

EgyptAir pilot suspended after seeking asylum

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) — EgyptAir said Sunday it has suspended a pilot who is seeking asylum in Britain and reportedly claiming to possess information about the airline's fatal crash last year.

Hamdi Hanafi Taha was suspended as of Friday — the day he flew a plane to London's Heathrow Airport and asked for asylum — for failing to follow procedures, said the airline's head of operations, Capt. Hassan Misharfa. Taha faces dismissal under Egyptian labor law if he does not report to the state-run airline within eight days of his suspension.

In London, a spokesperson for the Home Office, which handles immigration matters, said Taha's asylum application was being considered. An Egyptian Embassy spokesperson said Taha was being held at an immigration dormitory near Heathrow.

EgyptAir has said Taha claims to have information about the Oct. 31 crash of Flight 990 off the coast of Massachusetts that killed all 217 people on board. An investigation into the cause of the crash is ongoing, but airline officials have dismissed the idea that Taha knew something about it.

It is not clear why Taha chose to flee to London rather than simply come forward with any information he has.

While crash investigators have not issued a finding, some American sources say U.S. officials are working on the theory the plane was brought down deliberately by co-pilot Gamil el-Batouty. Egyptian officials have vehemently dismissed the idea, saying they believe an unexplained problem in the plane's tail was responsible.

IRA bombs hotel, damages peace hopes

BELFAST, Northern Ireland (AP) — Suspected Irish Republican Army dissidents bombed a rural hotel Sunday — an attack that caused no reported injuries but gave Northern Ireland a bitter reminder of the days the province is struggling to leave behind.

It was the first such attack here since 1998, and it came as international pressure was building on the mainstream IRA to begin disarming in support of Northern Ireland's peace accord.

A caller claiming to be from the Continuity IRA, a small dissident group opposed to the IRA's 1997 truce, told the BBC in Belfast that bombs had been left at two hotels in rural County Fermanagh.

Police evacuated both hotels shortly before a bomb went off at the rear of Mahon's Hotel in the village of Irvinestown. They said the bomb was placed beneath the hotel's main oil storage tank, causing a fire that spread to nearby cars.

Officers and British soldiers could not immediately find any suspicious devices at the other threatened hotel. They expected to resume their search at daybreak.

No IRA dissident group had launched such an attack since 1998. There were several bombings in the province last year, but they were the work of pro-power-sharing Cabinet, said the Continuity IRA was "unrepresentative of Irish republicans" and should be disbanded immediately.

But the blast underscored demands from the province's major Protestant group, the Ulster Unionists, for an immediate start to IRA disarmament.

"We cannot allow any paramilitary organization, republican or (pro-)British loyalist, to remain in existence with guns and explosives," said Ken Maginnis, Fermanagh's Ulster Unionist member of British Parliament. "Even if they adhere to their own cease-fires, weapons of war will inevitably end up in the hands of dissidents."

The Continuity IRA began bombing targets after the IRA called a 1994 cease-fire. The shadowy group's sporadic attacks have caused only minor injuries, no deaths, but it has never called a full cease-fire. Only last month, police arrested a neighboring Irish Republic activist suspected of Continuity IRA activities in possession of a van loaded with weapons and explosives.

"We cannot allow any paramilitary organization ... to remain in existence with illegal guns and explosives."

— Ken Maginnis
Unionist member of British Parliament

British Protestant groups. Every political party in Ireland condemned the attack, including the IRA-allied Sinn Fein.

Sinn Fein's Martin McGuinness, a former IRA commander who is education minister in Northern Ireland's

News in Brief

Train derails, killing 6

BRUEHL, Germany (AP) — An overnight express train derailed at a switch south of Cologne early Sunday, killing at least six passengers and injuring more than 100, authorities said. Police said the train may have been speeding.

The sleeper train carrying about 300 passengers had been traveling from Amsterdam, the Netherlands,

Missing plane lands

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — An Afghan plane carrying 151 passengers went missing for three hours Sunday before landing safely in neighboring Uzbekistan, an airline official said.

to Basel, Switzerland, when it hurtled off the tracks in the small town of Bruhl, German railways spokesperson Manfred Ziegerath said.

There was no immediate explanation

for why the aircraft was diverted to the Uzbek capital, Tashkent, during its one-hour scheduled flight from the Afghan capital of Kabul to the northern city of Mazar-e-Sharif.

Flight controllers lost contact with the Ariana Airlines flight just after the Boeing 727 took off from the Kabul airport, said Mullah Hamidullah, the head of state-run Ariana airline.

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Tuesday, February 8

- ABB Inc.
- AIM Funds
- Arthur Anderson LLP
- Auto One Acceptance Corporation
- Bed Bath & Beyond
- Broad Vision Inc.
- Career Center
- Chase Bank of Texas
- Ciber
- Cintas Corporation
- Container Store, The
- Crane's Stationers
- Enron
- Entercon International
- Enterprise Rent-A-Car
- Ernest & Julio Gallo Winery
- Ernst & Young L.L.P.
- Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
- Federal Reserve Bank - Houston
- Ferguson Enterprises, Inc.
- Frito-Lay, Inc.
- General Mills
- Glazer's Distributors
- Guaranty Bank
- Halliburton
- Harley Davidson
- Hastings Entertainment Inc.
- HEB Grocery Company
- Hewitt Associates
- Home Depot
- IKON Office Solutions
- IMG Financial Group
- J.D. Edwards
- JCPenney Co.
- KPMG L.L.P.
- Kurt Salmon Associates
- McLane Company, Inc.
- Mervyns California
- Mission Critical Software
- National Instruments
- Neiman Marcus
- Northwestern Mutual Life
- Norwest Financial
- Office Depot
- OLDE Discount Corporation
- PriceWaterhouseCoopers, L.L.P.
- Randalls/Tom Thumb
- Royce Homes
- Ryan & Company
- Sam's Club
- Sears Roebuck and Co.
- TEK Systems
- United States Gypsum Co. (USG)
- USAA
- VarTec Telecom, Inc.
- Walgreen Co.
- Wallace Computer Services
- Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.

Wednesday, February 9

- Alcatel
- Allstate Insurance Company
- Alsides Inc.
- American Express Financial Advisors
- American National Insurance Co.
- Baker & Botts, L.L.P.
- Bank One
- Blockbuster Inc.
- Career Center
- CarMax
- Cintas Corporation
- CMS Energy Panhandle Pipe Line Co.
- Deloitte & Touche
- DHL Worldwide Express
- Entercon International
- Enterprise Rent-A-Car
- Expo Group
- Exxon Mobil Corporation
- Fidelity Financial Services
- Fidelity Investments
- Foley's
- Grant Thornton L.L.P.
- Guaranty Bank
- Halliburton
- Harold's Stores, Inc.
- Hastings Entertainment Inc.
- Home Depot
- Houston Chronicle
- JCPenney Co.
- Kroger Co.
- Luby's
- Maxim Healthcare Services
- National Instruments
- Northwestern Mutual Life
- Office Depot
- OLDE Discount Corporation
- Onsite Companies
- Randalls/Tom Thumb
- Sears Roebuck and Co.
- Sewell Automotive Co.
- Sherwin-Williams
- Southwest Bank of Texas
- Stage Stores, Inc.
- Standard Register
- TeleCheck Services Inc.
- Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts
- Toys R Us / Babies R Us / Kids R Us
- TXU
- United States Gypsum Co. (USG)
- Universal Computer Systems, Inc. (UCS)
- USAA
- VHA Inc.
- Walgreen Co.

Thursday, February 10

- Automated Data Processing (ADP)
- Career Center
- Dell Computer Corporation
- Duke Energy
- Dynegy
- EDS
- Engage Energy US, L.P.
- Exxon Mobil Corporation
- Foley's
- Lowe's Home Centers, Inc.
- Maxim Group
- Onsite Companies
- Payless Shoesource
- SBC Communications Inc./Southwestern Bell
- Sewell Automotive Co.
- State Farm Insurance
- Target
- TXU
- Universal Computer Systems, Inc. (UCS)
- UUNET
- VHA Inc.
- Zale Corporation