

Wednesday October 10, 2007

Express boat operators warned to follow the rules

KUCHING: Express boat operators have been warned not to flout safety regulations in the run-up to the festive season.

The marine police will be on patrol at all express boat terminals and navigable rivers under *Ops Hari Raya*, launched yesterday and to run until a week after Hari Raya Aidilfitri.

Eleven patrol boats will be used during the operation. The marine police will inspect express boats and act against those found to have committed offences such as overloading.

Sarawak marine police deputy chief Supt Mohd Norshah Mohd Dris said that the unit would not compromise on safety.

Speaking to newsmen at a breaking fast ceremony with the media on board patrol vessel PX14 on Monday, he urged boat operators to ensure that safety measures were in place and adhered to, including having enough life jackets on board.

He also cautioned passengers not to board a boat that was overloaded.

?Sometimes passengers are in too big a rush to go back home. But if a boat is full, they should wait for the next one. We don?t want accidents to occur,? he said.

On another matter, Supt Norshah said marine police had issued 476 summonses so far this year for various offences including diesel smuggling.

For the whole of last year, a total of 621 summonses were issued.