

## Several theories attempt to explain crash

**Transcripts show miscommunications may have contributed to the collision near New Delhi.**

CHARKHI DADRI, India (AP) — As a Kazak cargo plane flew head-on toward a Saudi jetliner, controllers told its pilot to watch out for the 747 in the clouds ahead. The pilot asked how close it was.

"Fourteen miles," a controller said. Seconds later: "Thirteen miles."

The pilot's acknowledgement of that message was the last word New Delhi airport flight controllers had from either aircraft before they hit and

spun to earth in spectacular twin fireballs, taking 349 people to their deaths.

The exchanges, in transcripts released Wednesday, indicate the planes did not see each other in time and hint that the pilots were misled by their instruments or misunderstood the tower's directions. They were supposed to pass with a 1,000-foot difference in altitude — instructions that the Saudi plane's pilots never confirmed, the transcripts show.

The Saudi Boeing 747 was seven minutes into its flight and the Kazak plane was descending for its final approach into Indira Gandhi International Airport when the collision occurred Tuesday about 60 miles southwest of New Delhi.

Whether there was a last-minute

evasive maneuver by either plane was unclear, but India's top civil aviation ministry official said the crash was not direct.

"It was not a head-on collision," Yogesh Chandra said at a news conference. "The cockpit and fuselage of the Kazak airliner was found intact."

Searchers retrieved hundreds of bodies from wreckage strewn in a six-mile area around Charkhi Dadri. Grieving relatives tried to identify the badly mangled remains of their loved ones lying on blocks of ice at makeshift morgues.

Many of the victims of the Saudi Airlines flight that carried 312 passengers and crew apparently were Indian workers returning to jobs in the Middle East or making the Muslim pilgrimage

to Mecca; the Kazak plane carrying 37 people had been chartered by a clothing company in Kazakhstan.

A weeping Irene Colaso said she identified her 20-year-old daughter Sanim, a flight attendant on the Saudi plane, by her feet — the rest of her body was burned beyond recognition.

Searchers found the flight data recorders of both planes Wednesday but only the cockpit voice recorder of the Kazak plane. The recordings were not made public immediately.

But flight control transcripts showed that the airport tower instructed the Kazak plane to fly at 15,000 feet and the Saudi plane, which was ascending, to level off at 14,000 feet. The Saudi plane never acknowledged the order to hold its altitude.

The exact cause of the crash, the third-deadliest crash in aviation history, may take months to determine. But speculation already has focused on antiquated radar equipment and poor communications.

Chandra, a civil aviation official, said the army has restricted air space over Delhi, reducing the airport to only one air corridor for civilian aircraft landing and taking off.

The Indian Express newspaper, saying the accident was a "disaster waiting to happen," on Wednesday quoted aviation officials as saying there had been 10 recent near-misses in India's skies, most involving airlines from former Soviet republics.

## Clinton still to fight balanced-budget amendment

**Officials say remarks made Tuesday by the president weren't made to help pass the proposal.**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Concerned that remarks by President Clinton might help the prospects of the balanced-budget constitutional amendment, administration officials told reporters Wednesday that Clinton meant to emphasize that he will fight its likely approval by Congress.

On Tuesday, Clinton told reporters he believes the amendment is unnecessary, a position he has taken for years. But he added a condition, saying for the first time that he would consider

one if it contained an "escape hatch" for recessions, when decreased business activity normally drives up federal deficits.

Awakening Wednesday to headlines and news broadcasts that Clinton had softened his position, administration officials began telephoning reporters, saying the president had not meant to flash a green light to the proposal. The calls represented an administration attempt to recast the story to their liking in hopes of retaining an outside chance of stopping the amendment, or at least forcing it to be changed.

Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin told The Associated Press he and other economic advisers had asked Clinton Tuesday whether he had meant to back-

track on his previous opposition to the amendment.

"He said absolutely not, he was still opposed to the balanced budget amendment, and we should actively fight against it," Rubin said.

Rubin said Clinton told them that if it appeared the amendment would be approved, "we should try to get one that's the least harmful." But he also said Clinton has "grave doubts about whether you can create an escape hatch that is sufficiently flexible to take into account whatever may happen down the road" with the economy.

White House economic adviser Gene Sperling, who was also telephoning reporters, said administration officials wanted to make sure that reports

of Clinton's remarks didn't encourage lawmakers to vote for the measure. He said the White House wanted legislators to know "we do plan to speak out as to why we think it's poor economic policy."

The balanced-budget amendment passed the House in 1995 but fell a single vote short of Senate approval. At the time, Clinton helped lobby against it. After passing Congress, a constitutional amendment does not require the president's signature, but does need approval by 38 states.

With the elections last week resulting in a batch of additional amendment supporters joining the Senate, the proposal seems likely to get the two-thirds majority Congress needs to pass it.

Republicans plan to take it to the House and Senate floors early in the new Congress, perhaps in January.

Asked whether Clinton would lobby against the amendment again, Rubin said that would be "something you decide when you get there."

The current version of the proposal would allow its budget-balancing requirements to be waived during war or recession by three-fifths majorities of the House and Senate. Rubin said requiring a simple majority would be better.

"Why would you subject the economy of the United States to the risk of a Congress that for whatever reason is not willing to cast the 50 votes?" he said.

## Netanyahu cancels U.S. trip

*Israel, Palestine may near agreement on troop pullout*

HEBRON, West Bank (AP) — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu canceled a planned trip to the United States Wednesday in a possible sign that Israel and the Palestinians were nearing an agreement on an Israeli troop pullout from Hebron.

Netanyahu said in a statement after meeting with Yasser Arafat's deputy Mahmoud Abbas that he was calling off the trip "to assist in advancing the negotiations in the sensitive stages." He was to have left Israel Wednesday night.

In Hebron, Israeli troops reinforced positions around Jewish settler enclaves with bulletproof watch towers and dozens of soldiers patrolled the downtown Arab market area.

Government spokesman Moshe Fogel said earlier Wednesday that only one major issue stood in the way of an agreement on an Israeli troop withdrawal from the West Bank town.

Fogel, leading journalists on a tour of Hebron, said negotiators had made "significant progress" and talks were now focusing on what actions Israeli forces could take in

Israel's demands include the right of "hot pursuit" of suspects into Palestinian areas.

Chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat said that in addition to the "hot pursuit" issue, unresolved questions include what type of weapons Palestinian police would carry and the opening of a central Hebron street.

"We are trying to make progress," said Erekat after meeting with Netanyahu's advisor Yitzhak Malcho Wednesday in Jerusalem.

Netanyahu had raised hopes for agreement Tuesday by saying he would make a written promise to implement remaining elements of the Israel-PLO accords.

Army radio reported today that Israel had rejected the Palestinian's demand for a specific timetable on further withdrawals in the West Bank.

Israel radio said Israel also wanted a written commitment from Arafat promising to extradite Palestinians wanted for attacking Israelis, a trial for Palestinian police who opened fire on Israeli troops in September, and destruction of the Islamic militant infrastructure.

## Black activists protest acquittal of policeman in motorist's death

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Angering black activists, an all-white jury acquitted a white police officer Wednesday in the death of a black motorist who investigators say suffocated in a scuffle with officers during a traffic stop.

Blacks chanted, "No justice, no peace!" and an angry crowd of about 50 formed outside the courthouse after John Wojtas, a 40-year-old officer in suburban Brentwood, was cleared of involuntary manslaughter.

"By any means necessary, justice will be served," said Henry White, who is black. "A jury of peers does not mean all white."

The verdict came in the case of Jonny Gammage, a 31-year-old cousin of Pittsburgh Steelers player Ray Seals. The Rev. Jesse Jackson had branded Gammage's death a lynching.

Two other suburban officers are charged with involuntary manslaughter, but their trial ended in a mistrial after 10 days when a coroner blurted out improper testimony last month. A new trial will be held next year.

Gammage was pulled over in Pittsburgh on Oct. 12, 1995 by officers who had started chas-

ing him outside the city. The officers said he had been driving erratically, tapping the brakes of a Jaguar owned by Seals.

Gammage emerged from the car carrying a cellular phone that police said they thought was a gun. A struggle broke out, and police subdued Gammage by pressing on his back and neck. The coroner ruled he suffocated; defense lawyers argued he could have died from exhaustion or an adrenaline rush.

Vojtas, who could have gotten up to five years in prison, dropped his head and wept after the verdict.

Prosecutors argued that Wojtas instigated the fight by striking Gammage, then used too much force when he kneeled on the motorist's back. The defense said Wojtas, his thumb bitten to the bone, left the fight at least 10 minutes before Gammage died.

"I hope he dies," Wojtas said as Gammage lay motionless on the ground. The officer later explained he made the comment only in anger over his thumb injury and never expected the motorist to die.

## Drill sergeant receives sentencing after Army base sex scandals

FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo. (AP) — A drill sergeant who had sex with three women recruits got five months in prison and a bad-conduct discharge Wednesday in the first sentencing of the burgeoning Army sex scandal.

Sgt. Loren B. Taylor, 29, pleaded guilty a day earlier of breaking the ban on sex between commanders and subordinates, having consensual sex with three women recruits and trying to have sex with another.

Two other instructors at Fort Leonard Wood face similar charges.

The charges were disclosed on Tuesday, five days after a sex scandal broke at the military's Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland, where four drill instructors and a captain have been charged with raping or sexually harassing at least a dozen female recruits.

In another case, The San Antonio Express-News reported Wednesday that women Army trainees from Fort Sam Houston kissed their supervisors during wild drinking binges and that one trainee performed oral sex on her supervisor. Five sergeants were disciplined.

Taylor, who had faced up to 14 years behind bars, asked the judge to spare him prison so he could support his 7-year-old son, who lives with his former wife.

But prosecutors, bolstered by the testimony of two women who said they felt pressured into having sex with Taylor, asked the judge to send him to prison as a deterrent to others.

"I was so confused," former Pvt. Joy Paulsen, 21, testified. "He was my drill sergeant. I was supposed to obey. On the other hand, I didn't want to do what he was asking me to do."

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