

Australia says about 40% of MH370 search area
The Malaysian Insider
Feb 25, 2015

Australian search authorities tasked with locating Malaysia Airlines flight MH370 has covered over 24,000 sq km of seafloor in a remote area of the Indian Ocean, which is around 40% of the search area.

National news agency Bernama quoted the Joint Agency Coordination Centre (JACC) as saying in a statement that the current underwater search area may be largely completed around May, assuming there were no other significant delays with vessels, equipment or from the weather.

Two ships were conducting underwater search and recovery, and two more ships were on the way to assist in the SAR, it said in a statement today.

The Malaysian contracted vessel Go Phoenix and Dutch vessel Fugro Discovery are conducting underwater search operations.

Fugro Equator is expected to arrive in the search area tomorrow while Fugro Supporter is expected to arrive in the search area on Sunday.

"In addition to locating the aircraft, the underwater search aims to map the MH370 debris field in order to identify and prioritise the recovery of specific aircraft components, including flight recorders, which will assist the Malaysian investigation," it said.

JACC said the Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) has utilised the data from the bathymetric survey work to prepare the initial plan for the underwater search, to be followed and referred to by all parties involved.

"The plan includes search timings, methods, procedures, safety precautions and the initial search areas for the various vessels," it said.

Touching on the weather, it said weather conditions in the search area were expected to be favourable this week, with sea levels anticipated to rise no higher than 3.

Overall conditions are expected to continue to be generally favourable during the warmer months, it added.

Bernama yesterday reported that Transport Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai said the search would continue and the data provided by Inmarsat and the Air Traffic Control Centre showed that MH370 was heading towards the southern Indian Ocean.

The Boeing 777 flight MH370 with its 12 crew and 227 passengers disappeared from the radar screen while en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing, about an hour after departing the Kuala Lumpur International Airport at about 12.41 am on March 8 last year.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak announced on March 24 last year that flight MH370 had ended in a secluded spot in the southern Indian Ocean.

On January 29, the Malaysian Department of Civil Aviation announced that the misfortune was an accident based on international aviation rules and all 239 of its passengers and crew died. – February 25, 2015.

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