

Fishermen now free to fish in Middle Rocks vicinity

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian maritime enforcement agencies can now carry out patrols in waters adjacent to the Middle Rocks unimpeded following the decision of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in giving Malaysia sovereignty.

Maritime Institute of Malaysia (Mima) director-general Datuk Cheah Kong Wai said besides the maritime agencies, the public was also allowed free access to the area.

"Local fishermen from Pengerang and Tanjung Penyusuh in Johor who used to fish in the vicinity of the Middle Rocks, but were prevented from doing so due to the unresolved dispute, are now

free to continue their activities.

"The recent ICJ decision now guarantees such rights under international law," said Cheah in a statement issued here yesterday.

The ICJ which sat in The Hague, The Netherlands, recently gave Singapore sovereignty over Pedra Branca, while Malaysia was given sovereignty over Middle Rocks.

Cheah said research activities could now be undertaken without any hindrance in the vicinity of Middle Rocks.

"Construction of installations and fixtures in connection with the tasks of exercising ownership and sovereignty over Middle Rocks can also be undertaken," he said. — Bernama