

Liow: Search for MH370 may go on

KUALA LUMPUR: The Transport Ministry wants to continue the search for MH370 in January – if the tripartite partners agree with expert findings and want to relaunch the mission.

The minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai said summer in the southern hemisphere was a good time to start as calmer waters would make things easier.

“We have received the green light to negotiate with Ocean Infinity to continue the search. The first to know will be the next of kin,” he said. Liow said four meetings were held with the US-based seabed exploration outfit since September but the partners – Malaysia, China and Australia – have yet to reach an agreement.

He said experts identified a search area of 25,000 sq km in its principle review and the partners wished to narrow that to a 5,000 sq km search area north of where the previous search in the southern Indian Ocean was conducted.

On MH17, Liow said he welcomed the support of Belgium, Australia, Ukraine and the Netherlands in the joint investigation team. “The technical investigations have been concluded. Now, we are looking into the criminal investigations and we hope to receive that report by early next year,” he said, adding that those responsible for the downing of the plane in July 2014 would be prosecuted at the criminal courts in the Netherlands.

Earlier, Datuk Seri Liow presented RM1.6mil in study aid to 40 children of the 23 cabin crew members who served on both the ill-fated flights.

Each will receive RM40,000, thanks to efforts of the Flagbearer Education Association, an organisation set up to provide education aid to the children. Eu Yan Sang, Genting Malaysia Bhd, Hap Seng Plantations and Kuala Lumpur Kepong Bhd contributed to the fund.

Association chairman Datuk Anne Eu said: “The amount will be disbursed to the guardian’s joint bank account.” The mock cheque presentation was witnessed by Defence Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein, who was acting transport minister when the two air tragedies occurred.