

Today	Saturday	Sunday
High: 56 Low: 47 Precip: 80%	High: 57 Low: 42 Precip: 30%	High: 57 Low: 45 Precip: 20%

steps to secure ballot boxes, set up emergency communications systems and locate backup polling places in the event of an attack.

### Typhoon wreaks havoc on Japan, kills dozens

TOKYO — Rescue workers and Japanese troops waded through sludge Thursday to search for victims of mudslides in Japan's deadliest typhoon in over a decade.

Typhoon Tokage, the record eighth typhoon to hit Japan this year, unleashed towering waves and rapid mudslides that demolished homes and flooded dozens of communities when the storm slammed into western Japan Wednesday.

Tokage, which means lizard in Japanese, headed east into the Pacific Ocean Thursday after losing power, leaving clear blue skies in its wake and rescue workers combing the sea for victims feared washed away in the typhoon.

Powerful gusts uprooted huge trees, flash floods submerged cars to their windows and entire hillsides crumbled in landslides across southern and central Japan. Delivery trucks, tipped over by winds, lay on their sides.

By Thursday evening, the death toll had risen to 63 and 25 others were still unaccounted for, the National Police Agency said. Injuries totaled 273.

### Castro stands stong after fall at public event

HAVANA — Cuban President Fidel Castro's advancing age — and ultimately his mortality — were brought home Thursday after he fractured a knee and an arm when he tripped and fell at a public event.

In a communist society where the 78-year-old leader has played a larger-than-life role for more than four decades, the tumble was the latest reminder that Cuba's commander in chief is an aging man who will not live forever, with an elderly brother as his designated successor.

"I'm all in one piece," Castro declared on state television Wednesday night after tripping on a concrete step while returning to his seat after an hour-long speech in the central city of Santa Clara.

A medical examination early Thursday confirmed Castro suffered a broken left knee and a hairline fracture in his upper right arm, according to an official notice carried by state media.

— The Associated Press

# Nigerian insurgents might face death penalty for coup

Five Nigerians were charged with two counts of treason each for trying to topple the government

BY DULUE MBACHU  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LAGOS, Nigeria — The Nigerian government for the first time Thursday publicly disclosed a foiled coup plot, charging four military officers and a civilian with conspiring to topple the government by shooting down a helicopter carrying President Olusegun Obasanjo.

Maj. Hamza al-Mustapha, former chief of personal security to late military dictator Gen. Sani Abacha, and four others were each charged with two counts of treason in a federal high court in Nigeria's commercial capital, Lagos. If convicted, they could face the death penalty.

Abacha was the last in a line of military dictators that have repeatedly seized power in Nigeria, which

has known only 15 years of democracy since its independence from Britain in 1960. The years of often corrupt and dictatorial rule have left Nigeria destitute, despite the fact it is Africa's most populous country with 126 million people and the continent's largest oil producer.

According to court documents released Thursday, the military officers engaged in a conspiracy "for the purpose of overthrowing the federal government of Nigeria by force of arms" and had sought to buy a "Stinger surface-to-air missile to be used in shooting down the president's helicopter with the president on board."

The documents did not say when the attack was to take place, but three of the five charged Thursday

were among dozens of military officers arrested and interrogated by Nigeria's security agencies in April over what the government described at the time as "a security breach."

Al-Mustapha, who has been in detention since 1999 for a series of assassinations of political opponents during Abacha's years in power, was questioned in April by military intelligence officials in connection with the security breach.

Al-Mustapha, Lt. Col. Mohammed ibn Umar Adeka and civilian Onwuchekwa Okorie pleaded not guilty Thursday.

Two other suspects — navy Cmdr. Yakubu Kudambo, who escaped following his April arrest, and Lt. Tijani Abdallah — remain at large and were charged in absentia.

Justice Dan Abutu set the next hearing date for Oct. 28 and ordered the accused to remain in military custody.

## IN BRIEF

### U.S. soldier sentenced in Iraq prison abuse case

BAGHDAD, Iraq — The highest-ranking U.S. soldier charged in the Abu Ghraib prison case was sentenced Thursday to eight years in prison, the severest punishment so far in the scandal that broke in April with the publication of photos and video showing Americans humiliating and abusing naked Iraqis. Staff Sgt. Ivan "Chip" Frederick's civilian attorney, Gary Myers, called the sentence "excessive" and argued that the military command was at fault for failing to train his client — a veteran military policeman and a corrections officer in civilian life — and for failing to address the horrid conditions at the prison on the western outskirts of Baghdad.

### Missile strike in Gaza Strip kills senior Hamas leader

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip — An Israeli aircraft fired two missiles at a car traveling in the Gaza Strip late Thursday, killing a senior Hamas commander who was among the government's most-wanted fugitives for years, the latest in a series of Israeli assassinations that have weakened the militant group. Adnan al-Ghoul, a founder and the No. 2 figure of Hamas' military wing, was killed along with a lower-ranking militant. The air strike dealt another heavy blow to Hamas' military wing, Izzedine al Qassam, which is responsible for attacks that have killed hundreds of Israelis during four years of fighting.

### Poll security strengthened in watch for terrorism

WASHINGTON — Election officials are beefing up security and taking other precautions at many of the nation's 200,000 polling places amid continuing concern that al-Qaida terrorists are intent on disrupting the U.S. political process. Some officials are increasing police patrols and assigning plainclothes officers to monitor voting sites on Election Day. Others are taking

# Faulty tape recorder poses conflict in grave-looting case

A Medford man is accused of paying off a hit man with \$10,000 of opals to cover an Indian grave raid

BY JEFF BARNARD  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MEDFORD — The jury deciding whether artifacts collector Jack Harelson paid \$10,000 in opals to have four people murdered in retaliation for his Indian grave-looting conviction will have to decide whether or not to believe a paid informant facing federal drug charges.

Defense attorney Robert Abel and prosecutor Clay Johnson both told the Jackson County Circuit Court jury that a tape recorder that informant Brian Doland carried in his pocket didn't capture a key piece of the case against Harelson — his response to a staged photo showing a man lying dead in a shallow grave in the woods.

"That's the primary issue. That's what we ask you to zero in on,"

Abel said Thursday in his opening statement. "Where is Doland's testimony verified?"

Harelson, 64, a former insurance agent and amateur archaeologist, has pleaded innocent to charges alleging that after his 1996 conviction for robbing Indian graves in the Nevada desert, he gave Doland \$10,000 in opals to pay a hit man to kill four people responsible for sending him to jail.

They are retired Josephine County Circuit Judge Loyd O'Neal, who sentenced Harelson in 1996; state police Lt. Walt Markee, who led the investigation in that case; and two partners in a Nevada opal mine, Lloyd Olds and the late Richard Ledger.

On Tuesday, Harelson pleaded guilty to abusing the ancient remains of two Indian children he dug up in Elephant Mountain Cave in Nevada's

Black Rock Desert in the 1980s.

The prosecution is seeking a sentence of 10 to 12 years in prison if Harelson is convicted on all the charges against him, including two counts of being a felon in possession of firearms.

Johnson told the jury in his opening statement Wednesday that the tape recorder didn't work, but Doland reported afterwards that Harelson had chuckled at seeing a staged photo of Olds pretending to be dead, then tossed the photo into a fire and said, "One down, three to go."

But the key piece of evidence they needed to prove an intent to commit a crime — Harelson accepting the phony photo as proof the first victim had been murdered — has no tape to back it up, Abel said.

State police Detective Stephanie Ingraham, who oversaw the investigation, testified that the tape recorder had failed several times before the key meeting, when it shifted in Doland's pocket, depressing the stop button.

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