

## **Unknown Flight Was MH370, Deviated From Original Route**

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**By Tengku Noor Shamsiah Tengku Abdullah**

SEPANG, March 15 (Bernama) – Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak Saturday confirmed the unknown flight traced by the primary radar was Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370.

He said the Beijing-bound aircraft from the Kuala Lumpur International Airport has deviated from its original path last Saturday, and gone missing.

Despite media reports that the plane was hijacked, Najib stressed that the authorities were still investigating all possibilities as to what caused Flight MH370 to deviate from its original flight path.

He said the authorities and investigation team had also obtained a new data in relation to the plane's last communication with the satellite, and it opened up a new phase for search operation, including ending the operation in the South China Sea and reassessing the redeployment of the assets.

"Today, based on the raw satellite data that was obtained from the satellite data service provider, we can confirm that the aircraft shown in the primary radar data was Flight MH370," he said when reading his statement in a media briefing held at Sama-Sama Hotel here today.

The finding was concurred by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), National Transportation Safety Board (NSTP), Air Accidents Investigation Branch (AAIB) and the Malaysian authorities, who were working separately on the same data, he added.

In view of the development, Najib said Malaysia and its international counterparts had determined that the plane's last communication with the satellite was in one of two possible corridors – northern or southern.

The two possible corridors are a northern corridor stretching approximately from the border of Kazakhstan and Turkemenistan to northern Thailand, or a southern corridor stretching approximately from Indonesia to Indian Ocean.

"The investigation team is working to further refine the information," said the Prime Minister.

He revealed that according to the new data, the last confirm communication between the plane and the satellite was at 8:11 am Malaysia time on March 8, Saturday.

“The investigation team is making further calculations which will indicate how far the aircraft might have flown after this last point of contact. This will help us to refine the search.

“Due to the type of satellite data, we are unable to confirm the precise location of the plane when it last made contact with the satellite,” he added.

Najib said the authorities had conducted search operations over land, in the South China Sea, the Melaka Strait, the Andaman Sea and the Indian Ocean.

“At every stage, we acted on the basis of verified information, and we followed every credible lead. Sometimes, these leads have led nowhere.” He noted.

He said the new satellite information had significant impact on the nature and scope of the search operation.

“We are working with the relevant countries to request all information relevant to the search, including radar data.”

Najib said as the two new corridors involved many countries, the relevant foreign embassies had been invited to a briefing on the new information by the Malaysian Foreign Ministry and the technical experts.

He also revealed that based on the new satellite information, it could be described with “a high degree of certainty’ that the Aircraft Communication Addressing and Reporting System (Acars) was disabled just before the aircraft reached the East coast of peninsular Malaysia and shortly afterwards, near the border between Malaysian and Vietnamese air traffic control, the aircraft’s transponder was switched off.

“From this point onwards, the Royal Malaysian Air Force primary radar showed that an aircraft which was believed but not confirmed to be MH370 did indeed, turn back.

“It then flew in a westerly direction back over peninsular Malaysia before turning northwest. Up until the point at which it left military primary radar coverage, these movements are consistent with deliberate action by someone on the plane,” he said.

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