

Vietnam confirms MAS flight crashed into sea off Tho Chu island
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Family members of those onboard the missing Malaysia Airlines flight MH370 making their way to the waiting area at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport in Sepang today. There are still no confirmed reports of what caused the crash. MAS flight MH370 which went missing early this morning disappeared in Vietnamese airspace, the Vietnamese government has confirmed.

"The plane lost contact in Ca Mau province airspace before it had entered contact with Ho Chi Minh City air traffic control," a statement posted on the official Vietnamese government website said.

The plane was meant to transfer to Ho Chi Minh City air traffic control at 1.22am Malaysian time but never appeared, the statement reported by AFP said, citing a senior Ministry of Defence official.

The Ministry of Defence launched rescue efforts to find the plane, working in coordination with Malaysian and Chinese officials.

The Vietnamese navy had earlier confirmed that Kuala Lumpur-Beijing bound Flight MH370 had crashed into the sea off Tho Chu island.

Tuoi Tre quoted Navy Admiral Ngo Van Phat, Commander of Region 5, as saying that military radar reported that the plane crashed into the sea at a location 246km south of Phu Quoc island.

Meanwhile, distraught families of the 227 passengers and 12 crew members on board the Kuala Lumpur-Beijing bound flight MH370 have gathered at the Support Facility Building at KLIA's South Support Zone where they are hoping for news of their missing relatives.

Some are in tears and consoled each other as they sought out officials for the latest news.

MAS Group chief executive officer Ahmad Jauhari Yahya said flight MH370 went missing somewhere between Malaysian and Vietnamese airspace over the South China Sea at 2.40am.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said he had asked "all measures possible to be taken" to locate the missing aircraft.

"My thoughts and prayers are with the family members of flight MH370. I've asked all measures possible to be taken," Najib tweeted.

Acting Transport Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein also advised family members of passengers on board a missing MAS flight to stay calm and ignore speculation. He said they should get information only from validated sources.

"I'm making my way to the flight management building (in Sepang) from Janda Baik (Pahang) to get updates and details from the agencies involved. In the meantime, don't speculate," he tweeted.

The B777-200 aircraft had left Kuala Lumpur at 12.41am and was scheduled to land in Beijing at 6.30am.

It lost contact with the Subang air traffic control at 2.40am. The 239 passengers and crew onboard the missing MH370 bound for Beijing this morning were from 14 different countries, including the United States, Canada, France and Malaysia.

Ahmad Jauhari said the passengers comprised of citizens from China (152 plus an infant); Malaysia (38); Indonesia (12); Australia (7); France (3); United States of America – 3 pax plus 1 infant; New Zealand (2); Ukraine (2); Canada (2); Russia (1); Italy (1); Taiwan (1); Netherlands (1) and Austria (1).

"This flight was a code share with China Southern Airlines. We are working with authorities who have activated their search and rescue team to locate the aircraft," he said.

The flight was piloted by Captain Zaharie Ahmad Shah, a Malaysian, aged 53. He had a total flying hours of 18,365 hours. He joined Malaysia Airlines in 1981. First officer Fariq Ab Hamid, a Malaysian, is 27. He has a total flying hours of 2,763 hours. He joined Malaysia Airlines in 2007.

Ahmad Jauhari said the last reported position of MH370 was 120 nautical miles off Kota Baru, around the South China Sea. – March 8, 2014.

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