortunately, this also means more opportunities and cover for crimes like robberies, smuggling of contraband and trafficking of illegal immigrants. The recent arrest of 73 illegal immigrants in a Myanmar vessel which entered Singapore waters on the pretext of carrying out trading activities is but one example of the growing challenges facing the PCG.

The acquisition of four more coastal patrol crafts this year is yet another step in the process of upgrading PCG's operational capability. These CPCs will enable PCG to extend its range of patrol to effectively cover the entire Singapore territorial waters. They are installed with advanced radar, navigational and communications equipment for more effective sea operations. These equipment enable early detection of targets in our territorial waters and make for better command and control of a number of PCG crafts in major operations.

With improved operational capabilities, PCG will be able to work more closely with its counterpart agencies in neighbouring countries to combat crime at sea. For example, through the Indo-Sin Co-ordinated Patrols Agreement between Indonesia and Singapore, the number of sea robberies around our territorial waters has decreased significantly. We appreciate the cooperation of the Indonesian authorities in this regard. I am confident that the continued cooperation between law enforcement agencies of both countries will further enhance the safety of sea lanes being patrolled.

As a further step to improve operational effectiveness, the PCG will soon have five custom-made high-speed boats added to its fleet. These will complement the CPCs in special operations to thwart intrusions and other illegal activities.

I am also pleased to note that in addition to the improvements in operational equipment, the PCG has also taken steps to improve the training of its officers. A new training centre was completed recently. Advanced training equipment such as the Radar Tactical Training Simulator and a Firing Simulation Trainer will be installed soon. With such training facilities, the PCG will be able to make more effective use of the operational hardware they have acquired.

With confidence in the PCG in ensuring safety and security in our waters, I declare the four CPCs operational.

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