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Eastern cutback gets approval, 4000 jobs saved

WASHINGTON (AP) — A federal judge on Tuesday stopped Eastern Airlines from firing 4,000 employees but allowed the financially strapped carrier to go ahead with cutting back service to 14 cities on Wednesday as planned.

Eastern said it will go ahead with the cuts and will eliminate its hub in Kansas City.

"Massive layoffs are not, and shall never be business as usual," U.S. District Judge Barrington Parker said in a 50-page opinion. "The Railway Labor Act requires Eastern to bargain with its unions before taking unilateral action to eliminate 12 percent of its workforce."

He signed a preliminary injunction that bars Eastern from "altering in any way the status quo working condition of Eastern's pilots, machinists and flight attendants." A trial in the matter will be scheduled later.

Eastern President Phil Bakes called the decision "gravely wrong" and said the carrier would file an emergency appeal.

"Eastern, like any American business, must be allowed to prune money-losing operations," Bakes said in a statement released at Eastern's headquarters in Miami. "We must be able to take prudent, although sometimes painful, measures in the best interests of the company and our employees."

Lawyers for the three unions that brought the court action against Eastern submitted financial statements and Parker ordered bonds of \$25,000 each to indemnify the airline if the decision is reversed.

Meantime, the airline said, "Eastern's basic fall schedule remains intact. Travel agents and passengers can continue to book flights with full confidence that the schedule will be as announced."

"This is a case of protecting work and protecting jobs," said James Linsey, an attorney for Air Line Pilots Association. He said the decision "doesn't second-guess the business decisions of Eastern Airlines to fly

from Point A to Point B or to limit service in particular cities."

Asked what Eastern might do with thousands of employees it claims not to need, Linsey replied: "They get transferred, like any company transfers employees from one plant to another."

Parker wrote that Texas Air Corp., which bought Eastern in 1986, "has exerted every effort to curb union influence at Eastern and to reduce wage rates and economic benefits previously obtained."

He said there were many "indications of anti-union bias" and that Frank Lorenzo, chairman of Texas Air, had expressed that view on many occasions.

"Since the acquisition of Eastern by Texas Air, Eastern's management has contributed to Eastern's financial instability," the judge wrote. "Through a series of business decisions, management has led the company into a number of questionable loans and questionable ventures which have drained off cash reserves and other assets."

The centerpiece of the opinion was that Eastern could not proceed with the mass firings. Parker did not dwell on the airline's plans to close its Kansas City hub and cut service to 14 cities.

The airline claimed it would save \$50 million by the service terminations and \$7 million in payroll. It would cut 140 of its 1,225 daily flights and sell between 33 and 41 airplanes.

The cities Eastern targeted to cut are Albuquerque, N.M.; Fort de France, Martinique; Las Vegas, Nev.; Minneapolis-St. Paul; Oklahoma City; Omaha, Neb.; Dallas; Pointe-a-Pitre, Guadeloupe; Reno, Nev.; San Antonio, Texas; San Diego; St. Lucia, West Indies; Tucson, Ariz.; and Tulsa, Okla.

Parker said there is no question that the cutbacks are motivated by sound financial reasons.



Photo by Mike C. Mulvey

Your attention, please!

Scholastic Sargent Toney Buzbee, a junior from Texarkana, instructs Freshman Alex Winslow on the proper form of the hand salute. All

new members of the Corps of Cadets must be taught the proper methods of Drill and Ceremony.

'Blue flu' threatens to plague Houston

HOUSTON (AP) — Officials of the nation's fourth-largest city are bracing for a possible bout of "blue flu" Thursday when members of the 4,200-member Houston police force may call in sick to protest pay cuts and rising insurance premiums.

Police Chief Lee P. Brown has urged the heads of the city's two largest police organizations to denounce the wildcat action, but the leaders say Brown has admitted it would be difficult to prove who was and wasn't sick.

The threat of a "sickout" is the latest in an ongoing dispute between police and the city administration.

A flier circulating among police officers urges them to participate Thursday in a protest of rising medical insurance costs and a 3 percent pay cut, and Brown is making contingency plans in case a large number of police officers call in sick.

A disclaimer on the flier says the action is not sponsored by the Houston Police Patrolmen's Union or the Houston Police Officers Association, and HPOA President Mark Clark said what happens Thursday is up to the officers.

"I think this time the mayor has thrown enough gasoline on the fire that, unfortunately, it's really out of my hands and out of Mark's hands," agreed Tommy Britt, president of

HPPU. "I don't know what (officers) are going to do Thursday."

Britt said this is the first time he can remember police officers seriously threatening an organized strike.

Texas law prohibits firefighters and police officers from engaging in a strike against the governmental agency that employs them. If found guilty of violating the state law, they can be terminated.

"It's certainly our desire that all of our police officers continue to understand their responsibilities under their oath of office . . . and would not be involved in anything that would constitute an illegal job action," Brown said.

Whitmire, long a target of contempt by police officers, said she believes officers will consider the welfare of the people of the city.

"I know Chief Brown has made some plans, but I think, like me, he believes the officers will act professionally," Whitmire said.

"I think that I and my board and Mark (Clark) and his board are honestly concerned about what is going to happen Thursday to the safety of this city," said HPPU's President Tommy Britt. "But I don't think the mayor does because she's ignored the city's most valuable asset, and that's its people."

Two uninsured Texas banks set for closure by end of year

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Two of the state's three uninsured banks will close their doors by the end of December, pulling a curtain on the era of private banking in South and Central Texas, officials say.

D&A Oppenheimer Bank of San Antonio has asked customers to withdraw their funds and move accounts to other banks by Dec. 31. The Farmers and Merchants Bank in Priddy also has set a similar deadline.

That will leave the E.L. Price Bank of Galveston as the only remaining private bank in Texas.

"It makes us feel unique," said Tom Hill, cashier of the Price Bank.

But Jesse Oppenheimer, co-owner of the San Antonio bank, has a different feeling.

"I'm sort of sad about it because it was started by my grandfather and it's got a reputation all across the country," he said. "It's been sort of an interesting antique for some time now."

Oppenheimer's brother, Herbert, co-owns and operates the bank and wants to retire.

"His son is not in it and my son is

not in it. We've run out of family," Jesse Oppenheimer said. "Plus it's sort of an obsolete organization today. It's not like yesterday, when things were done on trust and confidence. Today, it's all balance sheets and statements."

Eleanor Gromatzky, co-owner of the Priddy bank in Mills County, said increasing state regulations were among the reasons the bank will be closed.

"I've just surrendered. I fought just as hard as I could," she said. "This is just a real small bank and I just wanted out."

"Regulatory authorities have made it practically impossible for a small bank to continue by requiring detailed reporting and (with) regulations that require expensive electronic equipment in order to comply," she said in a letter to customers.

Private banks are not insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp., which insures deposits at other banks up to \$100,000 per person in each of four account categories.

Larry Chilton, an examiner with

the Texas Banking Department, said private banks usually are "typically family held, one-owner type situations and they serve the needs of themselves plus other close business associates and family members. They are not out engaging in public banking business as other banks are."

Brothers Dan and Anton Oppenheimer created the Oppenheimer Bank in 1858, operating from a store front in downtown San Antonio. The bank has moved twice since then.

The bank, however, remained small, with an estimated 300 customers in recent years. The bank didn't pay interest on deposits, made very few loans and had only a handful of safety deposit boxes.

But it did have its advantages. "You didn't have to deal with bank examiners. It was a very independent way of doing business," Oppenheimer told the San Antonio Light. "You could buy anything from a rat skin to a ranch, and nobody could do anything to criticize you."

Solidarity leader holds labor talks to end strike

GDANSK, Poland (AP) — Solidarity founder Lech Walesa will hold his first talks with the Polish leadership in six years Wednesday in a government effort to end two weeks of labor turmoil, his advisers said.

Walesa will confer in Warsaw with Interior Minister Czeslaw Kiszczak at a meeting attended by a representative of the Roman Catholic Church but will not call off the strike at his shipyard in Gdansk, the advisers said.

The announcement resulted from four days of maneuvering started by Kiszczak's proposal on Friday that officials and worker representatives hold "round-table" discussions.

A communique from the Communist Party's ruling Politburo, distributed by the official news agency PAP, mentioned a round-table meeting, endorsed it and said Kiszczak should "carry on with the mission entrusted to him."

It was not clear, however,

whether the reference was to the Wednesday meeting or to the minister's original proposal on Friday. No other official reference was made to the Walesa-Kiszczak talks.

Ten enterprises in Poland remained on strike Tuesday. At its height, the current labor trouble involved 20 sites employing 100,000 people and was the worst since 1980.

Solidarity spokesmen said there was no agreement for an immediate end to the strikes, in which a central demand has been making Solidarity legal again. It was suppressed after the declaration of martial law in December 1981 and outlawed in 1982.

Tadeusz Mazowiecki, a senior Solidarity adviser, called the decision for talks "a historic moment."

On Tuesday evening, Walesa left the strikebound Lenin shipyard, where he works as an electrician, to confer with advisers.

Jet disaster leaves 6 dead in Hong Kong

HONG KONG (AP) — A Chinese jetliner carrying 89 people skidded into the sea off the runway at Hong Kong's airport in pouring rain Wednesday, and six people were killed, the government said.

Flight 301 from Canton, the capital of China's Guangdong province about 90 miles northwest of Hong Kong, crashed at about 9:30 a.m. (9:30 p.m. EDT), government-run Radio Television Hong Kong reported.

At least three of the dead were recovered from the wreckage of the plane, which was immersed in the sea, the radio reported.

Officials said the aircraft was a British Aerospace Trident.

Earlier reports said it was a Boeing 737.

"It fell into the sea at the end of the runway," police spokesman Tony Leung said.

The Government Information Services said 83 people were rescued and 13 were hospitalized.

Government spokesmen at the scene said the remaining six people were confirmed dead.

Phone calls to the Chinese airline did not get through.

It was not immediately known if the flight had any foreign passengers.

The Kai Tak International Airport runway juts into Hong Kong's famed Victoria Harbor, and the plane was possibly broken in half, the radio reported.

The radio reported that helicopters were ferrying some of the rescued passengers to military hospitals and that an emergency treatment center was set up at the airport.

All incoming and outgoing flights were canceled, the radio said.

There was no immediate indication of what caused the accident.

Initial reports from the government indicated that the exact number of passengers on the plane at the time of the crash was not known because the airline did not confirm the passenger list.

'Greenhouse effect' may be inevitable

WASHINGTON (AP) — A group of climate researchers has warned that the "greenhouse effect" warming of the Earth will continue even if there are sharp cutbacks in the use of the chemicals which cause the problem.

The heatup "appears to be inevitable, even without . . . drastic, and probably unrealistic reductions, of greenhouse forcing" by the release of carbon dioxide and other gases, the scientists reported in the Journal of Geophysical Research-Atmospheres.

The group, led by James Hansen of the National Aeronautical and Space Administration, reached that conclusion after running computerized climate models in an effort to predict the climate in the future.

The models looked at the effect of chemical releases at three different levels: continuing rapid release of the chemicals, as in recent years; release at slower rates, and a drastic cutback in those chemicals.

In the first case, the Earth's average tem-

perature was calculated to rise by 1.6 degrees Fahrenheit within 20 years.

It would take 25 years for that increase in the second model.

And even with the drastic "and probably unrealistic" cutback in chemical releases, the temperature would rise that much eventually, and probably would climb by 0.8 degrees within 15 years, according to the study.

The greenhouse effect has drawn increasing concern recently, although most meteorologists contend that it is too early to determine if it is responsible for the current drought and hot weather affecting much of the nation.

It occurs when carbon dioxide, largely from burning fossil fuels, and other gases — such as methane and nitrogen oxides — increase in the atmosphere. These gases let incoming heat from the sun reach the Earth, but block the Earth's own heat from traveling into space, much as a greenhouse traps heat indoors. As the gases become more abundant,

more heat is trapped and the planet's temperature rises.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reported late Tuesday that global concentrations of carbon dioxide have increased by 25 percent since the mid-1800s.

Pieter P. Tans of NOAA's Boulder, Colo., laboratory said concentrations of the gas now top 350 parts per million in the atmosphere, up from about 280 parts per million in the mid- to late-19th century. Analysis of air trapped in ice cores indicates little, if any change, in carbon dioxide for many centuries before that time.

Earlier in the summer that the current hot, dry conditions are an example of things to come.

In particular, he noted in the new report, while the average increase in global warming doesn't sound like a lot it means increasing frequency for hot summers. The chances of any particular summer being hotter than normal would top 50 percent, compared to a 33

percent chance of the past.

Such a change would be large enough to affect the quality of life, Hansen and his co-authors reported.

For example, they noted that over the past 30 years, Omaha, Neb., experienced a run of five or more consecutive days with a high of 95 degrees or more on an average of 3 times in 10 years. The climate model predicts that this could increase to 5 years out of 10 in the 1990s and 7 years out of 10 by 2020.

Such an increase in the number of runs of hot weather can damage corn and other crops, Hansen warned, and can also affect forests, water supplies, animals and people.

A warming of 0.8 degrees in a decade is faster than any found in historical studies and is thought to be faster than most plants are able to accommodate.

"We emphasize that it is the possibility of rapid climate change which is of most concern for the biosphere," wrote Hansen and his co-authors.