

Indonesia plane crash: Not expecting survivors from Lion Air flight carrying 189, say rescue officials

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Indonesia plane crash

The Lion Air flight crashed into Indonesian seas minutes after take off. 189 passengers and crew were onboard the plane.

UPDATES -

After the Lion Air flight carrying 189 passengers crashed into the sea on Monday morning, rescue officials said that there are not expecting any survivors. The pilot, an Indian died in the crash, confirmed the Indian Embassy in Jakarta. The flight that took off from Jakarta to the city of Pangkal Pinang off the island of Sumatra crashed into the sea minutes later. A tugboat leaving the capital's port had seen the craft falling. An official of Indonesia's safety transport committee said he could not confirm the cause of the crash, which would have to wait until the recovery of the plane's black boxes, as the cockpit voice recorder and data flight recorder are known.

The plane lost contact 13 minutes after takeoff, according to the official. Debris thought to be from the plane, including aircraft seats, was found near an offshore refining facility in the Java Sea, an official of state energy firm Pertamina said. "We don't know yet whether there are any survivors," Muhammad Syaugi, the head of the search and rescue agency said. "We hope, we pray, but we cannot confirm." "We cannot give any comment at this moment, said Edward Sirait, chief executive of Lion Air Group. "We are trying to collect all the information and data."

Bangkok: Lion Air, the airline whose plane crashed early Monday while traveling from Jakarta to an island off Indonesia's Sumatra with 189 people on board, is a fast-growing low-cost airline with a mixed safety record. The privately-owned carrier was founded in 1999 to provide access to air travel to everyone. It offers dozens of flights a day both internationally and within the archipelago's more than 17,000 islands.

The biggest airline in the country in terms of passenger numbers and one of the largest low-cost carriers after Malaysia-based AirAsia, it mostly flies Boeing 737s.

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Monday's disaster was a blow to the country's aviation safety record after the lifting of bans on its airlines by the European Union and United States.

The European Union barred Indonesian airlines from flying to Europe in 2007 due to safety concerns. Lion Air was allowed to resume flights to Europe as of June 2016, and the ban on all other Indonesian airlines was lifted earlier this year.

The U.S. lifted a decadelong ban in 2016.

Last month, two Lion Air-owned aircraft had a wingtip strike while they were on the tarmac at Jakarta's airport. An investigation attributed the incident to a rushed departure. In April, a Lion Air Boeing 737-800 overran the runway at Gorontalo Airport on the island of Sulawesi. Afterward, investigators and the airline issued instructions on improving safety awareness and procedures.

No one was reported injured in either of those incidents, according to reports on the website Aviation Safety Network.

Lion Air announced early this year that it was among three major Indonesian airlines, including Garuda Indonesia and Batik Air, that were upgraded to the highest level of safety rating after Indonesia passed a key international audit under the International Civil Aviation Organization's Universal Safety Oversight Audit Program.

Lion Air has been expanding bullishly in Southeast Asia, a fast-growing region of more than 600 million people. Earlier this year it confirmed a deal to buy 50 new Boeing narrow-body aircraft worth an estimated \$6.24 billion.

In a record transaction, Lion Air signed a deal to buy 230 Boeing jets for \$21.7 billion during a visit by then-President Barack Obama in November 2011.

The carrier was founded by Indonesian-Chinese brothers Rusdi and Kusnan Kirana, who pooled money to set up a travel agency and then began their airline with one leased aircraft. Rusdi Kirana, chief executive officer of the airline, was named Indonesia's ambassador to Malaysia in 2017 after serving as an adviser to Indonesian President Joko Widodo.

The carrier operates with regional partners Thai Lion Air, Malindo Air, Wings Air, Batik Air and Lion Bizjet. It also has a freight business, Lion Parcel.

- AP

Rescue workers stand next to body bags at the port of Tanjung Priok, that are believed to be from Lion Air flight JT610, that took off from Jakarta and crashed into the sea, in Jakarta, Indonesia October 29, 2018 in this image obtained from social media. On-screen text provided at source. Basarnas/via REUTERS

A rescue team prepares their boat before departing to the Lion Air flight JT610 crash site off the coast of Karawang regency, West Java province Indonesia, October 29, 2018. REUTERS/Beawiharta

People watch a rescue team, as a helicopter flies overhead, to the location of the Lion Air flight JT610 crash site off the coast of Karawang regency, West Java province Indonesia, October 29, 2018. REUTERS/Beawiharta

The flight path graphic shows the aircraft stopped transmitting data after descending to an altitude of 2,800 feet. (Credit: FlightAware)

Lion Air plane crash: Families of passengers in Pangkal Pinang airport, await news of their loved ones

Indonesia plane crash: Relatives of passengers pray while waiting for updates

Indonesia plane crash: Crushed smartphone, bags recovered by rescue teams

Lion Air captain Bhavye Suneja

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