

MH370 support centre in China shuts down, says report
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The MH370 family support centre in Shunyi, near Beijing, will be closed today, after a year-long operation of updating next of kin on the missing Malaysia Airlines (MAS) jetliner, The Star reported.

Six branches of the support centre in Beijing and Tianjin, as well as the Hebei, Henan, Shandong and Jiangsu provinces, also reportedly ceased operations since yesterday.

The English language daily said the centre had been set up on May 4, 2014, for the families of the 152 Chinese nationals on board the MAS flight, which went missing en route to Beijing from Kuala Lumpur on March 8.

The centre was staffed by officials from MAS and the governments of Malaysia and China.

A notice signed by the "Chinese government joint working platform" last week announcing the closure said the families could continue to place requests through the petition channels under the State Bureau for Letters and Calls.

The notice said that matters of concern would continue to be handled after the centre was closed.

"The Chinese government will continue to urge Malaysia to fully embark on the search mission and investigation, fulfil its responsibility on compensation and provide support and assistance to the next of kin," the notice reportedly read.

The Star said Chinese families have visited the centre frequently in the past year for updates on the missing aircraft.

Last month, several of the next of kin travelled to Malaysia to protest against Putrajaya's declaration that the plane was lost in an accident, and attempted to meet the country's top leaders.

Some 21 Chinese next of kin of the MH370 passengers gathered in front of Wisma MCA on February 19, during MCA's Chinese New Year open house, with hopes of meeting Malaysia's leaders but were not allowed into the premises.

The group also went to Putrajaya to deliver Chinese calligraphy scrolls to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak and called for their relatives' return, but were met by his special officer instead.

On January 29, Malaysia declared that Flight MH370 was lost in an accident, killing all 239 passengers and crew members on board.

Meanwhile, investigators searching for MH370 said they could finish scouring the

priority zone, in the southern Indian Ocean, by May if there were no delays with vessels, equipment and weather.

The Joint Agency Co-ordination Centre added that decisions about the future of the search would continue to be made in collaboration with Malaysia, China and Australia.
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