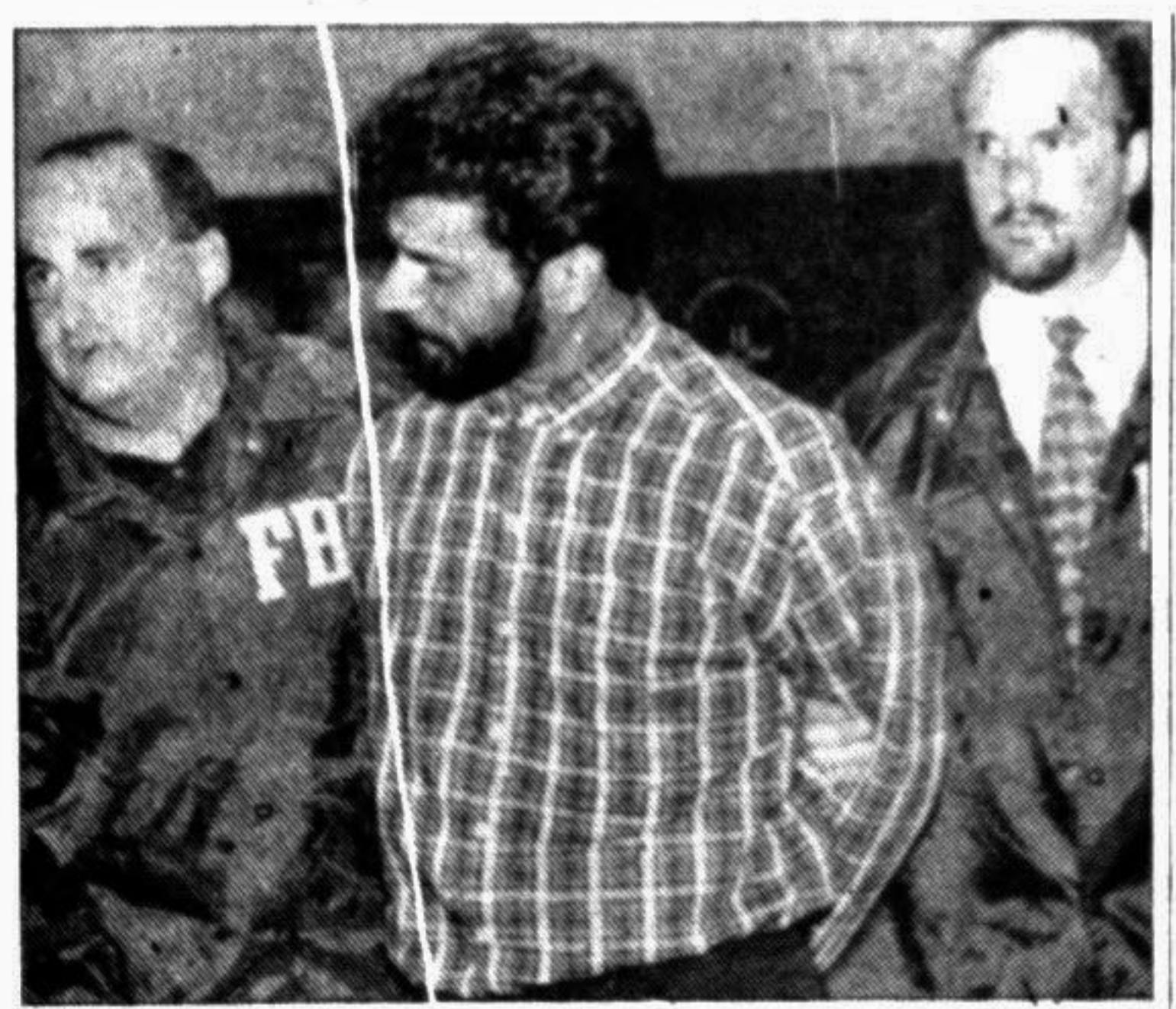


International

Campaign to force Benazir to quit

Pak opposition plans to march on Islamabad



Saad o Mohamed Ibrahim (C) who is accused of hijacking Iberia Airlines flight 6621 while it was enroute to Havana from Madrid Friday, walks with two FBI agents after he was interrogated. Ibrahim who forced the plane to land in Miami after he claimed he had a bomb was taken to a detention centre.

— AFP/UNB photo

Iberian plane hijacker surrenders

MIAMI, July 27 : A man claiming he had a bomb hijacked a Madrid-to-Havana flight Friday and demanded to be taken to Miami, where he surrendered to police. All 232 people aboard were taken off the plane safely, and the bomb turned out to be fake, reports AP.

Iberia Airlines Flight 6621 landed at Miami International Airport at 3 pm EDT (1900 GMT), and once the DC-10 taxied to an open area in the middle of the airport, police stormed the jet.

"He indicated he had an explosive device and he told an air stewardess that he wanted to go to Miami," Metro-Dade police Detective Ed Munn said.

FBI spokesman Paul Philip in Miami gave the hijacker's name as Saado Ibrahim, about 28, from Lebanon.

Ibrahim was arrested on federal charges of air piracy and faces a minimum of 20 years in prison if convicted. He was tentatively scheduled to appear in court Monday. A Spanish government

spokesman in Madrid, Francisco Garcia, said the Lebanese man left Beirut on Thursday and arrived in Madrid after a stop in Zurich, Switzerland. He had escaped from a refugee camp in southern Lebanon. Spanish Foreign Affairs Ministry spokesman Inocencio Arias said in Madrid.

The "bomb" he displayed to the crew was just a tape recorder covered with aluminum foil, with a couple of wires pulled out, Garcia said.

According to Garcia, Ibrahim said, "If I put these two wires together, this bomb will blow up." He also threatened the crew with a letter opener, Garcia said.

"There was never a bomb on board the plane," he said.

The general manager of the Spanish airline in Miami, Salvador Humbert, said none of the 218 passengers or 14 crew members was injured. More than six hours later, they boarded the same plane and continued on to Havana. The plane arrived there about 45 minutes later.

Opposition MPs demand Nepalese finance minister's resignation

KATHMANDU, July 27 : Opposition lawmakers Friday demanded the resignation of the Nepal's Finance Minister, Ram Sharan Mahat, alleging he violated the Nepalese foreign exchange control act, a parliamentary source said, reports AP.

Nepal Communist Party United Marxist and Leninist (NCP-UML) MP Krishna Gopal Shrestha presented to the house photocopy of a bank document from New York's Worldwide Consumer Bank (WCB) showing Mahat deposited 46,846 dollars in a personal account with the bank.

NCP-UML chief whip Devi Prasad Ojha said, "It has now been proved that Mahat has violated foreign exchange control act of 1963 by maintaining a personal account in a foreign bank."

The 1963 act prohibits Nepali nationals from opening accounts in foreign banks without written permission from the country's Central Bank.

We have sent the plan to the heads of the competent parties of the alliance for their approval," he said adding that a meeting of party heads will be held in the first week of August to approve the Strategy.

Haq who heads an opposition 15 group action committee, told Reuters the committee agreed on a strategy on Friday for an anti-government movement.

"Now the government will have to go home so a neutral interim government could be set up," Wednesday's joint declaration of opposition groups said.

Benazir has yet to respond to the latest opposition move, which follows widespread protests against harsh new taxes imposed in the state budget for fiscal 1996-97 (July-June).

Transport operators plan an indefinite strike to begin on Tuesday.

would hold rallies across the country before marching on Islamabad in a campaign to force Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto to quit office and make way for fresh elections, an opposition spokesman said today.

He said the date for the proposed march on the federal capital has not been fixed. "It will be the culmination of the movement."

The opposition move is an imitation of what Benazir herself did in 1993 when she claimed a campaign against the government of then prime minister Nawaz Sharif by planning a march on Islamabad. That march was cancelled after the then President Gohar Ishaq Khan intervened and later sacked Sharif.

In a meeting in Islamabad on Wednesday the 15 opposi-

tion groups asked President Farooq Leghari to use his constitutional powers to sack Benazir for alleged corruption and misrule charges denied by the government.

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Letter to UNSC President

Gaddafi to travel by air despite UN sanctions

UNITED NATIONS, July 27 : Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi has served notice on the Security Council he will travel by air to any country he wishes despite UN sanctions, reports Reuter.

Libya has been subject to air embargo and arms ban and downgraded diplomatic relations since 1992 for refusing to extradite two men indicted in Britain and the United States for planting a bomb on Pan Am flight 103 which exploded over the Scottish village of Lockerbie in 1988 killing 270 people.

In a letter to the Security Council President Gaddafi circulated said he had not flown in an aircraft since the "unjust embargo" was placed on Libya except to attend an Arab Summit in Cairo last month.

He also said many heads of state suffered hardship when visiting Libya.

Indonesian police raid opposition PDI HQs

JAKARTA, July 27 : The Dutch colonial bungalow housing the headquarters of Indonesia's opposition Democratic Party (PDI) was a shambles today after police raided the building to oust political activists entrenched inside, reports Reuter.

The windows of the sprawling single-storey building were smashed when members of a government-backed rival PDI faction hurled stones at the headquarters under the eyes of hundreds of riot police who surrounded it at dawn.

Inside, the building was defended by supporters of Megawati Sukarnoputri, daughter of Indonesia's late founding president Sukarno, who was ousted last month by PDI rebels at a government-backed Congress.

Witnesses said the defenders hurled small fire bombs and stones from within during a standoff that lasted more than two hours.

In nearby lanes, police battled with stone-throwing ac-



Police and rescue workers carry one of the seven victims killed in a building collapse in New Delhi on Friday. Seven people were killed and at least 15 injured when a three-storey building collapsed while undergoing construction. Rescuers continue to search for more than 20 people feared trapped in the rubble.

— AFP/UNB photo

Rumours, bomb scares grip Colombo

Lankan Tigers putting up strong resistance to army offensive

COLOMBO, July 27 : Tamil rebels are putting up strong resistance to an army offensive

launched in retaliation for one of the government's worst setbacks in a long and bloody ethnic war. Sri Lankan army officers said today, reports Reuter.

They said at least 42 rebels were killed and more than 100 wounded in the army thrust from a major base at Elephant Pass at the neck of the Jaffna Peninsula, the rebels' northern stronghold, until the army overran it earlier this year.

A military statement said 17 soldiers were killed and 36 wounded as the army, backed by tanks and helicopters, thrust south towards the

rebel-held town of Kilinochchi.

It said troops advanced about six km (four miles) on Friday, when the offensive was launched, as far as the small town of Paranthan.

The town is at a road junction, with one highway leading to the northeast coastal town of Mullaitivu, where Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) overran an army base in an attack launched from thick jungle on July 18.

Both sides say hundreds of fighters were killed in the battle for the base manned by some 1,200 soldiers.

Military sources said the army abandoned the base on Friday after finding it flattened with nothing to salvage, pulling

out under continued attack from Tiger rebels.

Earlier report says: Sri Lanka on Friday threatened to draft into military service people spreading bomb scares after the jittery capital Colombo was gripped by wild rumours, state radio said, re-

The Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation said rumour mongers would be forced to join the military, which is battling Tamil Tiger Guerrillas. The rebels were blamed for a deadly train bomb attack on Wednesday which killed 70 people.

Meanwhile, more than 100 Buddhist monks staged a peaceful demonstration in the Sri Lankan capital Friday.



US Secretary of State Warren Christopher (L) and US Defence Secretary William Perry (R) pose with their host Australian Prime Minister John Howard on Friday. The Americans are in town for the annual Australia-United States ministerial consultations focusing on defence and security. More than 20,000 personnel will take part next year in one of the biggest military exercises since World War II as part of expanded defence ties announced by the US and Australia.

— AFP/UNB photo

Hutus don't expect army coup to end three years of violence

BUJUMBURA, July 27 : Tutsi soldiers hold target practice in the field outside a filthy, abandoned psychiatric hospital. Inside, thousands of Hutus take refuge after losing relatives in the ethnic slaughter, reports AP.

Jean-Claude Kashinda and his sister would rather stay inside the stuffy building, where flies swarm and tattered sheets are strung for privacy, than venture into the mostly Tutsi capital.

Despite promises from Burundi's new Tutsi president, Pierre Buyoya, Kashinda and other Hutus don't expect the bloodless army coup to end three years of violence that has killed 150,000 people.

"Buyoya won't bring us peace," said Kashinda, 20, who arrived five months ago from the nearby Kamenge neighbourhood after his parents died in ethnic violence. "We are afraid of being killed."

The head of the Hutu-domi-

nated FRODEBU party — the largest of 12 parties in the government that was overthrown Thursday — also feared violence would increase in the tiny central African country.

Jean Minani, in a statement from his exile in Kenya, urged members of his party to "forcefully reject" Buyoya and called for an international force to protect Hutus.

Western leaders have condemned the coup, fearing it could inspire ethnic warfare on par with neighbouring Rwanda's 1994 genocide, when half a million people, mostly Tutsis, were slaughtered. So far, the West has said nothing about sending troops to restore President Sylvestre Ntibantunganya.

A day after the coup, soldiers removed roadblocks in Burundi's capital, businesses reopened, and the mostly Hutu women who live in surrounding foothills returned to the

central market to sell fruits and vegetables.

The borders and airport were to reopen Saturday morning, state-run Burundi Radio said.

No violence has been reported in the rest of the country since the new president was named Thursday, a UN spokesman said on condition of anonymity.

Buyoya, a 46-year-old army major, said the military installed him as president Thursday to stop the killing.

"The change is not a classic coup," Buyoya said Friday at a news conference. "It is an action to save a people in distress and stop repeated massacres and killings all over the country."

In the capital, which is mostly Tutsi, Buyoya (pronounced boo-YO-yah) has many supporters.

This is what the people need now — someone to reas-

sure them that the country is in good hands," said psychologist Charles Ntidi.

Buyoya is believed to belong to the moderate wing of the Tutsi-dominated, 12,000-strong military and said Friday coup leaders' goal is to restore democracy. "That could take 12 or 18 months. We cannot speculate," he said.

Buyoya staged a coup in 1987 and ruled Burundi until June 1993, when he was defeated in the country's first free and fair elections in June 1993 by Melchior Ndadaye. Burundi's first Hutu president, Ndadaye, was killed four months later by Tutsi paratroopers in a failed coup.

Since late 1993, at least 150,000 people, most of them civilians, have died in spiraling violence as Hutus, outraged at being robbed of their chance at power, have steadily taken up arms against the Tutsi military. Hutus make up 85 percent of Burundi's 6 million people.

Tutsis 14 percent.

Ntibantunganya (pronounced en-tee-bahn-toon-gah-yah) has been at the US ambassador's residence since paratroopers surrounded government buildings in the capital Tuesday night. Embassy spokeswoman Judith Kaula said he had not resigned.

The German Foreign Minister said his ambassador in Bujumbura was sheltering 18 Hutus, including several prominent political leaders.

US State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said Friday in Washington that the administration is reviewing its \$13 million in humanitarian aid for Burundi and a \$10.5 million program for training military officers.

UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali and the Organisation of African Unity said the international community would not recognise a Burundian government installed by force.