

Malaysia: Search for Missing Airliner Expands



Sepang, March 18 (RHC-Bernama) -- The search and rescue (SAR) operation for the missing Malaysia Airlines (MAS) Flight MH370 has taken on a new international dimension covering the so-called Southern and Northern Corridors - a total of 2.24 million square nautical miles.

Acting Transport Minister Hishammuddin Tun Hussein said the area was enormous and it was something that Malaysia could not possibly search on its own, and thanked those countries, 26 thus far, which 'have offered their assistance and support to the search and rescue operation.'

He said the search area for the northern and southern corridors were divided into seven quadrants, with each quadrant area measuring approximately 160,000 square nautical miles.

At a press conference Tuesday on the search and rescue progress, he said: "The search is still co-ordinated by Malaysia while its partners had taken an increasing role in organizing and carrying out operations, both within their own territory and also within agreed search sectors."

The acting transport minister said the search operation was focusing on four tasks; gathering information from satellite surveillance; analysis of surveillance radar data; increasing air and surface assets; and, increasing the number of technical and subject matter experts.

The Beijing-bound Flight MH370, with 227 passengers and 12 crew members on board, disappeared about an hour after leaving the Kuala Lumpur International Airport on March 8. It was scheduled to arrive in Beijing on the same day.

A multinational search for the aircraft has so far, drawn a blank.

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