

World and Nation

Bomb causes plane crash; 171 dead

From Associated Press reports

PARIS — A French DC-10 that crashed into a remote desert in southern Niger was probably blown out of the sky by a bomb, French authorities and airline officials said Wednesday.

The army said all 171 aboard died. In separate telephone calls to the airline and to a Western news agency, a caller claiming to represent the Moslem extremist group Islamic Jihad asserted responsibility for downing the plane.

Seven Americans were aboard, including Bonnie Pugh, wife of the U.S. ambassador to Chad, Robert Pugh.

The UTA airline jetliner was on a flight from Brazzaville, Congo, to Paris when it crashed Tuesday shortly after making a stop in N'Djamena, Chad. Debris was scattered over the desert about 400 miles northwest of N'Djamena.

The French army, whose troops stationed in neighboring Chad were the first to reach the scene, said the 15 crew members and 156 passengers died, including eight children.

Authorities said the early indications are that the aircraft was felled by a bomb.

"It exploded at high altitude leaving every reason to believe it was a bomb," said UTA spokesman Michel Friesse. He said it was possible, but less likely, that the explosion was due to technical failure aboard UTA Flight 772.

A Foreign Ministry official, speaking on condition of anonymity, echoed that sentiment. "The pieces are widely scattered, so it didn't crash on impact."

UTA said it had received an anonymous phone call from a man claiming responsibility on behalf of Islamic Jihad, but said it had no way to authenticate the call.

In London, an anonymous caller also telephoned a Western news agency and said: "In the name of Allah and Imam Khomeini, the Islamic Jihad issued this statement: 'We are proud of this action which was very successful. We would like to say the French are warned not to exchange information regarding Sheikh Obeid with the Israelis no more. We demand the freedom of Sheikh Obeid and otherwise we will refresh the memories of the bombings in Paris of '85 and '86. Long live the Islamic Republic of Iran.'"

Sheikh Abdul-Karim Obeid, a Shiite Moslem religious leader in southern

Lebanon, was kidnapped by the Israelis July 28.

The Ministry of Transport sent four investigators from the Civil Aviation Authority to the scene of the crash. The authority said military helicopters had reached the site and found debris scattered over a 16-mile area.

The U.S. National Transportation Safety Board said it was sending a team of investigators to assist in the probe.

At the White House, presidential press secretary Marlin Fitzwater said President Bush had been briefed on the matter.

"The obvious widespread nature of the debris suggested it blew up in the sky and not on the ground," Fitzwater said. "It's far too early to make any assumptions on motivation or cause at this point."

The DC-10, which went into service in May 1973, took off from N'Djamena on the 5-hour flight to Paris. The plane made a last contact with the N'Djamena airport control tower about 40 to 50 minutes after it took off, UTA said. The crew did not indicate any trouble.

The wreckage of the plane was found at daylight Wednesday by a French military aircraft.

Chadian authorities said 77 passengers boarded the plane in Brazzaville and 79 in N'Djamena.

On March 10, 1984, a bomb exploded aboard a UTA DC-8 flying the same route just before the plane was to take off from N'Djamena.

Twenty-five people were injured. A group calling itself "Group Idriss Miskini" claimed responsibility, but the Chadian government blamed Libya, with whom it had been fighting a war in the north, for the bombing.

On Dec. 21, a New York-bound Pan Am jumbo jet exploded over Lockerbie, Scotland, killing all 259 people aboard and 11 on the ground. Investigators said a bomb disguised in a radio-cassette player was put aboard Flight 103.

Investigators also have said the main suspect in the Lockerbie bombing is an Arab terrorist group, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command.

Islamic Jihad is among several radical fundamentalist groups in Lebanon presumed to be part of Hezbollah, the umbrella for groups believed to hold 16 Westerners hostage in Lebanon, including eight Americans.

Miserly NYC hotel queen increasing in popularity

From Associated Press reports

NEW YORK — First came the ads featuring Leona Helmsley as the perfectionist queen of her hotel empire. Then came her trial and conviction for tax evasion. Now Leona is coming to bookstores, piano bars and TV screens near you.

At least three books, several songs and two television movies in the works pay tribute to the arrogant penny-pincher whom Mayor Ed Koch once dubbed "the Wicked Witch of the West."

Mrs. Helmsley may also be a big hit on Halloween. Said Paul Blum, owner of the Greenwich Village novelty shop Abracadabra, "We do have a Leona Helmsley wig, and then we put you in a prisoner outfit with a crown."

In August, Mrs. Helmsley was convicted of evading \$1.2 million in taxes by billing \$3 million in personal expenses to her business.

Her husband, Harry, 80, was declared incompetent to stand trial. According to testimony from disgruntled former employees, Mrs. Helmsley insisted that bottles be returned for the nickel deposit, billed \$8 worth of underwear to her business, and once said, "Only the little people pay taxes."

She will be sentenced Nov. 14. "She epitomizes the 1980s to an extreme," said Newsday reporter Michael Moss, whose book "Palace Coup" was published by Doubleday in April.

Contact lens' dangers reported

BOSTON — About 12,000 contact lens users in the United States suffer painful and potentially blinding eye ulcers each year, largely because they wear their lenses while they sleep, research concluded recently.

The studies also showed, however, that even ordinary daytime use of contacts — while far safer than overnight wear — seems to slightly raise the odds of the ulcers, which are the most serious complication of contacts.

The research is most critical of extended-wear lenses, which were approved in 1980 for continuous use up to 30 days at a time. It found that

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people who wore the lenses day and night were 10 to 15 times more likely than strictly daytime users to have eye ulcers.

Sometimes people fitted with ordinary soft lenses also sleep with them. The study found that doing this just twice a month resulted in nine times the usual risk of the disease.

"Our paper shows that overnight wear is the major risk factor," said Dr. Oliver Schein. "It begins with even the first night of overnight wear. To some extent there is a risk with any kind of contact lens wear, whether they are hard or soft, worn daily or extended."

The new work also found that the level of lens care among users was "alarmingly low." While it suggested that proper cleaning helped reduce the hazards of extended-wear contacts, it did not eliminate the risk entirely.

Mercedes fails to show for test

WASHINGTON — Call it the mystery of the missing Mercedes — 15 of them, in fact. The luxury cars, most of them gas guzzlers, all failed to show in the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) auto mileage survey this week.

Was it an innocent lapse or by design? Among the 981 cars, whose expected gasoline efficiency was detailed in the EPA list and then widely distributed by the news media, were cars ranging from the 58-mpg Geo Metro to the 6-mpg Lamborghini Countach, not to mention a half dozen versions of the Rolls-Royce.

But no Mercedes-Benz.

Don Larson, branch manager of the EPA's auto testing laboratory in Ann Arbor, Mich., said that every year some cars — perhaps 80 or 90 — do not make the list because manufacturers do not provide the testing data for certification early enough to make the deadline for sending the list to the printer.

Nevertheless, he said, "It would be unusual for a manufacturer to have his entire product line not listed."

New South African president sworn in

From Associated Press reports

PRETORIA, South Africa — F.W. de Klerk was sworn in as president Wednesday and promised a new constitution that would bring blacks into South Africa's government by the end of his five-year term.

He appealed to South Africans of all races to help build a nation "free of domination and oppression."

"We accept that time is of the essence and we are committed to visible, evolutionary progress," de Klerk said in his inaugural speech.

He has vowed to eliminate discrimination and allow blacks, who cannot vote, participation in government under a five-year plan.

But he did not specify any apartheid laws he would repeal. Nor did he say how he would implement his goal of providing limited political rights to the 28 million black majority while maintaining the political domination of the country's 5 million whites.

De Klerk, 53, took the oath of office as reports spread that his government

will free jailed black nationalist leader Nelson Mandela early next year. Newspapers quoted official sources as saying the release will be part of a package of reforms to draw blacks into constitutional talks.

"The negotiation process will, from the start, receive incisive attention," de Klerk said in the speech following his swearing-in ceremony.

His conciliatory words, affable style, and new policy of allowing peaceful protests against the government have generated optimism among foreign observers and many South Africans. But de Klerk rejects the basic demand of most black leaders: majority rule.

The Rev. Allan Boesak, a leading anti-apartheid activist and president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, said he would give de Klerk six months to prove that blacks' skepticism is unfounded.

A tear rolled down de Klerk's cheek at a Dutch Reformed Church when the Rev. P.W. Bingle, a family friend preaching at the swearing-in, urged the

new president to press forward without fear.

Chief Justice Michael Corbett handed de Klerk a paper from which he read the oath of office in Afrikaans and English before about 1,500 people. No foreign heads of state were present, an indication of South Africa's international isolation.

Black and white choirs sang hymns and African songs, three Impala air force jets flew over trailing smoke in the blue, white and orange colors of the South African flag, and several people among the crowd of 3,500 screamed when a 21-gun salute began announcing de Klerk's arrival.

In his 20-minute inaugural speech, de Klerk said his goal was "a South Africa free of domination or oppression in whatever form."

In Windhoek, Namibia, Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu said, "We hope that he will... demonstrate that he is serious about his vision for a new South Africa, because that is the vision we want." Tutu won the 1984 Nobel

Peace Prize.

De Klerk said his government would move to eliminate discriminatory laws, give "urgent attention" to adopting a bill of rights, "gradually move away" from the 3-year-old state of emergency and release security prisoners.

De Klerk did not mention Mandela by name, but said political prisoners would be freed if public order were not threatened and if their release would enhance peace prospects.

Many South Africans consider Mandela their top leader and his freedom has been demanded as a condition for negotiations. Mandela was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1962 for allegedly plotting to overthrow the white government.

As Wednesday's ceremony began, a group of human rights lawyers in Pretoria announced de Klerk had commuted the death sentences of seven convicted murderers.

De Klerk became acting president Aug. 15, a day after the Cabinet forced Botha to resign after 11 years in power.

Subcommittee to order former HUD secretary to testify

From Associated Press reports

WASHINGTON — A congressional panel voted unanimously Wednesday to subpoena former Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Samuel Pierce Jr. to testify about alleged influence-peddling and mismanagement at the department he once headed.

His attorney accused the panel of "vindictive and punitive actions."

Pierce was ordered to appear on three separate occasions — the first coming next Tuesday — before the subcommittee that is investigating scandals at HUD.

The vote had been expected since Pierce provoked anger among the panel members when he demanded a third delay on the eve of his scheduled voluntary testimony last Friday.

"I think the subcommittee had no option," said Rep. Tom Lantos, D-Calif., chairman of the employment and housing subcommittee of the Government Operations Committee. "The subcommittee had an agreement with Mr. Pierce... That agreement was

broken unilaterally by Mr. Pierce."

Pierce's attorney, Paul Perito, said the former secretary — who appeared voluntarily before the panel in May — was willing to testify but needed another two weeks for preparation.

In a letter to the panel, which was received before the vote, Pierce's attorney said, "We believe the subcommittee's vindictive and punitive actions in denying Mr. Pierce adequate time to obtain and review pertinent documents and in insisting on use of subpoenas are taken in retaliation against Mr. Pierce's exercise of his constitutional right."

But Republicans and Democrats on the panel rejected that claim, saying Pierce was trying to delay unduly and had months for preparation — even though Pierce said he only hired a lawyer this month.

"Rather than coming forth and clearing the record... he is toying with the subcommittee in order to evade or avoid his responsibility," said Rep. Ted Weiss, D-N.Y. The subpoenas compel Pierce to appear or face the possibility of contempt of Congress proceedings.

But Pierce's attorney, in holding open all legal options, raised the possibility

Pierce could appear as demanded but refuse to answer questions by invoking his Fifth Amendment constitutional rights not to incriminate himself.

Congressional staff attorneys said such refusal by a former Cabinet official

could appear to invite efforts to appoint a special prosecutor to investigate Pierce under the law providing for a court-appointed independent counsel to handle investigations of current or former top executive branch officials.

TDI

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ents were really peeved at that second bill." Slowly, but surely, people are getting the message.

Now that students are aware of the proposal and support it, the next step is "to focus on doing legwork," Lewis said.

"The ASG will put its shoulder to the grindstone. We'll write letters, set up meetings and talk to people in the

General Assembly. It's going to be a long process, but we've got until 1991 (the next budget session)."

Lewis said he didn't know if all of the TDI proposals would be adopted, but hoped everyone would greet them with an open mind. "I hope the legislature will realize that we're trying to be constructive, not adversarial. We just want to be a part of the process."

For the Record

In Wednesday's story, "Petition calls for different SRC site," the quotation from Wayne Going, intramural sports coordinator, should have read: "I think that (the Fetzer courtyard) is the best

possible place for the function of that center, which is for informal activities. I think that is the best site on this campus." The DTH regrets the error.

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Ramp

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to the handicapped," Hathaway said. "There are many needs to be addressed by the University. It is also very hard to prioritize what should come first, but I think the timing is right to build a ramp in the Pit."

Donald Boulton, vice chancellor and dean of student affairs, said he agreed

with the need for a ramp in the Pit. "The Pit will now be accessible to handicapped students and all students."

Shumate said, "As long as student activities take place in the Pit, then all the students should be able to assemble there."

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ASSERT YOURSELF - 5 wks. beginning Tues., Oct. 3, 3:00-4:30.

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STOP SMOKING - Thurs. 4-5, Nov. 2, 9, 16, 30.

CAREER DECISION MAKING - Thurs., Oct. 5, 12, 19, 26, 3:30-5:00.

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