

the world

# Commonwealth countries open meeting; Rhodesia considered important issue

LUSAKA, Zambia — The Commonwealth conference opened Wednesday with Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher cast as the villain of the piece. Britain's southern Africa policy, which already has cost the country billions of dollars, was the first item on the agenda of the 21-nation meeting.

The weeklong summit meeting of 41 Commonwealth countries — representing one quarter of the world's population — was Southeast Asia and the plight of Vietnamese refugees, but the single most important issue will be Zimbabwe Rhodesia.

Conference officials predict it will be a stormy meeting with some of the bitterest debate over Thatcher's suggestions that Britain will lift economic sanctions against Zimbabwe Rhodesia and recognize its former colony's first black government headed by Bishop Abel Muzorewa.

The British premier, known as the "Iron Lady," held a series of private meetings Tuesday with Presidents Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia and Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, two key figures opposed to recognition of Muzorewa's government.

Despite Kaunda's earlier denunciation of Thatcher as a "frightened woman" intimidated by growing Soviet influence in Africa, the meetings were described by officials as "cordial."

## Worst air disaster

### Pilots call court ruling useless

THE HAGUE — The Dutch pilots association Wednesday dismissed a court ruling on the crash of a jumbo jet in Spain's Canary Islands two weeks ago, the worst air disaster in Europe since World War II.

A ruling last October by Spanish aviation authorities held the KLM pilot responsible because he allegedly began his takeoff before getting flight control clearance from the tower. But Dutch airline management and civil aviation leaders disagreed and had their own experts double check the Spanish findings.

Their report was made available to the court but not released. Instead, the court confined itself to listing a number of procedures that might help prevent such accidents in the future.

The pilots association issued a statement saying "all the points (in the court's ruling) are old hat and their practical use will be nil."

which is distantly related to the Tenerife catastrophe. The court said there should be tightening up of language used in all aircraft movement to avoid misunderstandings. It said investigations showed departure from standard terminology may have contributed to the collision.

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