

Philippines-China Conflict Must Be Resolved Through Diplomatic Channel - Zahid Bernama
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KUALA LUMPUR, April 16 (Bernama) -- The standoff between China and the Philippines must be resolved amicably through the diplomatic channel and not via an armed warfare said Defence Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

The issue was triggered when a Philippines Navy surveillance plane spotted several Chinese fishing vessels in a lagoon at Scarborough, about nautical miles from Luzon, Philippines.

The news prompted the Philippines to deploy its largest warship, the BRP Gregorio del Pilar, to the scene while sailors from the warship boarded the Chinese vessels for inspection, discovering large amounts of illegally collected corals, giant clams and live sharks inside the first boat.

However, two Chinese maritime surveillance ships later reportedly positioned themselves in between the Gregorio del Pilar and the Chinese fishing vessels, preventing the arrests of the fishermen.

"Malaysia's stand is to see such conflicts avoided and resolved through amicable talks," he told reporters after visiting the Defence Services Asia (DSA) exhibition at the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC) here today.

Such issues should not become a conflict that can drag both countries to a standoff that can result in a war. He said such issues should be settled through their respective Foreign Ministries through a platform that has long existed - Asean Defence Ministers Meeting.

Meanwhile, the DSA to be held over four days will see 850 local and foreign companies exhibiting their products and services.

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