

# Gang of convicts hijacks Soviet plane, asks for political asylum in Pakistan

KARACHI, Pakistan (AP) — A gang of convicts from a Siberian labor camp overpowered their guards aboard an Aeroflot passenger flight, hijacked the plane to Pakistan and sought political asylum Monday. No one was hurt.

One of the convicts apparently smuggled weapons on board in an artificial limb, the official Soviet news agency Tass reported.

The 11 hijackers surrendered after landing at Karachi International Airport, and the 29 passengers and nine crew members were freed unharmed, officials said.

It was the latest in an unprecedented spate of hijackings involving Soviet aircraft. There have been at least 13 hijack attempts in the past three months.

Airport officials insisting on anonymity said the Tupolev 154 had only five to 15 minutes of fuel left when it landed in Karachi. The authorities did not say whether the hijackers would be given asylum or sent back to the Soviet Union.

The hijacking began Sunday when 15 prisoners were aboard an Aeroflot flight from Neryungry, about 3,000 miles east of Moscow, where their labor camp is located. The flight was bound for the nearby city of Yakutsk in eastern Siberia, officials said.

It was not known why the prisoners were being

taken to Yakutsk, or why they were serving time in prison.

The prisoners, armed with guns and homemade explosives, overpowered their guards and threatened to blow up the plane, said the independent Soviet news agency Interfax.

"All indications are that the weapons were concealed in an artificial limb used by one of the hijackers," Tass said.

The hijackers forced the plane to return to Neryungry. There, six prisoners left the plane but two more joined the group, according to Soviet Interior ministry spokesman Yuri I. Arshenevsky.

Of the 70 passengers left on board, the hijackers allowed 41 women and children to leave the plane in Neryungry, Arshenevsky said. Then they flew west to Krasnoyarsk in Siberia, where authorities negotiated with them for two hours and allowed them to refuel.

The plane next flew to Tashkent in Soviet Uzbekistan. There, the hijackers demanded the aircraft be allowed to leave the country.

After negotiating through the night, authorities allowed the plane to be refueled and to take off. The hijackers promised to free the passengers and crew when they landed, officials said.

Karachi airport authorities initially denied the

jetliner permission to land but relented when the pilot said he did not have enough fuel to fly to another destination, officials said.

The airport was briefly closed but reopened to normal traffic after the hijacked plane landed, officials said.

Pakistan is an Islamic country, but authorities said none of the hijackers was believed to be Moslem.

There have been at least 13 attempts to hijack Soviet aircraft since late May, mostly by Soviet teen-agers or young men who said they wanted to live in the West. That compares with about 70 such attempts in the 57-year history of Aeroflot, the Soviet state airline.

At least six hijackers made it out of the Soviet Union, but all were arrested. Soviet media emphasized that Western countries have been returning the hijackers to the Soviet Union to face charges. Hijacking carries a penalty of five to 20 years in jail in the Soviet Union.

Finland on Monday ordered the extradition of Mikhail Varfolomeyev, who commandeered a Soviet plane on a domestic flight from the Estonian capital of Tallinn to the Ukrainian city of Lvov. He sought asylum when the plane landed in Helsinki. Finland extradited another young Soviet hijacker last month.

# U.S. court upholds justice's free speech

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — A justice of the peace in Texas was within his rights to speak out against what he believed were miscarriages of justice in the handling of traffic offenses in Fort Bend County, the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled Tuesday.

The appeals court overturned the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas, which had upheld reprimands issued by the Texas Commission on Judicial Conduct against James M. Scott Jr. in 1984.

Scott was elected to a four-year term as justice of the peace in Fort Bend in 1982.

"Soon after taking office, Scott became concerned about what he perceived to be an injustice in the administration of the county court system," the 5th Circuit said in its opinion issued Tuesday.

"Apparently, the great majority of defendants who appealed

their traffic offense convictions from justice or municipal courts to the Fort Bend County court-at-law during Scott's term in office succeeded in having the charges against them dismissed or the fines sharply reduced," the appeals court said, noting that the truth of that allegation had never been challenged in six years of litigation.

"This practice, Scott believed, unfairly allowed those in the know to violate the traffic laws repeatedly and with impunity while penalizing less sophisticated individuals who committed the same offenses," the court said.

Scott wrote an open letter to county officials, prompting several newspaper articles and an angry response from at least one of the judges he criticized.

The matter was taken to the Commission on Judicial Conduct, which warned him to be more temperate in the future.

# Mayor's car stolen during tour of town

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP) — This city's mayor may have a tough time convincing GOP officials crime won't be a problem if they hold their 1992 convention here — his car was stolen during their tour.

While Mayor Robert Ulrich met Sunday night with Republican leaders scouting potential convention sites, someone swiped his car from the parking lot of the St. Petersburg Hilton.

Ulrich returned from a three-hour dinner cruise with a group from the Republican National Committee to find shards of broken glass — and another parked car — where his 1980 white Buick four-door had been.

Ulrich's car was recovered about 11 p.m. Sunday after the driver crashed into someone's front yard. No arrests have been made.

The mayor said members of the GOP delegation were sympathetic about his loss. Ulrich had never been a car-theft victim before. He said he will repair his car.

The GOP officials took a three-day tour of the possible convention venue, the new Florida Suncoast Dome and other Tampa Bay-area attractions.

# Fortune magazine lists oil barons as richest people

NEW YORK (AP) — If you wondered why oil is worth fighting for, take a look at Fortune magazine's latest ranking of the world's billionaires.

The two richest people on the face of the earth are oil barons, the magazine reported Tuesday.

Sultan Haji Hassanah Bolkhiah, oil-rich leader of the tiny Pacific sultanate of Brunei, retained Fortune's top title for the fourth straight year with an estimated worth of \$25 billion, unchanged from 1989.

Saudi Arabia's King Fahd and clan, a focus of the Persian Gulf crisis, ranked second with assets worth \$18 billion, also unchanged from last year.

The ranks of Fortune's richest — bankrolled by assets ranging from oil to sneakers to ball bearings — swelled by 25 names this year to 182 individuals and families, controlling a combined empire worth \$471.3 billion. That's up about 7 percent from last year.

Fortune released the fourth annual ranking in its Sept. 10 issue. It said the average entrant's wealth was only slightly higher compared with last year after adjusting for inflation.

But the average fortune was still worth about \$2.6 billion, which if invested in 7.5 percent U.S. Treasury bills would earn \$534,000 a year.

As competitor Forbes magazine did in its annual list released last

month, Fortune ditched the Sultan of New York, Donald J. Trump, whose real estate and casino empire is bogged down in debt. The magazine had estimated his holdings at \$1.7 billion last year.

Ranked third on Fortune's list was the reclusive Mars family of the United States, whose holdings include Mars Inc. candy bars, Uncle Ben's Rice and Kal-Kan pet food, worth \$12.5 billion.

Fourth was Britain's Queen Elizabeth II, the wealthiest woman, with an untaxed personal fortune of \$11.7 billion in riches ranging from 267,000 acres of royal real estate to racehorses, crown jewels and a vast stock portfolio.

Fifth was the Newhouse family of the United States, owners of a large media empire, worth \$11.5 billion; sixth was the Reichmann family of Canada, with extensive real estate holdings valued at \$11.1 billion; tied for seventh were Yoshiaki Tsutsumi, Japan's richest industrialist, and Arkansas retailing mogul Sam Walton, both valued at \$7.3 billion; eighth was John W. Kluge of the United States, owner of media giant Metromedia Inc., valued at \$7.0 billion; ninth was Tsai Wan-lin and family of Taiwan, owners of a construction and insurance empire worth \$6.5 billion; 10th was the Thomson family, owners of Canada's biggest newspaper chain, with \$6.2 billion.

American newcomers included the Stephens family of Arkansas, owners of investment banking, energy and real estate holdings worth \$1.7 billion; the Parfet family of Kalamazoo, Mich., owners of a large stake in the Upjohn Co. drugmaker, worth \$1.5 billion; and Philip Knight, head of the Nike Inc. athletic footwear maker, \$1.3 billion.

Foreign newcomers included Alicia and Esther Koplovitz of Spain, owners of a \$2.2 billion construction and banking fortune; Hiroshi Terachi, owner of a \$1.8 billion Japanese ball-bearing business; and John Spyros Latsis, European head of a Saudi Arabian shipping and oil-refinery network worth \$1.8 billion.

# Texas real estate developer pleads guilty to indictments of S&L fraud

CHICAGO (AP) — A Texas real estate developer Tuesday pled guilty to charges that he illegally obtained more than \$90 million in loans from thrifts in Illinois and Texas and a bank in Wisconsin, the Justice Department said.

The six-count indictment filed against James Reagin of Houston stems from a series of fraudulent transactions in 1984 and 1985 against the bank and the three now-collapsed savings and loan institu-

tions, federal prosecutors said in a statement.

Those institutions were Glen Ellyn Savings in Glen Ellyn, Ill.; First Savings of South Beloit in South Beloit, Ill.; the Bank of Alma in Alma, Wis.; and Western Savings in Dallas.

Federal officials said Reagin subverted regulatory authorities to obtain control of the Glen Ellyn thrift and illegally borrowed money from the four institutions to finance real estate deals.

"This case is a classic white collar 'whodunit' that follows a sizeable chunk of cash across the country, through a series of fraudulent loans, to the doorstep of three collapsed, federally-insured financial institutions," said Attorney General Dick Thornburgh from Washington.

Thornburgh called the plea agreement a "significant breakthrough" in efforts to unravel complex fraud schemes in the nationwide savings and loan industry scandal.

# Mudslide claims 10

OAXACA, Mexico (AP) — Rescue crews battled bad weather and backroads Tuesday to get to a mountain town where a mudslide claimed at least 10 lives and left seven injured and five missing, the attorney general's office said.

The victims were reported Monday after mud rolling down a steep hillside knocked over a water storage tank, wiping out at least seven homes below, Oaxaca state Attorney General's spokesman Pedro Perez Cevallos said.

Four of the missing are children, the official news agency Notimex

said Monday night.

Bad weather and impassable roads made rescue efforts difficult, Perez said in an interview.

He said the town of La Luz, where the landslide toppled the water tank, could only be reached by a one-hour walk.

La Luz is perched high in the Juaréz mountain range 270 miles southeast of Mexico City.

Perez said five of the seven houses in the path of the slide were inhabited.

Notimex said Monday that five people were injured, none seriously.

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