

## world

# No answers yet for Indonesia jet crash

There were 178 adult passengers, one child, two infants, two pilots and six crew on board flight JT 610

● Search teams have filled ten body bags with limbs and other human remains

● Both the cockpit voice recorder and the flight data recorder are still missing.

● The plane had an unspecified technical issue fixed, airline acknowledged

● Orders inspection of all Boeing 737-MAX airliners

AFP | Jakarta, Indonesia

Indonesian search teams yesterday recovered more remains at the site of a crashed Lion Air jet that plunged into the sea with 189 people aboard, as a report said it had suffered an instrument malfunction the day before.

The Boeing-737 MAX, which went into service just months ago, crashed into the Java Sea moments after it had asked to return to Jakarta on Monday.

Flight JT 610 sped up as it suddenly lost altitude and then vanished from radar 12 minutes after take-off, with authorities saying witnesses saw the jet plunge into the water.

Dozens of divers are taking part in the recovery effort.

Search teams have filled ten body bags with limbs and other human remains, Muhammad Syaugi, chief of the Indonesian national search and rescue agency told Metro TV, saying they



Merdiana Harahap (R) is consoled for the loss of her husband, a passenger on board the ill-fated Lion Air flight JT 610, in Medan, North Sumatra province

“We hope we can see the plane’s main body -- everything on the surface of the water has been collected”

MUHAMMAD SYAUGI,  
CHIEF OF THE INDOONESIAN NATIONAL  
SEARCH AND RESCUE AGENCY

will be taken to Jakarta for identification and DNA testing.

The remains of a baby were among those found, according to national deputy police chief Ari Dono Sukmanto.

Another 14 bags filled with debris have also been collected.

Shoes, items of clothing and a wallet are among the items found. “We hope we can see the plane’s main body -- everything on the surface of the water has

been collected,” Syaugi said.

Indonesia’s National Transportation Safety Committee (NTSC) said there were 178 adult passengers, one child, two infants, two pilots and six cabin crew on board flight JT 610.

Among them were the plane’s Indian captain, 20 Indonesian finance ministry employees and Andrea Manfredi, an Italian former professional cyclist.

The search and rescue agency all but ruled out finding any survivors late Monday, citing the discovery of body parts that suggested a high-impact crash in water some 30-40 metres deep off the coast of Indonesia’s Java island.

“We are prioritising finding the main wreckage of the plane using five war ships equipped with sonar to detect metal underwater,” said Yusuf Latif, spokesman of the Indonesian search and rescue agency.

Both the cockpit voice recorder and the flight data recorder

-- which could be key pieces of evidence -- are still missing.

## ‘Unreliable’

The plane had been en route to Pangkal Pinang city, a jumping off point for beach-and-sun seeking tourists on nearby Belitung island, when it dropped out of contact around 6:30 am (2330 GMT).

Lion Air said the plane had only gone into service in August.

The pilot and co-pilot had

more than 11,000 hours of flying time between them and had undergone recent medical checkups and drug testing, it added.

On Monday, Lion Air acknowledged the plane had an unspecified technical issue fixed in Bali before it was flown back to Jakarta, calling it “normal procedure”. A technical logbook detailed an “unreliable” airspeed reading instrument on the Bali-Jakarta flight on Sunday and different altitude readings on the captain and first officer’s instruments, according to the BBC.

Boeing suspended release of the 737 MAX just days before its first commercial delivery last year due to an engine issue, according to airline safety and product review site airlineratings.com.

## Fake news, safety woes

A string of fake news stories have been circulating in the aftermath of the crash, including one that falsely claims to show a baby who survived and a video purportedly showing panicked passengers just before the deadly accident.

Indonesia’s disaster agency spokesman Sutopo Purwo Nugroho has knocked down both claims.



Members of a rescue team bring ashore personal items and wreckage at the port in Tanjung Priok, North Jakarta

## What happened?

Lion Air flight JT-610 took off from Jakarta en route to Pangkal Pinang city at 6:20 am (2320 GMT) on Monday. It crashed into the sea some 12 minutes later.

Two minutes after takeoff, Indian-born Captain Bhavye Suneja reported a flight control problem and requested permission to rise to 5,000 feet from 1,700 feet, according to the National Transportation Safety Committee (NTSC).

The plane vanished from radar at 6:32 am, after the captain asked for permission to return to the airport.

The Flightradar website tracked the plane and showed it looping south on take-off and then heading north before its flight path ended abruptly over the Java Sea, not far from the coast.

Witnesses said they did not hear an explosion but saw the Boeing 737 MAX plunge into the sea.

## Who was in the cockpit?

Captain Suneja and his co-pilot had more than 11,000 hours of combined flying time, and both had recent medical checkups and drug testing, Lion Air has said.

The Boeing 737 MAX 8 was built in 2018 and went into service just two months ago.

The engines were a product of a joint venture between US-based General Electric and France’s Safran Aircraft Engines.

It is not clear what, if any, role the engine issue or the reported instrument problem played in the accident.

## What will the focus of investigation?

Investigators will consider a range of factors, including crew proficiency, unusual cockpit activity that could point to a hijacking or pilot suicide, the role weather may have played and the jet’s mechanical condition, Hamilton said. Lion’s safety record -- including a fatal 2004 crash and a collision between two Lion Air planes at Jakarta’s Soekarno-Hatta airport -- will also be looked at, he added.

## Apple Watch supplier under fire over China student labour

Beijing, China

Apple is investigating a factory in southwest China after a labour rights group said the tech giant’s supplier forced student workers to work “like robots” to assemble its popular Apple Watch.

The report raises fresh questions about the practices of suppliers Apple uses to build its gadgets in the country following the deaths of a number of workers in 2010 apparently linked to tough working conditions.

Many of the students were compelled to work in order to get their vocational degrees and had to do night shifts, according to an investigation by Hong Kong-based NGO Students and Scholars Against Corporate Misbehaviour (SACOM).

SACOM interviewed 28 students at the plant in Chongqing municipality over the summer, and all of them said they had not voluntarily applied to work there, according to the report published last week.



Representative picture. Courtesy of Malaysia Times

They worked under the guise of “internships”, SACOM said, a practice rights groups say is widespread in China as manufacturers pair up with vocational schools to supply workers and fill labour shortages when they ramp up production for new models or the Christmas rush.

“Our graduation certificate

will be withheld by the school if we refuse to come,” said one student majoring in e-commerce, according to SACOM.

The US titan has sold tens of millions of Apple Watches -- which can cost up to \$1,499 -- since it was launched three years ago and chief executive Tim Cook said it was the most popular watch in the world.

Earlier labour abuse allegations focused on workers building iPhones and other gadgets for Taiwan-based Hon Hai

Precision Industry Co., better known as Foxconn.

As the world’s largest contract electronics maker Foxconn assembles products in huge plants in China where it employs more than one million workers.

In 2010, at least 13 Foxconn employees in China died in apparent suicides, which activists blamed on tough working conditions. Although Foxconn denied the accusations, it raised wages by nearly 70 per cent at its China plants in 2010.