

Saudi Arabia seeks extradition of hijackers

AFP & REUTERS

RIYADH, Oct. 16. — Saudi Arabia today asked Iraq to extradite the two Saudi hijackers who had forced a Saudi Arabia Airlines Boeing 777 to land in Baghdad.

Interior minister of Saudi Arabia Prince Nayef Bin Abdul Aziz who has identified the two hijackers as Faisel Naji Al-Bluey (26), a security guard at Jeddah airport, and Ayeish Ali Al-Faridi (28), a border guard in Najran, told reporters, "We demand the handing over of the two hijackers" who are being held by the Iraqi authorities.

Riyadh would "have recourse to all the established procedures to obtain the extradition of the two hijackers," he said, starting with Interpol.

He cited an international convention outlawing hijacking and an anti-terrorism convention, which the Prince said both Saudi Arabia and Iraq had signed with all other Arab countries two years ago.

"We hope the hijackers will be handed over to us so they can face justice," Prince Nayef said.

Saudi Arabia and Iraq do not have diplomatic relations, which were broken off during the Gulf War in 1991 after the

invasion of Kuwait by Iraqi President Mr Saddam Hussein's forces in August 1990.

The two Saudis had commandeered the airliner as it was flying from the Saudi port city of Jeddah to London on Saturday. Iraqi negotiators managed to end the seizure without violence and arrested the hijackers.

The first used his position to avoid security checks to carry a revolver on board the Boeing 777, the minister explained.

"They are friends ... Travelled often together on holiday to Britain, France, Egypt and Morocco," he added.

Lanka braces for rebel attacks

ASSOCIATED PRESS

COLOMBO, Oct. 16. — Police blew up a three-wheel motor-scooter they suspected of carrying a bomb in downtown Colombo, as the army braced for new Tamil rebel attacks after a lull during the parliamentary elections.

Residents alerted police after the scooter-rickshaw was found abandoned in the busy Union Place area. Officials of the anti-terrorist Special Task Force carried out a controlled explosion. There were no casualties.

"Whenever there is lull in terrorist activities, we get concerned," said defence ministry spokesman Brig Sanath Karunaratne. "Our forces are on a full alert to counter any terrorist attack."

A bomb was discovered fixed to an electricity transformer in the tea-growing Nuwara Eliya district today, a senior police officer in Colombo said on condition of anonymity.

An explosion could have shut down the power supply and disrupted production in many factories, he added.

Tea is one of the lifelines of

Sri Lanka's economy. The area is 180 km east of Colombo, and home to Tamils who were brought from neighbouring India by British colonial rulers to work as labourers in tea plantations.

Meanwhile, other military officials in Colombo said they feared that the rebels may target civilians in Colombo ahead of the opening session of parliament on Wednesday.

The rebels often target Colombo either to kill opponents, cause economic hardship to the government or to dramatise their campaign. Since the air force bombed a major Tamil rebel gun position in the Jaffna Peninsula on 9 October, a day before the election, there has been no major fighting in the north.

The Sri Lankan President, Mrs Chandrika Kumaratunga, who has promised to crush the rebels militarily, secured 107 seats in the 225-member parliament, six short of the 113-seat simple majority required to form a new government. However, she managed to raise her support to 116 seats after securing the backing of two minor parties.

Estrada warns of Opposition's bombing campaign

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
ASIA NEWS NETWORK

MANILA, Oct. 16. — President Mr Joseph Estrada, fighting against charges of bribery, said this morning that his political enemies were planning bomb attacks and arson to force him resign.

He hinted that figures linked to his predecessor, Mr Fidel Ramos, were behind the alleged plot to destabilise his administration.

"I know that they have many forces, especially the past administration. I have received information that they are trying to cause disorder in our country", Mr Estrada told reporters at the presidential palace. "They are planning to burn and throw bombs in the streets to create chaos. That is what we are on to watch for. I have reports that they are going to do this."

Mr Estrada's son Mr Joseph Victor Ejercito said that Ilocos Sur governor Mr Luis 'Chavit' Singson had confessed to him that former President Mr Fidel Ramos pressured the governor into linking his father to illegal "jueteng" operations.

THE STATESMAN

17 OCT 2000

Kannada writers meet emissary

By Our Special Correspondent

CHENNAI, OCT. 21. A group of Kannada writers from Bangalore led by Mr. Chandrasekhara Patel, State president of the 'Kannada Kriya Samithi' and Mr. Sridhar, editor of *Agni*, today met the Tamils Nationalist Movement leader, Mr. P. Nedumaran, here and thanked him for his efforts to secure the release of the Kannada actor, Mr. Rajkumar, held hostage by the brigand Veerappan.

The team also met the other two human rights activists, Prof. Kalyani and Mr. Sukumaran, who had accompanied Mr. Nedumaran during his mission to the forest, besides some Tamil writers.

A delegation representing the Kannada film industry including the president of the Karnataka Film Producers Association, Mr. K. C. N. Chandrasekar, later met the TNM leader and urged him to expedite efforts to free Mr. Rajkumar.

The members of this delegation, including film artistes, Mr. Sashi Kumar, MP, Ms. Jayanthi and Mr. Sara Govindan, president of the Rajkumar Film Fans Association, emphasised the need for strengthening the ties and goodwill between the people of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

Israel used excessive force: Arab League

By Kesava Menon

MANAMA (Bahrain), OCT. 21. An emergency summit of the Arab League heads of state, which began in the Egyptian capital of Cairo today, blamed Israel for setting off the conflict and using excessive force during the clashes with Palestinian demonstrators.

However, their unified action is not expected to go beyond a call for a freezing of normalisation with Israel.

As usual the Arab world is divided between Israel's closer neighbours who do not want a widening of the conflict and those on the outer-ring who want an all-out mobilisation of support for the Palestinians.

The Arab summit is taking place when the accord on a ceasefire reached at the Sharm-el-Sheikh meeting, is being observed more in the breach.

More clashes in Gaza

AFP reports:

Meanwhile, a Palestinian teenager was killed and at least 36 others wounded in clashes with Israeli troops here, as Palestinian territories braced for further violence following the funerals of

nine people killed on Friday.

Mohammed-al-Najjar, 13, was pronounced dead after he was hit in the head by a live round, the sources said.

His death brings to 124 the number of people killed in a three-week wave of violence across the Palestinian territories, all but a handful of them Palestinians. Over 3,500 people have been wounded.

Another protester in the Khan Yunis clash was in a very serious condition, according to medical sources. They had been among a crowd of around 300 Palestinian youths fired on by Israeli troops after they pelted an Israeli position with stones.

Four Palestinians were wounded in a clash which broke out at an army checkpoint at the Erez crossing in the north of the Gaza strip, its main link with Israel.

Two Palestinians were also wounded in similar clashes at the Israeli-controlled Rafah crossing point linking the Gaza strip with Egypt. The confrontations followed calls by a group of Palestinian parties for demonstrations in Khan Yunis and Gaza city.

A blow to Israel: Page 16

Goa Govt. in minority, BJP to stake claim

PANAJI, OCT. 21. The 11-month-old Francisco Sardinha coalition Government in Goa was today reduced to a minority, with the BJP withdrawing its support and staking claim to form a new government after nine Congressmen joined the party.

All the three BJP Ministers handed over their resignations to the leader of the BJP legislature party, Mr. Manohar Parrikar.

Mr. Parrikar told PTI here tonight that four Congress MLAs and five former Congressmen who left the party in August had joined the BJP and communicated their decision to the Speaker, Mr. Pratapsingh Rane. "The BJP will stake claim to form a new government at a meeting with the Governor, Mr. Mohd Fazal, tomorrow at Raj Bhavan", Mr. Parrikar said.

The BJP would now have an effective strength of 19 in the 40-member House. The two-member MGP and an independent have also extended support to BJP — PTI

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THE HINDU

22 OCT 2000

Arab leaders threaten to snap ties with Israel

HQ-15
23/10

Cairo, October 22

AN ARAB summit called to confront a frightening and deadly upsurge in Israeli-Palestinian violence ended today with a declaration that Arabs may consider cutting ties with Israel, but did not call on them to do so.

Arabs "hold Israel responsible for any steps taken in regard to relations with Israel by Arab countries, including their cancellation," said the final declaration, read by Arab league secretary-general Esmat Abdel-Meguid to a live television audience across the region.

Referring to establishing new ties, the declaration also said: "Arab leaders assert in the light of the collapse of the peace process their commitment to standing up to Israeli attempts to infiltrate the Arab world under any name and to the halting of establishing any relations with Israel," the carefully worded statement addressed what had emerged as the most contentious issue before the leaders meeting in Cairo — whether ties several with the Jewish State

should be reconsidered.

Libya had walked out of the summit yesterday, saying it was frustrated that the gathering would not clearly call for an end to ties with Israel.

While the summit was unified in

Israeli Cabinet meet

A DIVIDED Israeli Cabinet met here on Sunday to decide its next step following Prime Minister Ehud Barak's threat to pull Israel out of the West Asia peace process and an apparent hardline response from Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

The debate at the weekly Cabinet meeting was expected to be lively, but public radio said no vote would be taken.

AFP, Jerusalem

holding Israel solely to blame for the violence and for bringing the peace process to an impasse, moderates warned against doing anything that might make future negotiations difficult. Egypt and Jordan, the only Arab countries

with peace treaties and diplomatic relations with Israel, insist negotiations are the only way to bring lasting peace to the region.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak had opened the summit with an acknowledgement of Arabs' anger, but warned against "surrendering to our emotions."

Meanwhile, in Jerusalem, Israel called an Arab summit decision an apparent "victory of wisdom" because Arab countries at peace with it had not severed diplomatic ties over a surge of Israeli-Palestinian violence.

A Palestinian peace negotiator, on the other hand, voiced disappointment at the summit decision to condemn Israel without punishing it for a wave of violence. "The decisions of the Arab leaders at the summit were definitely insufficient," negotiator Hassan Asfour said.

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat has vowed to continue the uprising against Israel. Arafat, earlier told Egyptian television: "The intifada (uprising) will continue and it will win." (Agencies)

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

23 OCT 2000

Arab summit flays Israel, but for continuing talks

28/10
By Kesava Menon HD-14

MANAMA (Bahrain), OCT. 22. Arab leaders concluded their emergency summit in Cairo today with a strong condemnation of Israel for the ongoing violence but also called for the continuance of West Asian negotiations. Israel has signalled its pleasure at the call for the continuance of a dialogue and offered special praise for the Egyptian President, Mr. Hosni Mubarak, and other moderate leaders for their attempt to keep the negotiations on course. While the Arab leaders did call for a freezing of relations with Israel, their failure to demand more drastic measures might disappoint the Palestinian youth who continue to confront the Israeli security forces in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The summit demanded the setting up of an international commission of inquiry into the causes of the conflict and there was even a mention of a court of justice to try Israeli soldiers for their use of excessive force. But the suggestions from hardliners, that the countries having relations with Israel break them, went unheeded except by Tunisia which has decided to wind up its trade office. The Arab leaders also set up a fund of \$ 1 billion for the aid of Palestinians.

The Palestinian Authority President, Mr. Yasser Arafat, attended the summit but there was no word till this evening on whether he was pleased with the result. However, he had been coordinating his position closely with Mr. Mubarak and it is highly possible that the final communique met with his approval. The condemnation of Israel, pre-attached to the call for a renewal of talks, might just about provide Mr. Arafat with the leeway to ask his people to lay off from confrontations with the Israeli troops. There have been reports that Mr. Arafat will ask his policemen to stop Palestinian gunmen from shooting at Israeli troops from today onwards. Leaders of the Tanzim, the youth wing of Mr. Arafat's Fatah faction, who have led the street battles, have also indicated that they will be turning their protest movement into a peaceful one.

Meanwhile, the Israeli Prime Minister, Mr. Ehud Barak, insisted at a Cabinet meeting today that he still thought a time-out in the negotiations was necessary. However, he has not set a deadline from which this time-out will become effective. The results of the Cairo summit and the probability that the Palestinian Authority will try and curb their youth give rise to the possibility of an effective truce.

IOA involved in forex scam: Kirti Azad

NEW DELHI, OCT. 22. The former India cricketer, Kirti Azad, who is also a Member of Parliament, has alleged that the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) was involved in a foreign exchange scam during the Sydney Olympic Games.

Azad told a press conference here on Sunday that the passport of athletes were endorsed for amounts ranging from \$4000 to \$5000, but they were each paid only \$770 (Aus.\$ 1,380) as their pocket allowance while in Sydney.

"What happened to the rest of the dollars?", Azad asked. In his estimate, with all the sports persons signing for more exchange than they actually received, the total foreign exchange was worth Rs 1.5 crore, while only about Rs. 25 lakhs worth of Australian dollars were distributed to them.

"I wonder whether the IOA would let us know what exactly they did with the quick Rs. 1.25 crore..." said Azad.

In order to support his claim about athletes being asked to sign travellers cheques worth \$4000 to \$5000, Azad brought in shot putter Shakti Singh, who corroborated his claims. Photocopies of the pages from Shakti and middle distance runner K. C. Rosakutty's passports were also distributed to show the endorsement for more dollars than they actually received.— PTI

Woman writes to Vajpayee, threatens self-immolation

NEW DELHI, OCT. 22. A voter of the Lucknow Lok Sabha constituency has written to her representative in Parliament, the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, threatening to immolate herself on Diwali against the failure of the Uttar Pradesh administration to book those who had forcibly captured her house.

In a letter faxed to the Prime Minister, Ms. Uma Lakhanpal, had written that though the Uttar Pradesh high court had on seven

occasions ordered the State administration to ensure that the house be restored to her, the police had taken no steps to execute the orders during the past three years.

The *goondas*, protected by certain political leaders, in connivance with the police, are illegally in possession of her father's house, from which she and her family were forcibly dispossessed after repeated attacks and treats, she alleged.

Frustrated with the inability of the high court to ensure the observance of its orders, Ms. Lakhanpal wrote that she has been sitting in protest outside the Assembly for the past three years and last month also protested in the capital for three days, but her efforts to get justice had failed.

The woman stated that though Mr. Vajpayee was holding the office of the Prime Minister, he had failed to intervene in the matter.— UNI

THE HINDU

23 OCT 2001

Arabs seek to break embargo on Iraq

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LONDON, SEPT. 30. Arab countries have begun attempts to break down the wall of sanctions around Iraq, with Yemen sending a plane of "humanitarian" supplies to Baghdad on Friday and Morocco planning a similar flight.

Earlier this week, Jordan was the first Arab country to erode the 10-year flight ban, while Syria said it might follow suit.

The Iraqi dinar gained strength against the dollar as Mr. Tariq Aziz, Iraq's Deputy President, predicted that flights this month — from Russia, France and Iceland, as well as Arab states — heralded the end of economic sanctions.

"We highly appreciate this initiative which speaks for the stand of Yemen's people and Government which has always called for a lifting of the embargo," Mr Aziz said. "It is up to Arab Governments to take such initiatives."

Aeroflot and Royal Jordanian are making plans to resume regular flights to the reopened Saddam International airport.

However, a flight chartered by French anti-sanction activists, and joined by the backbench British Labour MP George Galloway, failed to take off on Friday because it could not get approval from French and Belgian authorities.

Activists blamed behind-the-

scenes American pressure for the publicity flop in Paris, officially said to be caused by technical hitches. They said they would try again next week.

"It has been a very miserable experience," said Mr Galloway as he made his way back to London on the Eurostar train. He was planning to fly to Amman to make

the 14-hour overland trip to Baghdad, where he is due to deliver a speech.

Other Britons who were supposed to be on the protest flight included Lord Rea and Lord Ahmed, and the singer Kirsty MacColl. The group was being led by the former French foreign minister, Claude Cheysson.



The Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Tariq Aziz (left), meets the Yemeni Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Abdul-Kader Bajammal (second right), head of the Yememi delegation, at Saddam International airport in Baghdad on Friday. — AP

Fr. Yves Buannic, one of the organisers, condemned the "cowardice of the French Government" for the failure of the mission of "solidarity with the Iraqi people against one of the biggest injustices of this century".

After organisers failed to reach agreement with a Belgian company to hire the aircraft, he said: "France — the land of human rights — bends once again before the American diktat with the complicity of the Belgian authorities. We apologise to the Iraqi people."

The U.N. Security Council is divided over the air embargo. Russia, France and China argue that commercial flights are not covered by sanctions while the United States and Britain say that they are covered by general sanctions on trade.

In a sign of the weakening of the sanctions regime, U.N. approval now requires only the semblance of a humanitarian "component". A flight from Russia carried oil executives.

A British Foreign Office spokesman said: "We encourage humanitarian flights to Iraq and assist groups in presenting requests for flights to the U.N. Sanctions Committee." — ©Telegraph Group Limited, London, 2000

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