

Drop In Chinese Tourists To Malaysia Following MH370 Incident

Bernama

9 Apr, 2014

KUALA LUMPUR, April 9 (Bernama) -- There has been a dip in the number of Chinese tourists arriving in Malaysia, following the disappearance of Malaysia Airlines (MAS) MH370 aircraft in the southern Indian Ocean.

Tourism and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz said to date, many Chinese tourists had cancelled their visit to Malaysia.

In fact, no future flight booking had been recorded for the China-Malaysia flight, he said.

As such, Mohamed Nazri said the ministry would postpone all promotions and and 2014 Visit Malaysia Year roadshows to give due respect to the incident.

"We were doing well for January and February. But of course, the MH370 incident (the aircraft carrying 239 passengers and crew vanished on March 8) has definitely affected (Malaysia's) tourism.

"But what is important is that we sympathise with the families of the passengers on board MH370, and the question of whether we will continue our campaign in China does not arise for the moment. I think we must respect the sensitivity issue.

"... so long as there is no closure to MH370, I do not see the suitability of us continuing the campaign in China," he told a media conference before opening the Asean Socio-Cultural Community Session here Wednesday.

Tomorrow, Mohamed Nazri will visit the Chinese Ambassador to Malaysia, Dr Huang Huikang, as a mark of respect over the fate of the Chinese passengers involved in the MH370 incident.

Last year, tourists from China made up the third largest group after Singapore and Indonesia, with a record 1.6 million people.

In conjunction with the 2014 Visit Malaysia Year, the government targeted 28 million tourists to visit Malaysia.

Flight MH370 left the KL International Airport at 12.41am on March 8 and disappeared from radar screens about an hour later while over the South China Sea. It was to have arrived in Beijing at 6.30am on the same day.

On March 24, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak announced that the flight path of the Boeing 777-200ER aircraft "ended in the southern Indian Ocean".

The search for MH370 is currently continuing there.

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