

Experts Say AirAsia Pilot May Have Managed to Land on Sea



Kuala Lumpur, January 3 (RHC)-- The pilot of an AirAsia airline plane, which recently crashed into the Java Sea, may have managed to make an emergency water landing, only for the plane to be flooded and sunk by high waves, experts say.

The airliner Airbus A320-200 crashed into the sea last Sunday with 162 people on board, halfway into its two-hour flight from the Indonesian city of Surabaya to Singapore's Changi Airport.

It disappeared from radar over the sea during a storm but did not send the transmissions usually emitted when a plane crashes or is submerged. Experts say this indicates the highly-experienced former air force pilot, Captain Iriyanto, conducted an emergency water landing that did not have a destructive impact.

"The emergency locator transmitter (ELT) would work on impact, be that land, sea or the sides of a mountain, and my analysis is it didn't work because there was no major impact during landing," Dudi Sudiby, a senior editor of aviation magazine *Angkasa*, said, adding: "The pilot managed to land it on the sea's surface." So far the search team has found 30 bodies, some of which appear to be intact.

"The conclusions I have come to so far are that the plane did not blow up mid-air, and it did not suffer an impact when it hit a surface, because if it did so, then the bodies would not be intact," said Chappy Hakim, a former air force commander.

The exact cause and more details of the crash will, however, remain unclear until the plane's black boxes are found.

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