

Zahid accuses Chinese media of flaming anger

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KUALA LUMPUR: Home Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi today accused the Chinese media of inciting anger among families of 154 passengers aboard the missing Malaysia Airlines flight MH370.

Speaking at Parliament today, Zahid said the Chinese print media through its provocative reports have stirred up the emotions of the passengers' family members, despite the government trying its best to locate the jetliner.

“The prime minister has used all the means available to try to solve the crisis. This is a tragedy, nobody wants it to happen.

“But unfortunately, these (Chinese) newspapers have manipulated the families' sentiments, causing them, especially those in Beijing to be upset,” he said in his winding up speech for the debate of royal address this evening.

It remained unclear whether Zahid was criticising the local Chinese newspapers or the ones in China.

Zahid said he would not hesitate to take action against individuals spreading manipulative facts in the media or social media.

Most media practitioners from China have been critical of Malaysia's search and rescue operations since the Boeing 777-200ER that carried 239 passengers disappeared on March 8.

More than half of the passengers were from China.

Some of them have openly called the MH370 “a Malaysia conspiracy”, while top Chinese tennis player Li Na told a Chinese media that she would never take a Malaysia Airlines flight again.

Meanwhile, Zahid said the two Iranians who boarded the plane using fake passports were able to avoid trouble at the Malaysia immigration checkpoint because their passport photograph matched the one shown in the system.

He said similarly the authorities have allowed them to board the plane because they did not overstay in the country.

“This is the standard operating procedure of immigration system around the world.

“But if they come to Malaysia using a different passport in the second visit, we would be able to track that through our biometric system,” he said.

He said the fake passports cost US\$10,000.

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