

Push for access to crash site

Liow: MH17 investigators have less than a month to gather evidence

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KUALA: Investigators of the MH17 tragedy have less than a month from now to enter the crash site and gather evidence on the ill-fated plane, said Transport Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai.

He said winter would arrive end of next month in Donetsk, eastern Ukraine – where the Malaysia Airlines aircraft was shot at and crashed, killing 298 people.

"The probe team must be able to gain access into the site before all evidence is covered by snow," he added.

He said the team was currently stranded due to the continuous fighting between the Ukraine government and the separatists.

"We are working hard and making efforts to persuade both parties to follow the ceasefire treaty (signed by them)," he added.

Liow also called on the United Nations to uphold a resolution adopted by its Security Council two months ago to demand that the armed groups allow unfettered access to the crash site and ensure that its integrity was maintained.

Speaking to reporters after attending the Double Ninth Festival celebration at Nirvana Memorial Garden in Semenyih yesterday, Liow called on Chinese guilds and associations to instil new elements into this traditional festival to attract young people to commemorate the event, which is not widely celebrated in Malaysia.

The Double Ninth Festival, which has a history of more than 2,000 years, falls on the ninth day of the ninth month of the Lunar Calendar, which will be on Thursday.

According to folklore, a man named Huan Jing



Respect for tradition: Liow (centre) attending a ceremony to mark the Double Ninth Festival at Nirvana Memorial Garden in Semenyih. Also at the event are (from left) NV Multi Asia Group chairman Datuk Fu Ah Kio, who is also Star Publications (M) Bhd chairman, (partly hidden) Federation of Chinese Associations Malaysia (Hua Zong) president Tan Sri Pheng Yin Huan, NV Multi Asia Group founder Datuk Kong Hon Kong and China's Embassy to Malaysia consular affairs counsellor Gong Chunsen.

was told by a fairy that the demon – which had been haunting his villagers – would appear on the ninth day of the ninth month.

The fairy advised the people to climb up a mountain and carry with them some dogwood plant and chrysanthemums to drive away the demon. To mark the occasion in modern times, the Chinese will visit the graves of their ancestors

to pay respect. Some families would also drink chrysanthemum wine.



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Relocation to urban areas saved Chinese schools, says Wee

GELANG PATAH: The relocation of Chinese schools from rural to urban areas has saved them from being closed down, said MCA deputy president Datuk Dr Wee Ka Siong.

He cited the example of SJK(C) Pai Tze, which relocated from Bukit Serampang in Pagoh to here about four years ago.

The school, he said, was on the verge of being closed down in 2009 because it only had one pupil then.

"When the school moved to its current location in 2010, it only had 29 pupils. In the following year, there were 156 pupils.

"The school now has 17 classes with 502 pupils. I am happy to hear that it also plans to take in 150 new pupils and add four new classes," he said after attending a fund-raising dinner in Taman Laman Setia here on Saturday.

Dr Wee described SJK(C) Pai Tze, together with four other such schools that relocated from rural areas to towns, as success stories.

"The survival of these schools shows the close cooperation among the state government, the Education Ministry and MCA. It would have been a shame for the schools to close because of a lack of students."