

INTERNATIONAL

The Daily Star



Afghan refugees eat their food offered to them from a nearby restaurant in Karachi on Saturday. Some 100,000 Afghan refugees are living in this Pakistani coastal city and are part of some two million refugees in Pakistan and Iran.

Vajpayee in hot water for allowing US plane to refuel

AFP, New Delhi

Leftist parties in India Saturday criticised the government for allowing a United States Air Force Hercules transport plane to land and refuel at an airport in New Delhi.

"Strong doubts have arisen in the minds of the people that such provision of landing facilities will gradually involve our country in the intended American war against Afghanistan," the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) said in a statement.

The party said the government had recently given an assurance to opposition parties that India's involvement in the war against terrorism would not go beyond an exchange of information with the US.

Detained aid workers meet lawyers

AFP, Kabul

Eight Western aid workers held in Afghanistan on charges of preaching Christianity met defence lawyers here Saturday as their trial neared its final phase, despite US demands for their immediate release.

The two Pakistani lawyers met the prisoners for the first time since the trial began behind closed doors last month, and reported they were being well treated in Taliban custody.

"They were in good health and good spirits. They were very happy to see us," said lawyer Atif Ali.

The other lawyer, Basmillah Jan, said medicine and clothing had been delivered to the detainees from diplomats and family members waiting in neighbouring Pakistan.

Diplomats said the trial process had continued despite the September 11 terrorist attacks in the

"It looks like the government is trying to hide certain moves," the statement said.

Atul Kumar Anjan, the national secretary of the Communist Party of India, said: "It is strange that this has happened. Why were the United States planes allowed to refuel here?"

Government officials had denied that the landing of the US plane was in any way linked to possible attacks on Afghanistan, whose ruling Taliban has refused to hand over Osama bin Laden, the top suspect behind the September 11 terrorist attacks on New York and Washington.

Officials said the plane was escorting senior US government officials.

12 killed in Kashmir hotel fire 11 militants shot dead

AFP, Srinagar

At least 12 people were killed Saturday and 16 others injured in a blaze that ravaged a popular hotel complex in the Indian-administered zone of Kashmir, police officials said.

Some of the victims were traders from the eastern Indian cities of Calcutta and Patna who were staying in the New Light Hotel in the town of Sopore when the privately-owned complex went up in flames late Friday, district police chief Abdul Qayoom Manhas said.

Sopore is a thriving apple-growing region, some 50 kilometres (31 miles) north of the Kashmir summer capital Srinagar.

Manhas said a total of 12 bodies had been brought out from the smouldering debris of the three-

storey hotel.

Also among the dead were four waiters and a chef, officials said.

Senior police official Mohammad Amin Shah said more than a dozen others injured in the fire were rushed to hospital, nine of them in critical condition.

He said the death toll could further rise as more people were still feared missing in the debris.

Firefighters took seven hours to put out the blaze, which destroyed the hotel and several adjoining houses.

Officials said the fire appeared to be accidental but said a full investigation would be carried out.

Witnesses said the fire started in the hotel's kitchen.

"Several cooking-gas cylinders present inside the kitchen exploded with a bang, sending flames in all

directions," firefighter Abdul Rashid told reporters at the site.

During the early 1990s parts of Sopore were twice destroyed by fires sparked by gunbattles between Muslim militants and Indian security forces.

Meanwhile, Indian security forces Saturday shot dead 11 separatist Muslim militants in Indian-administered Kashmir, police said.

Five militants were killed at the Razdan pass along the Line of Control (LoC) - the de facto border that divides Kashmir between India and Pakistan - in the northern Kashmir district of Baramulla, a police spokesman said.

"There is no basis to either of the two reports," he told a press conference here. "There are no foreign troops in Pakistan at present."

Quoting senior US and Pakistani officials, the daily USA Today reported Friday that American and



The fifteen members of the UN Security Council vote unanimously late Friday for a US-sponsored resolution obliging member states to crack down on financial assets of suspected terrorists. The resolution also expands information-sharing among UN members to combat international terrorism.

Pakistan denies US forces operating from its territory

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan on Saturday denied reports that US ground forces were operating from its territory against the Taliban militia and alleged terrorists in neighbouring Afghanistan.

Foreign ministry spokesman Riaz Mohammad Khan also dismissed rumours that Pakistani police had arrested several Arabs on suspicion of having links with "terrorist" organisations.

"There is no basis to either of the two reports," he told a press conference here. "There are no foreign troops in Pakistan at present."

Quoting senior US and Pakistani officials, the daily USA Today reported Friday that American and

British special forces had entered Afghan territory on scouting missions.

Pentagon officials were later quoted by CNN as confirming the report. British officials refused to comment.

Elite troops from the America's counter-terrorist unit, Delta Force, its airborne Rangers and Navy SEALS, along with the British Special Air Service (SAS), are reported to be operating out of bases in Pakistan and Central Asia.

Earlier Saturday, Qatar's Al-Jazeera television reported that five armed members of US special forces, two of Afghan origin, had been captured by the Taliban in western Afghanistan.

The Taliban later rejected the report, saying no such arrests had been made.

US forces have been deployed to undisclosed locations in preparation for possible attack against Afghanistan's ruling Taliban militia and its ally, Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden.

Bin Laden is wanted by the United States for his alleged role in a string of attacks against US interests, most recently the September 11 suicide hijackings against targets in New York and Washington.

Pakistan, the only country to maintain diplomatic ties with the Taliban, has offered its "full cooperation" with the US-led war on terrorism, but so far it insists Washington has only sought the use of airspace, logistics and intelligence.

Bomb found in Colombo

AFP, Colombo

in the island's north.

The Tigers said they were treating the killing of Colonel Shankar with the "utmost gravity."

The LTTE said Shankar was killed by a Claymore mine attack carried out by government forces Wednesday in the rebel-held area of Oddusudan.

But defence ministry spokesman Sanath Karunaratne said the government was not responsible for the killing.

"They are giving us a lot of credit, but it could be a small piece in a bigger jigsaw puzzle," he said.

Karunaratne said the guerrillas may be trying to stage more attacks and use the purported killing as a justification for "retaliatory" strikes.

The LTTE has been blamed for a spate of suicide bombings, including the May 1991 assassination of former Indian premier Rajiv Gandhi and the May 1993 assassination of Sri Lankan president Ranasinghe Premadasa.

Terror plot hatched in Germany?

AFP, Washington

quoted by the Times said some of the hijackers held planning sessions in Hamburg and enrolled in flight training elsewhere in Europe.

In London, Algerian pilot Lofti Raissi was remanded in custody after prosecutors claimed he was an instructor for four of the hijackers.

Raissi, 27, who denies any involvement in the strikes, was remanded in custody until October 5 on an international arrest warrant originating in the United States.

If confirmed, the allegation would be the first direct link between the attacks and a suspect held in Europe.

Raissi is one of at least 20 suspects arrested across Europe as part of a co-ordinated effort to crack down on cells of what may be a network of terror stretching across the continent and beyond.

ABC news reported Friday that Raissi came into investigators' sights when his name was found in a case left by hijackers at Washington's Dulles airport before they hijacked a

jet and flew it into the Pentagon.

The network said Raissi lived in the flight path of London's Heathrow airport, and enrolled in flight training elsewhere in Europe.

In London, Algerian pilot Lofti Raissi was remanded in custody after prosecutors claimed he was an instructor for four of the hijackers.

Raissi, 27, who denies any involvement in the strikes, was remanded in custody until October 5 on an international arrest warrant originating in the United States.

If confirmed, the allegation would be the first direct link between the attacks and a suspect held in Europe.

Raissi is one of at least 20 suspects arrested across Europe as part of a co-ordinated effort to crack down on cells of what may be a network of terror stretching across the continent and beyond.

ABC news reported Friday that Raissi came into investigators' sights when his name was found in a case left by hijackers at Washington's Dulles airport before they hijacked a

jet and flew it into the Pentagon.

The network said Raissi lived in the flight path of London's Heathrow airport, and enrolled in flight training elsewhere in Europe.

In London, Algerian pilot Lofti Raissi was remanded in custody after prosecutors claimed he was an instructor for four of the hijackers.

Raissi, 27, who denies any involvement in the strikes, was remanded in custody until October 5 on an international arrest warrant originating in the United States.

If confirmed, the allegation would be the first direct link between the attacks and a suspect held in Europe.

Raissi is one of at least 20 suspects arrested across Europe as part of a co-ordinated effort to crack down on cells of what may be a network of terror stretching across the continent and beyond.

ABC news reported Friday that Raissi came into investigators' sights when his name was found in a case left by hijackers at Washington's Dulles airport before they hijacked a

jet and flew it into the Pentagon.

The network said Raissi lived in the flight path of London's Heathrow airport, and enrolled in flight training elsewhere in Europe.

In London, Algerian pilot Lofti Raissi was remanded in custody after prosecutors claimed he was an instructor for four of the hijackers.

Raissi, 27, who denies any involvement in the strikes, was remanded in custody until October 5 on an international arrest warrant originating in the United States.

If confirmed, the allegation would be the first direct link between the attacks and a suspect held in Europe.

Raissi is one of at least 20 suspects arrested across Europe as part of a co-ordinated effort to crack down on cells of what may be a network of terror stretching across the continent and beyond.

ABC news reported Friday that Raissi came into investigators' sights when his name was found in a case left by hijackers at Washington's Dulles airport before they hijacked a

jet and flew it into the Pentagon.

The network said Raissi lived in the flight path of London's Heathrow airport, and enrolled in flight training elsewhere in Europe.

In London, Algerian pilot Lofti Raissi was remanded in custody after prosecutors claimed he was an instructor for four of the hijackers.

Raissi, 27, who denies any involvement in the strikes, was remanded in custody until October 5 on an international arrest warrant originating in the United States.

If confirmed, the allegation would be the first direct link between the attacks and a suspect held in Europe.

Raissi is one of at least 20 suspects arrested across Europe as part of a co-ordinated effort to crack down on cells of what may be a network of terror stretching across the continent and beyond.

ABC news reported Friday that Raissi came into investigators' sights when his name was found in a case left by hijackers at Washington's Dulles airport before they hijacked a

jet and flew it into the Pentagon.

The network said Raissi lived in the flight path of London's Heathrow airport, and enrolled in flight training elsewhere in Europe.

In London, Algerian pilot Lofti Raissi was remanded in custody after prosecutors claimed he was an instructor for four of the hijackers.

Raissi, 27, who denies any involvement in the strikes, was remanded in custody until October 5 on an international arrest warrant originating in the United States.

If confirmed, the allegation would be the first direct link between the attacks and a suspect held in Europe.

Raissi is one of at least 20 suspects arrested across Europe as part of a co-ordinated effort to crack down on cells of what may be a network of terror stretching across the continent and beyond.

ABC news reported Friday that Raissi came into investigators' sights when his name was found in a case left by hijackers at Washington's Dulles airport before they hijacked a

jet and flew it into the Pentagon.

The network said Raissi lived in the flight path of London's Heathrow airport, and enrolled in flight training elsewhere in Europe.

In London, Algerian pilot Lofti Raissi was remanded in custody after prosecutors claimed he was an instructor for four of the hijackers.

Raissi, 27, who denies any involvement in the strikes, was remanded in custody until October 5 on an international arrest warrant originating in the United States.

If confirmed, the allegation would be the first direct link between the attacks and a suspect held in Europe.

Raissi is one of at least 20 suspects arrested across Europe as part of a co-ordinated effort to crack down on cells of what may be a network of terror stretching across the continent and beyond.

ABC news reported Friday that Raissi came into investigators' sights when his name was found in a case left by hijackers at Washington's Dulles airport before they hijacked a

jet and flew it into the Pentagon.

The network said Raissi lived in the flight path of London's Heathrow airport, and enrolled in flight training elsewhere in Europe.

In London, Algerian pilot Lofti Raissi was remanded in custody after prosecutors claimed he was an instructor for four of the hijackers.

Raissi, 27, who denies any involvement in the strikes, was remanded in custody until October 5 on an international arrest warrant originating in the United States.

If confirmed, the allegation would be the first direct link between the attacks and a suspect held in Europe.

Raissi is one of at least 20 suspects arrested across Europe as part of a co-ordinated effort to crack down on cells of what may be a network of terror stretching across the continent and beyond.

ABC news reported Friday that Raissi came into investigators' sights when his name was found in a case left by hijackers at Washington's Dulles airport before they hijacked a

jet and flew it into the Pentagon.

The network said Raissi lived in the flight path of London's Heathrow airport, and enrolled in flight training elsewhere in Europe.

In London, Algerian pilot Lofti Raissi was remanded in custody after prosecutors claimed he was an instructor for four of the hijackers.

Raissi, 27, who denies any involvement in the strikes, was remanded in custody until October 5 on an international arrest warrant originating in the United States.

If confirmed, the allegation would be the first direct link between the attacks and a suspect held in Europe.

Raissi is one of at least 20 suspects arrested across Europe as part of a co-ordinated effort to crack down on cells of what may be a network of terror stretching across the continent and beyond.

ABC news reported Friday that Raissi came into investigators' sights when his name was found in a case left by hijackers at Washington's Dulles airport before they hijacked a