

**Hisham rebuffs apology demand, defends PM**  
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MH370 Brushing aside the demand that Malaysia tenders an apology for assuming that those on board missing Malaysian Airlines Flight MH370 had perished, acting Transport Minister Hishammuddin Hussein said that it stemmed from a misconception.

He explained that Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak did not mention that MH370 had crashed in the Indian ocean and that there were no survivors.

He said this when asked to respond to the demand from families of the Chinese national passengers that the Malaysian government apologise for making assumptions on the fate of the plane without concrete evidence.

"This (demand for an) apology comes from the belief that the prime minister claimed that the plane crashed and nobody survived.

"That is completely erroneous," Hishammuddin said.

He noted that Najib in his March 24 statement had among others stated that "based on new data, the flight ended in the Indian ocean."

He stressed that at no time did the premier state that the plane had "crashed" or that there were no survivors.

Najib, in his **solemn address** shortly after being briefed on the aircraft's final destination based on satellite analysis said: "This is a remote location, far from any possible landing sites.

"It is therefore, with deep sadness and regret I must inform you that according to this new data, Flight MH370 ended in the southern Indian Ocean."

Even though the premier treaded carefully in the announcement, MAS in a press conference the subsequent day urged families to accept the prime minister's message and said there were **no survivors**.

"Based on this evidence (satellite analysis), the prime minister's message was that we must accept the painful reality that the aircraft is now lost and that none of the passengers or crew on board survived," MAS chairperson Md Nor Md Yusof had said.

Relatives of the Chinese passengers vented their anger at government officials, after arriving in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Chanting "Tell us the truth", they demanded Najib to apologise for issuing misleading statements.

### **PM heading to Perth**

Meanwhile, Hishammuddin also revealed that Najib would travel to Perth this Wednesday to observe the search operation.

He added that the prime minister wished to personally thank all those involved in the operation.

On another matter, Hishammuddin denied that the police had leaked transcripts of the alleged statements recorded from Captain Zaharie Ahmad Shah's family to the *Daily Mail*.

"It did not come from the police, you have to ask *Daily Mail* where it (the information) came from," he added.

His daughter, Aishah, however denied the report, and accused the British tabloid of cooking up stories.

The Beijing-bound plane disappeared on March 8 with 239 people on board.

In another development, Hishammuddin, who is also defence minister, said that he would be attending the Asean Defence Ministers Meeting in Hawaii from April 1 to 3.

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