

NEWS DIGEST

your quick guide to news from around the world



Small plane crashes in Michigan, killing 29

1 MONROE, Mich. — A commuter plane trying to land in a snowstorm nosedived into a field 18 miles short of the Detroit airport Thursday, killing all 29 people aboard.

The twin-engine Embraer 120, operated by Cincinnati-based Comair, went down just before dusk in a huge fireball, splintering into small pieces and leaving a black patch in the snow, which was a half-foot deep by evening.

Cathy Conner, 14, said she was getting off the school bus when she saw the plane go "straight into the ground."

"It was just like a blur, it was going so fast. Then I saw the explosion and flames just went everywhere," she said. Comair said 26 passengers and three crew members were aboard. Joan Marie Smith, spokeswoman for the National Transportation Safety Board, said all were feared dead.

Clinton presses for college loan tax break

2 WASHINGTON — Looking ahead to budget negotiations with the new Congress, President Clinton today touted a record-low college loan default rate in pressing for further education tax breaks.

The Education Department reported the fiscal 1994 default rate was 10.7 percent, the lowest since the department began reporting it in 1988, and a 40-percent drop since Clinton took office in 1993.

The high was 22.4 percent in 1990.

"The bottom line is this report shows our strategy of opportunity and responsibility is working," Clinton said at a news conference with Education Secretary Richard Riley.

They credited a crackdown on delinquent borrowers by the administration, Congress, schools, lenders and student loan guarantors.

Roaches get implants to make them robotic

3 TOKYO — A big brown cockroach crawls across the table in the laboratory of Japan's most prestigious university. The researcher eyes it nervously, but he doesn't go for the bug spray. He grabs the remote.

This is no ordinary under-the-refrigerator-type bug. This roach has been surgically implanted with a micro-robotic backpack that allows researchers to control its movements.

This is Robo-roach. "Insects can do many things that people can't," said Assistant Professor Isao Shimoyama, head of the bio-robot research team at Tokyo University.

Within a few years, researchers say, electronically controlled insects carrying mini-cameras or other devices could be used for highly sensitive missions — from espionage to searching for earthquake victims.

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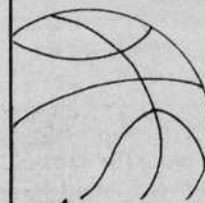


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