

No distress call from downed chopper, black box to London for analysis
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The ill-fated helicopter that crashed in Semenyih yesterday did not make any distress call and followed the approved flight path, said Transport Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai to Bernama.

He said that the Air Traffic Control (ATC) did not record any conversation with the pilot and that was normal.

"It is normal (helicopter) to fly after receiving the clearance unless it needs any requirement (to call ATC)," he said in Putrajaya after the helicopter's black box was handed to the ministry.

"We also checked whether there was a mayday call or distress call but we did not find any."

He said the black box would be sent to the Air Accident Investigation Bureau in Farnborough, UK for a thorough analysis to determine the cause of tragedy.

"We need time to withdraw the (black box) data and also time to analyse the data," he told Bernama, adding that it might take about three days to extract the data and another week to analyse it.

The national news agency reported that the aircraft's approved flight path covers a wide range of areas – Kuantan, Pekan, Muadzam Shah, Bandar Tun Razak, Kuala Klawang, The Mines, Petaling Jaya and Subang.

Liow said the pilot of the AS3655N2 Dauphin (9M-1GB) helicopter, Captain Clifford William Fournier, held a valid licence rated for that type of aircraft since 2012.

"He has been flying aircraft since 2002 totalling nearly 13 years of flying experience."

Liow was quoted as saying that the aircraft had a valid certificate of airworthiness under the private category, which was last renewed on February 13 this year, and valid till February 8 next year.

He added that the ministry had set up an investigation team, headed by Datuk Yahya Abdul Rahman, who has more than 20 years' experience in investigating helicopter accidents.

The team comprise four members while an accredited representative from France will be invited as the country is the state of design and manufacturer of the aircraft and engine.

Manufactured by Airbus Helicopters, formerly known as Eurocopter France, the

aircraft was made in 1990 and was 25 years as of April this year, he said.

The aircraft maintenance was carried out by Airbus Helicopters Malaysia Sdn Bhd and the last recorded inspection was made on January 29 this year, while the flight test was conducted on February 9, reported Bernama.

"The aircraft has a clean bill of health."

The helicopter carrying six people crashed in a rubber plantation in Semenyih, Selangor, at 4.55pm yesterday.

Those on board were Rompin MP Tan Sri Dr Jamaluddin Jarjis, principal private secretary of the prime minister, Datuk Azlin Alias, Fournier, operations assistant Aidana Baizieva, businessman Datuk Tan Huat Seang and Jamaluddin's bodyguard, Razakan Seran.

Meanwhile, the Department of Civil Aviation director-general Datuk Azharuddin Abdul Rahman said Baizieva was not the helicopter's co-pilot as it did not need an assistant.
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