**1. Fire**

A fire may have broken out on the aircraft shortly after last contact was made with air traffic control. The pilot may have made a sharp left turn and attempted to return to a Malaysian airport.

Chris Goodfellow, a Canadian pilot with 20 years’ experience, believes Capt. Zaharie Ahmad Shah was taking a direct route to Palau Langkawi, a 13,000-foot (3,962-meter) airstrip with an approach over water and no real obstacle. If the plane had turned back toward Kuala Lumpur, it would have needed to cross a series of high ridges.

According to him, an electrical fire could explain MH370’s failure to communicate.

He said the flight crew was most likely overcome by smoke and the plane continued in the same direction until it ran out of fuel or fire destroyed the control surfaces and it crashed.

**2. Decompression**

A gradual decompression could also explain MH370’s disappearance.

Central Queensland University aviation expert Ron Bishop said a fire or some other accident could have led to a gradual decompression of the aircraft.

The pilots may have tried to return to Malaysia but passed out after turning the aircraft around and the plane continued flying until it ran out of fuel.

**3. Mechanical failure**

The plane may have suffered a mechanical failure that required the aircraft to turn back to Malaysia. However, the problem could have become so severe that the pilots lost control of the aircraft and the plane may have continued flying until it ran out of fuel or crashed.

**4. Hijacking**

A passenger may have gained access to the cockpit and hijacked the plane for a political, psychological or financial reason. If the passenger was armed, they might have threatened the pilots and forced them to fly off course.

An instructor at the Tianjiao Special Guard/Security Consultant bodyguard training camp teaches students about close-quarter combat aboard planes.Photo: Reuters

Otherwise, if the passenger was a trained pilot, they could have taken over the controls.

Malaysia Airlines has said it was “shocked” at a TV report that MH370 co-pilot Fariq Abdul Hamid had allowed two women into the cockpit on a flight in 2011.

**5. Terror attack**

The plane may have fallen victim to a terrorist attack.

The presence of two passengers traveling on stolen passports fueled early fears of a terror link.

Authorities now believe the two Iranian men were simply illegal migrants, but CIA Director John Brennan has said a terror attack has not been ruled out.

The search area covers a massive region — a northern corridor from the border of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan through northern Thailand and a southern corridor from Indonesia to the southern Indian Ocean — with no potential target or destination pinpointed so far.

**6. Pilot involvement**

Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak said on Saturday evidence indicated that the plane’s communication systems were manually switched off and it was deliberately diverted.

This suggests that one or both of the pilots could have been involved in diverting the Beijing-bound flight and fly it toward the Indian Ocean.

Malaysian authorities have raided the homes of Zaharie and Fariq, searching for evidence to link them with its disappearance.

An image in support of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 is seen on the United Malays National Organization building in Kuala Lumpur.Photo: Reuters

Zaharie was reportedly a fanatical supporter of Anwar Ibrahim who was incensed by his sodomy verdict.

**7. Pilot suicide**

While rare, there have been cases of pilots crashing planes to take their own lives.

In December 1997, a SilkAir Boeing 737 from Jakarta to Singapore plunged into a river in Indonesia with the loss of 104 passengers and crew. US investigators blamed pilot suicide.

A suicide bid “is possible, and if that’s the case, there might not be a lot of debris because the plane would have come down in relative structural integrity,” said Terence Fan, an aviation expert at Singapore Management University.

“The airplane is not meant to float and if the airplane sinks in the water, water will go inside because the door seals are not meant to seal water.”

However, nothing has emerged to suggest any serious psychological problems with either of the pilots who were flying MH370.

**8. Plane landed but is hidden**

The lack of debris and apparent absence of any data indicating impact has led to speculation that the plane may have landed safely and be hidden in a remote location.

However, the size of the Boeing 777 and the amount of space needed for it to land make it unlikely that this was the flight’s fate, said Greg Waldron, Asia managing editor at industry publication Flightglobal.

“The triple 7 is a very large aircraft that requires a long airport-size runway to land … it’s possible, but I think not probable.”

A woman holds a candle during a special prayer for passengers aboard missing Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370.Photo: Reuters

**9. Cover-up**

The apparent slowness to reveal key radar data has led to speculation that countries may know more about the plane’s likely whereabouts, but are unwilling to share due to a perceived security risk.

Jakarta-based independent aviation analyst Gerry Soejatman said that if the aircraft flew north across Asia, following one of two air corridors currently being searched, it would be remarkable if no one had detected it.

“It’s extremely difficult to comprehend that so many countries might have seen it and kept it under wraps.”

**10. Theft**

Some have speculated the Boeing 777 may have been stolen, either to be used in a later terror attack or because it was carrying a valuable cargo, such as gold.

Malaysia Airlines chief executive Ahmad Jauhari Yahya told reporters the most remarkable cargo being carried on MH370 was 3 to 4 tons of mangosteens.

Experts have also played down the likelihood the plane would have been taken for a terrorist attack, pointing out that there are thousands of business jets and cargo planes that could be captured and used much more easily.

**11. Alien abduction**

Some fringe theorists online have dug out the old faithful alien abduction theories.

Check out how Twitter reacted to the alien abduction angle.

@emmarut (March 11, 2014) Malaysian airlines plane missing for days!!... Aliens have started visiting earth my friends.

@smelton91 (March 11, 2014) Has anyone thought that maybe aliens stole the missing maylasian plane? #justsaying #MissingPlane #MalaysiaAirlines

@ShaunPhillips95 (March 11, 2014) Ok now let's be real how is this plane in Asia still missing. How does a plane even go missing. I'm thinking aliens or a hijacked plane.

@chowaing (March 11, 2014) Are aliens real?? Plane missing for more than five days and cannot be found in this techno-era???...God Save Us...

One of the more fantastic conspiracies is that it's all just a Hollywood promotional stunt for the remake of Lost.

Since 1947 our Government has been lying to us about aliens. Everyone sees them, UFOs are everywhere, in every nation. They are a threat to our sovereignty as a nation and as a world.

Social media users have jumped on the possibility of extraterrestial life having something to do with the missing plane.

One user wrote: "After an extensive conversation with my father & his partner, we have come to the conclusion that the only explanation is #aliens mh370."

Another added: "I secretly believe that plane is abducted by aliens.. I know I’m not the only one.."

And one user even said there were only two possibilities for its disappearance, aliens or a DB Cooper-style heist.

He wrote: "This malaysian airlines flight has the potential to be either the greatest heist since DB Cooper, or alien abduction. I vote aliens."

after an extensive conversation with my father & his partner, we have come to the conclusion that the only explanation is aliens [#mh370](https://twitter.com/search?q=%23mh370&src=hash)

— Jordan (@wittsjw) [March 12, 2014](https://twitter.com/wittsjw/statuses/443678137654599680)

I secretly believe that plane is abducted by aliens.. I know I’m not the only one..

— CHUCKIE | DIRTYDUTCH (@djchuckie) [March 12, 2014](https://twitter.com/djchuckie/statuses/443657991149998080)

This malaysian airline flight has the potential to be either the greatest heist since DB Cooper,or alien abduction. I vote aliens

— cameron bush (@cameronthebush) March 10, 2014

Focusing on why the disappearance of flight MH370 is likely / unlikely to be a terrorist attack.

1. Government agencies discovered no “chatter” about imminent attack \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to flight.
2. No groups in region thought capable of orchestrating attack on this \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
3. There has been no \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or celebration by any known group.
4. There was no obvious \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_: no VIPs were on board.
5. Intensive background \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ on crew and passengers have all come up \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

blank / checks / claim / motive / prior / scale