

CasualtyWeek

January 6 2006

Kariba to blame for Tricolor collision

But insurers of \$22m vehicle carrier face long wait for compensation, write Sandra Speares and Janet Porter — Friday January 06 2006

A US court has ruled that OT Africa Line's containership Kariba was fully to blame for the collision which sank the vehicle carrier Tricolor, leaving several thousand luxury cars at the bottom of the English Channel.

Nevertheless, insurers of the Wilh Wilhelmsen ship face a long wait before being reimbursed for the loss of the Tricolor and the world's most expensive wreck removal operation.

While the US judge decided the Kariba was at fault, a Belgian court will determine compensation payments.

Further delaying final settlement is the prospect of an appeal in the US by Kariba's owner.

Lawsuits brought in Antwerp will not proceed until a surveyor appointed by the court to produce a factual account of the accident has delivered the report.

The Tricolor was valued at \$22m, while the cost of clearing the wreck from the middle of a busy sea lane is thought to have exceeded \$50m. When taking into account the lost cargo, legal fees, oil pollution clean-up, and other expenses associated with the accident, Wilh Wilhelmsen's claims director Ivar Brynildsen estimates that the total bill could top \$200m.

The US case was brought by the Kariba's owner that sought to limit liability for the lost cargo. That brought the Tricolor and a third ship, the Clary, into the frame.

In the US District Court for the Southern District of New York, Judge

Harold Baer, concluded that the cause of the collision "was the sole and exclusive fault of the Kariba".

The Tricolor and Clary, a bulk carrier in the vicinity, "share no portion of liability for the collision".

The accident occurred in December 2002, when the Kariba, Tricolor and Clary were navigating in the Channel traffic separation scheme north of Dunkirk. Visibility was restricted by fog. The Tricolor was in the process of overtaking the 1,200 teu, 1982-built Kariba approximately half a mile off the containership's starboard quarter.

When Kariba and Clary were about three miles apart on intersecting courses, Kariba made a turn to starboard and hit the port side of the Tricolor. There were no casualties.

Legal counsel for the owner of the Kariba, Otal Investments, argued that the ship was boxed in by the Clary and the Tricolor, and that the two ships were at least partly to blame.

According to the US court, proof at trial showed that the master of the Kariba had misread the Automatic Radar Plotting Aid and believed the Clary was closer than it was. At trial, the master also testified that he could have slowed down and avoided a collision but ruled out this course of action for fear of another collision if Clary turned to starboard astern of the Kariba.

Although the judge found that the second officer of the Clary had failed to answer a distress call, his actions had no bearing on the inquiry into who was responsible for the collision.

The judge said that while it was true the Clary could have turned to starboard earlier, and the Tricolor could have given Kariba more sea room, "the failure to do these things cannot be said to have caused the collision".

He found that "the sole and exclusive cause of the collision was the Kariba's turn to starboard".

Christen Guddal, vice president of claims at Gard P&I that insured the Tricolor for liabilities, said the club "had received the judgment and taken due note of it."

John Kimball, chairman of Healy & Baillie, which acted for the owners of the Kariba said yesterday: "We are dissatisfied by the court's decision, which is based on numerous errors of fact and law. We will be pursuing our client's right to appeal."

Although the Kariba has settled cargo claims, these are continuing in the US against the Clary and the Tricolor, and Kariba's legal team is pursuing a claim for damage to the ship against the Clary.

Kariba's operator, Otal has just been sold by the Bolloré group to CMA CGM, but liability is thought to stay with the original owner.

Lawyers said yesterday it was unclear whether the Belgium courts would accept the US judgment on which ship was to blame, or hear the facts again before making financial settlements.

The fact that Belgium has jurisdiction over the wreck removal is a serious consideration as shipowners cannot limit liability for the raising of wrecks.

Summary of Major Cases in this week's issue of Lloyd's Casualty Week

Vessel	Type	Flag	Class	GT	DWT	Bit	Casualty
<i>ANNA</i>	vehicle carrier	NIS	NV	39,710	17,224	1978	Anchored off Minami-Izuchō, Shizuoka Prefecture, after losing power in heavy weather Dec 24. Subsequently arrived Gamagori Dec 26.
<i>FRYKEN</i>	general	ANT	LR	3,987	1,245	1989	Had fire in engine-room, causing breakdown, Dec 22 and taken in tow for Riga, arriving Dec 24. Berthed in shipyard for repairs, which ETC early Jan 2006.
<i>HANIL 1001</i>	fishing	KOR	—	—	—	1979	Capsized and sank south of Wan Island, South Jeolla Province, South Korea, Dec 28. Search for crew under way.
<i>LURLINE</i>	ro-ro/ container	USA	AB ABS	24,901	22,220	1973	Reported Dec 22 in port at Honolulu, having sustained structural damage, due heavy weather on voyage from Oakland. Arrived Kahului Dec 24 and sailed same day.
<i>OCEAN STAR</i>	general	BLZ	—	119	—	1997	Sank due strong storm 150 nautical miles off Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province, Vietnam, Dec 22. Crew rescued.
<i>ROSETHORN</i>	general	VCT	—	1,213	1,694	1982	Anchored in lat 59 43.9N, long 19 38.9E, Dec 26 with cooling system problems. Towed into Stockholm Dec 28.
<i>SPRUCEGLEN</i>	bulker	CAN	AB ABS	22,388	35,315	1983	Grounded above the Eisenhower lock, St. Lawrence Seaway, following a loss of power Dec 22. Refloated same day and at Wilson Hill Anchorage. Subsequently arrived Three Rivers Dec 24.
<i>TAIHO MARU</i>	general	JPN	—	193	490	1981	Stranded in lat 34 03.5N, long 132 27.3E, Dec 28.
<i>TAMBORA</i>	tanker	PHL	—	95	—	—	Drifting and abandoned after being gutted by fire off Limay, Bataan, Dec 23. Still drifting off Limay Dec 25. Crew missing. Vessel believed sunk.
<i>VIBORG</i>	bulker/ container	SGP	GL	20,578	31,011	1971	Contacted by tug Chardonnay at Port Elizabeth Dec 26. Holed in starboard side, heavy fuel tank ruptured, some spillage. Heavy fuel tank pumped dry so repairs can be effected. Repairs ETC Dec 30.

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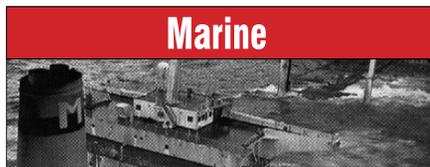
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The following reports are reprinted from Lloyd's List



ALGOSTEEL (Canada)

London, Dec 24 — Bulk *Algosteel* arrived Toronto Dec 21.

ALLORA (Honduras)

London, Dec 28 — General cargo *Allora* arrived Klaipeda 0200, Dec 24, for drydocking. (See issue of Dec 23.)

Klaipeda, Dec 29 — General cargo *Allora* arrived Klaipeda Dec 24 and entered dry dock at AB Klaipedos Laivu Remontas Dec 25 for repairs. The vessel was inspected and it has been established that large part of the hull plating needs to be replaced. The yard indicates that the estimated time of repairs is about three weeks. — Lloyd's Agents.

ALTEZA (Cambodia)

Yokohama, Dec 26 — General cargo *Alteza* lost part of its cargo overboard on Dec 17 after bad weather off Echizen promontory in Fukui Prefecture caused the vessel to list heavily. However, the vessel was able to proceed under its own power and arrived Tsuruga the same day. The vessel did not sustain any damage and is scheduled to sail for Kanazawa Dec 27. Operations to recover the logs lost overboard from the vessel have been commenced by the administration of Fukui Prefecture. — Lloyd's Agents.

AMADA (North Korea)

Piraeus, Dec 29 — General cargo *Amada* is still at Kalamata, ETD unknown. — Lloyd's Agents.

ANGLIAN SOVEREIGN (U.K.)

London, Dec 24 — Anchor handling tug/supply *Anglian Sovereign* sailed Rotterdam 1200, Dec 22, for Galway.

ANNA (NIS)

London, Dec 28 — A press report, dated Dec 25, states: Vehicle *Anna* (39710 gt, built 1978) anchored off Minami-Izucho, Shizuoka Prefecture, yesterday after it lost power and went adrift in a gale, according to the Shimoda Coast Guard Office. None of its 30 crew members were injured. According to the coast guard, *Anna* experienced engine trouble off Irozaki cape. By yesterday morning, it had drifted about 2.4 kilometres off Mitsuishimisaki cape, where it anchored. A tug from the Coast Guard reached the ship at about 0800 yesterday. After waiting for three other tugs to arrive, it was to be towed toward Omaezaki in the prefecture early this morning. The vessel was carrying 517 kiloliters of fuel oil, but was not leaking, according to the coast guard. The vessel left Hiroshima Port on Tuesday (Dec 20) and was scheduled to transport cars to the United States after loading them at the ports of

Mizushima, Okayama Prefecture, Omaezaki, Kawasaki and Nagoya. (Note — *Anna* sailed Mizushima Dec 21, and subsequently arrived Gamagori Dec 26 from Omaezaki.)

London, Dec 28 — Following notice to mariners issued at 1820, JST, today: Tug towing engine troubled vehicle *Anna*, Gamagori for Nagoya, departs Gamagori 0700, Dec 29 for Nagoya section 3, Kitahama Wharf, where estimated time of arrival 1400, JST, same day. Speed about seven knots, length of about 500 metres.

ANTONIS A. (Panama)

Piraeus, Dec 28 — Chemical/oil carrier *Antonis A.* is currently effecting repairs at Suez, completion of same expected in around another 10 days. — Tsaviliris Salvage (International) Ltd.

APL PANAMA (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Dec 27 — Following received from Coast Guard San Francisco, timed 1224, UTC: C.c. *APL Panama* (40306 gt, built 2001) grounded on sand Dec 25 while inbound to the port of Ensenada. Two tugs are currently on scene, carrying out refloating operations.

Mexico City, Dec 27 — C.c. *APL Panama* grounded at Ensenada around 1815, local time, Dec 25. Apparently vessel did not wait for port pilot and tugs and proceeded to enter port without them. It ran aground on Ensenada beach, outside breakwaters. There were no reports of heavy weather or fog. Two tugs from Los Angeles will arrive today to try to free the vessel; various unsuccessful attempts have already been made by local tugs on high tides. Discharge of some of the 900 TEUs on board is being considered but this will be difficult due to the location of the vessel. It is aground 200 ft from the beach on sandy bottom. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Dec 27 — MS "Mare Britannicum" Schiffahrtsgesellschaft mbH & Co KG, owners of c.c. *APL Panama*, report that the vessel grounded off Ensenada, Mexico, while awaiting a pilot to take it into port. All efforts to pull the vessel off the sandbank during high tide using the services of harbour tugs unfortunately failed. Three 5000-bhp tugs from Los Angeles have been contracted in order to free the *APL Panama* and these are now on scene and expect to refloat the vessel at high tide this afternoon. The weather remains calm and the vessel is in no danger. According to the master's report, there are no leakages or other damage to the vessel and no injuries among crew members or threat to the environment. MS "Mare Britannicum" Schiffahrtsgesellschaft mbH & Co KG would like to thank the local harbour authorities and harbour tugs for their support.

London, Dec 28 — Understand salvage services are being rendered to c.c. *APL Panama* by Titan Maritime LLC under Lloyd's Open Form.

Receive immediate notice as soon as a Casualty occurs. For further information please contact Andrew Luxton on +44 (0) 20 7017 4625.

London, Dec 28 — Following received from Coast Guard San Francisco, timed 1755, UTC: C.c. *APL Panama* is still aground and is likely to be aground for "some time."

London, Dec 29 — A press report, dated Dec 28, states: Tugs were still working today to try to pull c.c. *APL Panama* off a shallow sandy bottom near shore at the Mexican port of Ensenada. The vessel, chartered by the global container transportation company APL, had left Oakland and ran aground as it prepared to enter the city's harbour before continuing on to other stops in Mexico and Asia. An official with Ensenada's port said the crew apparently failed to follow port rules and seek pilot service before entering the port's access channel. "The first reports mention that the master didn't follow those basic rules," said Juan Carlos Ochoa, marketing director for the port of Ensenada. "There's a specific point where the pilots of the port go and take the vessel but they did not stop at that point." None of the 25 crew members was injured, Ochoa said, and the vessel did not appear seriously damaged. Officials found no fuel leaks or anything else that might harm the environment. The *APL Panama* is carrying 900 containers, Ochoa said. Jennifer Bronson, a spokeswoman for APL at the company's Oakland offices, said the containers typically carry electronic components related to the maquiladora industry.

ARCHANGELOS GABRIEL (Greece)

London, Dec 26 — Following received from Coast Guard New Orleans, timed 1805, UTC: Product tanker *Archangelos Gabriel* (40682 gt, built 2005), loaded with 5.2 million gallons of vacuum gasoil, grounded 20 miles south-east of Galveston, in lat 29 05.94N, long 94 14.82W, at 1100, local time, Dec 23. A salvage plan has been submitted and four tugs are proceeding. No damage or pollution reported.

London, Dec 28 — Following received from Coast Guard New Orleans, timed 1435, UTC: Product tanker *Archangelos Gabriel* refloated yesterday at 1825, UTC. Vessel is currently at anchor off Galveston awaiting class inspection before proceeding to Valero, Texas. No damage, no pollution and no injuries reported.

ASIAN FAVOUR (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Dec 28 — C.c. *Asian Favour* arrived Busan Dec 24 and sailed same day for Fushiki-Toyama.

AUK ARROW (Bahamas)

London, Dec 28 — General cargo *Auk Arrow*, which was involved in two separate collisions at Shanghai Dec 1 and 5, subsequently arrived Gunsan Dec 12 and sailed Dec 21.

BEACON 3 (Belize)

Piraeus, Dec 29 — C.c. *Beacon 3* is still at Piraeus, ETD unknown. — Lloyd's Agents.

BEETPULP TRADER (Antigua & Barbuda)

St. Malo, Dec 22 — General cargo *Beetpulp Trader* (1473 gt, built 1985) is presently at St. Malo to undergo repairs to a gas oil tank which was damaged by a shore crane while the vessel was discharging at St. Brieuc. — Lloyd's Agents. (Note — *Beetpulp Trader* arrived St. Malo Dec 16.)

St. Malo, Dec 28 — General cargo *Beetpulp Trader* completed repairs at 1400, local time, today and is due to sail at 1520 hrs for orders. — Lloyd's Agents.

BLACK PEARL (Malta)

Brest, Dec 27 — Following an agreement which was reached between cargo owners and the salvage company, general cargo *Black Pearl* was authorised to reload the shifted cargo which had been temporarily transferred from the vessel's deck to the quay. The vessel sailed Brest Dec 23 for Algeria. — Lloyd's Agents.

BLACKFRIARS (U.K.)

London, Dec 29 — Product tanker *Blackfriars* arrived Liverpool Dec 27.

BREIVIK (Norway)

London, Dec 28 — Following received from Stavanger RCC, timed 1045, UTC: Fishing *Breivik* (73 gt, built 1986), length 60 ft, had engine failure in lat 58 17.77N, long 06 13.08E, at 0426, UTC, Dec 27. Vessel was safely assisted into Eigerøey same day.

CHARDONNAY (South Africa)

See *Viborg*.

CP VALOUR (Bermuda)

Ponta Delgada, Dec 25 — c.c. *CP Valour* is still aground. The combustibles and removal of the containers from the vessel has been stopped due to the bad weather. About 500 tons of fuel from the vessel's tanks had already been transhipped to tanker *Magadir*. The considered dangerous cargo which was stowed in three containers on board has already been discharged ashore by using the Portuguese Air Force helicopter. An powered commercial helicopter is expected at Faial-Island to transfer the containers from the vessel to shore as *BBC Canada* still unable to be berthed alongside the vessel for the purpose. The adverse weather conditions remain in the casualty area and understand that some developments on the vessel's conditions have been occurred today. — Lloyd's Agents.

Ponta Delgada, Dec 25 — C.c. *CP Valour* has sustained a list of 16 degrees to starboard while grounded in the same position. All the crew members rescued for precaution and safely landed ashore. The vessel reported to have hull fractures with spillage of fuel into the sea. Spots of oil can be seen at sea in an area of approximately 250 square metres around the casualty. Tug *Fotiy Krylov* and salvage team from Tsavliris Salvage & Towage are on scene

according to LOF contract. Vessel is sustaining adverse weather conditions. — Lloyd's Agents.

Ponta Delgada, Dec 26 — C.c. *CP Valour*: No salvage developments as the vessel is still aground under the bad weather conditions. Ingress of sea water reported inside engine-room and holds. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Dec 28 — A heavylift helicopter was dispatched Dec 26 to retrieve toxic material from c.c. *CP Valour*. The Kamov 32 helicopter will lift the polluting material from several hundred containers lodged on the deck.

Piraeus, Dec 28 — Salvage operations on c.c. *CP Valour* continue. Some bunkers have been taken off and a helicopter employed for removal of hazardous cargo. — Tsavliris Salvage (International) Ltd.

Ponta Delgada, Dec 28 — C.c. *CP Valour* is still aground. A heavy-lift helicopter is expected at Faial today to remove part of the vessel's cargo. Product tanker *Magadir* is proceeding to the scene to remove the combustibles remaining in the vessel's tanks. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Dec 29 — A press report, dated Dec 28, states: C.c. *CP Valour*, which ran aground in the Azores islands earlier this month, will be dismantled after attempts to refloat it failed, the Navy said today. The vessel, with a crew of 21, got stuck in the shallow water of a bay off Faial island on Dec 9. Despite attempts to make the vessel lighter and pull it off the sea floor, it has remained immobile. The crew left the vessel Dec 25. "Heavy swells and the damage sustained by the vessel when it got stuck make it impossible for it to be removed by sea," Adm. Rodriques Cabral said. He did not say when dismantling operations would start but said they would probably not be finished until July or August. Last week, a Portuguese Air Force helicopter lifted about three dozen drums of flammable and toxic material off the vessel and a support vessel pumped about 550 tons, of fuel from its tanks before bad weather forced work to be stopped. Another 400 tons are still on board. Authorities had meanwhile flown three paneloads of anti-pollution equipment, including floating booms to contain any oil spill, to the island.

DAYANA (Cambodia)

London, Dec 28 — General cargo *Dayana*, which proceeded to Masan Dec 18 after listing off Nakhodka, subsequently sailed Masan Dec 20, arrived Pohang Dec 21 and sailed Dec 23.

DBL 152 (U.S.A.)

London, Dec 23 — A US Coast Guard press release, dated Dec 22, states: The refloated tank barge *DBL 152* began its voyage today for Alabama, where it will await final disposition. The barge's intended destination is the Holcim dock in Theodore, AL. Over the last two weeks, the barge was refloated and more than two

million gallons of its cargo was safely offloaded, emptying the barge of all but residual product. Three of the barge's cargo tanks were damaged. One cargo tank leaked initially from the collision on Nov 10, and two others leaked after the barge capsized. The barge's oil cargo is a thick, heavy petroleum product known as No 6 fuel oil. The oil is heavier than water, and sinks to the bottom of the sea. Responders have staged equipment to conduct diver, sonar, and video surveys of the submerged oil and are monitoring the movement of up to three million gallons of oil that was spilled onto the ocean floor. Submerged oil recovery operations began in the vicinity of the barge as soon as it began moving. The Texas General Land Office continues to monitor Texas beaches for any indication of oiling. The TGLO, the Louisiana Oil Spill Co-ordinator's Office, the barge owner, the Coast Guard, and other agencies have developed a shoreline clean-up plan, which will be implemented if oil is found along the Texas or Louisiana coastlines. No oil from the barge has reached either the Texas or Louisiana coast. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has determined that the likelihood of shoreline impact from the incident is low. Survey and clean-up operations are not obstructing marine traffic fairways. A four-mile safety zone is in effect around the initial collision site, with obstructions marked by lighted buoys and a second eight by ten-mile safety zone is in effect around the area of oil recovery operations. The incident is under investigation by the Coast Guard.

DIANA (Cambodia)

See *Diana*.

EISHO MARU 1 (Panama)

London, Dec 29 — General cargo *Eisho Maru 1* sailed Masan Dec 27.

ESTREITO DE RANDE (Argentina)

London, Dec 22 — Following navigation bulletin issued at 0313, UTC, Dec 22: Trawler *Estreito de Rande* has been recovered.

EUGENIA (Honduras)

London, Dec 28 — A press report, dated today, states: The mystery of containers, carrying 100 tonnes of gelatin sticks, disappearing from the decks of general cargo *Eugenia* (721 gt, built 1977), seems to have been solved. According to reliable sources, the missing containers have been spotted some 10 nautical miles off the Mumbai coast by the Navy and Coast Guard. The gelatine sticks, packed into six containers, were on a merchant vessel when it disappeared exactly from where it has now been reported to have been recovered. Defence sources further added that the Navy and Coast Guard's expert divers would be put into service tomorrow to ascertain whether the containers can be retrieved from the sea or not. According to sources, the

master of the *Eugenia* has told the interrogators that one container fell off the vessel Dec 22 and the remaining five Dec 23. Independent sources said that the sea was very rough on Dec 22 and 23 and several vessels sailing in the area were troubled by the choppy waters leading to delays in berthing at the Mumbai docks. However, there are also indications that the master is giving contradictory statements. A source in the Ministry of Defence said that the master at some point also did claim that the containers were pushed off the ship because of choppy waters that threatened to sink the ship. The six-member crew of the vessel has also been taken into custody and is currently in Mumbai under interrogation. The explosives were on their way to the port of Bandar Abbas from where, they were to go to Afghanistan by road for use by India's Border Road Organisation (BRO). The BRO was to put gelatine for blasting rocks along the highway it is constructing to link Delaram on the Makran coast of Iran to Kandahar in Afghanistan, via Herat. The BRO had bought the explosives from Premier Explosives, Secunrabad, which was supposed to supply the explosives in Afghanistan. The vessel set sail from Mumbai on Dec 22, after Premier Explosives checked in the item through an agent. It was also carrying several other items like generator sets, sources said. The ship vanished from radio contact the very next day. Alarmed Indian agencies launched a hunt for the ship and Coast Guard located the vessel in the Indian territorial waters itself. The vessel, sources said, was escorted back to Mumbai. Senior intelligence officers ruled out the possibility of any foul play as the vessel was in the Indian territorial waters and such a heavy cargo cannot be transferred to another vessel.

London, Dec 28 — Following navigation warning issued at 1712, UTC, Dec 27: Six containers containing explosives adrift along trackline joining lat 18 46.61N, long 72 32.88E, lat 18 50.00N, long 72 40.70E, lat 18 46.55N, long 72 33.82E.

FREY (Malta)

London, Dec 29 — General cargo *Frey* sailed Tallinn Dec 24.

FRYKEN (Netherlands Antilles)

London, Dec 24 — Following received from Riga MRCC, timed 1210, UTC: General cargo *Fryken* (3987 gt, built 1989), empty, is currently being towed into Riga following minor fire in engine-room which led to engine breakdown. Vessel was taken in tow early today and is currently approaching Section Buoy in Riga Bay. (Note — *Fryken* sailed Copenhagen Dec 20 for Riga. According to LMIU AIS, vessel was in lat 57 28 27N, long 23 08 41.4E, at 1209, UTC, course 152 deg, speed 3.6 knots.)

London, Dec 27 — General cargo *Fryken* arrived Riga Dec 24 and,

according to LMIU AIS, was still at Riga, in position lat 57 02 09N, long 24 04 51E, as of 1513, UTC, today.

Riga, Dec 28 — General cargo *Fryken*: Fire inside funnel was observed at 1835, local time, Dec 22. The fire was extinguished by the crew at 1910, local time, and vessel was towed to Riga. Vessel berthed at Mangaly Shipyard for repairs. Latvian Maritime Administration has inspected the vessel and is leading the investigation of the event. There were no injuries, while the amount of material loss is in the process of calculation. Expected time of repairs is around five to seven working days. — Lars Krogus Baltic Ltd.

GALINA (Cambodia)

Falmouth, Dec 28 — General cargo *Galina* is still at Falmouth, situation unchanged. — Lloyd's Agents.

GAS CRYSTAL (Malta)

London, Dec 24 — Lpg *Gas Crystal* sailed Antwerp 1150, Dec 23, for Rotterdam.

GU DRUN (Germany)

London, Dec 28 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: Product tanker *Gudrun* (676 gt, built 1982), Brunsbuttel for Bremerhaven with 700 tons of diesel oil, ran aground on Scharhorn Reef, in the Elbe estuary, on the morning of Dec 26. The vessel was stuck fast and listing to port all day. Support *Neuwerk* (3422 gt, built 1998), which proceeded to the scene to prevent possible oil pollution, also ran aground around midday, shortly before low tide, but floated free shortly afterwards. A first attempt to refloat the *Gudrun* failed, as did a second attempt. The sister vessel of the *Neuwerk*, support *Mellum*, also proceeded to the scene. *Gudrun* was refloated on the rising tide during the evening of Dec 26, by two tugs. No oil pollution was observed. The vessel was then towed to deeper waters.

London, Dec 28 — Product tanker *Gudrun* passed Brunsbuttel at 2125, Dec 26, and subsequently arrived Hamburg at 2246, Dec 27.

London, Dec 29 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: Product tanker *Gudrun* was towed into the Amerikahafen in Cuxhaven on Dec 28 by tugs *Taucher O.Wulf 3* and *Bugsier 15* after having been refloated Dec 27. Further inspections will have to be undertaken at Cuxhaven. To date, no oil leakage has been observed.

HANIL 1001 (South Korea)

Seoul, Dec 29 — South Korean fishing *Hanil 1001* capsized and sank off the country's southern coast, killing one crew member and leaving 10 others missing, feared dead, a Coast Guard official said today. The vessel, the name of which was revealed by Yonhap news agency, capsized late yesterday. The master was rescued but died early today in hospital. The 10 other crew were

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trapped on board and could not escape, said Coast Guard official Park Kyung-won. — Reuters.

London, Dec 29 — A press report, dated today, states: Fishing *Hanil 1001* overturned nine kilometers south of Wan Island, South Jeolla Province, South Korea, at 2340 yesterday, leaving one person dead and 10 missing. The master died at a hospital he was taken to after being rescued by the vessel's sistership, fishing *Hanil 1002*. Heo Jeong-shik, the master of the *Hanil 1002*, said: "The radio abruptly cut off while communicating with the master of the *Hanil 1001*. Before the communications broke off, he said in an urgent voice that his vessel was tipping over to one side." The Navy and local Coast Guard are searching for the missing but recovery has not been easy because the vessel completely sank.

ICE KING (Greece)

London, Dec 23 — Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 0839, UTC: General cargo *Ice King* is currently under tow to Eleusis, ETA later today.

London, Dec 24 — Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 1045, UTC: General cargo *Ice King* is still under tow for Eleusis.

London, Dec 28 — Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 0935, UTC: General cargo *Ice King* was towed to Eleusis Dec 26.

JIN BI (Panama)

Antwerp, Dec 27 — Bulk *Jin Bi* is now in dry dock undergoing repairs, ETC 20 days. — DPS Teamhead Surveyors.

JOHN SPENCE (Canada)

Toronto, Dec 21 — Anchor handling tug/supply *John Spence* is presently moving downbound, destination Hamilton. ETA Hamilton this afternoon. — Lloyd's Agents.

JURONG SEA (Singapore)

London, Dec 26 — Following received from Coast Guard New Orleans, timed 1835, UTC: Bulk *Jurong Sea* (38107 gt, built 1983), inbound, grounded near Mile 3, River Mississippi, at 2000, local time, Dec 24. No damage or pollution. Vessel refloated with the assistance of a tug in around 90 minutes. It was restricted to anchorage to await class report, which was subsequently received Dec 25. (Note — According to LMIU AIS, *Jurong Sea* was anchored about one nautical mile from Braithwaite, in lat 29 52 59.65N, long 89 57 24.08W, at 1738, UTC, today.)

KENTUCKY HIGHWAY (Japan)

London, Dec 28 — Vehicle *Kentucky Highway*, in collision at Campana Dec 15, subsequently arrived Rio de Janeiro Dec 23 and sailed Dec 26.

KONSTANTINOS F. (Greece)

Piraeus, Dec 29 — Hydrofoil *Konstantinos F.* sailed from Thasos island on Dec 8, without passengers and with one functional engine, and

proceeded to Kavala for repairs. The vessel has now returned to service. — Lloyd's Agents.

KURSK (Malta)

London, Dec 28 — Following received from Den Helder RCC, timed 1005, UTC: Ref *Kursk* (8960 gt, built 1983), St Petersburg for Agadir, in ballast, reported engine problems at 0530, UTC, and anchored in lat 55 01N, long 04 54E, to effect repairs. Vessel estimates another two-to-three hours to effect repairs.

London, Dec 28 — Following received from Den Helder RCC, timed 1510, UTC: Ref *Kursk* is still in the same position effecting repairs, which are now estimated to be completed by 1600, UTC.

London, Dec 28 — Following received from Den Helder RCC, timed 1703, UTC: Ref *Kursk* is now underway bound Agadir.

LAEMTHONG GLORY (Thailand)

See "Somalia" under "Piracy".

LECONTE (U.S.A.)

Seattle, Dec 28 — Ro/ro *Leconte* left Todd shipyard today and is under way to resume service in Alaskan waters. All repairs are presumed completed. — Lloyd's Agents.

LEDASTERN (Isle of Man)

London, Dec 28 — Chemical/oil carrier *Ledastern*, which grounded at Belfast Dec 15, arrived Ventpils Dec 24 and, according to LMIU AIS, was still there as of 1513, UTC, today.

LURLINE (U.S.A.)

Honolulu, Dec 22 — It is reported that the Matson Navigation ro/ro/c.c. *Lurline* (24901 gt, built 1973) sustained structural damage, due to heavy weather on it's current voyage from Oakland. The vessel is currently in port in Honolulu. — Lloyd's Agents. (Note — *Lurline* sailed from Oakland on Dec 16, bound for Honolulu.)

London, Dec 28 — Ro/ro/c.c. *Lurline* arrived Kahului Dec 24 and sailed same day.

MAERSK ENSENADA (Antigua & Barbuda)

Havana, Dec 27 — C.c. *Maersk Ensenada* has completed temporary bottom repairs at Havana Dockyard, and the main engine has been aligned. A Conveyance Certificate has been issued by the Class Society, under the vessel's new name of *Canis J.*. The vessel sailed Havana Dec 24 bound for Freeport to complete bunkering, after which it will proceed to Europe. — Lloyd's Agents.

MAISTROS BREEZE (Hong Kong)

London, Dec 24 — Bulk *Maistros Breeze* arrived Buenos Aires Dec 20 from Campana.

MARGARET (Georgia)

See "Italy" under "Weather & Navigation."

MATSONIA (U.S.A.)

Honolulu, Dec 22 — It is reported that the Matson Navigation ro/ro/c.c.

Matsonia (33095 gt, built 1973) sustained damage 2.5 days ago from heavy weather. Waves reportedly wiped the scuttle tube on the forecastle deck and flooded the thruster room. The 1st Mate and four crew were sent to investigate when another set of waves engulfed the vessel. They suffered major injuries and broken bones. *Matsonia* arrived in Honolulu this afternoon. — Lloyd's Agents. (Note — *Matsonia* departed Long Beach on Dec 17, bound for Honolulu.)

London, Dec 25 — A press report, dated Dec 23, states: Five crew members of a Matson Navigation Co ro/ro/c.c. *Matsonia* were injured when their vessel encountered "extreme sea conditions" this week en route to Honolulu. All five were taken to The Queen's Medical Center yesterday morning after the it arrived at Honolulu Harbour, but their conditions and names were not being released, said Gary North, senior vice president for Matson's Pacific operations. None of their injuries was life-threatening, North said. The vessel was midway between Long Beach, Calif., and Honolulu on Monday (Dec 19) when it encountered 15- to 20-foot swells, North said. "Sea conditions between Hawai'i and the Mainland have been very rough during the past week due to unusually strong winter storm systems, which have moved through this part of the Pacific," North said. "The seamen were injured while attempting to secure a store-room hatch, which had sprung open by heavy seas." U.S. Coast Guard officials in Honolulu received a distress call from the vessel about 2215, Monday, said Chief Petty Officer Marsha Delaney. The injuries included broken bones, cuts, bumps and bruises, Delaney said. The *Matsonia* was too far from Honolulu - about 1,100 miles away - for a helicopter flight, she said. The nearest potential help was a cruise ship 500 miles behind the *Matsonia*. Turning the *Matsonia* around to meet the cruise vessel could have put the vessel in bad weather, Delaney said. Instead, a C-130 aircraft made a nighttime drop Wednesday of medical supplies needed to keep the patients comfortable. Coast Guard officials are investigating the cause of the accident and injuries, Delaney said.

London, Dec 28 — Ro/ro/c.c. *Matsonia* sailed Honolulu Dec 24 for Long Beach.

MURMAN 2 (Russia)

London, Dec 28 — Fishing *Murman 2*, which arrived Fitjar May 9 for repairs to engine, subsequently sailed for Las Palmas, passing Dover Strait Dec 24.

NAPHT AL YEMEN 6 (North Korea)

London, Dec 23 — Pproduct tanker *Napht Al Yemen 6* arrived Hodeidah Dec 11 and sailed Dec 13.

NAPOCOR POWER BARGE NO.106 (Philippines)

See "Tropical Storm 'Kajiki' under 'Weather & Navigation.'"

NAPOCOR TUGBOAT NO.1 (Philippines)

See "Tropical Storm 'Kajiki'" under "Weather & Navigation."

NECDET K. (Turkey)

Piraeus, Dec 29 — General cargo *Necdet K.* was inspected by a Class surveyor and sailed Karistos Dec 21 for Tarragona. — Lloyd's Agents.

NEPTUNIA MEDITERRANEO (Brazil)

Buenos Aires, Dec 21 — Lloyd's Sub-agents in Ushuaia inform that c.c. *Neptunia Mediterraneo* remains abandoned at the Beagle Channel. There is a diplomatic conflict between the Argentine Foreign Affairs office and Brazil, owners are Brazilian, and until that conflict is solved, the vessel will remain in this situation. The vessel is under custody of Argentine Coast Guard, there is no crew on board and remains with bunkers inside. Vessel is also interdict. — Lloyd's Agents.

NEUWERK (Germany)

See *Gudrun*.

NORMANDY (Bahamas)

See "Republic of Ireland" under "Port State Control."

NORWEGIAN DAWN (Bahamas)

London, Dec 26 — A press report, dated Dec 23, states: Norwegian Cruise Line acted properly when passenger *Norwegian Dawn* was struck by a large wave on Apr 16, according to a report from the National Transportation Safety Board. After experiencing extremely rough weather, the vessel was hit by an unpredictable, large wave near South Carolina on its return trip to New York from Miami during a Bahamas/Florida cruise. The board determined that the Miami-based cruise line acted appropriately during the severe weather and tried to accommodate and comfort its passengers. The report noted that: "Rather than attempting to maintain the scheduled arrival time in New York, the master decided to lower the vessel's speed and change its heading for the passengers' comfort." Moreover, "the hotel staff tried to accommodate the passengers' needs and make them comfortable." The board praised the crew for having "properly prepared the vessel for heavy weather" and noted that Norwegian Cruise Line kept its passengers apprised of the developments by continually providing "advisory announcements to the passengers." "We are pleased with the report from the NTSB and that it further clarifies the Bahamas Maritime Authority's report that the company, the master of *Norwegian Dawn* and his officers and crew acted appropriately in this rare large wave

incident," said Colin Veitch, president and chief executive officer of NCL Corp. The report notes that the winds and seas experienced by the vessel became "heavier-than-expected" and recognised the unpredictability of the incident by concluding that "the probable cause of the damage to *Norwegian Dawn* and of the injuries suffered by its passengers was waves breaking over the bow during the vessel's unavoidable encounter with severe weather and heavy seas."

OCEAN STAR (Belize)

London, Dec 25 — A press report, dated today, states: All eight crew members on board of the general cargo *Ocean Star* (399 gt, built 1997) were rescued off the Vietnamese coast on Dec 22. The vessel sank during a strong storm 150 nautical miles off central Ba Ria-Vung Tau province and 38 nautical miles off Phu Quy Island of central Binh Thuan province. After receiving the SOS signal, the Joint Search and Rescue Centre No. 3 broadcast the information and coordinated with Binh Thuan province's coast guards to search for the ill-fated vessel. Fortunately, the sailors were found and saved by c.c. *Sima Pride*. These seamen then were transferred to the centre for repatriation.

London, Dec 28 — A press report, dated today, states: General cargo *Ocean Star* sank about 150 nautical miles off the coast of Ba Ria Vung Tau province Thursday (Dec 22) en route from Hong Kong to Thailand to pick up a cargo of frozen seafood, said Nguyen Ngoc Hung, director of the provincial Department of Foreign Affairs. All eight sailors on board were rescued hours later by c.c. *Sima Pride*, Hung said. The cause of the accident was under investigation, he said. Further details were not immediately available. Hung said the sailors were resting at a hotel in the resort city of Vung Tau after being taken in by Vietnamese authorities Thursday night. The sailors are expected to be turned over to their respective embassy officials Tuesday after paperwork is completed, Hung said.

OTTON (Panama)

Bilbao, Dec 27 — Firefighting tug *Otton*: Local agents have advised that vessel is still carrying out repairs at Bilbao, completion date unknown at present. — Lloyd's Agents.

P.MOUZELIS (St. Vincent & Grenadines)

London, Dec 28 — Following received from the owners of bulk *P.Mouzelis*: After passing through severe storms with winds up to force 10 (storm) for about ten days en route from Brazil, water was found to have entered the forepeak and No 1 hold of the *P.Mouzelis*. Upon discovering this, as an immediate precaution pending further investigation, owners prudently sought salvage assistance while the crew pumped the spaces out. As pumping progressed with no

new ingress, it soon became apparent that the source of the ingress did not lie in any breach of watertight integrity of the hull but in heavy weather damage to vents, which was repaired. The vessel then resumed its voyage unassisted and without escort within 24 hours of the problem being detected. Salvage assistance was cancelled.

POLANA

Varna, Dec 28 — Tug *Polana* is still lying sunk in the Danube River. Understand from the Bulgarian Maritime Authorities in Rousse that the decision and responsibility for raising the vessel from the water is now in the hands of the Romanian Maritime Authorities. Minor oil stains from the vessel's holds and machinery compartment were observed shortly after the vessel sank. Presently, there are no traces of oil spillage from the vessel's fuel tanks. Forty-two tons of bunker diesel oil still remain on board the vessel. Plans for raising the vessel have not been officially confirmed by the Romanian authorities. Understand 150 metres of oil containment booms have been deployed around the vessel in order to prevent and minimise any oil spillage. — Lloyd's Agents.

RED WING (Liberia)

Gothenburg, Dec 28 — Chemical/oil carrier *Red Wing* (4753 gt, built 2005) is aground at Landskrona, 3.6 km from shoreline at Vastflacket. No leakage so far reported and vessel expects a tug this evening to try to refloat the vessel. No injuries reported. — Westax Marine Service AB.

London, Dec 28 — Following received from Gothenburg MRCC, timed 1730, UTC: A report was received at 1145, UTC, that chemical/oil carrier *Red Wing*, cargo 5,700 tons naphtha, was aground in lat 55 50.8N, long 12 46E. Vessel was proceeding in northerly direction and went the wrong side of a buoy and grounded. No leakage reported. Coast Guard vessel 048 is on scene and tugs *Dunker* and *Kullen* have just arrived on scene.

Gothenburg, Dec 28 — Chemical/oil carrier *Red Wing* is loaded with approximately 5,700 tons of naphtha bound for Le Havre. Tugs *Dunker* and *Kullen*, from Helsingborg, have pulled now for an hour, without success. Vessel still aground. Expect increasing hard winds and heavy snow later this evening, but water level slightly improved. — Westax Marine Services AB.

Gothenburg, Dec 28 — Chemical/oil carrier *Red Wing* is still aground despite three hours attempt to refloat vessel. It has been decided to call in an extra tug and ETA for this unknown at the moment Vessel to proceed to yard at Helsingborg after vessel refloated. In Malmo right now the wind has increased and heavy snow after midnight and not easier for the vessel — Westax Marine Services AB.

Landskrona, Dec 29 — Chemical/oil carrier *Red Wing*, Kaliningrad to Le Havre, about 5700 tonnes Naphtha, grounded outside Landskrona noon time, Dec 28. Present situation: still aground. — Lloyd's Sub-agents.

Malmö, Dec 29 — Chemical/oil carrier *Red Wing*, loaded with 5,744 tonnes naphtha, grounded at Valgrundet, outside Landskrona, at 1221, local time, Dec 28. According to the Swedish maritime authorities, the vessel is still hard aground but no leakage has been observed. Two tugs tried to refloat the vessel overnight but were unsuccessful. A lightering vessel has been ordered. Divers will inspect the vessel's bottom today. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Dec 29 — Following received from Gothenburg MRCC, timed 1125, UTC: Chemical/oil carrier *Red Wing* remains aground; Coast Guard are on scene.

Helsingborg, Dec 29 — Chemical/oil carrier *Red Wing* grounded in the Oresund, off Landskrona, at noon, Dec 28. No injuries were reported, the vessel is not reported to be leaking and no oil spill has been observed. Attempts to refloat the vessel yesterday evening using tugs *Dunker* and *Kullen* were unsuccessful, and lightering of the vessel's cargo is scheduled for Dec 30. — Damco Survey AB.

**RICKMERS GENOA
Marshall Islands)**

London, Dec 28 — General cargo *Rickmers Dalian*, ex *Rickmers Genoa*, sailed Wilmington(DE) Dec 27 for Houston.

RODSHER (Latvia)

Zeebrugge, Dec 23 — General cargo *Rodsher*: The shipyard are still awaiting conformation to begin engine repairs. The vessel is expected to remain at the yard until the new year. — Lloyd's Sub-agents.

**ROSETHORN
(St. Vincent & Grenadines)**

London, Dec 27 — Following received from Gothenburg MRCC, timed 0827, UTC: General cargo *Rosethorn* (1213 gt, built 1982), bound Sandarne with quicklime, was reported anchored in lat 59 43.9N, long 19 38.9E, at 1515, local time, Dec 26, due to cooling system problems. The vessel is reportedly awaiting a tug from Tallinn.

London, Dec 28 — Following received from Gothenburg MRCC, timed 0930, UTC: General cargo *Rosethorn* was safely towed into Stockholm in the early hours of today. (See issue of Dec 28.)

London, Dec 29 — General cargo *Rosethorn* arrived Norrtälje in tow at 0330, Dec 28, for repairs. The vessel is expected to remain in port until Jan 3.

SHANGHAI PRIDE (Panama)

London, Dec 28 — A Svitzer Wijismuller Salvage BV report, dated Dec 20, states: Svitzer Wijismuller Salvage BV and partners Sri Lanka

Shipping Co yesterday, Dec 19 successfully guided the still semi-loaded general cargo *Shanghai Pride* into the Colombo dry dock, thereby effectively ending the salvage operations on the vessel that started at the end of November. In addition to the part discharge of the affected and condemned cargo which was done offshore, part of the cargo from the after-most hold No.5 was during the past two days transferred to the fore-most hold No.1 in order to satisfactory trim the casualty, bring stresses further under control and ensure dock-block pressures were within limits. The vessel subsequently was during yesterday afternoon moved into the dry dock where the salvage services terminated during the early evening of the same day upon the vessel being safely on the dock blocks.

SHINSEI MARU NO.3 (Japan)

London, Dec 28 — A press report, dated Dec 27, states: The police's National Fraud Squad wrapped up its investigation today into the September collision between the Israeli c.c. *Zim Asia* and Japanese fishing *Shinsei Maru No.3*, in which seven Japanese fishermen were killed. Police recommended indicting the ship's second officer, Pilastro Zdrako, a Serbian national with negligent homicide and the violation of Port Authority regulations. In the case of the ship's captain, Moshe Ben David, police said they found deficiencies in his performance but refrained from issuing a recommendation on whether he should be indicted. Police passed his file to the prosecution, which will make a final decision after reviewing the evidence. Police said the prosecution would have to decide if Ben David could be held responsible according to the Israeli Penal Code for the accident that occurred while his second officer was in command of the vessel. "According to the findings," police said, "the collision was caused during a non-routine manoeuvre that the *Zim Asia* made, while following an order made by the second officer who commanded the vessel at the time of the collision." During the investigation, police cleared the Zim Shipping Company of responsibility for the collision. Police added that the Japanese fishing boat did not take proper security measures to prevent the accident. Today the Tel Aviv District Court decided to release Zdrako to house arrest but extended an order preventing him from leaving the country until the end of January.

SITC BANGKOK (Turkey)

London, Dec 28 — A SMIT Salvage BV report states: In November c.c. *SITC Bangkok*, laden with 530 containers, ran aground on Depond Reef offshore Cambodia. Due to the grounding and bad weather on site the casualty ruptured several ballast tanks and two fuel tanks, causing some pollution. SMIT Salvage was contracted by the Turkish owners and underwriters basis LOF 2000 and immediately mobilised a 8,200 BHP

tug equipped with portable salvage and antipollution equipment to the grounding area. Immediately after the contract award, the salvage team started fighting the oil pollution. On arrival of the offshore workbarge *Smit Ibis* part of the containers were discharged into a chartered offloading vessel. After discharging the majority of the containerised cargo the casualty was refloated by a combination of pressurizing the damaged tanks and the pulling force of the salvage tug. After refloating temporary repairs were carried out and *SITC Bangkok* and its cargo were redelivered to its owners in Ho Chi Minh.

SKY SUN (U.S.A.)

London, Dec 23 — A press report, dated today, states: The owners of a 67-foot fishing vessel (fishing *Sky Sun*) that ran aground along the Puna Coast last week will be unable to salvage the vessel, and are making plans to remove the wreck. A spokeswoman for the state Department of Land and Natural Resources said natural hazards at the wreck site two miles south of Cape Kumukahi Point on the Big Island "might obstruct any seaward movement of the vessel, and so the decision was made to begin to look at the feasibility of a wreck removal." Contractors are preparing proposals to remove the vessel, which is stuck a half-mile north of Wai'opae Tidepools, a state Marine Life Conservation District. No date has been set for the removal.

London, Dec 28 — Following received from Coast Guard Honolulu, timed 0905, UTC: Fishing *Sky Sun* is to be removed piece-by-piece from the reef as refloating it intact is not possible.

SOUND OF ISLAY (Canada)

London, Dec 28 — Ro/ro *Sound of Islay* (280 gt, built 1968), with 10 persons on board, reported making contact with Burnside Rock in lat 48 43 05N, long 53 47 02W, at 2205, UTC, Dec 27, while in transit to St. Brendan's. Vessel turned around and returned to Burnside without further incident. Damage to the rudder suspected

SPRUCEGLEN (Canada)

London, Dec 22 — Following received from Coast Guard Cleveland, timed 2020, UTC: Bulk *Spruceglen* (22388 gt, built 1983), in ballast, was reported aground in the St.Lawrence Seaway, above the Eisenhower lock, following a loss of power, at 1547, UTC, today. Power has now been restored. There is no damage, no pollution and no injuries. The vessel is trying to refloat itself. (Note — *Spruceglen* was reported sailing Quebec about Dec 20.)

Troy, Michigan, Dec 22 — At 1600, today, it was reported that bulk *Spruceglen* has been freed and is now at the Wilson Hill Anchorage. — Greaty Lakes and Seaway Shipping News.

Troy, Michigan, Dec 23 — Bulk *Spruceglen* was freed with assistance from the tugs *Robinson Bay* and *Performance*. The vessel has been inspected and cleared to continue up the Seaway. At 1000 this morning the vessel was near Crossover Island in the St. Lawrence River. — Great Lakes and Seaway Shipping News.

London, Dec 25 — Bulk *Spruceglen* arrived Three Rivers Dec 24.

STEADFAST (Dominica)

See "Indonesia" under "Piracy."

STEEL TRADER (Panama)

Curacao, Dec 23 — General cargo *Steel Trader* was towed to Curacao and is now lying alongside Curacao Drydock Company. — Lloyd's Agents.

STEENBORG (Germany)

London, Dec 24 — General cargo *Steenborg* (718 gt, built 1967) ran aground at 0770, Dec 23, on the Harriersand, in the river Weser, near Brake. At 1750 hrs, the vessel was refloated by tugs and proceeded to Bremen. Cause of the grounding was a failure of the electricity.

SVIR (Russia)

London, Dec 24 — General cargo *Svir* arrived Tuzla Dec 16 from Rostov.

SYDSTRAUM (NIS)

London, Dec 28 — Following received from Aarhus MRCC, timed 1040, UTC: Chem.tank *Sydstraum* (1881 gt, built 1981), Gdynia for Antwerp, 1,500 tonnes alcohol UN1987, and 500 tonnes UN1120, grounded in lat 54 42.6N, long 10 56.4E at 0620, UTC, today. Vessel refloated by own means and is now anchored nearby, detained and awaiting inspection. The vessel is holed in a ballast tank. Coast Guard vessel on scene.

TAIHO MARU (Japan)

London, Dec 28 — Following notice to mariners issued at 0720, JST, today: Stranded product tanker *Taiho Maru*, 993 gt, (built 1993) removed. "Exists" (? from) lat 34 03.5N, long 132 27.3E.

TAMBORA (Philippines)

Manila, Dec 23 — The Philippine Coast Guard reported that Philippine-registered non specific tanker *Tambora* was drifting, abandoned and razed by fire off the coast of Limay, Bataan. The vessel was sighted by a Philippine Coast Guard search and rescue helicopter at around 1130 today. The aft portion of the vessel was gutted by fire and there was no sign of its crew of eight. There were, however, no traces of oil spill from the vessel, the Coast Guard added. The Coast Guard said that it had alerted tugs *Barbero*, *Rajah*, *Capella* and *Canopus* to take the vessel in tow and carry out search-and-rescue operations for the missing crew. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Manila, Dec 25 — The six crew members, not eight as earlier reported, of non specific tanker

Tambora (95 gt) remained missing Sunday (Dec 25) despite efforts by the Philippine Coast Guard to locate them. The tanker was sighted by a Coast Guard helicopter on Dec 23 off Limay, Bataan, drifting and abandoned by its crew. There were also signs of an onboard fire. The *Tambora* was en route to Lubang, Mindoro island from Manila when it was reported missing. The vessel has still not been recovered and is drifting off Limay, the Coast Guard reported. The tanker is owned by Manila-based White Gold Marine Services. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Manila, Dec 26 — Non specific tanker *Tambora* is feared to have sunk after Philippine Coast Guard search and rescue helicopters and tugs sent to retrieve the vessel failed to locate it. The vessel was sighted by a Coast Guard helicopter, drifting and abandoned by its crew along the coast of Limay, Bataan, on Dec 23. There were also signs of a fire on board. Several tugs were alerted to assist the vessel and a buoy was dropped to mark the area where the vessel was sighted. By the time the tugs arrived on Dec 24, neither the vessel nor its six-man crew could be located. A helicopter search also yielded no results. Coast Guard personnel suspect that the vessel could have sunk because of the stormy sea conditions prevailing in the area. The vessel was en route to Lubang, Mindoro island, from Manila when it was reported missing. The vessel is owned by Manila-based White Gold Marine Services. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Manila, Dec 28 — The Philippine Coast Guard reported that it had recovered today, what is believed to be the body of one of the missing crewmen of non specific tanker *Tambora*. The Coast Guard said that the body, which remains unidentified, was found floating off the coast of Bacoor, Cavite. Search and retrieval operations are continuing for the five remaining members of the *Tambora* crew, the Coast Guard said. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

TRACY (Canada)

London, Dec 22 — Icebreaker/tender *Tracy* (963 gt, built 1968) made contact with the bottom while manoeuvring off Cote Ste-Catherine dock in the St.Lawrence Seaway, in lat 45 24N, long 73 34W, at 1615, Dec 21. Damage not known.

TRANSMODAL (Argentina)

Buenos Aires, Dec 22 — Understand ro/ro *Transmodal* will be sailing this week. — Lloyd's Agents.

VERTIGO (Jamaica)

London, Dec 23 — Following received from Aarhus MRCC, timed 0901, UTC: Bulk *Vertigo* is still aground. Salvage operations are expected to begin this afternoon.

Copenhagen, Dec 23 — Underwater repairs to bulk *Vertigo* have been completed and the water is currently

being pumped out of the vessel. The vessel is expected to be refloated late tonight, after which it will be taken to Fredericia, ETA Dec 24. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Dec 26 — Following received from Aarhus MRCC, timed 0832, UTC: Bulk *Vertigo* has been refloated. The vessel arrived Fredericia Dec 25 and is presently undergoing a diver's inspection.

London, Dec 28 — A SvitzerWijsmuller Salvage BV report, dated Dec 26, states: As planned, SvitzerWijsmuller Salvage BV started pumping operations on the semi-sunk bulk *Vertigo* at 1400, local time, Dec 23. Pumps were started in earnest on holds No.3 and 4 after considerable pump tests executed upto that time had confirmed the patch to be sufficiently in place to allow a successful refloating operation. During the evening and night the pumping operation was continued until at about 0300, local time, Dec 24 the vessel started to refloat on its own keel again. The vessel thereupon was further secured and stabilised and at 1800, local time, same day the pumping operation was completed with *Vertigo* sufficiently secured to allow it to be towed to Fredericia. Upto that time it had been kept in position by the two anchors that had been brought out by the salvors and the SvitzerWijsmuller salvage tugs *Skuld*, *Penja* and *Preya*, which had been mobilised in to the site especially for the operation. After the vessel was released from its anchors the towage started along a pre-determined and well-planned route to Fredericia. The convoy arrived off Fredericia during the late afternoon Dec 25, and was berthed alongside at 1800, local time, same day. The vessel was redelivered back to its owners at 1200, local time, today.

VIBORG (Singapore)

Durban, Dec 28 — Bulk/c.c. *Viborg* (20578 gt, built 1971) arrived Port Elizabeth at approximately 1900, Dec 26. Upon entering the port at approximately 2100 hrs, the vessel was struck on the starboard side by tug *Chardonay* (430 gt, built 1980). According to *Viborg's* agent, the collision was apparently the result of *Chardonay* coming alongside *Viborg* at the incorrect angle and too high a speed. The section of *Chardonay* that made contact with *Viborg* was a sharp edged channel section on the bow, unprotected by any fenders. The sharp edge punctured a hole in the starboard side of *Viborg*, rupturing the heavy fuel tank. A small quantity of heavy fuel oil spilled into Port Elizabeth Harbour through the hole. The spillage was however contained by the local port authority's oil spillage team using floating barriers. Subsequent to the incident, *Viborg* berthed at the general cargo berth at Port Elizabeth Harbour. The affected heavy fuel tank has been pumped dry in order that repairs can be carried out. Understand from the agent that a Class Surveyor is due to attend on

Receive immediate notice as soon as a Casualty occurs. For further information please contact Andrew Luxton on +44 (0) 20 7017 4625.

board the vessel this afternoon, in advance of the repairs being carried out. It is anticipated that the repairs should be carried out and completed by Dec 30. — Lloyd's Agents.

VISPATAURINI (India)

Piraeus, Dec 28 — Tug *Wizard* safely towed c.c. *Vispataurini* into Suez about a week ago. — Atlas Salvage & Consultants Ltd.

VISTEN (Netherlands Antilles)

London, Dec 28 — General cargo *Visten*, which was towed to Tallinn Shipyard and drydocked Dec 6 with propeller damage, subsequently arrived Naantali Dec 24 and sailed Dec 26 for Ghent.

YEMEN STAR 1 (Ghana)

London, Dec 28 — Non specific tanker *Yemen Star 1* is Ghana flag, not Yemen as before reported.

YUE DA 28 (Panama)

Yokohama, Dec 26 — General cargo *Yue Da 28* is still aground in the same position and has sustained heavy damage to its engine room. Water ingress into the hold has also been observed, and five containers have reportedly been lost overboard. The vessel's master has declared General Average. Salvors report the vessel may be declared a constructive total loss. — Lloyd's Agents. (See issue of Dec 23.)

ZIM ASIA (Israel)

See *Shinsei Maru No.3.*

ZIM HOUSTON III (Antigua & Barbuda)

Kingston, JA, Dec 23 — Understand c.c. *Zim Houston III* restarted its engines and is proceeding to Kingston under its own power, ETA 1300 today. — Lloyd's Agents.



INDONESIA

Barking, Dec 28 — A report from the IMB's Piracy Reporting Centre in Kuala Lumpur, dated Dec 25, states: Chemical/oil carrier *Steadfast*, hijacked by pirates shortly after the cargo was loaded and the voyage commenced, has been recovered as a result of co-ordinated actions by law enforcement agencies in South-East Asia. The *Steadfast* loaded a cargo of 16,585 tonnes of vegetable oil at Palembang and sailed for China Dec 18. The last message received by the owners from the vessel was on Dec 19. Inability to contact it suggested a hijacking had occurred. The IMB's Piracy Reporting Centre (PRC) immediately sent out alerts to all vessels and authorities in the region. Intelligence received by the owners and the PRC suggested that the vessel was headed towards Vietnam

or Cambodia. The PRC worked closely with the Vietnamese, Cambodian and Singapore authorities and the Indonesian Navy providing them with timely information to seize the vessel if it entered territorial waters. The vessel turned back towards Indonesia and the pirates finally left the vessel Dec 24 in Indonesian waters. The master brought the vessel safely back to Singapore, arriving there at 1330, Dec 24. The Singapore authorities are investigating. The 25 crew, cargo and vessel are safe. This was the first case this year where a tanker of this size was hijacked, in an attempt to steal the vessel and the cargo. Capt Pottengal Mukundan, Director of the IMB, commented that: "It was vital the authorities deal with this hijacking effectively to deter further attacks of this kind. We congratulate the law enforcement agencies, particularly the Indonesian Navy for their prompt and positive support. We believe it was the actions taken by them which dissuaded the pirates from proceeding with the illegal discharge of the cargo." — International Maritime Bureau.

SOMALIA

London, Dec 23 — General cargo *Laemthong Glory* arrived Hodeidah dec 15.



REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

London, Dec 23 — A press report, dated today, states: Following an inspection by Department of the Marine officials this morning, Irish Ferries has confirmed that the order detaining its passenger ro/ro *Normandy* in Rosslare Harbour has now been lifted. The vessel will resume scheduled sailings following the Christmas break departing Rosslare to Cherbourg on Tuesday (Dec 27).



AFRICAN PRIDE (Panama)

London, Dec 29 — A press report, dated Dec 28, states: An aircraft carrying Russian sailors from product tanker *African Pride*, held in a Nigerian prison for almost two years, arrived at Moscow's Sheremetyevo 2 Airport at 0515 today. Relatives, Russian diplomats and UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador Ara Abramyan were there to welcome the sailors. The ambassador said the sailors were planning to meet with Patriarch Alexy II of Moscow and All Russia and speak to journalists later in the day.

The third assistant to the vessel's master said the crew was doing well. Abramyan said the sailors would have to undergo medical examinations. He also said the crew might bring a case against Nigeria. The crew members of the vessel, which was found laden with suspected stolen oil 31 miles off Nigeria's coast in October, 2003, were imprisoned in the country for nearly two years before being released on bail in September. The delays in their court case strained diplomatic relations between Russia and Nigeria.

AUDREY

Manila, Dec 29 — Ghanian-flagged tug *Audrey* and its remaining crew of four Filipinos have finally been allowed to dock at Al Jazeera port after more than a year of being detained off the port, the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs reported yesterday. The vessel will be put up for auction as ordered by a Bahraini court. It is unclear, however, if the crew would be paid their outstanding salaries of US\$17,000 dollars. The vessel, owned by Filipino Richard V Jorge, whose company RVJ Shipping is based in Ajman, UAE, arrived in Bahrain waters on Dec 14, 2004 with a nine-member crew. Shortly after docking at Al Jazeera port, she was ordered detained by a Bahrain court because of a financial dispute between Mr Jorge and the Dubai-based company Inventa General Trading, which chartered the *Audrey*. Inventa claimed *Audrey*, which was chartered to tow Inventa's tug boat from Kuwait to Dubai for repairs, failed to complete the towing service. RVJ, on the other hand, claimed that it encountered engine trouble on the high seas, preventing it from completing its charter contract. After the court ruled to have the *Audrey* detained, it was moved in March from a mooring buoy to an anchorage off Al-Jazeera port. Four crew members opted to return home to the Philippines but five chose to stay with their vessel for the duration of the court case to ensure that they would be paid their overdue salaries. Refused re-entry into Bahrain after their vessel was towed to sea, the four were stranded with little food and water. Humanitarian aid provided by the tugboat's agent, the Gulf Agency Company (GAC), and the Bahrain International Seafarers' Society (BISS) enable the five to survive. In March, however, the crew was reduced to four, when the tugboat's chief cook suffered a massive heart attack and died. The crew was finally allowed on dry land after the Bahraini court ruled in favour of the tugboat's charterer in December. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

HISTRIA TOPAZ (Romania)

London, Dec 23 — Product tanker *Histria Topaz* sailed Rotterdam Dec 16.

NEPTUNIA MEDITERRANEO (Brazil)

See under "Marine."

PAN YUN BO 1 (China)

London, Dec 23 — General cargo *Pan Yun Bo 1* is still at Western Anchorage No.1, Hong Kong, under detention.

SEA EMPEROR (Georgia)

London, Dec 23 — A press report, dated Dec 24, states: The Kerala High Court yesterday permitted Cochin Port authorities to release bulk *Sea Emperor*, detained earlier as per the interim order of the high court. The petitioners, LID Oil Petrol Company, Liberia, and C K P Enterprises, Cyprus, filed a statement before the court to the effect that their dispute with the vessel owners had been settled and an amount of Rs 1.5 crore had been received to settle their claim. Earlier, the petitioners had moved the court to seize the vessel, submitting that M/S Trans Marine Shipping Company, owners of *Sea Emperor*, defaulted on payment on account of the purchase of oil, water and other materials. Taking note of the settlement, Mr Justice K Balakrishnan Nair said the vessel need not be detained further.

water supplied to the city meets all the norms. The Rospotrebnadzor consumer rights watchdog has reported that the quality of drinking water "is now higher than ever before." This comes because of additional purification of water by activated charcoal. As specialists have forecasted, contaminated water is intensively diluted at all sections of the Amur River. On Jan 2 or 3, the slick will reach Amursk. However, no emergency situation is expected when the toxic slick flows past the city as well as when it flows past Komsomolsk-on-Amur. Both cities are ready for the situation. Specialists say there will be no cuts-off of cold and hot water supply to these cities.

OSLO FJORD, NORWAY

London, Dec 25 — A press report, dated Dec 24, states: Crews from Oslo's fire department, its water and sewage department and the police were working Thursday (Dec 22) to find the source of an oil spill at the mouth of the Aker River. Equipment to contain the oil was laid out in the area where the river enters the inner Oslo Fjord at Bjrvika. Emergency crews were also considering using chemicals that could help send the oil to the bottom of the fjord. The leaking substance was believed to be heating oil, and it was first discovered seeping into the fjord late Thursday morning. "There's been a lot of oil coming out," said Jan Vestlie of the fire department. "We're looking for the source, but haven't found it yet." Suspicions initially turned to the construction area where Oslo's new Opera House is being built at Bjrvika, but there were no indications of any leaks there.

with bills running into many hundreds of thousands of dollars. Both shires have been hit by two storms. Chief executive John Costello says Indigo Shire Council's claim could run to \$1.75 million to account for damage in the shire. He says the clean-up will continue for months in some shires. Mr Costello says he expects the cost of the latest wind storm in the Yackandandah area to exceed the earlier flooding in Chiltern. "In round figures, about \$750,000 around the Chiltern episode - we lost three bridges in that which were a quite substantial cost there," he said. "In the second storm, with the wind damage, it's really just a long, hard slog in clearing up the masses of timber. "There's only, say, in some roads, 30% of the vegetation's left so it's a massive clear-up cost.

CANADA

Troy, Michigan, Dec 24 — The number of vessels in the canal or waiting to enter the canal has grown to 23 overnight. Several vessels have cleared the system, but addition vessels have gotten in line. The current "last in line" is down bound *BBC California*. It is in the Port Colborne Anchorage with an estimated arrival at Lock 8 of Dec 31. — Great Lakes and Seaway Shipping News.

Troy, Michigan, Dec 24 — As of 0900 the St. Marys River was closed due to dense fog. Two down bound vessels were tied below the locks. — Great Lakes and Seaway Shipping News.

London, Dec 27 — A press report, dated Dec 26, states: Strong winds have knocked out power to about 60,000 homes and businesses in south-western Quebec, as a major winter storm begins to buffet Eastern Canada. Clouds in association with a storm system spread from the Mid-Atlantic north-eastward through the North-east and hit Monteregie region south-west of Montreal early today, causing total blackouts in several towns between Saint-Hyacinthe and Saint-Jean-Richelieu. Hydro-Quebec spokeswoman Helene Perrault told the Canadian Press that high winds were to blame. She said crews hadn't been able to find any broken equipment, so they weren't sure when the power would be restored. Freezing rain and snow forced police to shut down several highways and roads in the province. The storm had started to move into New Brunswick, where as much as 60 cm of snow were expected. At 1700, AST, freezing drizzle had begun to pelt Fredericton. In Prince Edward Island, estimated 90 km/h winds from the north-east have triggered a storm surge warning, with 40 mm to 60 mm of rain expected. The northern peninsula of Newfoundland and coastal Labrador was under a blizzard warning, with 40 cm of snow expected.

CONGO

Brazzaville, Dec 26 — Rain storms, floods and mudslides have left thousands of people homeless in the

Pollution



BEI RIVER, GUANGDONG PROVINCE, CHINA

London, Dec 22 — A press report, dated today, states: A second Chinese city stopped drawing drinking water from a southern river after a toxic spill, the government said today, as the business centre of Guangzhou rushed to protect water supplies to its seven million people. The area hit by the spill is one of China's most densely populated and is home to thousands of factories that form the heart of the country's booming export industries. The city of Yingde, upstream from Guangzhou, stopped using water from the Bei late yesterday, the official Xinhua News Agency said. It said the city of 210,000 people switched to supplies drawn from a nearby reservoir through a hastily installed 1.6-kilometre-long pipe. The move came after Xinhua said Guangzhou and the nearby city of Foshan were ordered to "start emergency plans to ensure safe drinking water supplies." (See issue of Dec 23.)

London, Dec 29 — A press report, dated today, states: An alert regime, enforced in Russia's city of Khabarovsk because of a poisonous slick from Songhua River, is lifted starting from today, the regional government reported. The decision was taken by the Khabarovsk region commission for emergency situations. Residues of "the Songhua slick" will today leave behind the Amur River section flowing through the Khabarovsk city. The concentration of nitrobenzene is slightly above the maximum allowable level. Drinking

Weather & Navigation



AUSTRALIA

London, Dec 28 — A press report, dated today, states: Councils in southern New South Wales and north-east Victoria are claiming around \$5 million in damages and clean-up costs caused by storms over the past four months. The violent downpours and freak wind storms left trails of damage across urban and rural areas from late August until early this month. The councils are finalising their claims to the Victorian and New South Wales Governments for the cost of cleaning up and fixing roads, culverts and bridges. Most claims by the southern Riverina and Victorian councils range from \$100,000 to close to \$1 million, not taking in the costs of repairs to electricity supplies, telephone services and state and federally controlled roads. In Albury, a storm early this month brought the most severe wind damage ever recorded. Most councils, such as Indigo and Towong shires, are faced

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Congo Republic capital Brazzaville, local officials said today. A young boy was reported killed during heavy rain at the weekend (Dec 24-25) which caused extensive damage to homes in poor, heavily-populated districts north of the city. In Maman Mbouale district, houses built illegally on hillsides were swept away by a mudslide which trapped some residents in their houses for hours until they could be rescued by neighbours, residents said. Flood waters rose as high as four metres in another part of town, Mpila, where some residents said they only escaped with their lives by climbing onto the roofs of houses. Residents said the district was subject to regular flooding which was exacerbated by a lack of storm drains. — Reuters.

EUROPE

London, Dec 29 — A press report, dated today, states: Europe is shivering in the grip of an icy cold snap, with France hardest-hit by blizzards that have cut rail and road links and left thousands of motorists stranded in sub-zero temperatures. Snowstorms caused hundreds of train cancellations in Britain and flight disruptions in Germany, Sweden and Portugal. They also brought road chaos to Italy, Austria and the Czech Republic. Worst hit was north-eastern France, where 5,000 to 10,000 people spent a chilly night behind the wheel after traffic ground to a halt on a stretch of motorway between the towns of Toul and Nancy. In the north-western Manche department, 300 to 400 people were taken into shelters for the night, after deep snow caused a string of truck accidents that blocked access for snow-clearance workers. All high-speed train services between Paris, Lyon, Marseille and Montpellier were suffering delays of one to two hours after drivers were ordered to cut their speed for safety reasons. Below-freezing conditions have gripped northern Europe for several days, with night-time temperatures falling as low as minus 15 degrees Celsius in places. Snowfall in the eastern half of England forced hundreds of trains to be cancelled. Forecasters predicted up to 25 centimetres of snow could fall in eastern Scotland and north-east England overnight. More blizzards and strong winds were expected overnight in both Sweden and Denmark. In the Czech Republic, the highway linking Prague to the country's second city Brno was closed for several hours yesterday morning after a collision involving four lorries in thick snow. The road link from Brno to the Austrian capital Vienna was also shut down after a Polish truck carrying four tonnes of wood crashed into an embankment in snowy weather. In northern Italy, heavy snowfall also caused the closure of highway links to south-eastern France. In Turkey, where the cold has claimed four lives this week, temperatures plummeted overnight to minus 31 degrees Celsius in the

eastern mountain area of Agri. More than 1,000 villages remained cut off by deep snow that blocked access to some 3,300 hamlets earlier this week. Further west, bad weather and strong winds disrupted air traffic on the Portuguese island of Madeira.

INDIA

London, Dec 25 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: A thick blanket of fog and cold wave conditions gripped the capital New Delhi today, severely affecting air, rail and road traffic. As mercury dipped slightly to 7.5 degrees Celsius on Saturday morning, fog enveloped the city reducing visibility on the runway to less than 100 metres. Not a single flight was able to take off or land at the IGI airport between 0200 hrs and 0900 hrs, said airport sources. Nearly 40 flights, including some plying on international routes, of Indian airlines, Jet Airways, Air Deccan and Air Sahara have been delayed. Flights of several international airlines, including Luftansa, could not land at Delhi airport and had to be diverted. Trains too have been running behind schedule with the Ambala-bound Unchahar Express, which reaches New Delhi at 0515 hrs getting delayed due to fog by over seven hours, northern railway officials said. The foggy conditions are expected to continue till around noon and temperatures likely to stay at about 16 degrees Celsius.

ITALY

London, Dec 28 — A SMIT Salvage BV report, states: General cargo *Margaret* sank outside the breakwater of La Spezia port on Dec 3. After having conducted a diving inspection SMIT was contracted to remove the approximately 90 tonnes of oil from the double bottom tanks. The oil recovery will be executed with the hot-tap technology, which is designed by SMIT. The hot-tap technology guarantees a spill free extraction of any contained fluids either above or underwater. As the hot-tap equipment is light in weight and easy to transport, this technology is the best tool for arranging for the immediate transfer of bunkers from vessels run aground or sunk. On each tank two valves will be installed one on the bottom and one on the top of the tank. On arrival of the salvage craft the workbarge will be moored with two anchors to the seaside and two mooring lines to the breakwater side to keep it steady during the bunker removal operation. The operation is expected to be completed within 10 days.

JAPAN

London, Dec 25 — Heavy snow continued to blanket wide areas of Japan, particularly the Sea of Japan coastal region, yesterday, killing five people and snarling public transportation systems. A cold air mass that flowed into northern Japan brought snow - although the cold weakened in the afternoon, the Japan

Meteorological Agency said. All Nippon Airways and Japan Airlines cancelled more than 30 flights including those between Haneda and Toyama airports and Haneda and Izumo airports, the airlines said. The heavy snow, coupled with a strong earthquake which hit wide areas centering on Nagoya yesterday morning, caused an up to 87-minute delay to the operations of Shinkansen bullet trains. As of 1700 hrs, some mountainous areas in Niigata, Gifu, Nagano and Fukushima prefectures had more than 2 metres of snow, including Tsunan, Niigata Prefecture, with 285 centimetres, the village of Shirakawa in Gifu with 253 cm, and Ono in Fukui with 237 cm, the agency said. Morioka, Iwate Prefecture, had 61 cm of snow, surpassing a December record there for the first time in 29 years, it said.

MOROCCO

London, Dec 25 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: Torrential rains have flooded parts of the normally dry and desert Western Sahara, cutting off the main town of Laayoune, local authorities and residents said. Water up to one metre deep had inundated houses and cut roads in and around the city after several days of downpours, they said. Residents shown on television called on the authorities to supply aid and reopen the main road to southern Morocco.

THAILAND

London, Dec 28 — A press report, dated Dec 27, states: A series of devastating floods which have devastated many provinces in Thailand's South has caused over Bt500 million, US\$12.5 million, in damage, with 26 deaths, while an urgent recovery effort is under way, said Interior Minister Kongsak Wanthana. The Interior Minister today reported to the Cabinet that eight southern provinces have been severely affected by the floods for almost two months. The flood losses have included many deaths, injuries and extensive property damage. The reported death toll is now at 26. Eight people were killed by mudslides in Songkhla province, while the other fatalities were mainly children in other provinces who drowned while splashing and playing with water. Air Chief Marshal Kongsak said that the current Bt500 million budget for relief operations may be insufficient; so the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation will give more financial help for all eight provinces, boosting the total budget for emergency relief efforts to Bt800 million, which he said would be sufficient for the current need. The urgent recovery efforts by state agencies concerned are now under way, including restoring and rebuilding infrastructure, local resident's homes and farmland, he said. In addition to the flood-affected population in the South, relief efforts for those suffering the cold weather,

especially in the North and the Northeast, are also proceeding. Blankets and clothing have been distributed in many rural areas, and, ACM Kongsak said, the prime minister himself might visit rural villages to distribute emergency supplies — clothing and blankets—to low-income people himself during the New Year holidays.

TROPICAL STORM “KAJIKI”

Manila, Dec 22 — The Philippine Coast Guard reported today that a total of 15 drums or 3,000 litres had leaked from *Napocor Power Barge No.106*. The resulting oil spill had reached Semirara island, affecting one-and-a-half kilometres of mangrove shoreline. The environmental impact would have been much worse except for the containment efforts by salvors Malayan Towage and Salvage Co. The Malayan Towage tug *Maranaw* had reached the barge on Tuesday (Dec 20) and installed oil booms and dispersants to contain the oil spill around the vessel. — Lloyd’s List Correspondent.

Manila, Dec 23 — Efforts to tow barge *Napocor Power Barge No.106* to deeper waters were thwarted today by heavy rains and powerful waves. The barge, which ran aground off Semirara island on Dec 18, was scheduled to be towed to deeper waters today to enable divers to carry out an underwater hull inspection. The operation was to have started with the arrival at 1330 hrs of a salvage tug and salvage barge *Atlas* in the vicinity of the grounding. However, the towing operation was postponed until weather conditions improve. The Philippine Coast Guard has commissioned Malayan Towage and Salvage Co to repair the barge and contain the oil leak from the vessel’s fractured bottom hull. — Lloyd’s List Correspondent.

Manila, Dec 26 — Salvage tugs were unable to free the grounded barge *Napocor Power Barge No.106*, the Philippine Coast Guard reported today. Tugs attempted to pull the barge to deeper waters Dec 24 but could only move it a few metres. The barge remained firmly embedded in the rocks and sand of Semirara island. Stormy sea conditions also prevented an underwater survey and the transfer of bunker fuel from the barge to an oil storage barge which is on standby. The oil leak from *Napocor Power Barge No.106* has been reduced considerably, however, because water pumped into the storage tanks has forced most of the oil to float to the surface, the Coast Guard said. — Lloyd’s List Correspondent.

London, Dec 28 — Barge *Napocor Power Barge No.106* and tug *Napocor tugboat No.1* were yesterday still grounded amid bad weather despite efforts to tow them into deeper water.

Manila, Dec 29 — Salvage tugs of Malayan Towage and Salvage Co. were finally able to free and refloat barge *Napocor Power Barge No.106* afternoon of Dec 28. The barge was

towed to a safe anchorage off Mindoro island, about 10 miles north of Semirara island. Salvors are now patching up the holes in the barge’s hull, Malayan Towage officials said. The barge will be towed to Batangas port upon completion of repairs. Salvors have also decided not to unload the bunker fuel carried by the barge as oil is no longer leaking from the vessel. — Lloyd’s List Correspondent.

UNITED STATES

London, Dec 29 — A press report, dated Dec 28, states: A drenching winter storm swelled rivers in northern California to their highest levels in seven years, causing power outages and forcing some residents to evacuate. Flood warnings were in effect for the northern half of the state after the storm swept through yesterday and today. One person was killed in a car crash caused by a mudslide. “It’s been several years since we’ve had flooding this widespread, and we’re not done,” said Rob Hartman of the National Weather Service’s California-Nevada River Forecast Centre in Sacramento. The last significant flooding in the region was during the El Nino year of 1998 and a year earlier, when three people died after levees collapsed north of Sacramento. The danger is lower this time because there is relatively little snow in the Sierra Nevada to be melted by the warm rains, officials said. In Modesto, a mudslide led to a pileup that killed a motorist on Monday (Dec 26). In Mendocino County, four homes were evacuated after a landslide last night. Rivers were cresting from the Napa County wine country to the far northern coast, including the Russian, Navarro, Scott, Klamath and Eel rivers. They were expected to rise to flood stage periodically through the weekend without causing severe damage. “We’re getting an early start on the rain-and-snow season, which is good as long as we don’t get flooding,” said Don Strickland, a spokesman for the state Department of Water Resources. Federal and state water managers were releasing torrents of water at the Oroville and Folsom dams, but both reservoirs had plenty of capacity to handle additional runoff, officials said. More storms were forecast for Friday through the New Year’s weekend. The system was expected to spread farther south by Saturday and potentially cause mudslides and flash floods in recently burned areas of Southern California, Hartman said.

Earthquakes



ECUADOR

London, Dec 25 — A magnitude 5.7 earthquake occurred in Ecuador at 2147, UTC, Dec 23.

JAPAN REGION

London, Dec 26 — A press report, dated today, states: A moderate earthquake occurred at 1348, UTC, today. The magnitude 5.8 event has been located in the Bonin Islands, Japan region, lat 26 85N, long 140 62E. The hypocentral depth was estimated to be 85 km.

Volcanic Activity



MOUNT POPOCATEPETL, MEXICO

London, Dec 26 — A press report, dated Dec 25, states: Mexico’s Popocatepetl volcano staged a spectacular pre-dawn explosion today, sending a column of ash two miles into the air and spewing red-hot lava. There were no reports of ash raining down or any other threat to nearby communities, Mexico’s National Disaster Prevention Centre reported. The explosion was the latest in a series of moderate eruptions from the 17,886-foot volcano located 40 miles south-east of the Mexican capital. The volcano has been erupting intermittently since December, 1994. In July, it sent a column of hot ash more than a mile into the air and spat red-hot rocks but did not threaten residents living at the base.

VOLCANO OF FIRE, GUATEMALA

London, Dec 29 — A press report, dated Dec 28, states: Guatemala’s Volcano of Fire belched more ash and lava today and continued raining debris on nearby villages, one day after it began erupting. Civil protection officials said various explosions in the volcano sent up columns of ash 150 metres high and caused two lava flows, one extending nearly 1.5 km down the mountainside. Nearby residents were in no immediate danger, however, and the volcanic activity was slowing. No one was evacuated from 78 communities around the volcano, where about 25,000 people live, authorities said. “The activity began declining from about 0400 hrs, but the expulsion of ash and lava and explosions continue,” said Gustavo Chigna, a scientist at the Volcano Institute. The volcano, among the most active of 33 in Guatemala, stands 60 km south-west of Guatemala’s capital and its peak is about 3,700 metres above sea level.

Political & Civil Unrest



COLOMBIA

London, Dec 28 — A press report, dated today, states: At least 24

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Colombian soldiers have been killed as FARC rebels ambush an Army contingent monitoring efforts to eradicate illegal crops in central-eastern Colombia. A military spokesman says the soldiers have been attacked 280 km south-east of Bogota by rebels of Front 45 of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia. It was the most deadly attack by FARC rebels this year, and part of a campaign of attacks launched by the group since early December on roads in the country's north-east. Some politicians say the rebels have stepped up their attacks to defend their countryside influence in advance of the coming legislative and presidential elections in 2006.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

London, Dec 28 — A press report, dated Dec 27, states: About 40 people have been killed in fighting between United Nations backed troops and Ugandan rebels in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). One Indian peacekeeper and three Congolese troops are among those killed when rebels launched a counter-attack against the UN-backed force in the eastern DRC district of north Kivu. The UN has launched a major offensive to try to drive out militia groups who are terrorising local villagers. The operation involves 3,500 Congolese troops supported by 600 UN peacekeepers. Another 3,500 troops are searching out militias in the nearby region of Ituri. It appears that a referendum held last week will result in a new constitution and elections in the DRC. The UN is trying to bring peace to the area before the poll.

INDIA

Bangalore, Dec 29 — Indian police stepped up patrols in the southern technology hub of Bangalore today after a professor was shot dead and four other people wounded at a top science university in what authorities said was an attack by suspected anti-India militants. Officials did not offer any clue as to the identity of the gunman who left behind a hand grenade after the shootings outside a conference hall at the Indian Institute of Science but said events indicated it was a terror attack. India's capital, New Delhi, and the financial centre of Mumbai have been hit by such attacks before but the shootings yesterday is a rare event in the south. The professor, three other academics and a laboratory technician had just attended a seminar when they were shot from a range of 10-20 yards. The attack appeared to be "a pre-planned terrorist activity", involving up to three persons, said Dharam Singh, chief minister of Karnataka state where Bangalore is the capital. "This is the first time this has happened," Singh said after an emergency meeting with security officials. He said the attack posed no threat to investment in Bangalore. "The intention is to create fear and

demoralisation," said Singh, who added that protection for information technology and biotechnology companies would be stepped up with increased police patrols in the streets. — Reuters.

INDONESIA

London, Dec 28 — A press report, dated today, states: Rebels in Indonesia's tsunami-ravaged Aceh province formally disbanded their armed wing yesterday, ending a 29-year struggle for independence that killed thousands so the movement could participate in elections next year. Free Aceh Movement fighters returned to peace talks with the government after mammoth waves crashed into Aceh's coastlines a year ago, leaving at least 156,000 of the province's people dead or missing and a half-million more homeless. The two sides signed an accord in August, and the rebels last week finished handing over their self-declared 840 weapons. Yesterday's disbanding was the next major step under the plan, and it carried large symbolic weight. "The armed wing of the Free Aceh Movement has demobilized and disbanded," said rebel commander Sofyan Daud, effectively ending the separatist insurgency that has killed at least 15,000 people since 1976. "The Aceh national army is now part of civil society, and will work to make the peace deal a success," he said after meeting with President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono in the provincial capital, Banda Aceh. "We are entering a political era now. We do not need weapons anymore." Instead, the guerrillas will participate in April elections in this province of 4 million people on the northern tip of Sumatra island. Yudhoyono renewed his government's pledge to complete the withdrawal of more than 24,000 troops from Aceh by Dec 31. In a tsunami commemoration speech a day earlier, he said the deal was "an example of how a new hope for peace can emerge out of the ruin of destruction." The magnitude-9.0 earthquake that ripped apart the ocean floor off Sumatra island on Dec. 26, 2004, killed or left missing more than 216,000 people in 12 nations. But Aceh was hardest hit, and as tens of thousand of corpses began piling up on the road in the disaster's aftermath, the rebels and the government decided they did not want to add to people's suffering. When they returned to the negotiating table in Finland, both sides made concessions. The rebels agreed to hand over their weapons and, in an about-face, gave up their demand for independence. The government vowed to withdraw more than half of its nearly 50,000 garrison from Aceh and to give the region limited self-government and control over 70 percent of the oil- and gas-rich province's mineral wealth. So far, the deal has stuck with the help of international peace monitors.

IRAQ

Baquba, Dec 26 — Guerrillas opened fire on a checkpoint north of Baghdad today, killing five Iraqi policemen and wounding three others, police said. Six guerrillas were killed when police officers returned fire in the early morning attack in Buhriz, about 60 km from Baghdad, police said. Violence in Iraq has surged in the past few days after a lull in attacks earlier this month during parliamentary elections, partly due to an informal truce by some Sunni Arab insurgent groups and strict security measures at the time. The attack followed a major assault on Iraqi security forces on Friday (Dec 23) when guerrillas stormed an army post, killing 10 soldiers and wounding 20. — Reuters.

Baghdad, Dec 26 — Guerrillas killed 10 Iraqi policemen and soldiers in attacks north of Baghdad today, while the capital itself was rocked by five major explosions that left at least eight dead. It was one of the bloodiest days in Iraq since the largely peaceful election on Dec 15, when rival ethnic and sectarian groups took part in a vote for a new parliament. By nightfall, at least 20 people had been killed and over 40 injured. In the capital, five people were killed and 15 wounded when four car bombs exploded in quick succession as civilians travelled to work in the morning, the US military said. Later a parked motorbike loaded with explosives blew up in a market in a Shi'ite neighbourhood of Baghdad, killing at least three people and wounding 23 others, police said. Iraqi police and soldiers bore the brunt of other attacks. In the second major assault on Iraqi security forces in four days, guerrillas stormed a police checkpoint north of Baghdad, killing five policemen and wounding four. Al-Qaeda's wing in Iraq claimed responsibility. It said it killed or injured all 20 policemen present — differing from police accounts. The attack seemed to have been carefully planned and staged. Gunmen jumped out of a minibus and started firing mortar rounds and rocket-propelled grenades at the checkpoint in Buhriz, a small town about 60 km from the capital, police said. As they got closer, they also began hurling hand-grenades. At least six guerrillas were killed in several hours of ensuing clashes, police said. A main road leading to the checkpoint was also laid with roadside bombs, delaying backup police forces sent in to help. "They attacked us from all sides," said one police officer at the scene. He said he saw at least 10 guerrillas killed. Further north, in the small village of Dhabab, gunmen shot dead five Iraqi army soldiers in separate, but apparently co-ordinated, attacks as they left for work or went about their morning routine, the army said. In Falluja, a suicide bomber threw grenades at police recruits outside a training centre, killing two before detonating his explosive belt and killing himself, police said. The

governor of restive Diyala Province was wounded in an assassination bid today when a makeshift bomb hidden in a cigarette kiosk exploded near his motorcade, his office said. His driver was also wounded and an aide was killed. Al-Qaeda claimed responsibility for this attack too. On Christmas Day, at least five Iraqis and two US soldiers were killed in car bomb explosions and mortar attacks. The bloodshed came after partial parliamentary election results threatened to deepen severe sectarian divisions. The results show the incumbent Shi'ite Islamic bloc in a strong lead in crucial areas like Baghdad, despite a large turnout by Sunni Arabs who had boycotted a previous vote. The United Iraqi Alliance — the largest bloc in the Shi'ite and Kurdish-led government — is expected to clinch about 130 of the 275 available seats, based on the latest election data. Thousands of Sunni Arabs have taken to the streets in recent days, protesting over the results and demanding fresh elections. — Reuters.

Baghdad, Dec 29 — A suicide bomber, wearing a police uniform, killed four Iraqi policemen and wounded five at checkpoint close to the interior ministry in Baghdad today, police said. "He was wearing an explosive belt. He approached the checkpoint as police cars were entering the ministry, then he blew himself up," a police source said. — Reuters.

Baghdad, Dec 29 — US fighter jets dropped two 500-pound bombs on a village in northern Iraq, killing 10 Iraqis they suspected of planting explosive devices on a nearby road, the US military said today. The incident occurred on Tuesday (Dec 27) in a small village near the town of Hawija, 50 km south-west of Kirkuk, the military said. The pilots were flying a routine patrol when they saw three men digging holes by the side of major road and planting bombs in them, a statement said. When they heard the aircraft overhead, the men jumped in a car and fled. They were soon joined by another car as the jets tracked them. They drove the cars into the village and tried to hide by parking between two buildings, the statement said. The pilots then dropped two 500-pound laser-guided bombs. "They were able to destroy the vehicles while causing only minimal damage to surrounding structures," the military said. US soldiers later raided the village and found assault rifles, a machine gun and bomb-making equipment in houses near the site of the air strike. They said they also found a bomb by the side of the road where the men were first spotted. — Reuters.

ISRAEL

Gaza, Dec 26 — The Israeli army fired artillery rounds into fields in the Gaza Strip today after militants slammed two rockets into Israel, Israeli and Palestinian security officials said. There were no

casualties from the Israeli artillery fire which followed a threat by Israeli leaders to intensify air strikes inside Gaza to enforce a buffer zone aimed at curbing militant rocket fire. "Following the launching of Qassam rockets and mortar shells at Israeli targets, the Israeli army is now responding with artillery fire into an open area in the northern Gaza Strip from where Palestinians have been launching rockets," an army statement said. Palestinians in Gaza said the army fired three shells which landed near a farm in the northern Gaza Strip, causing no injuries. Earlier in the day, militants fired two rockets into Israel. One landed next to a kindergarten in a farming community near the Gaza Strip and the other landed near a village, south of the coastal city of Ashkelon, Israeli radio stations reported. No one was hurt in the rocket strikes. — Reuters.

Gaza, Dec 27 — Israeli warplanes hit targets in the Gaza Strip early today as Israel followed through on a threat to enforce a buffer zone in the northern Gaza Strip to stop militant rocket fire at Israel. Helicopter gunships and fighter jets struck at least nine targets, cutting off electricity to a town in northern Gaza and cutting deep craters in half a dozen roads. The Israeli army said it targeted two offices in Gaza used by the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, an armed group in President Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah faction, to plan attacks, and a bridge used to reach an area to fire rockets at Israel. There were no casualties in the attacks which came after Israeli leaders vowed to intensify air strikes against militant targets in Gaza to halt rocket fire. Early today after two rocket strikes on farming communities in Israel, helicopters launched the first assaults and warplanes broke the sound barrier over Gaza. "Both buildings hit in the strikes are used by the al-Aqsa brigades which is involved both in planning and firing rockets at Israel," an army spokeswoman said. The north Gaza town of Beit Lahiya lost electric supply and half a dozen roads and a bridge were badly damaged by deep craters, witnesses said. The makeshift rockets fired by Gaza militants rarely cause casualties, but could complicate Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's campaign for re-election in a March ballot on the strength of a Gaza pullout he had said would boost Israel's security. The Haaretz newspaper said the army would "take more aggressive action in northern Gaza," and carve out a so-called security zone to prevent rocket firing from northern Gaza. The Israeli army has been given the go-ahead to enforce a no-go zone near the Gaza border with Israel and has urged Palestinian police to evacuate positions. Palestinian officials have rejected the move and ordered their forces to remain. Gunmen in Gaza have continued rocket fire despite Israel's withdrawal from Gaza after 38 years of occupation, calling it a response to Israeli strikes in violence

that has soured hopes the pullout would lead to a quick resumption of peacemaking. In recent days the crude rockets have struck near Israel's southern coastal city of Ashkelon. Defiant militants said they would step up the barrages if Israel attempted to curb rocket fire with aerial assaults. "Any attack on our people on any part of Palestine will be met by a decisive and violent reaction that will not be limited to a time or place," a statement issued by the al-Aqsa brigades, Islamic Jihad and the Popular Resistance Committees said. Sharon has ruled out any talks on statehood in the West Bank and Gaza until Palestinians disarm militants, a process that is meant to start under a US-backed peace plan. — Reuters.

Jerusalem, Dec 28 — Israeli warplanes attacked a Palestinian guerrilla group's training base in Lebanon early today, the army said, after a rocket strike on an Israeli town raised border tension to its highest level in years. "The message is to the government of Lebanon which is responsible for preventing terror attacks from its territory," Israel's northern commander Major-General Udi Adam said. "The State of Israel holds the Lebanese government responsible for these attacks, in that it has done nothing to dismantle the terror organisations operating from within Lebanon, in violation of UN decisions 425 and 1559," the army said in a statement. The attack targeted a base belonging to the pro-Syrian Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC) and slightly wounded two of its fighters, the group's spokesman in Lebanon Anwar Raja said. He denied the group's involvement in the rocket attack against northern Israel. "The air strike is an Israeli attempt to depict the presence of Palestinian groups in Lebanon as a source of instability while they the Israelis continue to violate Lebanon's sovereignty in the air, land and sea," he said. "Israel wants to bring UN Security Council resolution 1559 under the spotlight but we are confident that the Lebanese authorities are aware of this blatant attempt." The 2004 resolution in part demands the disarmament of all militia in Lebanon, a reference to the pro-Syrian Hizbollah and other Palestinian militant groups. The Beirut government has yet to implement the resolution. Adam blamed Palestinian guerrillas for attempting to escalate tension along the Israel-Lebanon border by slamming at least three Katyusha rockets into the northern town of Kiryat Shemona shortly before midnight yesterday. It was the first rocket attack in years against the town — which was a regular target of Katyusha rocket strikes until Israel withdrew from southern Lebanon in 2000 after a 22-year occupation. The Katyusha rockets scored a direct hit on three homes, wounding three people and sending others into shock. Residents of Kiryat Shemona were

ordered to enter bomb shelters following the strike. Explosions were heard overnight near the northern village of Shlomi indicating additional Katyusha strikes, Israeli media reported. The army was not immediately able to confirm the reports. Tension along the Israel-Lebanon border has heightened in recent months due to international pressure against Syria over the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri and demands that Iran, a supporter of Hizbollah, halt its nuclear programme, Adam said. The killing of Hariri in February sparked massive protests that forced Syria to bow to world pressure to withdraw its troops from Lebanon in April after 29 years. In November, four Hizbollah guerrillas were killed and 11 Israeli soldiers wounded in the worst clashes in five years. They erupted when Hizbollah fighters raided a divided border town in what the army said was an attempt to kidnap soldiers. — Reuters.

Gaza, Dec 29 — Unidentified gunmen kidnapped a British human rights activist and her parents in the Gaza Strip yesterday and then immediately began negotiating with Palestinian officials for their release, police sources said. The 25-year-old worker at pro-Palestinian rights group Al Mezan, identified by British media reports as Kate Burton, was showing her visiting parents around the town of Rafah when they were bundled into a car and driven away, residents said. There was no public claim of responsibility, but police sources said officials were in talks with the kidnappers in hope of securing the hostages' release by early today. Gaza has seen a rash of kidnappings since Israel quit the coastal territory in September after 38 years of occupation, a move welcomed internationally as a potential spur to peace, though it has left the Palestinian Authority struggling for control. Foreigners taken hostage have been released within hours, usually for a ransom. The last victims were a Dutchman and an Australian, teachers at a Gaza school, who were briefly held last week. — Reuters.

NEPAL

Kathmandu, Dec 27 — Two Maoist guerrillas and a soldier were killed in fierce fighting in western Nepal today, days before a unilateral cease-fire declared by the rebels was due to expire, the army and insurgents said. The gunbattle started yesterday after the rebels, who are campaigning to topple the monarchy, attacked an army patrol in the Maoist stronghold of Rolpa, 400 km west of Kathmandu. The clash came ahead of the end of the Maoist cease-fire, due on Jan 2. More than 12,500 people have died in the Maoist revolt aimed at setting up a single-party communist republic in the Himalayan kingdom, which is wedged between India and China. In February, King Gyanendra fired the government saying it had failed to

quell the revolt and seized power, triggering a new political crisis. — Reuters.

NIGERIA

London, Dec 23 — A press report, dated today, states: Bonny Terminal operators (Shell) has declared a Force Majeure effective from December 21, following the recent pipeline explosion in Bonny, which has affected one of the flow stations.

Lagos, Dec 24 — Royal Dutch Shell has reopened one of two pipelines in remote southern Nigeria that were damaged in a suspected dynamite attack and is working to fix the second one today, a company spokesman said. The firm has also reopened one of two oilfields that were shut to curb a huge blaze caused by Tuesday's (Dec 20) attack on the pipelines in the Niger Delta by unknown gunmen, which killed 11 people and cut 180,000 barrels per day in output. Kolo Creek, one of the oilfields that was shut down, has been reopened. The 24-inch pipeline has been fixed and the clamping is being done today on the 28-inch one, a spokesman for the Nigerian arm of Shell said. He said some crude was flowing through the 24-inch pipeline and the volume of the outage had gone down, although there was no new figure available yet on how much production was still down. "We are building up gradually," he said. He added that a force majeure, a technical release from honouring contracts, was still in place. The two pipelines, in the remote Opobo channel in Rivers state, flow to the Bonny Light export terminal. A previously unheard-of group calling itself the Martyrs' Brigade has claimed responsibility for the attack and threatened further violence against the oil industry in the delta. — Reuters

PAKISTAN

London, Dec 25 — A press report, dated today, states: At least 20 Baluch tribesmen were killed and 80 injured in a clash with security forces yesterday during an ongoing operation against insurgents in the Dera Bugti area in turbulent Baluchistan province in southwestern Pakistan, a tribal leader said. Sardar Akbar Bugti, chief of the Bugti tribe, told reporters in the provincial capital Quetta that the clash took place in the Bikar area situated on the confluence of the Mari and Bugti tribes regarded as a hotbed of Baluch insurgency, about 250 kilometres east of Quetta.

Karachi, Dec 28 — Pakistan state owned largest gas producer-Pakistan Petroleum Ltd said a pipeline supplying gas to the main purification plant from gas well was blown up in Sui gas field in Balochistan province of Pakistan last night. According to local media report, an eight inch-piece of the pipeline blew up and later the affected pipeline had caught fire immediately. However, PPL engineers cut off gas supply and controlled the

fire. Security forces deployed for protection of the Sui gas plant and gas field have cordoned off the area and started an investigation. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

PERU

Lima, Dec 22 — President Alejandro Toledo today declared a state of emergency in Peru's central jungle after Shining Path guerrillas killed eight policemen amid an upsurge in violence from the Maoist group. The emergency decree bans public gatherings and gives police and military the right to search houses and make arrests without warrants. — Reuters.

SAUDI ARABIA

Riyadh, Dec 28 — Saudi police today shot dead a militant suspected of killing five policemen in the kingdom's ultraconservative Muslim heartland a day earlier, the Saudi Interior Ministry said. Another gunman, on a most wanted list of militants linked to al-Qaeda, also died in custody today after being wounded during a shootout with police following yesterday's attack in the northern province of Qassim, the site of several shootouts with al-Qaeda-linked militants. "There is one (other) terrorist killed today," a ministry spokesman said. "He will be subject to some tests, like DNA, to confirm his identity and to see whether he is on the list of wanted criminals and if he was linked to yesterday's crime." He said the shooting took place almost in the same area as yesterday's incident. A security source named the man as Abdel-Rahman al-Meteb, who is also on the most wanted list. Saudi Arabia, birthplace of Osama bin Laden, has been battling a two-year wave of bombings and shootings by al-Qaeda supporters. The last major attacks took place nearly a year ago and security forces have since killed several leading militants in clashes. Gunmen yesterday killed three of the policeman after driving their car into a checkpoint. They also shot dead two policemen on patrol in the nearby town of Buraida. Police shot and wounded one of the militants and an Interior Ministry statement identified him as Mohammed Abdulrahman al-Suweilmi, who was on a list of 36 wanted militants linked to al-Qaeda. Suweilmi later died in custody. Security sources said he was an Internet specialist who helped the Saudi wing of al-Qaeda post statements on the Web. An Interior Ministry statement issued earlier said police found a large cache of weapons, including automatic rifles and pistols, in the militants' car. The gunmen were also carrying more than 425,000 riyals (\$113,000) as well as forged licence plates and identity cards. — Reuters.

SRI LANKA

London, Dec 22 — A press report, dated today, states: An attack on naval ships by suspected Sri Lankan rebels has triggered a clash at sea. It

was the latest in a series of violent attacks that are threatening to unravel a nearly four-year old ceasefire. A military spokesman says rebel boats hid among a fishing fleet and opened fire on two naval patrol vessels, sparking an exchange of gunfire. The clash occurred today off the coast of Mannar, about 250 km north-west of Colombo. Officials say one sailor was wounded in the assault, and three are missing. The navy says it captured seven rebels. It is the first clash at sea since a recent upsurge of violence that has targeted security personnel. The violence has intensified since Mahinda Rajapakse was elected president, saying ethnic Tamil rebels had been granted too many concessions in an earlier peace deal, and vowing to take a hard line in future negotiations.

Colombo, Dec 23 — Sri Lanka's Tamil Tigers said today they had killed three sailors during the most serious clash with the navy since a 2002 ceasefire, and they vowed to continue to fire in self-defence. The navy said yesterday Tiger cadres attacked two naval craft off the island's northwest coast and returned fire. The Tigers said the navy had fired first and they returned fire, shooting two sailors dead and injuring another who then drowned when the rebel craft he had been transferred to sank. "The three sailors died," rebel media co-ordinator Daya Master said. "One Sea Tiger cadre was injured. This incident was started by the Sri Lankan navy and we had to fire for self protection." Speaking to Reuters by telephone from the rebels' northern stronghold of Kilinochchi, he had no immediate comment on a navy statement that it had captured six rebels during the incident. Rebel political wing leader S.P. Thamilselvan sent a letter to the head of the Nordic mission that oversees the truce, warning the Tigers would continue to carry and use arms in self defense — including at sea, against the terms of the ceasefire. Furious at attacks on Tiger cadres in the restive east by a renegade faction they accuse the military of helping, the rebels want a guarantee of safety in government-held areas and at sea. Hagrup Haukland, head of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission, said the Tigers had no right to be at sea, much less armed. "This is adding more petrol to the fire," he said. "They have always claimed that they have their own waters adjacent to the areas they are controlling on land, and they have never accepted that there are quite different rules at sea." The Sri Lankan navy had the right to safeguard the whole island irrespective of who controlled the land, he added. The army blamed the rebels for two overnight grenade attacks in Jaffna, one near the northeastern port of Trincomalee that wounded two soldiers and for shots fired at a northern bunker. Norway, Japan, the European Union and the United States — co-chairs of a Sri Lankan donors conference — called on

the Tigers this week to end what they called a campaign of violence immediately or face unspecified serious consequences. — Reuters.

Colombo, Dec 28 — Troops searched for Tamil Tiger rebels and claymore mines in military-held areas in Sri Lanka's north and east today as the toll from a deadly ambush that raised fears of a return to civil war rose to 12. Yesterday's attack in the island's far north, which killed 10 soldiers on the spot and claimed the lives overnight of two others, was one of the deadliest incidents since a 2002 ceasefire and the second such attack in less than a week. "We are conducting search operations in the north and the east," said military spokesman Prasad Samarasinghe. "We are searching for claymores and for terrorists who throw grenades at us." In a separate incident overnight in the eastern district of Trincomalee, a soldier was shot dead in his home by suspected rebels. Yesterday's attack was the latest in a string of guerrilla ambushes on the military and the assassination of a pro-rebel member of parliament at a Christmas mass that are straining a 2002 truce to breaking point. Those in turn came after 13 sailors were killed in an ambush by suspected Tigers using claymore mines and rocket-propelled grenades in the island's northwest. Sri Lanka's stock market was down over 6% at 0535, UTC, today after falling nearly 7% yesterday as news of the attacks prompted small investors to sell their shares and kept bigger investors on the sidelines, waiting to see if the \$20 billion economy was heading back to war. "It is war in all but name," said Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu of the Centre for Policy Alternatives. "They cling on to the cease-fire agreement as some kind of totem pole, but in effect on the ground it doesn't hold with these kind of casualty figures," he added. "To say that there is a cease-fire in the country is somewhat farcical." The government has appealed to the island's main donors — Japan, the United States, Norway and the European Union — to make good on a warning to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam that continued attacks would bring serious consequences. "The LTTE has shown complete contempt to the diplomatic efforts made by the co-chair countries," the government said in a statement issued overnight. "We believe that such actions by the donors could take the strain off the cease-fire by preventing the escalation of violence." The government and the Tigers are poles apart over the rebels' demands for wide political powers in the north and east and a homeland for ethnic Tamils. The two sides cannot even agree on a venue for emergency peace talks, and analysts say the Tigers have been using the truce to rearm and regroup. Norwegian peace envoy Erik Solheim warned overnight crunch peace talks were vital to avoid further escalation. "The high level of violence and the tragic loss of life are putting the cease-fire agreement at

risk and will make it very difficult to secure further progress in the peace process," Solheim said in a statement. The northern Jaffna peninsula, which is held by the military and which the Tigers want to control, remained tense. Cease-fire monitors have stopped patrols in the northern Jaffna peninsula because of deteriorating security, and have voiced deep concern about the future of a cease-fire that halted a two-decade civil war that killed over 64,000 people. The Tigers threatened in November to resume their armed struggle to carve out a homeland for ethnic Tamils in the north and east unless they were given wide political powers in about 15% of the country where they run a de facto state. New President Mahinda Rajapakse, who is allied to hardline Marxists and Buddhists who refuse any concessions for the rebels, has ruled out the idea of a Tamil homeland. Rajapakse is in India on his first state visit since winning the presidency in November to seek greater Indian involvement in the stalled peace process, but officials and analysts in India say he is unlikely to have much success. — Reuters.

SUDAN

Nairobi, Dec 28 — The security situation in the strife-torn western Sudanese region remains volatile as government and rebel forces continue to violate a ceasefire deal amid incidents of banditry, looting and possibly rape, the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) said yesterday. In South Darfur, militia activity seemed to have increased, with several reported attacks on villages reported; UN News reported citing a UNMIS statement. Harassment, beatings and the killing of internally displaced persons grazing cattle outside their camps are still being reported, along with allegations of rape and the attempted rape of women as well as girls in Tawila, North Darfur. — Reuters.



YEMEN

Sanaa, Dec 28 — Yemeni tribesmen seized five German tourists today in the third kidnapping incident involving Westerners this year, a government official said. A German Foreign Ministry spokesman confirmed that a five members of one family had disappeared in Yemen, adding that they were part of a group touring the country. "A five-member family has gone missing in Yemen," spokesman Martin Jaeger said. The Yemeni official said the Germans were kidnapped during a trip to the eastern Shabwa province from the port city of Aden. The tribesmen have yet to make any demands, he added. Last week, Yemeni tribesmen seized two

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Austrians. A month ago, another group of tribesmen captured two Swiss tourists. Both kidnappings were aimed at pressuring the government to free jailed relatives and all tourists were released unharmed. — Reuters.

Dubai, Dec 29 — Yemeni authorities hope to soon secure the release of a former German government minister, his wife and three children, kidnapped by tribesmen in the eastern part of the country, officials said today. “We have formed a committee of tribal leaders and government officials to negotiate with the kidnappers. No force will be used to free them,” said Ali al-Rassas, governor of Shabwa Province. “They will be freed safely and soon,” another official said. He gave no further details of the negotiations to free former German junior foreign minister Juergen Chrobog and his family. The captors said the Germans were in good health. “We are still talking with authorities. The hostages are in an excellent state and they are in good health,” one of them said by telephone. One of the kidnappers, however, said yesterday that the lives of the family would be at risk if the government used force to free them. Earlier, he had said the Germans’ lives were not in danger. — Reuters.

Labour Disputes



PAKISTAN

London, Dec 28 — A press report, dated today, states: Partial strike was observed in different areas of Balochistan yesterday. It was called by coalition of nationalist parties included four parties Baloch Ittihad, PONM and ANP. The strike was called to protest against the “operation” in Kohlu and Dera Bugti and construction of Kalabagh Dam. The traffic remained suspended and all business centre stood closed in Quetta. Traffic also remained suspended at Quetta -Karachi and Quetta-Taftan highways. According to police sources, heavy contingents of police and law enforcement agencies have been deployed at important roads in Quetta. Secretary General of Jamhoori Watan Party Agha Shahid Bughti told a private television news channel that strike is being observed in Hub, Dera Bugti, Khuzdar, Turbat, Gwadar, Kharan, Naushki and Jaffarabad. Another report says that a wheel-jam strike, called by nationalist groups in Pakistan’s southwestern Baluchistan province brought life to a standstill in the province yesterday. The strike was called by the alliance of nationalist groups also against military operation in the town of Kohlu. The government says that paramilitary force is targeting camps of miscreants in Kohlu but the nationalist groups say that civilians were killed. The strike disrupted life

in Quetta, the provincial capital, and other major cities in the province, correspondents said. All major business centres were shut. Several banks were also closed. Attendance in government officers was thin. Traffic between Quetta and the southern port city of Karachi, as well as Quetta and the border town of Taftan was thin.

UNITED STATES

London, Dec 23 — A press report, dated Dec 22, states: Faced with mounting fines and the rising wrath of millions of commuters, the New York city transit union sent its members back to work without a new contract today and ended a crippling, three-day strike that brought subways and buses to a standstill. Union members were told to return to their jobs starting with the evening shift. Buses were expected to be rolling again by evening. And most subways were expected to be running by tomorrow mornings rush. The breakthrough came after an all-night session with a mediator. Around midday, leaders of the 33,000-member Transport Workers Union overwhelmingly voted to return to work and resume negotiations with the transit authority on a new three-year contract. While the deal put the nation’s largest mass transit system back in operation, it did not resolve the underlying dispute - pension contributions were the main sticking point - meaning there could be another walkout if the negotiations fail. The strike cost the city untold millions in police overtime and lost business and productivity at the very height of the Christmas rush and forced millions of commuters, holiday shoppers and tourists to carpool, take taxis, ride bicycles or trudge through the freezing cold. But the strike did not cause the utter chaos that many had feared, and traffic in many parts of town was surprisingly light. The return to work was announced just minutes before union local president Roger Toussaint and two of his top deputies were due in a Brooklyn courtroom to answer criminal contempt charges that could have landed them in jail. Earlier this week, state Justice Theodore Jones fined the union \$1 million a day for striking. And under the state no-strike law, the rank-and-file members were automatically docked two days’ pay for each day they stayed off the job. Gov. George Pataki warned there was no possibility of amnesty for the striking workers who were penalized financially. The fines “cannot be waived. They’re not going to be waived,” he said. A chief sticking point in the talks was a Metropolitan Transportation Authority proposal to require new hires to contribute six percent to their pensions, up from the current two percent for all employees. The pension proposal remained on the table despite the end of the walkout. The vote to return to work was blasted by TWU dissidents who felt the union had caved in. “This was a disgrace,” said TWU vice president

John Mooney. “No details were provided to the executive board. (Toussaint) wants us to discuss the details after Christmas.” After workers returned to the job, the judge overseeing the dispute adjourned all further action in the case until January 20.

London, Dec 26 — A press report, dated Dec 25, states: Businesses lost \$1 billion in revenue during last week’s three-day transit strike, Mayor Michael Bloomberg said today. Transit workers walked off the job last Tuesday (Dec 20), shutting down the bus and subway service that millions of commuters rely on each day. Service resumed on Friday after the Transport Workers Union agreed to return to work while contract negotiations continue. “This morning, thousands of hardworking New Yorkers dearly miss the wages and tips they lost during what would normally have been a busy pre-Christmas week,” Bloomberg said in his weekly radio address. The day the strike ended, several economists said the city’s estimate of \$400 million a day in lost revenue appeared too high and failed to account for offsets, such as employees working from home. Bloomberg did not explain how he reached the \$1 billion figure. Negotiations between the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the TWU have been under a media black-out since the strike ended.

Awards & Settlements



CLASS-ACTION LAW SUIT, WAL-MART, UNITED STATES

London, Dec 23 — A press report, dated Dec 22, states: A California jury ordered Wal-Mart, the world’s largest retailer to pay \$172 million, \$57 million in general damages and \$115 million in punitive damages. The money goes to 116,000 current and former California employees. The lawsuit contended Wal-Mart broke a state law that requires workers to have 30-minute, unpaid lunch breaks if they work at least six hours. Wal-Mart claimed some California workers were paid and most waived their meal periods. The company said others waited too long to demand penalty wages.

CLASS-ACTION SETTLEMENT, UNITED STATES

London, Dec 25 — A press report, dated Dec 24, states: A judge gave preliminary approval today to a \$62.5-million settlement between H&R Block Incorporated and an estimated eight million consumers in more than two dozen states, including Florida. The customers had exchanged tax refunds for upfront payments. The deal resolves four class-action lawsuits as well as potential claims

alleging the nation's largest tax preparer violated state consumer protection laws. The company offered quick payments, formerly known as "Rapid Refunds," to customers expecting tax refunds. They were actually loans repaid by those refunds that featured interest rates of between 29% and 750%. While admitting no wrongdoing, H&R Block has agreed to offer payments to customers who took out these refund anticipation loans. Depending on their state, consumers are eligible for payments for loans taken out as far back as mid-June 1989.

London, Dec 25 — A press report, dated Dec 24, states: A \$75 million settlement has been approved between American Express Co. and thousands of cardholders who contended in a class-action lawsuit that they paid hidden transaction fees for charges made in foreign currencies. The settlement, approved this week by U.S. District Judge Cecilia M. Altonaga, affects more than 833,000 cardholders who paid some form of transaction fee from March 28, 1997, through Oct. 15, 2004. Settlement amounts could range from \$15 to millions of dollars, lawyers involved in the case said yesterday. The lawsuit claimed that American Express failed to adequately inform cardholders that they would be charged an adjustment of up to 2% to convert charges made in foreign currencies to U.S. dollars. Instead, the fee was embedded in the transaction amount that showed up on cardholders' bills, making it "invisible to consumers," according to the lawsuit.

London, Dec 25 — A press report, dated Dec 23, states: Disgruntled third-generation iPod owners looking for improved battery performance may be able to send the unit back to Apple for a replacement, or alternatively receive a store credit for \$50 by mail under this week's finalised class-action lawsuit settlement. Following the dismissal of an appeal that could have delayed claims for up to a year, the official website says that "Apple and the Settlement Administrator can move forward with claims administration and claims fulfillment." Deadlines relating to claim submissions have not changed, according to the website. The settlement was approved by a judge in August, who alleged that Apple misrepresented the iPod's battery life. Owners of first-, and second-generation iPods were also covered under the settlement, but the deadline to file for a store credit of \$50 or a check from Apple for \$25 expired on Sep 30. Owners of third-generation iPods hoping to send the unit back to Apple or receive a store credit must ensure the request is postmarked within two years of the original purchase date. Originally anyone who purchased a first-, second-, or third-generation iPod on or before May 31, 2004 in the U.S. was eligible to take part in the settlement. According to the

settlement, "Battery Failure" describes a situation where the capacity of an iPod's battery has dropped to four hours or less of continuous audio playback, with earbuds attached, with respect to the third-generation iPod, or five hours or less of continuous audio playback, with earbuds attached, with respect to the first-generation iPod and the second-generation iPod.

ILLEGAL PROMOTING & MARKETING OF DRUG, UNITED STATES

London, Dec 28 — A press report, dated Dec 27, states: Texas and several other states joined the federal government in a \$704 million criminal and civil settlement against a US affiliate of Swiss drug maker Serono Inc. for illegally promoting and marketing the AIDS drug Serostim. The state of Texas and the Medicaid program received almost \$3.6 million this month in penalties and restitution against Serono Laboratories for using flawed technology to market Serostim from 1996 to 2004. The US Food and Drug Administration approved the drug in 1996 to treat AIDS "wasting," which was, at the time, a leading cause of death among AIDS patients. Due to lessening demand for the drug, the company and its subsidiaries promoted the use of altered computer software that falsely indicated the onset of weight loss and AIDS wasting. The skewed computer results were designed to induce physicians to prescribe Serostim for patients. "This company chased big profits without regard for its product's effectiveness or safety, and today's results show that this will not be tolerated," Texas Attorney General Gregg Abbott says. Serono pleaded guilty to conspiring with Clinton Township, Mich. medical device manufacturer RJL Sciences Inc. to aggressively market the software, which was not approved by the US Food and Drug Administration, and also pleaded guilty to offering physicians who prescribed Serostim an all-expense paid trip to Cannes, France. The drug cost \$21,000 per course of treatment. As a result of this criminal conviction, and as part of its agreement with the government, Serono Laboratories, its US subsidiary, Serono Holding, and all affiliates will be prohibited from participating in any federal health care programs for at least five years. Geneva-based Serono had world-wide revenues of \$2.5 billion in 2004, and a net income of \$494.2 million. Its products are sold in over 90 countries.

London, Dec 29 — A press report, dated Dec 28, states: Ohio will receive \$4.1 million in a settlement with a Swiss drugmaker that illegally promoted and marketed an AIDS drug. Serono SA and its U.S. divisions pleaded guilty Dec 15 to falsifying data on the effectiveness of Serostim, a drug intended to slow weight loss in AIDS patients. The company agreed

to pay a total of \$704 million to 42 states and the federal Medicaid program, Ohio Attorney General Jim Petro said today.

Railway Accidents



AMAGASAKI, JAPAN

London, Dec 27 — A press report, dated today, states: The president of a Japanese railroad is resigning to take responsibility for an April derailment that killed 107 people, the country's deadliest railway accident in decades, a company spokesman said today. Takes Kakiuchi will be replaced by the Osaka-based company's vice president, Masao Yamazaki, West Japan spokesman Makoto Masamoto said. The crash of the West Japan commuter train on Apr 25 triggered national concerns about the safety of public transportation and prompted government inspection into the nation's railway operation. The train jumped its tracks during the morning rush hour, barreling into an apartment building in Amagasaki, about 250 miles west of Tokyo. The crash killed 107 people and injured more than 500 others, and was Japan's worst since 1963. Investigators believed the train's 23-year-old driver, who was among the dead, was far exceeding the speed limit. Train drivers face heavy pressure to keep to timetables in Japan, which is famous for its punctual rail service. West Japan Railway has acknowledged that psychological pressure on an inexperienced driver might have contributed to the April accident. West Japan has since improved an emergency braking system, loosened its timetables to allow for more time between trains and retrained its drivers in the run-up to the resumption of service.

YAMAGATA PREFECTURE, JAPAN

London, Dec 25 — A press report, dated today, states: The first three cars of a six-car express train heading to Niigata derailed and toppled onto their sides today in Yamagata Prefecture, East Japan Railway Co said. The local firefighting authority said it has received a report that many people have been injured in the incident. The express train Inaho No. 14 from Akita derailed at around 1920 between Amarume and Sakata stations on JR East's Uetsu Line, according to officials of the railway operator and JR Sakata station.

London, Dec 26 — A press report, dated today, states: At least two people were reported dead and about 30 injured after an express train derailed in a snowstorm in northern Japan, causing several carriages to topple over. The front five cars of the six carriage train, carrying just over 30 passengers, derailed at around

1920 hrs between Amarume and Sakata stations on the Uetsu Line, 350 km north of Tokyo, police said. Two women died in the accident, in which three carriages toppled over in strong winds as the train crossed a bridge over a river, the Kyodo News agency reported, quoting police, hospital and railway officials. The dead were among five people trapped inside the first train carriage which derailed. One of the other three was rescued, according to Kyodo News. Television footage showed the carriages lying on their side and partially torn open. As snow fell, rescuers squeezed through broken windows to search for victims. Train operator JR East reported that the train driver, who survived the crash, had applied manual brakes after hearing an unusual sound. Due to heavy snow, the train is believed to have been more than one hour behind schedule, JR East said. The dead were among five people trapped inside the first train carriage which derailed.

London, Dec 26 — A press report, dated today, states: An express train travelling through strong winter winds derailed in northern Japan, killing four people and injuring more than 30, officials said today. All six cars of the train derailed yesterday evening, and three of the cars toppled onto their sides in Yamagata prefecture, about 180 miles north of Tokyo, train operator JR East Co said. The injuries of the survivors did not appear to be life-threatening, Yamagata police spokesman Yoshikatsu Oe said. It was unclear how many passengers were on the train, but Oe said most of the injured were in the first two cars. The police spokesman said all four passengers who died were in the first car, which buckled in the crash. Transport Ministry official Ryotaro Miyamoto said the cause of the accident was not immediately known. The president of JR East, Mutsutake Otsuka, apologised for the accident at a news conference today and promised an investigation. Yamagata police official Yasuhiro Sugi said there had been high wind warnings at the time of the accident. Winds in the area were about 48 mph, Kyodo News agency reported. JR East executive Masaki Ogata said the driver reported the train tilted to the left after it was buffeted by a gust of wind. "Then the lights went off and he got disoriented," Ogata said. The train was reportedly travelling as fast as 62 mph just before the accident. Kubota said the speed limit in that area is set at 74 mph, and the train was not required to slow down under the weather conditions at the time.

London, Dec 27 — A press report, dated today, states: Japan's government yesterday ordered emergency inspections of railway wind gauges following a Dec 25 crash in Yamagata prefecture, and criticised the train operator. The train was running about an hour late but travelling under the 74 mph speed limit in the area. It was not required

to slow down despite the windy weather, Japan Railroad East Co spokesman Jun Kubota said. Kyodo News agency reported that winds reached nearly 44 mph near the site of the wreck. Company executive Masaki Ogata quoted the train's driver as saying that the train had tilted to the left after it was buffeted by a gust of wind from the right. "Then the lights went off and he got disoriented," Ogata said. Most of the injured passengers were riding in the first two cars, said Yamagata police spokesman Yoshikatsu Oe. They were taken to hospitals and none was in life-threatening condition. JR East executives were summoned to the Transport Ministry and handed a harshly worded warning accusing the company of "eroding public trust in the safety of the railway transit system," ministry official Hiromi Mishima said. The president of JR East, Mutsutake Otsuka, apologised for the accident at a news conference yesterday.

London, Dec 27 — A press report, dated today, states: Rescuers today found part of a human body in the wreckage of a train that derailed in Yamagata Prefecture on Sunday (Dec 25), bringing the death toll to five, police said. The police said they had yet to establish the gender or identity of the body. Earlier in the day, authorities launched a search for three people possibly missing in East Japan Railway Co's derailed train. The body was found a day after officials said there were no more people left in the derailed train in Shonai, Yamagata Prefecture. Rescuers resumed the search after authorities received information that two women and a girl have been missing since the accident, which also injured 33 people.

London, Dec 28 — A press report, dated today, states: Local authorities plan to use a crane to hoist up two of the carriages of an East Japan Railway Co. train that derailed Sunday (Dec 25) in Yamagata Prefecture as they continue their search today for victims of the fatal accident. Police and firefighters plan to hoist the first and second cars from the front of the train to check whether any passengers are buried underneath, particularly under the first one, they said. They said they confirmed nobody was trapped inside the crashed cars in a series of searches in blizzard conditions before today. At least five people were killed and 33 injured after the six-car express Inaho No. 14 derailed Sunday evening in the town of Shonai. Officials of the transport ministry's Aircraft and Railway Accidents Investigation Commission continued their on-site probe into the cause of the accident. The commission, under the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport, suspects the train left the track after encountering sudden strong winds near a river. The commission has confirmed there were no signs of any problems with the train itself or irregularities near the accident site.

London, Dec 29 — A press report, dated today, states: Local authorities used a crane to hoist two carriages of an East Japan Railway Co. train that derailed Sunday (Dec 25) in Yamagata Prefecture off the track as they continued their search yesterday for victims of the fatal accident. Police and firefighters hoisted the first and second cars of the train to look for passengers who might be trapped beneath the wreckage, particularly under the lead car. But no one was found under the wreckage, they said. Police said they have confirmed that no one was trapped inside the cars in a series of searches carried out in blizzard conditions earlier. Based on earlier reports, a woman and a girl still remain unaccounted for. Survivors also told police and other officials they saw a woman believed to be in her 30s and a young girl walking down the aisle of the train before the accident, but there is no information on their fate. The commission suspects the train left the track after encountering a gust of wind near the Mogami River.

Computer Systems



VIRKEL.F WORM

London, Dec 28 — A press report, dated Dec 27, states: A virus masquerading as a new beta version of Microsoft's MSN Messenger has begun circulating, antivirus company F-Secure said on its blog today. The virus, which F-Secure calls Virkel.F, comes as a file called BETA8WEBINSTALL.EXE that can be downloaded from a Website. Running the program installs not a new MSN Messenger beta, but rather a virus that sends download links to a computer user's MSN Messenger buddies. The virus falsely labels the link as "MSN Messenger 8 Working BETA." "It also connects your machine to a botnet server," F-Secure warned, meaning that a person's computer can be controlled remotely to attack other machines or send spam.

Miscellaneous



COLLAPSE OF SWIMMING POOL ROOF, MOSCOW, RUSSIA

London, Dec 27 — A press report, dated Dec 26, states: A roof collapse that killed 28 people at a Moscow water park nearly two years ago was caused by design flaws, the chief prosecutor said today, blaming the architect and an official who approved the plans. The collapse, which injured more than 100 others, was caused in part by "crude miscalculations" that

made the concrete-and-glass dome over the Transvaal water park unsafe, chief prosecutor Anatoly Zuyev said in televised comments announcing the probe's findings. He reiterated that no evidence of explosives or any other attack was found in the ruins of the indoor park in south-western Moscow whose roof collapsed on swimmers on Feb 14, 2004. The findings will be sent to court for trial. Zuyev said the design cut corners by calling for concrete in the roof instead of a more expensive design using lighter materials. The findings blame Nodar Kancheli, the building's architect, and Anatoly Voronin, the head of a state agency that signed off on the plans, Mosgoexpertiza, according to reports on Russian television networks. The prosecution's report accuses them of criminal negligence causing death. Prosecutors said in April that they had filed criminal negligence charges against Kancheli. It was unclear whether the investigation report completed Monday was in support of those charges or meant the start of a new case. Russian media predicted it would take a long time for the case to come to trial. Defence lawyer Yuri Kostanov said on NTV television that the report was not sufficiently specific. Kancheli has rejected allegations of design flaws.

LANDSLIDE, YEMEN

Sanaa, Dec 29 — Landslides in Yemen have destroyed a small village near the capital Sanaa, killing at least 30 people including women and children with dozens more missing, officials said today. A Yemeni official said rocks had slid off a mountain late yesterday and collapsed into the al-Dhofair village, about 20 km south-west of Sanaa, destroying its 27 houses. Police cordoned off the area and were searching for survivors. State news agency Saba said tens of people were injured, some seriously, and had been taken to hospital. — Reuters.

OUTBREAK OF "BIRD FLU"

London, Dec 23 — A press report, dated Dec 22, states: Two more people have died from bird flu in Indonesia, the World Health Organization has confirmed. An eight-year-old boy and a 39-year-old man died from the virus earlier this month, health officials said, taking the country's death toll to 11. The latest news comes as researchers reported two cases of patients in Vietnam who died after failing to respond to the drug Tamiflu. The drug, which governments around the world have been stockpiling in case of a pandemic, is the most effective yet found in combating the virus. The Vietnam cases, reported in the New England Journal of Medicine yesterday, suggested the H5N1 virus which causes bird flu is mutating and becoming resistant to the drug.

London, Dec 29 — A press report, dated Dec 28, states: Russia's Federal Service for Veterinary and Phitosanitary Control has registered

an outbreak of bird flu in two southern territories, the Astrakhan region and the Republic of Kalmykia, the press service of the Agriculture Ministry said. As of today, the two territories had at least one population center each where bird flu had been detected.



BUSH, AUSTRALIA

London, Dec 26 — A press report, dated today, states: New South Wales firefighters are working to extinguish some of the 37 bushfires burning around the state before the arrival of extreme weather conditions predicted for tomorrow and Wednesday (Dec 28). The Rural Fire Service said almost all the 37 fires were contained, with the exception of a massive blaze in the remote Pilliga forest near Narrabri, in north-western New South Wales. The fire burnt through more than 6,000ha of bushland but no houses or property were under threat. RFS spokesman Cameron Wade said more than 200 volunteer firefighters were working to extinguish fires already under control. "Everything's very good at the moment, and some (of the fires) will come off the board (of current fires) as soon as they are extinguished," Mr Wade said. He said weather conditions were expected to worsen tomorrow and Wednesday, with forecast high temperatures and strong winds. "The objective today was to try to get as many of those fires out as we could, however we'll still have a number of those fires burning when the weather changes," he said. A blaze which threatened about 50 houses yesterday at Chittaway Point, on NSW Central Coast, is one of the blazes now under control. Other fires are in bushland near Gloucester, the Clarence Valley, Tenterfield and Lake Macquarie, while one is still burning at the Liverpool rubbish tip in Sydney's south-west. There is a very high fire danger for most of the state tomorrow, but no fire bans had been issued as of 1700, AEDT, today.

COAL MINE, GUIZHOU PROVINCE, CHINA

London, Dec 25 — Twelve miners are trapped after a fire broke out in a coal mine in south-west China's Guizhou province, state media said today. The fire began at about 2320, yesterday at the Xiangshui Coal Mine located in Panxian county of Liupanshui city, Xinhua news agency quoted the Guizhou Provincial Coal Mine Safety Bureau as saying. Firemen rushed to the scene to attempt to rescue the men but have not been successful. Flames gushed out of the mine shaft, keeping rescuers at least 20m away, Xinhua said. Experts are studying how to put out the fire. The coal mine,

which can produce four million tons of coal a year, is affiliated with the Pannan Power Plant in the county. The cause of the fire is not yet known.

CONSTRUCTION SITE, SICHUAN PROVINCE, CHINA

Beijing, Dec 23 — A gas blast at a construction site in China's south-western province of Sichuan has killed at least 42 people, state media said today. Eleven were injured in the explosion yesterday in a highway tunnel under construction between the cities of Dujiangyan and Wenchuan. Most of the victims were construction workers, the report said. The exact number of casualties was unclear, with search and rescue operations still under way. — Reuters.

FOREST, NEW ZEALAND

London, Dec 26 — A press report, dated Dec 25, states: Up to 100 firefighters and a helicopter were called in to contain a forest fire in the lower North Island. The fire was reported about 1830pm yesterday in a forest owned by company Earnslaw One at Tangimoana, southwest of Bulls, Earnslaw One duty fire officer Tony Groome said. It was next to a Department of Conservation (DOC) reserve. Between 70 and 100 firefighters had been sent to the fire from volunteer brigades in the surrounding area, along with firefighters from Palmerston North, and crews from DOC, the Manawatu District Council and Earnslaw One. A helicopter with a monsoon bucket dumped water on the fire for up to 20 hours, as firefighters on the ground worked on the blaze with hoses and hand tools, Mr Groome said. The fire crews were stood down about midnight, with checks continuing at the scene throughout today. The cause of the fire was being investigated.

PALACE, ST. PETERSBURG, RUSSIA

St. Petersburg, Dec 22 — Fire gutted one of the buildings at Russia's world-famous Peterhof palace complex today, emergency officials said. Peterhof, on a bluff above the Finnish Gulf outside Russia's second city of St Petersburg, is a magnet for tourists from around the world who flock to see its ornate palaces and giant golden cascade of fountains. The fire brigade took four hours to subdue the fire in the so-called Farmer's Palace, a 19th century outlying building at the complex, which was founded in the early 18th century by Russian Tsar Peter the Great. "Around 1,200 sq metres of the Farmer's Palace was burned. This is more than half of the ground floor, around a third of the first floor and around a third of the attic," said a spokesman for the Emergencies Ministry. The palace had been undergoing restoration and local media suggested an electrical fault could have started the blaze. — Reuters.

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**PLASTICS FACTORY,
MAPULANG LUPA, VALENZUELA,
PHILIPPINES**

London, Dec 25 — A press report, dated Dec 24, states: A big fire razed a plastics factory for several hours yesterday in Valenzuela City. The fire left three persons hurt and damaged manufacturing equipment and materials. Firefighters have contained it. The blaze hit the Asian Plastic Center at 5039 Sto. Rosario Street, Mapulang Lupa at 0635 hrs, quickly spreading in the warehouse-type structure, fire officials said. The fire was believed to have originated from the pellet section in the walled compound, but the cause was still under investigation, according to a report by arson investigator FO3 Melchor Gonzales. The fire consumed highly flammable materials and equipment, believed to be worth millions of pesos, though Bureau of Fire Protection officials could not immediately give an accurate estimate. Firefighters found it hard to put out the fire because of the flammability of the plastic materials, officials said. The fire was confined at 1034 hrs.

**PREMISES, CIUDAD GUAYANA,
VENEZUELA**

Caracas, Dec 28 — Rescue workers in Venezuela today wound up their search at the site of a fireworks blast and fire that killed 13 people. The explosion at a fireworks and munitions shop in a busy commercial district of Ciudad Guayana in Bolivar state Monday (Dec 26) sparked a fire which destroyed several other shops. It took firefighters 12 hours to control the fire and then hours more to cool off the rubble to prevent further blasts. "We no longer have any reports of missing people," Civil Protection Agency Director Antonio Rivero said, adding that he did not expect to find any more bodies. Rescuers found a 13th charred corpse today, adding to yesterday's reported toll of 12. Five people were injured. Authorities said police had to intervene at one point to prevent the looting of the gun store and other shops in the area. Firefighters and those rescued from the area also had to be treated for possible poisoning by mercury, which was suspected to have been shop, Rivero said. State news agency ABN had quoted a senior firefighter as saying one of the employees had apparently lit a sparkler in the shop, causing the explosion. The Prosecutor General's office said in a statement today that the store owner was being questioned. Police searched a warehouse where he stored more fireworks, which they suspect he did not have a license to sell. — Reuters.

**PREMISES, JEDDAH,
SAUDI ARABIA**

Karachi, Dec 25 — A huge fire broke out in the cargo yards of several shipping agencies, including those that belong to Saudi airlines, Sudanese airlines and private exporters, in Jeddah, Saudi Arab on Friday afternoon (Dec 23). According

to local media report, merchandise ready for export worth millions of riyals turned into ashes as the flames spread across several courtyards and covered the Jeddah skies with thick black smoke. Civil Defence Authorities (CDA) rushed to the site and called in additional support to help extinguish the flames. A helicopter, belonging to the authorities, reached the site to douse the fire from the top and prevent it from doing more damage to adjoining areas. Police cordoned off the area until fire completely extinguished late night. The yards contained automobile spare parts, garments, carpets, furniture and electrical appliances. The fire also burnt 10 cars, four buggies and five forklifts. Two fire fighters sustained minor injuries during their duty and no other human casualties were reported. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

**PREMISES, MIRAMAR,
UNITED STATES**

London, Dec 28 — A press report, dated Dec 27, states: A morning fire yesterday destroyed The Natural Touch, a retail business specializing in artificial trees, plants and Christmas decor, owned by Steve Shaw, in Miramar that housed The Natural Touch and Shaw's other business, PatioSource, an outdoor furniture store. Two of the companies' trucks, parked next to the building near Kenamar Drive and Formula Place, were heavily damaged. An accidental electrical failure in the building's lighting system sparked the blaze, causing about \$2.5 million in damage, said Maurice Luque, spokesman for the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department. An employee reported the fire at 0821 hrs, shortly after arriving for work. Fire officials said the 18,000-square-foot building was engulfed in 25-to 30-foot flames when they arrived. An hour later, only the back of the building's exterior concrete wall still stood. Four metal garage doors at the rear entrance shrievled up under the intense heat. The building did not have a sprinkler system, Luque said. About 70 firefighters battled the two-alarm fire, preventing it from leaping to nearby buildings in the industrial area, said Battalion Chief Rich Leap. It was brought under control about 0950 hrs. Leap said the firefighters were slightly hindered because one of the half-dozen fire hydrants in the vicinity was inoperable. But he said it likely wouldn't have made much of a difference. Battalion Chief Jimmy Fiero said the fire quickly consumed many of the wooden products in the building's showroom. Unfortunately, he said, it was "good fuel to burn." About 40 employees worked in the building for the two companies. Shaw said he couldn't estimate how long it would take to rebuild. He said the businesses were insured.

PREMISES, VENEZUELA

London, Dec 28 — A press report, dated Dec 27, states: An explosion at

an armoury in Venezuela yesterday left at least 12 people dead, local media reports say. Twenty-eight people are still unaccounted for. At least two of the victims are reported to be children. It is believed the blast originated in a box of fireworks. Parts of the shop in San Felix, in the eastern state of Bolivar, are still on fire. The rescue effort has been hampered by the large amounts of explosives and gunpowder stored in the shop. Firefighters believe there are more bodies in parts of the Comercial Marquez shop they have not been able to access. The blaze also spread to neighbouring shops and cars.

PREMISES, ZHONGSHAN, CHINA

Beijing, Dec 26 — A fire gutted a bar in south China yesterday, killing at least 26 people and injuring another eight, residents and state media said today. Firefighters rushed to the scene and put out the blaze, which broke out shortly before midnight yesterday at Tandao bar in Zhongshan, a city in Guangdong province, the media said. A police officer in Tanzhou township ruled out media speculation that arson was the cause of the fire, but declined further comment. "Witnesses said disco lights fell to the ground and exploded after the boss handed out Christmas gifts," a resident who lives nearby said. Police sealed off the street, where the bar occupied the first two storeys of a building, another resident said. "We've heard lots of rumours. Some said it was disco lights. Others said it was a gas pipe," he added. — Reuters.

**SHOPPING CENTRE, SYDNEY,
AUSTRALIA**

London, Dec 27 — A press report, dated today, states: Firefighters say a shopping centre in Sydney's south-west will not open today after fire ravaged five stores early this morning. Fifty firefighters battled the fire that broke out at the Miller shopping centre about 0300, AEDT. Fire inspector Gordon Boath says the entire building has been affected by smoke and water. "The bulk of the shopping centre has been saved and has not been affected by the fire per se, but because of the smoke penetration they've got to assess the stock within the buildings," he said. "Particularly in the supermarket there are issues with health as far as removing or maintaining stock is concerned, so the businesses will have their work cut out for them." He says several shops have significant damage. "Five shops on the southern side of the complex have been severely damaged by the fire, there is also substantial roof collapse in this area," he said. Inspector Boath says it is too early to determine the cause of the fire.

WILDFIRE, SOUTH AFRICA

London, Dec 25 — A press report, dated Dec 24, states: Some homes in Camps Bay were being evacuated due to a fire raging out of control on the

slopes of Table Mountain, Cape Town's disaster management services said. "We're evacuating some houses in Camps Bay. The fire is burning above Camps Bay and the front of Table Mountain. The cable station has been closed off and quite a number of roads in the area are also closed off," spokesperson John Brown said. He said helicopters had been water-bombing the fire since 1100 hrs. Chief fire officer Piet Smith earlier appealed to hikers on the nearby mountains to leave the area. "We have 20 fire ground crew and 16 National Park volunteers assisting at various places to put the fire out. About 16 fire appliances including tankers and four helicopters and six water tankers are also being used," said Smith. "It's very hot and very strong winds are blowing, making it more difficult to fight the fires, which are jumping."

London, Dec 25 — A press report, dated today, states: Fire has swept along the slopes of Table Mountain in the South African city of Cape Town. Ten homes were destroyed and many families have been moved to safety. Off-duty fire fighters and volunteers have joined the struggle to contain the flames. Winds of more than 50 kilometres an hour spread the Camps Bay fire across hundreds of hectares. A thick cloud of smoke has hung over the town. Cape Town's disaster management spokesman John Brown said that dozens of homes were threatened by the blaze and that a number of residents have been evacuated as a precaution. The cable car station and a number of roads in the area were also closed. Throughout the day helicopters dropped water on the fire. That managed to partially contain it but firefighters say it could easily flare up again.

London, Dec 26 — A press report, dated today, states: Firefighters were still combating a brush fire at Melkbosstrand this afternoon, Cape Town's chief fire officer, Piet Smith, said. A helicopter and a number of fire engines were being used, he said. Fire crews were also patrolling the Camps Bay and Sir Lowry's Pass areas, where there were occasional flare-ups. None of the blazes posed any immediate threat to people or property, Smith said. About 200 shacks were destroyed in a fire in an informal settlement at Khayelitsha on the Cape Flats this morning, Cape Town disaster-management services spokesperson John Brown said. He said no one was reported injured in the blaze, which began shortly after 0600 hrs and was under control by 0900 hrs. The brush fire that raged over the weekend in the Blouberg/Melkbosstrand area, and which at one point threatened a caravan park and an old-age home, is now "basically under control."

WILDFIRES, UNITED STATES

London, Dec 28 — A press report, dated Dec 27, states: Fires fuelled by dry brush and driven by gusty wind raced across parts of Texas and Oklahoma today, killing at least one

person, damaging scores of homes and forcing the evacuation of a small town. In Cross Plains, a town of about 1,000 people 150 miles south-west of Dallas, at least 25 homes and a church were burned and residents evacuated. Governor Rick Perry deployed state firefighters and issued a disaster declaration after at least 73 fires were reported burning in the northern and central parts of the state. "It's like trying to stop a 30-mph car coming down the street," Texas Deputy Fire Marshal Keith Ebel said. "The wind is the worst enemy right now." Drought and windy conditions help set the stage for the wildfires, which authorities believe were mainly set by people ignoring fire bans and burning trash, shooting fireworks or tossing cigarettes on the brown grass. In Cooke County, near the Texas-Oklahoma border, an elderly woman was killed, said Texas Forest Service spokeswoman Traci Weaver. No details were available. In Oklahoma, the biggest fire burned at least 400 acres in a rural area near the town of Mustang, south-west of Oklahoma City. At least two Oklahoma firefighters were being treated for smoke inhalation or heat exhaustion, authorities said. In Texas, at least three firefighters were hospitalised with smoke inhalation and heat exhaustion, authorities said. In Oklahoma City, a child suffered minor burns on his hands when a shed caught fire. That blaze was apparently started by children playing with fireworks, Oklahoma City Fire Maj. Brian Stanaland said. In Texas, blazes were sparked the same way in Granbury and Kennedale, communities south of Fort Worth. "We've had warm temperatures, no moisture, low humidity and winds, so any little spark and it just goes," Stanaland said. Fire burned across Bryan County in south-eastern Oklahoma. The most severe blaze destroyed at least three structures near Achille and resulted in an unknown number of injuries, mostly from smoke inhalation, said Tim Cooke, the county's emergency management director. Smoke from other grass fires reduced visibility along Interstate 35, forcing officials to close a stretch of the highway in southern Oklahoma near the Texas line. It reopened this evening. The wind in Oklahoma was clocked at 25-35 mph, with gusts as high as 40 mph. In Texas, Fort Worth Fire Department Lt Kent Worley said crews had fought nine brush fires during the first half of the day and he expected more. His department also helped battle a blaze in nearby Kennedale, where two apartment complexes were evacuated. In Hood County, a fire near Canyon Creek forced at least 100 people to evacuate, said Chief Deputy Jerry Lind. He said several structures were on fire, and propane tanks had exploded.

London, Dec 29 — A press report, dated today, states: As many as eight fires broke out in Texas yesterday as scattered wind-blown grass fires

continued to devour land as far north as Oklahoma City, destroying more than 100 buildings and killing five people. Cross Plains, Tex., a town of about 1,000, saw the most damage by wildfires across Texas and Oklahoma. Gov. Rick Perry of Texas is traveling today to the fire-ravaged town of Cross Plains, where more than 70 buildings were destroyed Tuesday (Dec 27) night, a spokeswoman for Mr. Perry said yesterday. On Tuesday Mr. Perry issued a statewide disaster declaration and ordered the deployment of state firefighters and equipment. The fires have affected at least 19 counties in his state and broke out over a stretch of land almost 500 miles long. They have destroyed more than 20,000 acres so far. Investigators are trying to determine the cause of the fires, including some in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, which they believe were started by people shooting off fireworks, tossing cigarettes or burning trash. No place was affected more than Cross Plains, an oil and ranching town of about 1,000 people 150 miles west southwest of Dallas. After a night of intense heat, wind, and flames that threatened most homes and businesses, residents awoke yesterday morning to a scarred town, with at least two residents dead and 7,600 acres of scorched earth - much of it still smoldering. Firefighters from 31 departments fought all day Tuesday and into the night, trying to save homes and businesses and hold back the fire. Firefighters, many of them volunteers, brought the fires under control around midnight, Lieutenant Goettsch said. "Nothing else was lost after midnight," he said. About a third of the town had burned down, he added.



4K-AZ48

London, Dec 23 — A press report, dated today, states: A passenger aircraft with 23 people on board crashed in Azerbaijan soon after take-off from the capital Baku. Russia's RIA news agency quoted the Azeri transport authority as saying that the aircraft bound for the city of Aktau in Kazakhstan with 18 passengers and five crew disappeared from radar screens 20 minutes after take-off. It was not clear if there had been any survivors. "As became known later the plane crashed near the village of Kyurdakhany some 15km from Baku," RIA said. It said the aircraft belonged to Azerbaijan's flag carrier AZAL.

London, Dec 25 — Antonov 140-100, operated by Azerbaijan Airlines, 4K-AZ48, Baku Airport for Aktau Airport, crashed on the Caspian Sea shore shortly after departure from Baku at about 2240, Dec 23. All 23 persons on board were killed.

Receive immediate notice as soon as a Casualty occurs. For further information please contact Andrew Luxton on +44 (0) 20 7017 4625.

London, Dec 27 — A press report, dated Dec 26, states: Azerbaijan's national airline has suspended flights by its one remaining Ukrainian-built aircraft and put off plans to acquire two more after a crash of the model killed 23 people, officials said today. All 18 passengers and five crew were killed when an Azerbaijani Airlines Antonov An-140 (4K-AZ48) plunged onto the Caspian Sea shore about 20 miles north of Baku shortly after take-off late Friday (Dec 23). The aircraft was en route to Aktau, a city on Kazakhstan's Caspian Sea coast. Ilham Amirov, the lead investigator into the crash, said on Saturday that officials were looking at a control system failure as the most probable cause of the crash, but he added that it was too early to dismiss other possible causes, including terrorism. Azerbaijani Airlines "has one An-140 still left and it was immediately taken out of service following this tragic event until the reasons for the accident have been established," said a senior manager at the airline, Faramakh Mahmudov. Azerbaijan has also decided to hold off on plans to acquire two more An-140s that it has purchased from Ukraine, said Rauf Jafaradze, the airline's deputy chief. Also today, the office of Azerbaijan's chief prosecutor said it had opened a criminal investigation into possible violations of safety measures or flight rules. Such a measure is common after crashes in the former Soviet Union, and the statement did not indicate whether any specific violations were suspected or who might be to blame. Local television stations reported the wreckage was spread over a space of about a mile, a pattern that could indicate an explosion. The aircraft's black boxes, recovered yesterday, will be sent to Russia or Ukraine for analysis, Amirov said. The victims included many foreigners — a Briton, an Australian, a Turk, a Georgian and four citizens of Kazakhstan.

London, Dec 29 — A press report, dated Dec 28, states: The crash of an Azerbaijani Airlines Antonov 140-100 4K-AZ48 on Friday (Dec 23) that killed 23 people was caused by flight instrument failure, leaving the crew unable to pilot the aircraft, airline officials said today. Azerbaijan Airlines' chief Jahangir Askerov said that the study of the aircraft's flight recorders revealed that the pilots' instruments failed immediately after takeoff, making the crew unable to see the aircraft's position in the air. "The crew lost an indication of the aircraft's altitude," Askerov told a news conference. Askerov's deputy in charge of air safety, Ilham Amirov, said the crew reported a system failure five minutes into the flight and asked air traffic controllers for information on the aircraft's altitude and direction. But the head of the Ukrainian company that built the aircraft, Pavel Naumenko, disputed the claim that the instruments failed, telling reporters at the same news conference that the aircraft had three horizon indicators and each of them

had a backup energy source. That, Naumenko said, would make the instruments' simultaneous failure "all but impossible."

AIRCRAFT PUT BACK TO LOS ANGELES, UNITED STATES

London, Dec 28 — A press report, dated today, states: A Frontier Airlines jet has landed safely in Los Angeles, after being turned around because of a possible problem with a cargo door. The aircraft took off from Santa Ana this morning on a flight to Denver, and the crew then reported that a cargo door light started flashing intermittently. So, the airline says, the crew decided to "get it checked out." The aircraft headed to Los Angeles, where Frontier has more maintenance crews. The aircraft, with 119 passengers and crew members, touched down again at 1250, about two hours after it had taken off.

AIRCRAFT PUT BACK TO THESSALONIKI, GREECE

London, Dec 26 — A press report, dated today, states: A British Airways Boeing 737 bound for Gatwick has been forced to return to Thessaloniki after suffering an apparent electrical fault. The Boeing 737, carrying 95 passengers, flew back to Thessaloniki late this afternoon after pilots noticed a possible problem. "There was a cockpit indication shortly after take-off. As a precaution it returned to Thessaloniki," BA said. Passengers from BA 2643 were being put up in a hotel overnight. The aircraft was later being inspected to try and find the cause of the problem. A BA spokesman added: "These things happen, unfortunately. The pilots err on the side of caution every time, which is the right thing to do."

C-FTWO

London, Dec 22 — A report, dated today, states: Mitsubishi MU-2B-36 C-FTWO, owned by The Nav Air Charter, took off from the Terrace airport runway 15 for a courier flight to Vancouver and crashed about 300 m beyond the airport fence about 500 m off the extended centerline of the departure runway at 1834, PST, Dec 20. The two pilots were fatally injured. A post-crash fire occurred. The weather conditions at the time were reported to include light freezing rain.

CRASH, MENDOCINO COUNTY, UNITED STATES

London, Dec 26 — A press report, dated today, states: A man piloting a single-engine aircraft died in a fiery crash in Mendocino County on Christmas Eve, authorities said. An autopsy was set for tomorrow. The aircraft crashed into a mountainside about 20 miles south of Hopland at approximately 2300 hrs, said Capt. Kurt Smallcomb of the Mendocino County Sheriff's Department. The Federal Aviation Administration reported the victim was ejected on impact and thrown about 100 yards from the wreckage. The identity of the victim was not released.

CRASH, MONADNOCKS, UNITED STATES

London, Dec 29 — A press report, dated Dec 28, states: A retired airplane pilot and part-time police officer escaped with minor injuries today after his small Cessna aircraft crashed in a wooded area shortly after takeoff. According to Temple/Greenville Police Chief James McTague, Michael Farrey took off from a private airstrip in Mason, about a half-mile from the 1045 hrs crash. Farrey, of Mason, was on his way to Brookline Airport when the Cessna lost power, crashed through trees and rolled over. Farrey crawled from the aircraft, sustaining cuts and scrapes, McTague said. He was taken to Monadnock Community Hospital in Peterborough. Federal Aeronautics Administration officials were due to arrive at the scenerlater this afternoon.

CRASH, MOORABBIN AIRPORT, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA

London, Dec 28 — A press report, dated Dec 27, states: At the Moorabbin airport a pilot and student were unharmed when their helicopter crashed during a training exercise this afternoon. Airport general manager Phil McConnell says the helicopter bounced and turned over during a heavy landing. The incident is being investigated.

CRASH, TORQUAY, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA

London, Dec 28 — A press report, dated Dec 27, states: Investigations are being conducted into the crash of a Cessna 172 being flown by a 19-year-old Sunbury man off White's Beach, Torquay, Victoria, this afternoon. Senior Constable Carla Coslovich says the aircraft developed engine trouble and the pilot was trying to land it at the local airstrip. "At around 200 feet it lined up for another approach to land, again the engine failed and the pilot unfortunately had to put the aircraft down," she said.

EMERGENCY LANDING, CARDIFF INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, WALES, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Dec 28 — A press report, dated today, states: A London-bound British Airways passenger flight from New York made an emergency landing in Wales today after smoke was detected in the passenger cabin, an airport official said. The 747 aircraft, flying from JFK to Heathrow, was diverted to Cardiff International Airport at 1240. Fire crews were put on standby. The aircraft was carrying two passengers and 17 crew, said Bill Kitchen, fire and facilities manager at Cardiff airport. A BA spokeswoman said the aircraft was carrying only two people, both off duty company employees, because other passengers had switched to other flights following an earlier delay in New York. "The 747 was diverted to Cardiff and emergency crews put on standby after we were informed that smoke or

fumes had been seen in the passenger cabin," Kitchen said. "The plane landed safely and was examined by fire crews, who found no sign of any smoke." British Airways said the emergency landing was a precaution after a warning light indicated the possible presence of fumes in the rear of the aircraft.

EMERGENCY LANDING, KANSAI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, OSAKA, JAPAN

London, Dec 28 — A press report, dated today, states: A FedEx cargo aircraft heading to Anchorage from Hong Kong made an emergency landing at Osaka's Kansai International Airport early today after confirming signs of problem in its fuel system, Kansai International Airport Co. said. None of the crew members of FedEx Flight 28 was injured and there was no problem during the MD-11 aircraft's landing around 0200, according to the Kansai airport office of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport. The aircraft asked for a permission to land around 0050 saying that it confirmed lamps that indicate problems in its fuel system were lighting while flying about 400 kilometres east off Choshi, Chiba Prefecture, the ministry said.

EMERGENCY LANDING, Khabarovsk Airport, Russia

London, Dec 28 — A press report, dated Dec 27, states: A passenger aircraft Tupolev -214 owned by Aeroflot Airlines has made an emergency landing at Khabarovsk airport today. Chief pilot of the Tupolev-214 asked for emergency landing shortly after take-off after a defect was found in the system on board. The flight Khabarovsk- Moscow took off from Khabarovsk at 1030, Moscow time, but the aircraft undercarriage got jammed after take-off. The chief pilot decided to make emergency landing back in Khabarovsk. For five hours the aircraft had been making circles above the airport, using up its fuel until finally the aircraft landed at 1427, Moscow time, (2127, local time) at Khabarovsk airport. None of the 129 passengers and aircraft crew has been hurt.

EMERGENCY LANDING, YAKUTIA REGION, RUSSIA

London, Dec 28 — A press report, dated Dec 27, states: Eight people on board a helicopter that made an emergency landing in Yakutia on Dec 24 have been rescued. A search helicopter spotted the missing aircraft from the air on today. The three crewmen and five passengers have been evacuated from the site of the emergency landing and brought to the settlement of Batagai. All the people who were on board have not been hurt, the press service of the Far Eastern regional Centre for emergency situations said today. The Mi-8 helicopter took off from the settlement of Tumata on Dec 24 and headed for Batagai, carrying eight people on board and three tons of

cargo. Radio contact with the helicopter was lost 40 minutes after take-off. The helicopter made an emergency landing in a remote highland area more than 250 kilometres off the destination. On Dec 25 rescuers from the Ministry for Emergency Situations spotted the missing helicopter from the air, but failed to reach the site of the emergency landing. On Monday (Dec 26), the rescuers made their way to the helicopter landing site in cross country vehicles, but had to abandon the search approximately a kilometre off the landing site because of a heavy blizzard and a zero visibility range in the search area. Today, another search helicopter spotted the missing one from the air, which helped locate the people in emergency. All the people evacuated from the site of the emergency landing are in good health.

ER-AJE

London, Dec 26 — A press report, dated Dec 25, states: An aircraft operated by the African Union crashed in Sudan's Darfur region killing two pilots, a Ukrainian and a Moldovan, the pan-African body said in a statement today. The crash, the first such incident for the force of 6 000 peacekeepers in the region happened yesterday after the aircraft took off from Zalingei, a town in central Darfur, the AU added. "The aircraft crashed near Zalingei airport and the two pilots were unfortunately killed," the AU said. There were no other people on board the hired aircraft which had been used to transport personnel around Darfur. A team of investigators will try to establish what caused the Antonov 28, which was heading to El-Fasher, to crash.

London, Dec 27 — Antonov An-28 ER-AJE, operated by the African Union, crashed near Zalingei Airport Dec 24, shortly after take-off from Zalingei for a flight to El Fasher Airport. The two persons on board were killed.

FLIGHTS DELAYED, AUSTRALIA

London, Dec 23 — A press report, dated today, states: Thousands of Virgin Blue passengers at airports around the country are waiting about two hours for flights. Heather Jeffries from Virgin Blue says the flight schedule has been put back because of high winds at Sydney airport and a power failure at Melbourne airport. Ms Jeffries is advising passengers to call the airline before heading to the airport. "When major airports such as Sydney get down to one runway it obviously causes a problem for all airlines coming into land and take off so it has an effect on airline schedules," she said. Qantas says there are no delays to its domestic or international flights tonight. Jetstar flights out of Hobart are delayed by up to two hours but the airline says there are no other delays. Virgin spokeswoman Amanda Bolger expects flight schedules to return to normal later tonight. "Some of the flights across the network aren't affected at

all, ditto with some of the particular destinations," she said. "Basically it's a small minority of the 40,000 people that are flying but it's across a number of different routes, so hopefully we'll get them all back on track by this evening," she said. Qantas and Jetstar say their flights are running to schedule.

INCIDENT AT DUBAI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

London, Dec 29 — A press report, dated today, states: The Dubai International Airport was closed briefly from 1612 until 1650 yesterday following reports of pieces of tyre tread found on one of its runways. A source at the Department of Civil Aviation confirmed the closure saying the decision to close the airport briefly and clear the runway of the tyre tread was according to international norms and in the interest of the safety of both passengers and the aircraft. Security and safety official at the runway who noticed parts of tyres on the runway immediately notified the air traffic control tower which decided to divert the incoming flights to other United Arab Emirates airports until the runway was cleared, the source informed. Airport seizure, under such circumstances is very normal, he said, stating that only few incoming flights were affected-one diverted to Abu Dhabi and another to Kish. The source said the Dubai International Airport has two runways, but one is temporarily out of operation due to some work being carried out. A source at the flight information desk at Dubai airport however said the airlines were issued communique about the temporary closure of the airport and the subsequent diversion of flights. But, an airline official denied receiving an such advance indication of the airport closure resulting in some flights being forced to divert to other UAE airports including Abu Dhabi and Sharjah, or circling the city until the runway was cleared of the debris. A Qatar Airline flight which departed Doha was scheduled to land in Dubai at 1700 hrs. But the flight was diverted to Abu Dhabi, and returned to Dubai around 1855 hrs. A passenger disclosed that in an announcement made by the crew in English informed that the pilot had received instructions to divert the flight to Abu Dhabi because the Dubai airport runway was busy due to heavy traffic. But, the announcement made in Arabic reported that the airport was closed and the passengers should remain in the aircraft while in Abu Dhabi until further information received from Dubai. A source of another airline reported that the incoming flight from Delhi scheduled to land in Dubai at 1600 hrs was forced to remain airborne circling the city for almost 40 minutes, before getting the clearance to land. The official said they later learnt that the runway was closed due to some debris

found. But, we were not informed how the debris landed on the runway. The official disclosed that they had no advance notice of the airport closure. However, they were informed of the closure when the flight was approaching landing. We were asked to re-direct the flight to Sharjah, but the commander decided to continue circling the city until clearance to land, the official disclosed. She added that their departing flight left on schedule at 1700 hrs.

INCIDENT AT GRIFFITH AIRPORT, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA

London, Dec 28 — A press report, dated Dec 27, states: Two people have made a lucky escape after a landing went wrong at Griffith Airport in southern New South Wales yesterday afternoon. Police say a Cessna Birdog spotter aircraft lost a wheel on touchdown and slid 55 metres before coming to rest on the edge of the runway. The aircraft lost part of its undercarriage while landing. The pilot and his passenger were not hurt during the accident. Emergency crews cleaned up the fuel spill and the airport re-opened after two hours.

INCIDENT AT HALIFAX INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, CANADA

London, Dec 28 — A press report, dated Dec 27, states: No one was injured when the wing of a WestJet Boeing 737 hit the runway at the Halifax International Airport on Sunday (Dec 25) evening, but air industry officials were investigating. "This is the first significant incident that we've had," said Gillian Bentley, a spokesman for the Calgary-based airline. All 130 passengers and six crew members on Flight 178, which originated in Toronto, were uninjured, Bentley said. "On landing, the starboard wing touched the ground," she said. Until that point, there had been nothing unusual about the instrument landing approach, she said. She could not say what caused the mishap, which occurred at about 1925 hrs. "WestJet will be doing a full investigation," she said. Investigators with the Transportation Safety Board will also look into the incident. The accident left some debris on the runway, and the aircraft has been taken out of operation, Bentley said. The airport had two runways operating at the time of the accident, airport authority spokesman Gina Connell said. "We did have a number of cancellations and diversions due to dense ground-level fog," Connell said. The affected runway was closed for a short period after the incident for an inspection and then was reopened, an official with Nav Canada said yesterday. The flight had been scheduled to continue on to Newfoundland. Bentley said passengers were taken off that aircraft and put on a later flight the same evening. Delays at the Halifax airport continued yesterday but were apparently unrelated to the accident or conditions there.

INCIDENT AT MOSTAR, BOSNIA

London, Dec 28 — A press report, dated today, states: Spanish Defence Minister Jose Bono has escaped unharmed after his aircraft overshot the runway when landing in the Bosnian city of Mostar. Some 60 people, including Bono's aides and Spanish journalists, were on board the Sunday (Dec 25) flight. No one was injured. According to journalists on board the aircraft, fog and rain forced the pilot to land about halfway down the runway. A problem with the brakes then kept the pilot from stopping before reaching the end of the runway.

INCIDENT AT STANSTED AIRPORT, ESSEX, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Dec 23 — A press report, dated Dec 22, states: A worker has been suspended after he drove a set of passenger steps into the wing of a plane at Stansted airport. Colin Auger, a team leader for ground service provider Swissport, caused £75,000 of damage when he drove into the Ryanair plane on December 4. Mr Auger's union, the GMB, said today it was an accident and that he should be re-instated. Ryanair has rejected claims that the accident was caused by their 25-minute turn around time at the airport. A statement released by Ryanair said: "This individual and this set of steps had no business being on the left-hand side of a Ryanair aircraft, nor can driving a set of steps at speed under a wing be described as "misjudgement".

N198X

London, Dec 28 — A press report, dated Dec 27, states: A small turbo aircraft crashed at Fox Field airport shortly after takeoff today, slightly injuring one of the two people aboard as it skidded across the tarmac and burst into flames. Firefighters quickly put out the blaze, and one person from the aircraft was treated for a minor injury but not transported to a hospital, said Inspector Ron Haralson of the Los Angeles County Fire Department. It wasn't immediately known why the engine failed. The crash snapped off the aircraft's starboard wing and left large black streaks of spilled fuel across the tarmac.

London, Dec 29 — Socata TBM 700 N198X crashed on approach to William J. Fox Airport, Lancaster, California, at 2246, Dec 27. The aircraft sustained substantial damage. One of the two persons on board suffered minor injuries.

N3953R

London, Dec 28 — Piper PA-28-180 (Cherokee) N3953R crashed near Ukiah, California, at 0306, Dec 26. The aircraft was destroyed. The one person on board was killed.

N444DA

London, Dec 29 — Piper PA-23-250 (Apache) N444DA crashed on South Caicos Island at 2330, Dec 26, while on a flight from South Caicos Island

to Providenciales. The aircraft sustained substantial damage. The four persons on board were killed.

N530MD

Hawaii, Dec 27 — Inter-Island Helicopter MD 369, piloted by Jonathon D'Attilio, crashed into DeMello Reservoir, Kauai Island, Hawaii, at about 1800, Dec 25. D'Attilio was assisting county fire fighters in putting out a brush fire that burned approximately 3 to 5 acres in Kapaia Valley. Battalion Chief Bill Quinlan pulled D'Attilio from the wreckage and he was taken to Wilcox Hospital where he remained in critical condition as of yesterday. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Dec 28 — McDonnell Douglas MD369FF N530MD crashed into a reservoir near Lihue, Kauai, Hawaii, at 0340, Dec 25, while on a flight from Port Allen, HI. The aircraft was destroyed. The one person on board was seriously injured.

Honolulu, Dec 28 — McDonnell Douglas MD369FF helicopter (N530MD) crash on Kauai island, Dec 25: It was reported due to injuries, Pilot Jonathan D'Attilio died yesterday. He was president of Inter-Island Helicopters, and son of the owner of a Kauai air tour company. The National Transportation Safety Board had the helicopter removed and stored in a hangar, pending further investigation. — Lloyd's Agents.

N5942S

London, Dec 26 — A press report, dated Dec 24, states: Two people were killed yesterday afternoon when their small aircraft, travelling from Santa Barbara, crashed in the hills east of Livermore, California. The single-engine Beechcraft Bonanza 36 was attempting to land when it crashed about seven miles east of Livermore Municipal Airport at around 1520 hrs, according to the Federal Aviation Administration. The National Transportation Safety Board was leading the investigation into the cause of the crash.

London, Dec 28 — Beechcraft Bonanza 36 N5942S crashed near Livermore, California, at 2320, Dec 22, while on a flight from Santa Barbara, CA, to Livermore. The aircraft sustained substantial damage. The two persons on board were killed.

N67195

London, Dec 27 — A press report, dated Dec 26, states: The crash of a small aircraft at a rural airport this evening left one man dead and his brother in critical condition, authorities said. Raymond Craft, of Florida, died in the crash at Hicks Airfield in Saginaw, north-west of Fort Worth. His brother, Robert Craft, of Fort Worth, was listed in critical condition at Harris Methodist Fort Worth hospital, Dallas-Fort Worth television station KTVT reported today. The biplane was practicing stunt manoeuvres before crashing just short of the runway, officials said "It suddenly banked and rolled over and

came nose-first into the ground," said Tarrant County Sheriff's Office spokesman Jay Six. The Federal Aviation Administration and National Transportation Safety Board were investigating the incident.

London, Dec 28 — Boeing 75 (Stearman) N67195 crashed at Hicks Field, Saginaw, Texas, at 2138, Dec 26, while on a local flight from Hicks Field. The aircraft was destroyed. One of the two persons on board was killed and the other was seriously injured.

N711HG

London, Dec 28 — A press report, dated Dec 27, states: An aircraft belonging to the air charter company Midwest Aviation crashed near Marshall. The pilot, who was the only person aboard, walked away with only an apparent shoulder injury. The twin-engine Piper Navajo crashed at about 2040 yesterday about 10 miles west of Marshall. The aircraft was found about two hours later. The pilot was returning to Marshall from Oklahoma. He was found walking near the aircraft toward the lights on emergency vehicles. A heavy fog settled in the area as night fell yesterday, but it was not immediately clear if that had anything to do with the crash. The Federal Aviation Administration will investigate.

London, Dec 28 — Piper PA-31-350 (Navajo Chieftain) N711HG crashed near Marshall, Minnesota, at 0222, Dec 26, while on a flight from Guymon, Oklahoma, to Marshall. The aircraft sustained substantial damage. The one person on board suffered minor injuries.

N7383A

London, Dec 23 — A press report, dated Dec 22, states: Two adults and two children died when their single-engine airplane crashed yesterday night in rugged terrain near Coyote Lake in south Santa Clara County. The names of the victims have not been released as of this morning. The Cessna 172 was registered to Leonard Vongiese. The plane, which was headed to Fresno, encountered a problem shortly after take-off yesterday night from the South County Airport in San Martin, according to the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Department. Initial searches for the plane turned up no evidence of wreckage yesterday night, but the rainy weather and hilly terrain made the search difficult, officials had reported. The charred wreckage was located this morning. The Federal Aviation Administration received a distress call from a pilot shortly before 2100 hrs, who said he was about three miles east of South County Airport in San Martin, officials said today. The FAA confirmed that a plane had been reported missing. Three witnesses reported seeing a plane go down, including one who said the plane appeared to be doing acrobatics.

London, Dec 23 — Cessna 172, N7383A, privately owned, on a flight

from Santa Clara, California to Fresno, California, crashed under unknown circumstances, wreckage found east of San Martin, California, at 2044, local time, Dec 22. The four persons on board were killed. The aircraft was destroyed.

N781RS

London, Dec 29 — A press report, dated today, states: A private aircraft crashed in a ball of flame yesterday as it approached an airport north of Lake Tahoe in stormy weather, killing both people on board. The Learjet 35 had taken off from Twin Falls, Idaho, and was scheduled to pick up two passengers at Truckee Tahoe Airport before traveling on to California, said Bruce Nelson, a Federal Aviation Administration operations officer in Los Angeles. Officials did not yet know what caused the crash, but a storm had brought rain, snow and high winds to the area, Nelson said. Authorities did not immediately identify the victims. "The port wing went straight up with the starboard wing straight down, then the port wing went straight up," he said. "Then it hit the ground with the biggest ball of flame you've ever seen." The aircraft was owned by R.S.B. Investments, based in Washington, Pa., a company that does business as Skyward Aviation, Nelson said. Skyward is an aircraft charter, sales and management company.

London, Dec 29 — Learjet 35A N781RS crashed on approach to Truckee-Tahoe Airport, California, at 2057, Dec 28, while on a flight from Twin Falls, Idaho, to Truckee-Tahoe. The aircraft was destroyed. The two persons on board were killed.

N979AS

London, Dec 28 — A press report, dated Dec 27, states: A 12-inch hole in the fuselage of an Alaska Airlines jet caused the aircraft to lose cabin pressure, forcing the pilots to make an emergency descent and return to the airport, authorities said today. The incident yesterday involved a McDonnell Douglas MD-80 en route from Seattle to Burbank, California. The aircraft landed safely at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, and none of the 140 passengers was hurt. A ramp worker acknowledged that he failed to report immediately striking the plane at the gate yesterday with a baggage cart or baggage-belt machine, said Jim Struhsaker, a spokesman for the National Transportation Safety Board. The worker told the agency that although the vehicle touched the aircraft, he was not aware he had dented it, Struhsaker said. The accident created a crease in the aircraft's aluminium skin, which opened up into a 12-by-6-inch gash as the aircraft climbed to 26,000 feet, Struhsaker said. The crew of Flight 536 reported a loss of cabin pressure about 20 minutes after take-off, airline spokeswoman Caroline Boren said. Oxygen masks deployed for passengers, and the aircraft made a

rapid descent back toward the airport. The worker who damaged the jet was employed by Menzies Aviation, a British company under contract with the airline to provide baggage handling and other ramp services, Boren said. Meetings were being held with ramp workers to review safety procedures, including the "rapid and thorough reporting" of incidents on the ground, Boren said. The aircraft was being repaired and should be back in service within a few days, she added.

London, Dec 28 — McDonnell Douglas MD-83 N979AS, operated by Alaska Airlines, reported cabin pressurisation problems and returned to Seattle, Washington, at 0047, Dec 27, while on a flight from Seattle to Burbank, California. No injuries were reported.

Product Recalls



BATTERY PACKS, UNITED STATES

London, Dec 23 — The following press release, dated Dec 22, states: The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in co-operation with Petters Consumer Brands LLC, of Minnetonka, Minn., today announced a voluntary recall of approximately 165,000 battery packs used with Polaroid-brand portable DVD players. The battery can overheat and melt the plastic case while recharging, posing a fire and burn hazard to consumers. Petters Consumer Brands has received eight reports of batteries overheating, melting the plastic case, or units smoking during the recharging process. No injuries have been reported. The recall involves external battery packs used with the Polaroid-brand portable DVD players in seven-inch and eight-inch screen sizes. The seven-inch DVD player has model number PDV-0700 and eight-inch player has a model number of PDV-0800. The players and battery packs are silver in color. The battery packs attach to the bottom of the DVD player. Manufactured in China, the product was sold at various electronics and department stores nationwide from May 2003 through to March 2004 for between \$150 and \$350.

Port Conditions



ITALY

Genoa, Dec 28 — Port situation Dec 28: Genoa: Five vessels awaiting berths. Average berthing delay one to two days. Savona: No vessels awaiting berths. La Spezia: No vessels awaiting berths. — Lloyd's Agents.

Port Delays

(Information received from BIMCO, Denmark and Indian Ports Association, New Delhi)

Country/Port	Date of report	No. of vessels waiting and/or days delay
Azerbaijan		
Apscheron	26-Dec-2005	Oil products: Dubendi terminal: 3 vessels berthed, of which 1 loading crude oil, 1 completed discharging gasoil, 1 stopped loading of crude oil.
Baku	26-Dec-2005	Oil products: Bay of Baku: no vessels; Azerneftiyag terminal: no vessels; AzerTrans terminal - Nobel avenue: no vessels; Sangachal district: no vessels; Transserve terminal: closed.
Bulgaria		
Bourgas	27-Dec-2005	Five vessels in port operating, of which 1 loading coils, 4 discharging (2 gasoil, 1 zinc concentrate, 1 billets); 6 vessels in roads, of which 4 to load (1 copper anodes, 1 bulk ammonium nitrate, 1 coils, 1 empty vessel), 2 to discharge (1 metals, 1 gasoil); 16 vessels due, of which 10 to load (1 soya, 1 reinforced concrete, 6 coils, 1 scrap, 1 sunflower seeds), 6 to discharge (1 wheat, 1 salt, 1 iron ore, 2 coal, 1 manganese ore).
Varna	27-Dec-2005	Varna East, Varna West, Electrical Power Station, Balchik: Conditions 19-26 December: Fifteen vessels in port operating of which 7 loading (1 dense soda in bulk, 1 clinker, 1 kaolin, 1 light soda in big bags, 1 dense soda in big bags, 1 chamotte, 1 bulk STTP), 5 discharging (2 raw phosphate, 2 bulk coal, 1 containers), 3 discharging/loading containers; no vessels waiting in roads.
Chile		
Antofagasta	26-Dec-2005	Three vessels berthed, 4 berths vacant; 19 vessels due this week to load/discharge concentrates, bulk copper, containers and general cargo.
Arica	26-Dec-2005	Four vessels berthed, 3 berths vacant; 20 vessels due this week.
Iquique	26-Dec-2005	Four vessels berthed, 3 berths vacant; 17 vessels due this week.
Lirquen	26-Dec-2005	Four vessels at terminal, 2 berths vacant; 19 vessels due this week.
Puerto Montt	26-Dec-2005	Two vessels at terminal, 1 berth vacant; 8 vessels due this week.
Punta Arenas	26-Dec-2005	Four vessels at terminal, 3 berths vacant; 12 vessels due this week.
San Antonio	26-Dec-2005	Six vessels berthed, 3 berths vacant; 22 vessels due this week.
San Vicente	26-Dec-2005	Two vessels berthed, 3 berths vacant; 18 vessels due during the week; Steel pier: 1 vessel at terminal, 1 berth vacant; 1 vessel due this week; Coronel pier: 2 vessels at terminal, 2 berths vacant; 8 vessels due this week; Oil terminal: 1 tanker at terminal, 1 berth vacant; no tankers due this week.
Valparaiso	26-Dec-2005	Four vessels berthed, 4 berths vacant; 3 vessels anchored; 20 vessels due this week.
Cyprus		
Larnaca	27-Dec-2005	Five conventional vessels discharging at berth; 3 conventional vessels due 28/12; no delays expected.
Limassol	27-Dec-2005	Three container vessels loading/discharging at berth, 2 conventional vessels discharging at berth; 4 container vessels due 28/12; no delays expected.
Egypt		
Adabiya	25-Dec-2005	Six vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 1 general cargo, 3 bulk carriers, 2 containers.
Alexandria	25-Dec-2005	Fifty vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 33 general cargo, 12 bulk carriers, 2 tankers, 3 container vessels; 33 vessels dry-docked; 14 vessels at inner anchorage, 16 at outer anchorage.
Damietta	25-Dec-2005	Twenty vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 14 general cargo, 3 bulk carriers, 1 Ro/Ro, 2 containers; 4 vessels at outer anchorage, 1 at inner anchorage.
Dekheila	25-Dec-2005	Nine vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 1 general cargo, 7 bulk carriers, 1 container vessel; 2 vessels at outer anchorage.
Port Said	25-Dec-2005	Five vessels berthed (loading/discharging), all containers.
Suez	25-Dec-2005	Ten vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 2 general cargo, 1 tanker, 3 reefers, 4 passenger vessels; 3 tugs, 1 vessel dry-docked.
Suez Canal	25-Dec-2005	Twenty-five vessels transiting Northbound, 26 Southbound.
Estonia		
Tallinn	26-Dec-2005	Paljassaare (formerly Kopli): 2 vessels loading at berth (1 general cargo, 1 oil products), 1 grain vessel discharging at berth; no vessels waiting at anchorage; 3 vessels due, with 10 days berthing delay expected.

Port Conditions

India

Kolkata	26-Dec-2005	3 vessels operating at berth of which 2 loading (General Cargo, Containers), 1 vessel discharging Edible Oil, 1 vessel working at midstream and waiting to load Iron ore; 4 vessels under repair; 1 vessel waiting to sail.
Haldia	26-Dec-2005	13 vessels operating at berth of which 6 vessels loading (POL-2, Iron ore-3, Containers), 7 vessels discharging (Coke-2, Fertilizer, Rock Phosphate, Edible Oil, Project Cargo, Containers); 9 vessels awaiting berth (6 to discharge, 3 to load); 3 vessels waiting at anchorage (2 to discharge, 1 to load); 8 vessels due (Crude, POL-2, Iron ore-2, R.P.Coke, Containers-2)
Paradip	26-Dec-2005	7 vessels operating at berth of which 6 loading (Iron ore-2, Thermal Coal-3, Chrome Concentrate), 1 vessel discharging Coking Coal; 1 vessel awaiting berth to load; 3 vessels waiting at anchorage to load.
Visakhapatnam	26-Dec-2005	13 vessels operating at berth of which 8 loading (Iron ore, Steel Plates, Soya, I.Sand, Feld Spar, Alumina, Thermal Coal-2), 5 vessels discharging (Coking Coal, Rock Phosphate, Steel Scrap, Alumina, Containers); 8 vessels not ready to work and waiting at anchorage (7 to discharge, 1 to load); 1 vessel under repair(MV Chin Shwe Haw at HSY Jetty which was collided with MV Uttar Kasi); 34 vessels due (Iron Ore-4, Iron Steel-5, Thermal Coal, B.F.Slag, Pig Iron, Alumina, Food Grains-3, Crude & POL Products-4, NAP, MOP-3, Urea-2, Coking Coal-2, Iron ore fines, Containers, General Cargo, Steel Scrap, Crude & POL Products-2).
Chennai	26-Dec-2005	12 vessels operating at berth of which 3 vessels loading (Barytes, Granite Blocks, Iron Ore), 5 vessels discharging (Urea, DAP, Met Coke, Crude Oil, General Cargo), 4 vessels loading and discharging (Granite Blocks/S.Coil, Granite Blocks/Project Cargo, LSHS, Containers); 3 vessels not ready to work and waiting at anchorage (1 to discharge, 2 to load); 1 Containers vessel due.
Tuticorin	26-Dec-2005	9 vessels operating at berth of which 3 vessels loading (General Cargo, Maize, Sugar), 6 vessels discharging (Timber Logs-2, Copper Concentrate, MOP, Rock Phosphate, Liquid Ammonia); 3 vessels not ready to work and waiting at anchorage (2 to load, 1 to load and discharge); 1 vessel under arrest ("MV Shahad" at the anchorage after completion of Cement loading operations for want of MMD Clearance).
Cochin	26-Dec-2005	4 vessels operating at berth of which 1 loading Naphtha; 3 vessels discharging (Coal, Crude, HSD & MS); 1 vessel awaiting berth to load and discharge.
New Mangalore	26-Dec-2005	4 vessels operating at berth of which 2 vessels loading (POL Product, Iron ore Fines), 2 vessels discharging (Met Coke, LPG); 2 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge; 13 vessels due (Containers, POL Product-3, POL Crude-2, Crude Palm Oil, Iron Ore(P), Met Coke, Timber, LPG, Granite Stone, Urea).
Mormugao	26-Dec-2005	3 vessels operating at berth of which 1 loading Iron Ore, 2 vessels discharging (MOP, Met Coke); 6 vessels working at midstream and loading Iron ore; 2 vessels awaiting berth (1 to discharge, 1 to load); 6 vessels under repair/dry docked; 8 vessels due (Coal, Coking Coal-2, Iron Ore-5).
Mumbai	26-Dec-2005	16vessels operating at berth of which 7 loading (General Cargo/Mech/Project Cargo, Bagged Sugar, Bagged SBM, Steel Cargo-3, POL), 8 vessels discharging (Palm Oil Products, Sulphur, Rock Phosphate, Steel Coils, Steel Cargo, Bulk Peas, POL-2), 1 vessel loading and discharging Containers/Steel/General Cargo; 2 vessels awaiting order to discharge; 2 vessels waiting at anchorage to load; 6 vessels under repairs/ dry docked; 4 vessels under arrest; 1 vessels under laid up (Berths not required for cargo operations); 26 vessels due (Container-6,General Cargo-20).
J.N.P.T.	26-Dec-2005	7 vessels operating at berth of which 1 vessel loading Molasses, 1 vessel discharging Phosphoric Acid, 5 vessels loading and discharging Containers; 1 vessel awaiting berth to load and discharge; 1 Containers vessel due.
Kandla	26-Dec-2005	16 vessels operating at berth of which 7 discharging (Chemical-2, Phosphoric Acid, Butane, Timber Logs-2, Feldspar), 7 vessels loading (Agriculture Product-5, Cement, Naptha); 2 vessels loading and discharging Containers; 3 vessels awaiting berth (1 to discharge, 2 to load); 3 vessels not ready to work and waiting at anchorage (1 to discharge, 2 to load); 1 vessel under repairs.
Ennore	26-Dec-2005	3 Thermal Coal vessel due (MV Gem of Ennore, MV APJ Sri Devi, MV Rani Padmini).

Israel

Ashdod	27-Dec-2005	Two general cargo vessels loading at berth, 13 general cargo vessels discharging at berth, 3 container vessels loading/discharging at berth; 7 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (5 general cargo, 2 bulkers), 1 tanker waiting at anchorage to load/discharge; 2 vessels awaiting orders; 19 vessels due, with 2-3 days delay expected.
Haifa	27-Dec-2005	Seven vessels discharging at berth (3 general cargo, 4 bulkers), 6 loading/discharging at berth (3 containers, 1 car carrier, 2 tankers); 5 bulkers waiting at anchorage to discharge, 4 container vessels waiting at anchorage to load/discharge; 5 vessels under repairs/dry-docked, 1 awaiting orders; 17 vessels due, with 2-3 days delay expected..

Kazakhstan

Aktau	26-Dec-2005	Oil products: 2 vessels berthed, both loading crude oil; 7 vessels in roads, all to load unknown cargoes; 2 vessels due by 27/12, both to load unknown cargoes.
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Port Conditions

Mozambique

Maputo	27-Dec-2005	<p>Twenty-four hour berthing/sailing. There are some restrictions to berthing at certain badly lit wharves. Vessels have to be geared for general cargo berths as shore cranes are very few and unreliable. The Port is working normally and is expected to remain so, hence vessels should berth on arrival, daylight, draft and weather permitting. No berthing delays envisaged. A shortage of equipment is being experienced (except at the Container terminal). Shed space is currently available. Safe draft for transiting the channel is 9.1 metres plus the tide of the day. Density of water varies from 1.020 to 1.023. Vessels with ramps on starboard side can berth with the ebbing tide. Should ramps be portside, vessels to berth with the flowing tide. Pilot launch is operational. Both tugs are operational. Leading lights are lit. One container gantry is operational, the second is under repairs. Matola coal terminal is operational. Ressano Garcia, Goba and Limpopo railway lines are all operational. Five vessels are currently in port berthed, of which 1 loading bulk coal, 1 discharging bulk alumina, 1 transhipping bulk wheat/wheat, 1 discharging/loading steel coils/sheet iron, 1 dredger; 1 vessel due to berth 27/12 to discharge pitch; 25 vessels due by 24/1 of which 6 to load (2 bulk coal, 1 aluminium ingots, 1 ferro chrome, 1 bagged sugar, 1 other cargo), 12 to discharge (1 frozen fish, 1 bulk maize, 2 bagged rice, 2 petcoke, 1 vegetable oil, 1 coke, 1 petcoke/ingots, 1 bulk alumina, 1 vehicles, 1 bulk wheat), 6 to discharge/load (5 containers, 1 containers/steel cargo), 1 passenger vessel.</p>
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Pakistan

Karachi	28-Dec-2005	<p>Two vessels loading at berth (1 rice, 1 cement), 11 vessels discharging at berth (1 crude oil, 1 scrap, 1 coal, 3 urea, 1 sulphur, 3 general cargo, 1 tallow), 2 container vessels loading/discharging at berth; 9 vessels waiting at anchorage to load (8 containers, 1 cement), 12 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (8 containers, general cargo, 1 scrap, 1 phosphate); no vessels bunkering, 1 under repairs/dry-docked, none awaiting orders; 1 container vessel due, with 2 days berthing delay expected for containers, 2-3 days for general cargo, 7-8 days for bulk cargo..</p>
Port Qasim	28-Dec-2005	<p>Three vessels discharging at berth (1 palm oil, 1 canola, 1 wheat); 2 container vessels waiting at anchorage to load, 6 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (2 containers, 1 jute, 2 HSD, 1 canola).</p>

Russia

Novorossiysk	26-Dec-2005	<p>Seventeen vessels in port operating, of which 15 loading (1 DRI, 1 scrap, 1 pig-iron, 1 pipes/steel sheets/steel billets, 1 pipes/coils, 3 wheat, 1 steel sheets/steel billets, 1 bulk ammonium nitrate, 1 coils, 1 equipment, 1 cellulose, 1 oil, 1 barley), 2 discharging (1 debars, 1 products); 14 vessels waiting in roads of which 9 to load (1 bulk ammonium nitrate, 1 bulk NPK, 1 wheat, 1 aluminium, 1 DRI, 1 coils, 1 steel billets, 1 steel billets/tin plates/steel sheets/coils, 1 steel billets/H-beams), 5 to discharge (1 bulk sugar, 4 citrus); 83 vessels due, of which 79 to load (7 slabs, 1 scrap, 3 pipes, 8 bulk NPK, 3 DRI, 1 cars/equipment, 2 bulk fertiliser, 4 bulk ammonium nitrate, 4 aluminium, 8 steel billets, 1 steel billets/cars, 1 pig-iron, 1 pipes/steel billets, 9 bulk urea, 1 H-beams/steel billets/cars, 1 oil, 3 diesel oil, 1 bulk ammonium nitrate/bulk NOK, 1 lead, 1 coils/WRIC, 1 WRIC, 3 copper, 3 bulk cement, 5 coils, 1 soda ash, 1 slabs/coils, 1 bulk NPK/bulk ammonium nitrate, 3 wheat), 3 to discharge (1 citrus, 1 debars, 1 bulk sugar), 1 to load/discharge containers; Oil terminal: 2 tankers berthed, both loading, of which 1 crude oil, 1 diesel oil; 2 tankers in roads, both to load crude oil; 15 tankers due, all to load, of which 14 crude oil, 1 diesel oil.</p>
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Slovenia

Koper	27-Dec-2005	<p>Eleven vessels berthed of which 4 discharging/loading containers, 2 discharging bulk cargo, 2 loading bulk cargo, 3 loading sawn timber/general cargo; 3 vessels waiting at anchorage to load bulk cargo; 17 vessels due over the next 2 days of which 2 to discharge/load containers, 3 car carriers to discharge/load vehicles, 3 vessels to discharge bulk cargo, 2 to load bulk cargo, 6 to load sawn timber/general cargo, 1 to load livestock.</p>
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Spain

Bilbao	27-Dec-2005	<p>Twenty-seven vessels operating (8 tankers, 19 other vessels), of which 6 loading, 14 discharging, 7 loading/discharging.</p>
Cadiz	27-Dec-2005	<p>Twenty-six vessels in port of which 14 operating (3 Ro/Ros, 3 containers, 2 cereals, 1 cement, 1 wheat, 1 oil, 1 clinker, 2 shipbuilding materials), 12 vessels under repair; no delays.</p>

Turkmenistan

Aladja	27-Dec-2005	<p>Oil products: 1 vessel berthed, loading crude oil.</p>
Turkmenbashi	27-Dec-2005	<p>Oil products: 2 vessels berthed of which 1 completed discharging fuel oil, 1 discharging gasoil; 2 vessels in roads, 1 to discharge crude oil, 1 to load gasoline.</p>

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Port Conditions

Ukraine

Ilichevsk	26-Dec-2005	Nine vessels in port operating, of which 7 loading (4 steel products, 1 grain, 1 sunflower oil, 1 gasoil), 2 discharging/loading containers; 2 vessels in roads, both to load, of which 1 gasoil, 1 pig-iron; 22 vessels due, of which 13 to load (9 steel products, 1 sunflower oil, 1 sulphur, 1 equipment, 1 ferro nickel), 1 to discharge ore, 8 to discharge/load containers.
Mariupol	26-Dec-2005	Fourteen vessels in port operating, of which 12 to load (7 steel, 1 sulphur, 1 equipment, 1 fire-clay, 1 bran, 1 sunflower seeds/husks), 2 to discharge/load (1 feldspar/fire-clay/kaolin, 1 containers/steel products); 16 vessels in roads, of which 15 to load (9 steel, 1 coal, 1 coke, 2 sulphur, 1 wheat, 1 fire-clay), 1 to discharge/load magnetite/steel products; 59 vessels due, of which 57 to load (29 steel, 14 coal, 1 coke, 4 fire-clay, 3 sulphur, 2 bran, 1 wheat, 1 barley, 1 kaolin, 1 pitch), 1 to discharge citrus, 1 to discharge/load containers/steel.
Odessa	26-Dec-2005	Twenty-five vessels in port operating, of which 14 loading (7 metal, 2 oil, 1 ferro alloy, 2 corn, 1 wheat, 1 barley), 8 discharging (1 luggage, 3 citrus, 1 car parts, 2 bananas, 1 sand), 2 loading/discharging containers, 1 passenger vessel; 6 vessels in roads, of which 1 to load pitch, 2 to discharge (1 animal fats, 1 general cargo), 3 to load/discharge containers; 80 vessels due, of which 42 to load (24 metal, 3 pig-iron, 4 corn, 1 pitch, 1 wheat, 1 timber, 1 vegetable oil, 7 oil), 11 to discharge (6 citrus, 1 luggage, 1 vegetable oil, 1 meat, 1 bananas, 1 sugar), 27 to discharge/load containers.

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