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Missing Malaysia Airlines plane: Pilot contacted MH370 just before it went missing

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A girl walks past a Malaysian Airlines logo (MAS) at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) in Sepang, outside Kuala Lumpur on March 9, 2014. A pilot said he established contact with Malaysia Airlines plane MH370 moments before it went missing. -- PHOTO: AFP

SEPANG: A pilot said he established contact with Malaysia Airlines plane MH370 moments before it went missing.

The Boeing 777 captain, who asked to not be named, said he was flying 30 minutes ahead of the missing aircraft, and was asked to use his plane's emergency frequency to contact MH370 by Vietnamese air traffic control officials who wanted to establish its location.

The pilot, whose plane was bound for Narita, Japan, told Malaysia's New Sunday Times: "We managed to establish contact with MH370 just after 1.30am and asked them if they have transferred into Vietnamese airspace.

"The voice on the other side could have been either Captain Zaharie or Fariq, but I was sure it was the co-pilot," he told the newspaper.

MH370 was piloted by Captain Zaharie Ahmad Shah, 53, and co-pilot Fariq Abdul Hamid, 27.

"There were a lot of interference... static... but I heard mumbling from the other end," said the B777 captain. "That was the last time we heard from them, as we lost the connection."

Those on the same frequency at the time, including vessels on the waters below, would have heard the exchange, he said.

But he said he did not detect anything unusual during the contact. "If the plane was in trouble, we would have heard the pilot making the Mayday distress call. But I am sure that, like me, no one else up there heard it."

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