

# World and Nation

## Widow files \$15 million claim on NASA

WASHINGTON (AP) — The family of Michael J. Smith, the pilot on the ill-fated space shuttle Challenger, has filed a \$15 million negligence claim saying NASA should have known "a catastrophic accident would likely occur."

The claim, filed by Smith's widow Jane as executor of his estate, is the first by a member of the families of the seven astronauts who were killed.

"It alleges, as it must under the federal tort claims act, that we were negligent and as a result an accident occurred during which Smith died," said Edward Frankle, deputy general counsel for the space agency.

Under federal regulations, NASA has six months to decide how it wants to handle the claim, Frankle said, adding, "If we do nothing in six months, people can go to court."

A suit also can be filed if NASA denies the claim.

Smith is represented by William F. Maready, an attorney in Winston-Salem, N.C., who specializes in aviation and space law.

The claim was dated July 2, not long after the Challenger investigating commission reported that a leak on the shuttle's right booster rocket triggered a sequence that resulted in the explosion.

After the commission issued its report last month, Jane Smith commented that it reflected "incredibly terrible judgments (and) shockingly sparse concern for human life."

The claim says that NASA officials "directed, allowed and participated in the launch . . . when they knew or should have known . . . that a catastrophic accident would likely occur."

## World Briefs

### Litton charged with contract fraud

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — A division of Litton Industries, a major defense contractor, was indicted Tuesday along with two employees on charges of defrauding the government out of \$6.3 million in connection with contracts to manufacture instruments for military hardware.

The company agreed to plead guilty and to pay \$15 million in criminal and civil fines and restitution, authorities said. U.S. Attorney Edward S.G. Dennis Jr. said that constituted one of the largest sums ever recovered from a defense contractor accused of wrongdoing.

### Little relief expected for Dixie drought

Clouds brought slightly cooler weather Tuesday to the Southeast, where a record string of eight days of 100-degree heat have caused 10 deaths. But forecasters warned the relief was temporary, and scattered rain did little to ease the region's drought.

withered crops and forced water-use restrictions in communities.

The weekend heat stroke deaths of three elderly people raised the number of heat-related fatalities in Georgia to five. Two heat-related deaths have been reported in North Carolina and one each in South Carolina, Virginia and Louisiana.

### Mayor seeks end to garbage strike

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Citing a threat to public health from growing piles of trash, Mayor W. Wilson Goode asked a state court Tuesday to order striking health-care and sanitation employees back to work.

The request applies to about 2,500 sanitation workers.

### Stock prices fall amid brisk trading

NEW YORK (AP) — Stock prices tumbled across a broad front in brisk trading Tuesday in a continuation of the market's recent retreat.

Trading volume on the exchange surged to 183.98 million shares from 123.17 million on Monday.

The Dow Jones average of 30 industrials sank 24.75 to 1768.70 after a volatile session for the blue chips that featured several unsuccessful rally attempts.

Losing issues outnumbered gainers by about 3 to 1 in the overall tally on the New York Stock Exchange.

## Nuclear weapons cause dispute

## Pakistan aid cutoff threatened

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Reagan administration is sticking to its pledge to help Pakistan against outside aggression, but will cancel a multibillion-dollar aid program if that country builds atomic weapons, a senior official said Tuesday.

"The United States has on many occasions assured the government of Pakistan that the United States remains fully committed to Pakistan's security in the face of continuing military threat from the Soviet Union and the Afghan regime," State Department spokesman Bernard Kalb said.

At the same time, the official, speaking on condition he not be identified, said that if Pakistan pro-

duces an atomic bomb, the commitment — first made in 1959 by President Dwight D. Eisenhower — would be canceled.

A portion of the U.S. support consists of economic and military aid, which under administration proposals will climb to \$4.2 billion aid during the six years beginning October 1987.

"There's never been any misunderstanding, and it's discussed with

great frankness, that the programs will be stopped if there is evidence they have acquired a nuclear device," the official said.

Attention focused on Pakistan's nuclear program and the drug situation there on the eve of a visit here by Prime Minister Mohammad Khan Junejo. He's making his first official visit to the United States since taking office Dec. 30.

## Senator says tax plan will help middle class

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate's chief tax-writer predicted Tuesday that Congress' final version of tax overhaul will provide greater relief to middle-income Americans, though not necessarily by retaining fully deductible Individual Retirement Accounts.

He added, however, that there probably are better ways of helping the middle class than by keeping the full deduction for IRAs.

A conference of tax-writers from the Finance Committee and the House Ways and Means Committee begins work Thursday on a compromise between the tax plans passed by the House and Senate. Tax relief for the middle class and IRAs are only two of the hundreds of differences between the two bills.

Packwood will head the Senate delegation to the conference. The House delegation will be headed by Rep. Dan Rostenkowski, D-Ill.

About IRAs, Packwood said he would not object to restoring a full deduction for all workers if such help "can be targeted to the middle-income group."

## Oil prices up slightly but plunge predicted

NEW YORK (AP) — Oil prices rebounded Tuesday and erased declines of the previous session after Saudi Arabian King Fahd's public plea for OPEC production restraints, but many U.S. analysts expressed doubt the rally would last and some predicted a plunge to the \$8-a-barrel level.

"I would say this was a technical correction that doesn't have any strong underpinnings," said William Randol, oil-industry analyst at the New York investment firm First Boston Corp.

John Hill, a trader at Merrill Lynch Energy Futures in New York, said: "I have to say that most people are still a little skeptical over whether or not we've seen the lows."

The price for Britain's benchmark North Sea Brent Crude, which hit a record low of \$8.75 per 42-gallon barrel in Europe on Monday because of fears about a market glut, was trading in the \$9.30-\$9.40 range by late Tuesday.

On the New York Mercantile Exchange, the price of West Texas Intermediate, the best-known U.S. crude, soared more than \$1 a barrel to \$12.12 by midafternoon in heavy

trading, then closed later at \$12.11. Unleaded gasoline jumped more than 2 cents a gallon to 34.10 cents, closing at 34.11 cents, and home-heating oil rose more than 2 cents a gallon to 33.45 cents, closing at 32.92 cents.

"This is a very strong rally, but the jury is still out on what it means," said Peter C. Beutel, assistant director of Elders Futures Inc. in New York. "Everybody's asking why is it going higher, then they turn around and buy because they think, 'maybe there's something we don't know.'"

Many analysts said the market rallied because traders bought oil to repay borrowed oil they had sold earlier at higher prices, known as short-covering, which can create temporary supply shortages and drive the price up.

Others attributed the rally to Fahd, who on Monday exhorted his oil minister Ahmed Zaki Yamani to seek stability in world oil markets when the 13-nation Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries convenes an emergency session July 28 aimed at reaching a pact to restrain output.

## U.S. industrial production drops 0.5% during June

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. industrial production plunged 0.5 percent in June, the fourth decline in the past five months, while retail sales inched upward only slightly, the government said Tuesday in separate reports that underscored how weak the economy has become.

The Commerce Department

report on retail sales showed they rose a slight 0.2 percent in June, the weakest showing since March.

While the Reagan administration is forecasting economic growth of 4 percent in the second half of 1986, many analysts contend the economy will show little pickup from the weak growth of the past two years.

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