

International



Hijacking of Russian plane ends, gunman arrested

UVDA, Israel, Nov 12: A Chechen gunman who seized a Russian airliner surrendered to Israeli authorities today and all 58 people on board were safe, a military official said, reports AP.

Army Col Ofer Ophir said the lone hijacker was in Israeli custody and the passengers were unharmed.

The Vnukovo Airlines plane landed at a military air base in Uvda, in Israel's southern desert, early Sunday morning after being commandeered during a flight from southern Russia to Moscow. The plane refueled in Baku, Azerbaijan, before reaching Israel.

Israel, Russia and Azerbaijan had said initially that up to four hijackers were on board and were threatening to blow up the plane.

But there was only one gunman, and he turned over his weapon and surrendered, Israeli authorities said.

As the hijacking ended, Prime Minister Ehud Barak's plane reversed course for a second time and landed back toward the United States, where he was scheduled to meet US President Bill Clinton on Sunday.

Barak left Israel on Saturday night. But at a stop in London, he decided to return to Israel to deal with the hijacking crisis. He was still in the air as the hijacking approached a resolution, and decided to

turn around and head back to London and on to Washington, said David Zisso, Barak's media adviser at the Defense Ministry.

The hijacking began moving toward a peaceful resolution at about 9 am three hours after the plane landed in Israel.

At that time, the captain of the Vnukovo Airlines plane came down a stairway and handed over weapons to Israeli security forces, said army spokesman Brig. Gen. Ron Kitrey.

At the same time, the hijacker also came down the stairs, and was met by a vehicle that took him to the terminal building, Kitrey added.

Kitrey and other Israeli officials initially said the hijackers acted in support of the Palestinian uprising, a six-week-old conflict that has claimed nearly 200 lives. But later he said that information was incorrect, and that the hijacking was part of the ongoing conflict between Chechnya and Russia.

The gunman seized the plane Saturday night shortly after takeoff from Makhachkala, the capital of the southern Russian region of Dagestan in the Caucasus Mountains. It was headed for Moscow, but the hijackers diverted the airplane to Baku, Azerbaijan, where it refueled before heading toward Israel.



The hijacked Dagestan Airlines Tupolev TU-154 carrying 48 passengers and 10 crew stands on a runway in the civilian part of Ovda airport, some 50 km north of the Red Sea resort of Eilat yesterday. The plane was hijacked overnight on a flight from Dagestan in the northern Caucasus to Moscow.

-AFP photo

Zemin begins SE Asian tour

VIENTIANE, Nov 12: Chinese President Jiang Zemin began a state visit to Laos today on the first leg of a Southeast Asian tour that reflects China's desire to expand its influence in a region still recovering from economic crisis, reports AP.

Jiang, who arrived late Saturday, was received by Lao President Khamtay Siphandone at the Hor Kham presidential palace in Vientiane Sunday, and was due to meet other communist party leaders, including Prime Minister Sisavath Keobounphan, Lao officials said.

After Laos, Jiang will travel to Cambodia on Monday before going to Brunei later in the week for a leaders' summit of the Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation forum.

Stephen Jarvis of New Zealand flies a giant Winnie the Pooh kite during the annual 23rd Festival of the Winds on Sydney's Bondi Beach yesterday. Over 50,000 people from around the world attended the largest kite flying event in Australia. -AFP photo

Two Indian ministers resign

NEW DELHI, Nov 12: Two Indian ministers from the ruling Hindu nationalist BJP party have been forced to resign over their alleged role in the murder of a policeman during sectarian violence in 1985, reports said today, reports AFP.

Junior Minister for Defence Production Harin Pathak and a provincial minister from the western Indian state of Gujarat, Ashok Bhatt, submitted their resignations late Saturday, the Indian Express said.

Pathak, a federal minister from Gujarat, and Bhatt, have been accused of inciting the murder of a policeman during communal and caste-based riots in the western state following a controversial government proposal to reserve a certain number of state jobs for lower-caste Hindus and tribals.

Both deny the allegations and say they will "prove their innocence" before the Gujarat High Court.

Eight dead in Seoul clinic fire

SEOUL, Nov 11: Eight patients died and another 25 were injured when a blaze swept through a clinic that treats the mentally ill and drug addicts on Saturday, police said, reports AFP.

The pre-dawn fire erupted at Kim Kyung-Bin Clinic in south west Seoul, where psychopaths, alcoholics and drug addicts were locked up in their rooms with windows sealed by iron bars.

The fire gutted the five-storey building and all eight died from smoke inhalation, officials said. It took 40 minutes for 160 firemen with 31 fire engines to put out the blaze.

TV showed firemen using electric saws to tear iron bars off the windows and help patients and nurses escape down ladders from the second floor.

"I thought I was going to die. The metal door was locked up from the outside and there were no windows," said a 50-year-old patient.

Four bodies were found in the basement and three on the second floor, police said.

Delhi urged to announce ceasefire in Kashmir

SRINAGAR, India, Nov 12: A prominent Muslim politician in Indian Kashmir urged New Delhi on Saturday to announce a ceasefire against Islamic guerrillas in the frontier Himalayan state, reports AFP.

Gulam Mohammad Shah, former chief minister of the northern province, also asked New Delhi to include Pakistan in peace talks to resolve the dispute over Kashmir.

Tripartite talks can lead to an everlasting resolution of the Kashmir issue," Shah, who heads the Peoples' National Conference political party, told a rally in Srinagar, Kashmir's summer capital.

"But for this a congenial atmosphere has to be created," he said

Bangladesh for involvement of five big powers in UN peace missions

UNITED NATIONS, Nov 12: The five permanent members of the Security Council -- the only states with veto powers over war and peace -- are under increasing pressure to release some of their "well-trained, well-equipped" troops for UN peacekeeping operations, reports IPS.

Bangladesh has proposed that each of the five veto-wielding members -- namely the United States, United Kingdom, France, China and Russia -- be obliged to provide about five per cent of the total number of troops needed for each peacekeeping operation they help create.

"This will be in keeping with their responsibilities as permanent members," says Ambassador Anwarul Karim Chowdhury of Bangladesh, a country which is the fourth largest troop contributor to UN missions.

All five permanent members (P-5) have taken an identical stand

on the issue: Fund and equipment, Yes, troops, No.

The Bangladeshi proposal, initiated at a closed door meeting of the Security Council, comes at a time when UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan is complaining that he is finding it increasingly difficult to raise troops for peacekeeping missions -- particularly so for the troubled UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL).

The five permanent members -- along with most Western nations are keeping away from most peacekeeping missions primarily because they don't want their soldiers to return home in body bags.

"Spilling Third World blood is okay. But spilling P-5 blood is obviously a No-No," says a Third World diplomat.

Annan says that member states in the Security Council

with "significant military capacity" -- and who vote for UN peacekeeping missions -- should be prepared to back up their votes with troops.

"They can't leave us in the lurch if this is to be a viable mission. We need strong, viable military units and someone has got to contribute," he says.

Over the last several months, Annan has made several appeals to member states particularly those with "well-trained, well-equipped" troops -- to provide military contingents to one of the most troubled peacekeeping missions in Sierra Leone. But the reaction has been negative.

Annan told reporters that Jordan's decision raised "a very serious question: Can the Security Council adopt resolutions that require us to deploy troops, and those in the Council do nothing, particularly those major league countries with large forces?"

After India and Jordan decided to withdraw their troops, the only countries offering additional troops were Bangladesh, Kenya and Ghana.

If UNAMSIL does not receive

Arafat seeks UN protection force

Bomb blast, shootings shake Gaza Strip, West Bank

UNITED NATIONS, Nov 12: Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat pressed his case on Friday for a 2,000-member UN protection force but France proposed a smaller unarmed military observer group and Israel rejected both plans, reports Reuters.

Amid tight security, Arafat, president of the Palestinian Authority, left the United Nations headquarters without speaking to reporters after addressing the 15 member Security Council in a private session.

A spokesman for Arafat, Marwan Jilani, did not flatly turn down the French proposal. But Israeli ambassador Yehuda Lancy, who addressed the council after Arafat, said he saw no need for an international force.

US Ambassador Richard Holbrooke said Israel was right to reject the force because Palestinians had not discussed it with them first. "It's not that we're opposed per se to something because it came from one side or

the other," he said.

"We're simply not going to support something which is unilaterally proposed without even having been discussed with the other side directly," Holbrooke added.

Lancy said any observer group should be the result of a bilateral agreement with the Palestinians. "What we need now is not an international presence which really can run against the spirit of the peace process," he said.

We need a direct approach with the Palestinian partner in order to bring back the calm and the security in order to resume the peace talks," he said.

The Palestinians want the force to deploy between Israeli forces and Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, putting an end to violence.

French ambassador Jean-David Levitte, supported by Britain, suggested to Arafat that the United Nations dispatch an unarmed military observer force

to the region to report to the Security Council on the violence and liaise between Palestinian police and Israeli security forces, diplomats reported.

In West Bank, Israelis and Palestinians exchanged fire near Bethlehem and a bomb went off near a Jewish settlement Sunday as eight people were injured on another day of Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation.

Eight Palestinians were hurt, including a 12-year-old boy who was seriously injured in the head, when the Israeli army fired at least three shells near Bethlehem, hospital sources said. The Palestinians had just participated in a funeral at the Beit Jala church.

The soldiers launched the shells from Gilo, a Jewish settlement adjacent to east Jerusalem, in response to automatic weapon fire from Beit Jala, a majority Christian town that faces the settlement, military sources said.

In the Gaza Strip, a bomb exploded by a road near the

Israeli settlement of Kfar Darom as two carloads of settlers were passing, causing no casualties but damaging the vehicles, an army spokesman said.

Palestinians also opened fire on Israeli cars and buses travelling between Jerusalem and Bethlehem, again without causing injury.

Palestinian sources said a group calling itself the "Hussein Abayat brigade" claimed responsibility for the shootings.

Hussein Abayat, 37, a military official of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's Fatah group, was killed by an Israeli helicopter gunship on Thursday which the Israeli said deliberately targeted him.

Six Palestinians were also killed Saturday in various confrontations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, taking the total death toll to 210 since the intifada, or uprising, broke out after a visit by Israeli opposition leader Ariel Sharon to a disputed religious site in Jerusalem.

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Protesters in the capital, Taipei, and the southern port city of Kaohsiung demonstrated for President Chen Shui-bian, whose decision last month to abandon the US \$15.4 billion project has prompted calls for his ouster.

Protesters waved purple and green banners that read "No Nuclear Plant, Support Chen Shui-bian," and distributed pamphlets reminding the public of past nuclear disasters abroad.

Over a hundred policemen with riot shields cordoned off roads leading to the Presidential Palace. Chen has faced intense criti-

cism from opposition lawmakers who say that his bypassing of the legislature to scrap the plant was unconstitutional, and a coalition of opposition leaders met Saturday to discuss details of Chen's ouster.

The leaders declined to elaborate on their plans after the meeting.

Thousands of protesters braved a light rain in Taipei on Sunday, carrying pink daisies and white balloons painted with the Chinese character for "nu-clear" with a black cross over it.

"Mother Taiwan, Do Not Build the Nuclear Plant," read one banner held aloft by Buddhist nuns, Taiwanese academics and Western human rights activists.

Members of Taiwan's aboriginal tribes and mothers carrying their children also joined the

protests in Kaohsiung, shouting slogans in the rain, over 100,000 people rallied Sunday to support Taiwan's president, who faced political crisis after scrapping a partially completed nuclear plant, reports AP.

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There is still a palpable rise in tension amid signs the authorities are losing their tenuous grip on law and order here.

Last week an unidentified woman blew herself to pieces in the ground floor reception area of a newspaper office, taking two other lives with her.

Newspaper editors immedi-

ately blamed the authorities for

allowing the crowd to blow horns and chant Chan's nickname, "Abian."

I'm here not just to support the president, but to support the decision to scrap the nuclear plant. We're doing this for our kids, for the future generation," said Yidee Huang, a 30-year-old businesswoman.

In Kaohsiung, anti-nuke activists wore skull masks, chanting slogans from flatbed trucks filled with oil drums painted yellow and black with the radioactive sign.

Traffic was at a standstill while the protesters held a motorcade.

Opponents argue that Taiwan is incapable of storing Nuclear waste, and the plant would threaten the environment, already damaged by decades of policies emphasizing industrial growth over all else.

Subiela's creation 'The Adventures of God' was screened as the inaugural film.

It has been our policy to create a cultural environment which would lead to this understanding. This even forms a part of our endeavours in that direction, he said.

Veteran film maker Mrinal Sen said the festival was going from strength to strength and hoped that it would soon become one of the leading international movie events. Referring to the current edition of the festival, he said it rightly aims at putting the world in a capsule.

A number of film personalities from abroad including celebrated polish director Krzysztof Janusz, Argentine filmmaker Eliseo Subiela, Italian director Ricky Tognazzi and French movie critic Jean-Claude Carriere graced the dias of the overflowing main auditorium at the Nandan film complex.

Subiela's creation 'The Adventures of God' was screened as the inaugural film.

An independent house for minimum 5500 square feet at Dhanmondi, DOHS, Mohakhali, Gulshan, Banani or Uttara areas in the Dhaka city is wanted for use as the liaison office-cum-residence for this company. Apart for arrangement for keeping 3-4 cars full time, there should have the facility for keeping 1 truck occasionally. Moreover, there should be an open space of minimum 30 feet X 30 feet area for installing 130 feet long self-supported tower in order to ensure the telecommunication system of the company within the boundary wall of the house. If there is no 30 feet X 30 feet open space within the boundary wall of the house, then the house should be of RCC frame structure from the infrastructural point of view so that it is possible to install a 3 leg self-supported mast on the roof of the house. There should be room measuring 12 feet X 15 feet open space suitable for use to install telecom equipment within 25 feet-30 feet from that tower or mast. Besides, BGFC will install a 21 kilowatt capacity Diesel Generator in that house with its own expenses for which there should be room with the area of 10 feet X 12 feet on the ground floor or an open space for 10 feet X 12 feet. Both tower-or mast for the installation of telecommunication system will have to be favourable for the result of the location of the house path/site survey. Landlords will have to give such assurance that the appropriate authority/Civil Aviation has no objection in installing tower/mast of the height as mentioned in the area concerned.

Interested landlords are requested to deposit the application/

proposal with signature in the box kept at the present liaison office at 97, Purana Paltan (Bijoy Nagar), Dhaka in a sealed envelope on 28th November, 2000 by 2:00 PM in the afternoon mentioning the name, address, documents regarding ownership, structural design of the house and design/plan as approved by the RAJUK with the rate of monthly rent on square feet basis (covered area, place for keeping vehicles, open space and rate of monthly rent separately/gross).

Mentionable that, the rate of the monthly rent should have to be same for 5 years. Application/proposal will be opened the same day at 2:15 PM in presence of the interested landlords