

Today	Saturday	Sunday
High: 71 Low: 51 Precip: 0%	High: 62 Low: 38 Precip: 30%	High: 61 Low: 46 Precip: 30%

IN BRIEF

Plane crashes after takeoff in Canada; all seven aboard feared dead

HALIFAX, Nova Scotia — A Boeing 747 cargo jet bound for Spain with a crew of seven crashed in a fireball after its tail section apparently broke off during takeoff at Halifax International Airport early Thursday. All aboard were feared dead.

The MK Airlines jet loaded with lawn tractors and 58 tons of lobster and fish crashed shortly before 4 a.m. local time into a largely wooded area near an industrial park north of Halifax, said Steve Anderson, a spokesman for the carrier in Sussex, England.

The flight had originated from Bradley International Airport near Hartford, Conn., and stopped in Halifax for refueling en route to Zaragoza, Spain.

"Right now, we can confirm that there are believed to be no survivors as a result of the downed airplane," said Constable Joe Taplin of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

The tail of the jet lay in a field at the end of the runway, inside the fence surrounding the airport. The rest of the plane cut a wide, V-shaped swath through woods and brush and came to rest in pieces less than a mile away. The tops of several trees and power poles were sheared off.

The weather at the time of the crash was good with a partly cloudy sky and light winds.

Anderson said the crew members were from South Africa and Zimbabwe.

2004 deficit hits record \$413 billion

WASHINGTON — The federal deficit surged to a record \$413 billion in 2004, the Treasury Department announced Thursday, injecting the figure into a presidential campaign in which the two parties have clashed over President Bush's management of the economy and the budget. The number was a significant improvement from the shortfalls that analysts projected earlier this year, including a \$521 billion estimate the Bush administration made in February. In March, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimated a deficit of \$477 billion.

Russia-U.S. crew leaves for international space station

BAIKONUR, Kazakhstan — A new Russian-U.S. crew headed to the international space station Thursday, surging into orbit aboard a Soyuz spacecraft none of the three astronauts has piloted before.

The Soyuz have been the only manned vehicles able to reach the orbiting research lab since the U.S. space shuttle fleet was grounded 20 months ago after the Columbia burned up on re-entry.

Russians Salizhan Sharipov and Yuri Shargin and American Leroy Chiao were flying their first mission in a Soyuz spacecraft — a rare rupture with a tradition of having at least one crewman with previous experience in piloting the capsule.

Chiao and Sharipov both have flown U.S. space shuttles, while Shargin is a space rookie.

The Soyuz TMA-5 spacecraft lifted off as scheduled from the Baikonur cosmodrome in the bleak steppes of Kazakhstan at 7:06 a.m. Moscow time and entered orbit less than 10 minutes later.

The spaceship is to dock with the station at 8:17 a.m. Saturday.

U.S. Marines launch attacks in Fallujah

BAGHDAD, Iraq — U.S. Marines launched air and ground attacks Thursday on the insurgent bastion Fallujah after city representatives suspended peace talks with the government over Prime Minister Ayad Allawi's demand to hand over terrorism mastermind Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. Late Thursday, residents of the city, 40 miles west of Baghdad, reported shuddering American bombardments using planes and armored vehicles in what they said was the most intensive shelling since U.S. forces began weeks of "precision strikes" aimed at al-Zarqawi's network.

Vote counting begins in Afghan election

KABUL, Afghanistan — Interim leader Hamid Karzai took an early lead as vote counting began in Afghanistan's landmark presidential election, after allegations of ballot-box stuffing, voter intimidation and multiple voting forced five days of delay. The tally was halted Friday so the 1,000 Afghans on the counting staff could have the day off to celebrate the start of Ramadan, the Islamic fasting month. Counting was to resume in all eight regional counting centers on Saturday.

Bush, Kerry lob post-debate assaults

LAS VEGAS — President Bush criticized Sen. John Kerry as a liberal trying to hide from his own record Thursday as the two men entered the last, post-debate lap of a close race for the White House. The Democratic challenger said his rival "fights, literally, for the privileged few ... I believe we need a president who will fight for the great middle class and for those who are struggling to join it."

Deck collapses, leaving six injured after fall

UNIVERSITY PLACE, Wash. — A second-story deck collapsed Thursday night during a party at a private home, dropping more than a dozen people 12 feet to the ground and injuring six of them, witnesses said.

Two of the injured were reported in critical condition at Tacoma General Hospital.

As many as 16 people were on the deck at a going-away party for a Navy recruit.

"First thing I thought was just 'earthquake,' and then I realized the deck was falling and as soon as it hit I didn't know if I was hurt or not, but I just wished I could have done more to help others," Paul Jackson, the guest of honor, told KING-TV.

The cause of the collapse wasn't immediately known, said Marv Cole of the University Place Fire Department.

Coos County coroner sentenced for shooting

COQUILLE — The Coos County coroner convicted of shooting a man in the chest was sentenced to 30 days in jail, a far more lenient sentence than he could have received.

Because his crime involved a firearm, William Hosack, 63, faced five years in prison if Judge Richard Mickelson had sentenced him under guidelines for third-degree assault.

"You're lucky the Legislature has retained discretion to judges for the firearm minimum," Mickelson told Hosack.

Hosack was initially charged with first-degree assault after a shooting on his rural property in February, when several young people drove up to his property and got into a fight with his neighbors.

— The Associated Press

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