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No radioactivity from suspected China rocket debris

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Two objects suspected to be debris from China's Long March 5B rocket, which made an uncontrolled re-entry into Earth airspace, will be sent for analysis after confirmation that no radioactivity is detected from both objects. – AFP/STR pic, August 2, 2022.

PUTRAJAYA: There was no radiation or radioactive element detected on two objects suspected to be debris from China's rocket found in Sarawak recently, says the Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry (MOSTI).

This was confirmed by a team which investigated the objects found in Kg Nyalau in Bintulu and Kg Sepupuk Lama, Niah, in Miri on Monday (Aug 1).

Four officers from the Bintulu District Atomic Energy Licensing Board along with the Fire and Rescue Department's Hazardous Materials (Hazmat) team and the Bintulu police conducted the investigation at the first location in Kg Nyalau.

"Based on the measurements and results of the initial investigation, the object, which is 13cm in size, did not emit any radiation and no radioactive elements were detected.

"Meanwhile, the measurements and results of the preliminary investigation of the second object in Niah, Miri, showed similar results," MOSTI said in a statement on Tuesday (Aug 2).

Mosti, through the Malaysian Space Agency (MYSA), in collaboration with the Chemistry Department will carry out a detailed investigation of the two objects to confirm whether or not they are related to the re-entry incident of debris from China's Long March 5B rocket.

The results of the investigation and analysis will be made public and appropriate action will be considered in accordance with the Malaysian Space Board Act 2022 and international treaties related to space under the management of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, said MOSTI.

On Sunday (July 31), the media reported that debris from China's Long March 5B rocket was detected crossing Malaysian airspace in several areas including over Sarawak.

MOSTI said its monitoring through MYSA as well as a statement by the Chinese Space Agency found that the re-entry of the debris into the Earth's atmosphere was detected at 12.55am Sunday Malaysian time.

According to MOSTI, the debris was recorded falling around the Sulu Sea, which is an area between latitude 9.1 degrees North and longitude 119.0 degrees East. – Bernama