

Boat carrying 31 goes missing in Malaysia, several Chinese tourists on board

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Kuala Lumpur: Kuala Lumpur: A boat carrying 31 people, including at least 18 Chinese tourists, has gone missing in the after sailing out from an eastern Malaysian city, officials said today.

Search and rescue mission by Malaysian authorities is on

"The owner of the boat reported it missing on Saturday evening and we have begun a search and rescue mission," AFP quoted an official from the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency as saying.

Besides tourists, a skipper and two crew members were also on board when the boat sailed out on Saturday morning, he said.

The tourists were on their way to an island some 60 kilometres west of Kota Kinabalu, the capital of eastern Sabah state.

Chinese state media said that around 18 Chinese nationals were on board when the boat went missing in the waters off Borneo.

The Chinese Consulate General in Kota Kinabalu in the Malaysian state of Sabah said the boat lost contact after leaving Kota Kinabalu on Saturday morning, according to the official Xinhua News Agency said. It was bound for Pulau Mengalum, an island about 60 kilometers (38 miles) west of the city.

The report cited the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency as saying there were 28 Chinese tourists on board. But the Chinese Consulate could only confirm the passport details of 18 Chinese citizens, Xinhua said.

Malaysia deployed search and rescue ships and helicopters after receiving a call Saturday night about the boat's disappearance, Xinhua reported.

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