

Oil slicks spotted 20NM from MH370's last contact point, debris pictures go viral
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A screengrab of a Weibo page with photos of the debris and oil slick as taken from a flight over the site where flight MH370 may possibly be found in the South China Sea. - March 9, 2014. A Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) plane has spotted oil slicks about 20 nautical miles (37km) south of the missing Malaysia Airlines flight MH370's last point of contact.

Director-general of MMEA Datuk Mohd Amdan Kurish, who joined in the search for the missing plane, said, his search team spotted "two or three" patches of oil slick measuring about 16km and were yellowish in colour about 11am today.

"A ship has been dispatched to the location of the slick to take samples so we could test whether the oil is from a plane," Amdan was quoted as saying by The Star newsportal.

Photographs purporting to show debris in the sea in the area where the missing Malaysia Airlines (MAS) flight MH370 lost contact have been posted on Chinese social media.

The pictures, supposedly taken by a Chinese passenger on board another MAS flight from Beijing which landed safely in Kuala Lumpur this morning, shows what appears to be fragmented debris floating on waters about 90 minutes out to sea from the Malaysian capital.

The passenger, whose profile information says he is a banker working for China Minsheng Bank in Beijing, wrote that he took the pictures from his window at a height of 11,000m, at 6.45am today.

Li Jiayang, administrator of the Civil Aviation Administration of China, said at a press briefing today that some debris had been spotted, but it was unclear whether they came from the plane.

While it is not immediately clear what the suspected debris consist of, the area where the passenger said he spotted it appeared to be roughly consistent with where the missing plane lost contact with aviation authorities and where ships from Malaysia and Vietnam were already searching since yesterday afternoon, reported the South China Morning Post.

None of the reported possible sightings so far has been confirmed to be from the Boeing 777-200 which vanished early yesterday.

Director-general of Civil Aviation Datuk Azharuddin Abdul Rahman had said that the search area was expanded to the west coast of the peninsula, on the other side of the country from where the last contact was made with the plane.

"This is standard procedure. If we can't find it here, we go to other places," he added.

A photo of debris supposedly taken by a Chinese passenger on board another MAS flight from Beijing to Kuala Lumpur. The Xinhua News Agency said that two warships of the Chinese navy, "Jinggangshan" and "Mianyang", were on their way to where the missing Malaysia Airlines flight MH370 may have crashed.

"Jinggangshan", a 20,000-tonne amphibious warship loaded with life-saving equipment, underwater detection facilities and supplies of water and food, is expected to arrive in the search area on Tuesday morning.

The missile frigate "Mianyang" left for the possible crash site last night, and was expected to arrive tomorrow morning.

Armed Forces chief General Tan Sri Zulkefli Md Zin had said that there were 22 aircraft and 40 ships currently involved in the search and rescue operations.

This includes assistance sent by Singapore, Thailand and the United States. – March 9, 2014.

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