

# **Hijackers threaten passengers**

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Sikh hijackers forced an Indian Airlines plane to Lahore, Pakistan, yesterday and threatened to blow it up with 264 people aboard if their demands were not met, a Government spokesman said.

The Sikhs, who seized the twin-engined jetliner on a domestic flight from Srinagar, capital of Kashmir, to New Delhi, demanded immediate release of all Sikhs arrested during recent agitation by that sect in India's Punjab state.

The spokesman said the hijackers set a deadline of 2 a.m. yesterday (5 p.m. EDT), but the deadline passed without incident.

The ultimatum was conveyed to authorities in New Delhi, said Mohammed Sharif, deputy information officer for the military Government in Pakistan.

Mr. Sharif said he had no word on those held hostage on the plane, which remains under heavy security at Lahore Airport, 280 kilometres east of Islamabad. The hijacked plane carried 255 passengers, including the hijackers, and nine crew.

He said that Pakistan was awaiting word from New Delhi on how to proceed.

Mr. Sharif said there were four hijackers aboard the aircraft. Earlier, in New Delhi, the United News of India agency said nine Sikh militants had pirated the Airbus A-300 and said they belonged to the Kashmir unit of the banned All-India Sikh Students Federation. The Indian Government has accused the federation of plotting for secession and setting up guerrilla training camps in Kashmir.

Other hijacker demands were:

— That India announce over radio and television the names of all those arrested in the Sikh crack-down.

— That India release Harmandar Singh Sandho, General Secretary of the All-India Sikh Students Federation, and 29 other prominent members.

— That India convert into U.S. dollars the \$25-million in money and treasure that Sikhs say was looted by Indian soldiers from the Golden Temple in Amritsar last month, and send the money on to Pakistan.

Last month, Indian soldiers stormed the Golden Temple, the most sacred Sikh shrine, to root out extremists agitating for an independent Sikh state in Punjab.

State-run Pakistan Television quoted the hijackers as saying "We are prepared to kill or get killed" when they talked to airport authorities.

[SikhMuseum.com](http://SikhMuseum.com)