It is now more than two weeks since Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 vanished from the face of the earth, and while hope remains that it might be found, we seem no closer to solving the mystery of what happened, or why.

The mounting anguish of the families waiting for news on their lost loved ones is painful to watch, as is the floundering of the authorities in the face of the searing questions that have inevitably come.

Many have mocked the response, from confusing statements and changing positions to the comic antics of shamans, to the flood of leaks and clarifications, with each day seeming to bring a new lead, theory or explanation.

Those of us looking on might well wonder what would have happened if the ill-fated flight had taken off from Changi Airport instead.

The instinctive reaction would be to say that, of course, Singapore would have handled the crisis better, and I would like to believe so.

But that seems like hubris to me. Besides, some recent fiascos of our own - from riots in our streets to security checkpoint breaches - should prompt us to guard against smugness, and its dastardly cousin, complacency.

So, while the top priority remains the urgent search for the plane and passengers, it is not too soon to ponder the somewhat grandiloquent statement made by Malaysian leaders that MH370 "will change the history of the aviation industry, and holds lessons for everyone".

What might these lessons be? What should we in Singapore take away from this deeply troubling episode?

I am by no means an expert in aviation security, but let me offer five simple observations, having followed developments in the MH370 saga from Day 1.

Just no letting up on security

To everyone's horror, MH370 exposed gaping holes in the global security network, from millions of missing passports that are used to board planes, to airport security agencies that neglect to check passengers' records against global databases of such lost documents.

No doubt, this will give rise to moves to tighten up the system, if only temporarily.

It should also prompt airport authorities everywhere, including in Singapore, to have a care as they push for automation and efficiency gains in their operations. Ultimately, security is only as good as the officer on the job staying alert and ready to respond to a crisis which might arise when he least expects it.

Further, the missing plane has pointed to gaps in radar and satellite tracking systems, as well as the telling reluctance of governments to share sensitive information they might have. These issues will have to be faced up to and addressed.

But even so, more basically, it is no use having elaborate radar and other detection systems, if no one responds to unexplained aircraft movements, simply because it seems like just another day at the office.

Safety comes first, really

Questions have been raised about airliner safety, although these have been dismissed, as the Malaysian plane in question was said to be "airworthy".

Yet, there have been recent scares with planes having to be turned back or make emergency landings because of mechanical faults on both Airbus and Boeing jets.

Airlines everywhere will have to reassure passengers that they will live up to all the hype about the romance of air travel on their modern fleets, and are not compromising on safety, even in the face of intense pressures to cut the red ink on their balance sheets.

While competition might mean improvements in creature comforts - wider seats and bigger screens - which are certainly welcome by passengers, nothing beats a sense of assuredness that you are in good hands when you board a plane and the flight will land when and where it is supposed to.

And on the off-chance that it is unable to, well-trained and reliable pilots will know how - and be empowered - to make the right call to divert or abort a flight, with safety always the paramount concern.

Pick the right people

Malaysia has been much maligned for its handling of the crisis, suffering untold harm to its international reputation.

I don't wish to add fuel to the fire. But the lesson

SOME REVELATIONS