

## **Najib, Abbott Visit Pearce Airbase**

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**By Mohd Razman Abdullah**

PERTH, April 3 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak visited the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Pearce base, here today, to get a firsthand look at the search operation for the missing Malaysian airliner.

He arrived at 7.30 am and was welcomed by his Australian counterpart Tony Abbott at the airbase.

Accompanying Najib are Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Anifah Aman, Advisor in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Jamaluddin Jarjis, Malaysia High Commissioner to Australia Datuk Zainal Abidin Ahmad, Department of Civil Aviation Director-General Datuk Azharuddin Abdul Rahman and Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) Chief Tan Sri Rodzali Daud.

Yesterday Zainal Abidin, in a press conference with the Malaysian media, said that Najib and Abbott would have a 40-minute briefing of the search mission at the airbase.

Later both of them are scheduled to have breakfast with the air search personnel, including the Malaysian search team.

Zainal Abidin said Najib and Abbot would then go to the Commonwealth Centre, the Australian Prime Minister's Office, to have a meeting on the search for the missing Malaysia Airlines (MAS) Flight MH370 and also discuss the strengthening of bilateral relations.

Flight MH370, carrying 227 passengers and 12 crew, left the Kuala Lumpur International Airport at 12.41 am on March 8 and disappeared from radar screens about an hour later while over the South China Sea. It was to have landed in Beijing at 6.30 am on the same day.

A multinational search was mounted for the aircraft, first in the South China Sea and then after it was learned that the plane had veered off course, along two corridors - the northern corridor stretching from the border of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan to northern Thailand and the southern corridor, from Indonesia to the southern Indian Ocean.

Following an unprecedented type of analysis of satellite data, United Kingdom satellite telecommunications company Inmarsat and the UK Air Accidents Investigation Branch (AAIB) concluded that Flight MH370 flew along the southern corridor and that its last position was in the middle of the Indian Ocean, west of Perth, Australia.

Najib then announced on March 24, seventeen days after the disappearance of Boeing 777-200 aircraft, that Flight MH370 "ended in the southern Indian Ocean".

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