

MH370: Australian PM Calls Najib About Possible Objects Related To Missing Airliner
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KUALA LUMPUR, March 20 (Bernama) -- Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott telephoned Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak at 10 am Thursday, informing that possible objects related to a missing Malaysian airliner may have been found in the southern Indian Ocean.

Acting Transport Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein said in a statement that Abbott had informed Najib that "two possible objects related to the search for (flight) MH370 had been identified in the southern Indian Ocean."

He said the Australian High Commissioner to Malaysia Rod Smith had also briefed him on the situation.

"At this stage, Australian officials have yet to establish whether these objects are indeed related to the search for MH370," Hishammuddin said.

Abbott had told Parliament in Canberra earlier today that satellite imagery has shown two objects that could be related to the Malaysia Airlines (MAS) Boeing 777-200ER aircraft that disappeared on March 8, according to Reuters news agency.

The news agency quoted Abbot as saying "the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) has received information based on satellite imagery of objects possibly related to the search."

MAS Flight MH370, with 227 passengers and 12 crew on board, disappeared about an hour after leaving the KL International Airport at 12.41 am on March 8. It was scheduled to arrive in Beijing at 6.30 am on the same day.

Today's announcement in Australia comes on the 13th day of a multinational search for the airline which, according to satellite data, had veered off course over the South China Sea and headed for the Indian Ocean.

The area of the search was extended to cover a large tract west of Malaysia, including the Indian Ocean, when it was learned that the plane had flown for seven hours after that.

The search then focused on two corridors, namely the northern corridor which stretches from the border of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan to northern Thailand, and the southern corridor which stretches from Indonesia to the southern Indian Ocean.

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