

Experts say latest MH370 search has strong chance of success

By Mohd Iskandar Ibrahim - February 27, 2025 @ 11:11am



The latest and possibly final attempt to locate the missing Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 has a strong chance of success, says aviation expert Datuk Captain Nik Ahmad Huzlan Nik Hussain. - NSTP file pic

PUTRAJAYA: The latest and possibly final attempt to locate the missing Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 has a strong chance of success, says aviation expert Datuk Captain Nik Ahmad Huzlan Nik Hussain.

He attributed this optimism to the expertise and advanced capabilities of Ocean Infinity, the US- and UK-based company conducting the search.

"Ocean Infinity has meticulously analysed data, including assumed coordinates where MH370 might have ended in the ocean. This has significantly reduced the search area to 15,000 square kilometres compared to the previous 120,000 square kilometres," he told Berita Harian.

He also expressed confidence in the mission, noting that Ocean Infinity would not have committed an initial investment of at least USD 10 million (RM45.07 million) without a strong belief in a successful outcome.

However, he urged the government to clarify whether the USD 70 million (RM309 million) payment to Ocean Infinity includes the cost of retrieving the aircraft debris, if found.

"The financial details must be finalised early, as this is a substantial expense. Nevertheless, I remain hopeful that the aircraft will be located, bringing closure to the mystery that has lasted for over a decade and to the families of those on board," he said.

A professor of oceanography at Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT), Prof Dr Mohd Fadzil Akhir, said the decision to focus on a smaller search area was driven by new data obtained through oceanographic, hydrophone, ocean biology, and radioacoustic studies.

"Hydrophones, which study underwater sounds, have played a crucial role. Sound travels vast distances in water, and scientific buoys have detected signals that are now being analysed to uncover new clues," he said.

The data convinced Ocean Infinity to continue the search under a renewed agreement with the Malaysian government. Additionally, the company's use of faster and more advanced search technology has further strengthened the likelihood of success.

"The latest mapping systems will allow the search to be completed in a shorter time compared to previous missions, improving operational efficiency," Mohd Fadzil said.

Explaining the Indian Ocean's conditions, he said its complex current system and underwater volcanic structures are similar to those found in other major oceans, such as the Pacific and Atlantic.

The renewed search follows a Cabinet decision in December last year to approve Ocean Infinity's proposal. The operation is being conducted on a "no find, no fee" basis, meaning Malaysia will only pay if the aircraft is found.

If successful, the government will pay USD 70 million (RM309 million) to Ocean Infinity.

The company's deep-sea exploration vessel, Armada 7806, is currently about 1,500 kilometres off the coast of Perth, Australia. The ship will focus on four "hot spots" identified by researchers as potential locations of the missing Boeing 777 wreckage.

Since the disappearance of MH370, the Malaysian government has reportedly spent approximately RM456 million on previous search operations involving Malaysia, Australia, and China.

Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 vanished from radar on March 8, 2014, while flying from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing, about an hour after departing Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA).

The aircraft was carrying 12 crew members and 227 passengers, including two infants.

After 515 days of uncertainty, authorities concluded that the plane's final destination was in the Indian Ocean, based on debris found on Réunion Island, east of the suspected crash site.

The Indian Ocean is the third-largest ocean in the world, covering approximately 70.56 million square kilometres, with an average depth of about 3,741 metres.

The latest search mission has reignited hopes of finally solving one of the greatest aviation mysteries in history.