

Zaid: I think of God all the time, not only in emergencies

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Former minister says that in mid-air emergencies, passengers naturally say a prayer and there is no need for pilot to add on to anxiety.

PETALING JAYA: Zaid Ibrahim today defended his remark against an AirAsia pilot who asked passengers to pray during a problematic flight, after PAS Youth chief Nik Abduh Nik Aziz said it was only normal to remember God during emergencies.

In a tweet, Zaid said, "Nik Abduh remembers God during emergencies; I remember God all the time."

The former minister also took the opportunity to explain his remarks on the pilot's behaviour.

"When an engine is shaking, passengers would say a prayer, there is no need for a pilot to add on to the anxiety. That is what I meant," Zaid said.

"The chairman of AirAsia says there is nothing wrong seeking divine intervention," he said in a separate statement to FMT.

"Like Nik Abduh, he misses the point.

"The passengers had probably done so, when the engine was about to fall off. Nothing wrong with that.

"But when the pilot enjoined everyone to do so, how would the passengers know he was in control and calm and collected? How would the passengers know he had not given up?"

He said this after Nik Abduh rebuked him for his remarks over an incident two days ago in which AirAsia X flight D7237 was forced to turn back to Perth after experiencing difficulties with one of its engines.

An explosion was said to have occurred on the left engine with one of the fans on the turbine having broken off.

As the plane was "shaking like a washing machine", according to one of the passengers, the pilot asked everyone to pray for a safe landing as the flight was re-routed to Perth.

Taking to Twitter to express his disapproval, Zaid had said, "AirAsia pilot urged passengers to pray on distressed Perth flight. Good lord, I much prefer pilot don't tell me death is imminent," he said.

He also mocked AirAsia over the issue, saying, "Pilot has to give hope, and leave the rest to God and the passengers. If AirAsia are big into prayers; engage proper imam and priest."

Nik Abduh was one of several PAS members who, along with several social media users, defended the pilot's action.

The PAS Youth chief said he hoped Zaid, who was now a DAP leader, would pray when faced with an emergency.

He said Zaid should not have questioned the pilot as it was a norm for people to seek assistance from God during such times.

After turning back, the flight in question landed safely in Perth at 10am that day.

According to AFP, the incident is the second one this month involving an Airbus A330 in Australia. Previously, a China Eastern flight was forced to make an emergency landing in Sydney after a huge hole appeared in one of its engine casings.

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