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**PHILIPS**

# Pakistan rejects Indian call to extradite 5 hijackers

Delhi's claims unfounded: Islamabad

ISLAMABAD, Jan 16: Pakistan has dismissed India's call for the extradition of five hijackers of an Indian Airlines jet and insisted New Delhi has no evidence to back its claims of Pakistani involvement, report agencies.

Pakistan has once again rejected Indian accusations of Pakistan's involvement in the hijacking of the Indian Airlines plane, the Foreign Office

said in a statement late Saturday.

The comments came after India on Saturday demanded Pakistan extradite the five hijackers to stand trial for terrorism.

It was India's first official demand since December 31 when, after a week-long ordeal, the hijackers finally released their 160 hostages at Kandahar Airport in southern Afghanistan and fled into the desert.

Many analysts believe they crossed into neighbouring Pakistan and were linked to Kashmiri militant groups fighting in the disputed Himalayan state.

"India continues to make allegations which are unfounded and not supported by even a shred of credible evidence," Pakistan's Foreign Office said.

It said Pakistan's High Commissioner to India, Ashraf Jahanzeb Qazi, was handed documents containing the accusations against Islamabad on Saturday.

The High Commissioner rejected these allegations forthwith, the statement said.

"The Indian purpose is to deflect domestic criticism of the government's mishandling of the hijacking incident," it said.

The nuclear rivals have traded highly charged accusations since the hijacking ended on December 31, with India saying Pakistan masterminded the drama, and Islamabad saying there was no proof that and that New Delhi was using the

three are facing trial for possessing huge foreign currencies of 16 different countries.

The court fixed next date of hearing on January 25.

The ULFA leader and his two associates — Babul Sharma and Laxmi Prashad Goswami — were arrested on December 21, 1997 from a residence at Adabar under Mohammadpur police station. Police also recovered foreign currencies and a satellite telephone set.

**Chetia case**  
Hearing adjourned till Jan 25

By Court Correspondent

The Fifth Assistant Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court yesterday adjourned the case filed against ULFA leader Anup Chetia and two of his associates as the prosecution witness did not appear.

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**Upgrade DEOs**

From page 1 that of district level officials getting the lowest pay scale.

However, the EC proposal for upgrading the post of DEO reached the Ministry of Establishment in May 1995. But the ministry took more than three years to be convinced that the status of DEOs should be higher than that of TEOs.

Recommending this, the Establishment ministry referred the matter to the Finance Ministry in November 1998, observing 'it is the Finance Division that can take a decision on change of pay scale'.

The matter eventually went to a cabinet committee headed by Finance Minister SAMS Kibria for approval. But the committee has not yet taken it up.

Meanwhile, two meetings of the cabinet committee have been postponed. The first meeting was scheduled for November 10, 1999 but it was not held as the finance minister was abroad. The second meeting scheduled for January 6 this year also did not take place. "We came to know about the postponement only a few hours before the meeting was scheduled to be held," a top Election Commission official said.

This time Kibria was in town. But he was neither aware of the meeting nor its postponement. "Well, I would call a meeting some time this month. But I cannot say what would happen to the EC proposal as it involves money," he told The Daily Star Saturday night.

It is very important for us to have our own officials at than level as the volume of work as well as responsibilities of the EC have increased over the last few years, let alone the need for greater control over the polling process," said the acting Chief Election Commissioner. "But if we recruit them before upgrading of the post of district election officer, there would be no chain of command."

The association of DEOs is, however, demanding grade V.

**Stratification of officials (status and salarywise)**

**Grade V Pay scale**  
Tk 9,500 — Tk 12,100

Deputy Director (Agriculture Expansion)  
District Livestock Officer  
District Fisheries Officer  
Executive Engineer (LGED)

**Grade VI Pay scale**  
Tk 7,200 — Tk 10,840

Thana Agriculture Officer  
Thana Livestock Officer

Deputy Director (Youth Development)  
District Relief and Rehabilitation Officer  
Head Master (Education)

**Grade VII Pay scale**  
Tk 6,150 — Tk 9,750

District Education Officer  
District Primary Education Officer

**Grade IX Pay scale**  
Tk 4,300 — Tk 7,740

Thana Education Officer  
District Election Officer  
Thana Election Officer

## 3 Biman pilots

From page 1

cer sentenced to death in the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman murder case by the District and Sessions Judge of Dhaka on November 8, 1998.

Capt. Ansar is the brother of Capt. Najmul Ansar, who was also sentenced to death and is believed to be living in Canada.

Biman officials said the pilots were fired in the interest of public security following intelligence reports about their activities.

Biman's action coincides with a prosecution move yesterday for a hearing and confirmation of the death sentence.

Capt. Yasmin Rahman told UNB over the phone that "we don't know why the authority terminated me. I couldn't fly for the last three years since the authority grounded me when I returned from Hong Kong."

"My husband filed an appeal against the grounding order and won, but I didn't file an appeal."

Capt. Rahman said the termination letter she received on January 11 didn't cite the reason for her dismissal.

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"It may not be a possibility tomorrow ... it may not be possible with domestic operators now but (we can get) foreign investors to start with," said Mendis, the vice chairman of SAFE.

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