

World and Nation

Contract talks fail, idle 6,600 railroad workers

NEW YORK (AP) — The nation's busiest commuter railway shut down Sunday when contract negotiations failed between the Long Island Rail Road and 11 unions, idling 6,600 workers.

"Operations on the railroad are now shut down," Long Island Rail Road spokesman Jim Burns said after the strike began at 6:01 a.m.

The effects of the strike were minimal Sunday, a light ridership day, and were not expected to be fully felt today on the federal holiday honoring the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

But if the strike lasts until Tuesday, it will force nearly 150,000 passengers between the Long Island suburbs and New York City to seek alternate transportation.

Officials urged commuters to use car pools and set up an information hot line; they also planned special express buses.

John Caggiano, business manager of Local 589 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers,

said, "There is a very good possibility it's going to be a long strike."

He called on Gov. Mario Cuomo and U.S. Sen. Alfonse D'Amato to meet with Robert Kiley, head of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, and reconsider the management position. The MTA is the LIRR's parent agency.

Walter C. Wallace, the federal mediator for the talks, said he could not say when negotiations would resume. "We will get some sleep, recharge, and I'm not going to set a date when we will get back together," he said.

"There will still be some meetings going on," he said, adding that the government had exhausted its efforts to halt a walkout and the unions were free to exercise their right to strike under federal law.

Sunday's walkout climaxed two years of federally sponsored negotiations, including two cooling-off periods. It occurred after five unions suddenly withdrew from the talks and two others — the Brother-

hood of Locomotive Engineers and the Police Benevolent Association — failed to reach agreement with management.

The engineers and police were the only workers to declare a strike, but the other union leaders said they would honor picket lines. LIRR President Bruce McIver said he considered any union not under contract to be on strike.

The 11 unions represent 60 percent of the railroad's unionized employees. Five other unions, representing mostly supervisory personnel, already have signed contracts but also are idled by the strike.

The LIRR strike is the first since April 1980, when the railroad was shut down for one day.

Under the Federal Railway Labor Act, which governs LIRR labor relations, employees are allowed to strike after all federal procedures have been exhausted. This happened in the LIRR dispute Saturday when the second and final federally mandated cooling-off period ended.

U.S. won't seek death for suspect in hijacking

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Justice Department announced Sunday that it won't seek a death penalty against the suspected hijacker of a TWA jetliner if the suspect is extradited from West Germany and convicted in U.S. courts.

The U.S. announcement ended an impasse between the two nations caused by the earlier refusal of the United States to rule out the death penalty in the case of Mohammed Ali Hamadi.

West Germany, which has a death penalty, has said it would not allow Hamadi's extradition until it was assured that no capital punishment would be imposed.

"We have concluded that the only way we can get him back through the use of the formal extradition process, and that extradition process, our extradition treaty with Germany, requires that we agree not to impose a death penalty if the suspect is convicted of capital crimes here in the U.S.," Justice Department spokesman Patrick Korten said in a telephone interview.

A Justice Department statement said the United States now formally will ask for the extradition of Hamadi, who was arrested last Tuesday at the Frankfurt airport.

He is the first person arrested in connection with the 17-day hijacking that occurred in 1986 during which a U.S. Navy plane was shot to death at the Beirut airport and 39 other Americans were taken hostage.

A day after Hamadi's arrest, the Justice Department told West Germans that Hamadi, 22, and three others are wanted in this country for conspiracy to commit air piracy and murder aboard TWA flight 847, which was hijacked on a flight from Athens to Rome.

Air piracy carries a maximum penalty of death.

Study shows crime victims often know their attackers

WASHINGTON (AP) — In nearly four out of 10 violent crimes, the attacker is a relative, friend or acquaintance of the victim, according to a federal study released Sunday.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics reports that less than half the 20 million violent crimes committed from 1982 through 1984 were committed by people who were strangers to the victims.

The survey of 58,000 households conducted twice a year by the Census Bureau found that 46 percent of robberies, rapes and assaults were committed by strangers.

"It is often said that the fear of crime is largely a fear of strangers," bureau director Steven R. Schlesinger said in a statement.

But he said 10 percent of the offenders were known to the victims

by sight and 39 percent of the violent crimes involved friends, relatives or acquaintances of the victim.

Friends accounted for 17 percent, or 3.3 million, of the violent crimes, while casual acquaintances accounted for 14 percent, and relatives accounted for 8 percent.

In the rest of the cases, the relationship of the attacker to the victim was not known.

From 1982 to 1984, friends, relatives or acquaintances were responsible for 40 percent of the rapes, more than 45 percent of the simple assaults, nearly 40 percent of the aggravated assaults and 20 percent of robberies.

The bureau, a Justice Department agency within the Office of Justice Programs, said it may be underestimating the number of crimes com-

mitted by people known to the victim.

"Individuals victimized by relatives may be reluctant to discuss the event . . . for fear of reprisal or out of shame or embarrassment," the report said.

In the 1.5 million violent crimes in which a relative was the offender, 77 percent of the victims were women.

Spouses or ex-spouses committed more than half of all crimes by relatives and about two-thirds of all crimes by relatives against women.

More than half of the crimes by relatives against women were reported by women who were divorced or separated.

The bureau cited FBI statistics for 1984 which found that 20 percent of the 19,000 homicides were committed by relatives and nearly 40 percent by acquaintances.

Study: Cocaine use can cause birth defects

NEW YORK (AP) — Animal experiments suggest that cocaine use during pregnancy can produce infants with long-term abnormalities in the brain systems that control sensation, movement and emotions, a researcher said Sunday.

This occurs despite the frequent absence of physical defects in the offspring, said Diana Dow-Edwards, a researcher at the State University of New York Health Science Center in Brooklyn.

In a separate report, a researcher said he has found that cocaine use by pregnant women may retard the brain growth of their children.

Dow-Edwards found, in studies with about 30 rats, that rats exposed to cocaine during early development mature into adults with marked hypersensitivity in the brain's motor system, its sensory system and in the

limbic system, which governs emotions and such functions as eating and sleeping.

The evidence suggests, she said, "that cocaine exposure during pregnancy produces long-term and perhaps permanent alterations in brain function activity."

The hypersensitivity apparently is due to the excessive buildup of certain chemicals called neurotransmitters that are used by brain cells to communicate with one another, she said at a symposium sponsored by the Greater New York Chapter of the March of Dimes.

Ira Chasnoff, a pediatrician at Northwestern University Medical School in Evanston, Ill., and one of the nation's leading authorities on the effects of cocaine use in pregnancy, said Dow-Edwards' research could explain some of the defects he

is cataloging in the infants of cocaine-using mothers.

For example, Chasnoff said, "it appears that these infants are probably having an increased rate of seizures in the neonatal (newborn) period."

He also reported that infants of cocaine-using mothers have a significantly smaller head size than normal infants, suggesting a retardation in brain growth and possible future brain deficits.

Chasnoff said cocaine-affected infants are excessively jittery, experience rapid changes of mood, and are extremely sensitive to noise and other external stimuli.

He has reported previously that pregnant women using cocaine are more likely than others, even heroin users, to have spontaneous abortions and that the infants of cocaine-using

mothers have an increased risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) crib death.

Dow-Edwards said her studies are the first to look for subtle signs of cocaine-associated brain deficits in offspring of laboratory animals.

For 10 days after the rats were born — a period that parallels the third trimester of human pregnancy — she gave the rats a daily dose of cocaine equivalent to a human dose of slightly more than one gram of cocaine.

The drug produced no change in the growth of the young rats, but it did produce obvious physical effects.

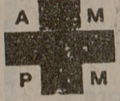
But studies to assess the brain development of the rats when they were young adults, 60 days after birth, showed that their brains had levels of three neurotransmitters

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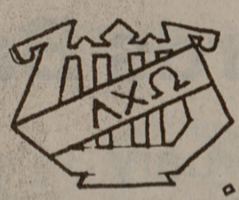
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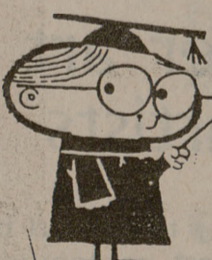


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