

BP's 'green' Alaska tankers halted due to rudder cracks

Trouble hits vessels designed especially for the rigours of the Gulf of Alaska, writes Rajesh Joshi in New York- Monday May 23 2005

TWO Jones Act tanker newbuildings owned by BP, described as "the most environmentally friendly tankers ever built", have been laid up near Seattle after large cracks were discovered in their rudders.

One is headed for repairs at an unspecified Vancouver shipyard and could be out of service until July, BP said.

The other is to be patched up and should resume trading in Alaska later this week, subject to regulatory approval.

The 193,050 dwt "Alaska-class" sisterships, Alaskan Frontier and Alaskan Explorer, are the first two in a quartet contracted with National Steel and Shipbuilding Company of San Diego, a General Dynamics subsidiary, for a price estimated between \$210m and \$250m apiece.

The ships were delivered in August last year and March this year, with the remaining two deliveries scheduled for late this year and in 2006. They are operated by Alaska Tanker Company, a US joint venture between BP, Keystone and Overseas Shipholding Group.

According to Nassco each ship has a life of 35 years. Designed especially for the rigours of the Gulf of Alaska, the ships feature a twin diesel-electric propulsion system with redundant engines, shafts and screws.

They use seawater instead of oil to lubricate propeller shafts, eliminating the possibility of accidental oil leaks.

Pablo Urrutia, a BP spokesman, told Lloyd's List a routine scheduled maintenance inspection on the Alaskan Frontier on May 14 revealed cracks on the plating of the two rudders, including one fissure 9ft long.

The Alaskan Explorer was then inspected as a "precaution" and revealed three cracks of up to 15 inches in one of its rudders, Mr Urrutia said. Both ships are laid up in Port Angeles, Washington, according to local reports.

Mr Urrutia said a team comprising BP, Alaska Tanker and classification society American Bureau of Shipping was investigating the cause of the cracks.

Once this was identified the Alaskan Frontier would head for repairs in Vancouver which would last "however long it may take — perhaps until July".

BP would hold Nassco responsible for the damage, said Mr Urrutia.

He added that BP anticipated the Alaskan Explorer could be repaired quickly and resume trade after ABS and US Coast Guard approvals.

He added: "The best thing was the damage was discovered under scheduled maintenance and did not compromise public safety or cause a serious incident."

A naval architect not connected with either Nassco or BP told Lloyd's List that

from the information available he did not consider this a critical safety matter.

He said rudder cracking was "fairly normal" under certain conditions such as turbulence in the water or excessive vibration. He did not rule out design flaws, but said these were unlikely.

"Induced vibrations into the rudder can be caused by the propeller or by design factors such as the shape of the hull," he said.

"However, with the computer technology available today, it is less likely to be a design flaw."

He said computer models usually predicted the static and dynamic forces to which rudders were subjected based on known factors such as speed. It was conceivable that the model used to test the BP design "simply underestimated the dynamic force generated in Alaskan waters".

The Nassco series has been built keeping the Exxon Valdez in mind. It represents a "new generation" of tankers capable of carrying huge loads safely.

The Nassco ships can carry 1.3m barrels of crude oil, or more than a day's North Slope oil production.

BP has earmarked the quartet to serve the North Slope to US west coast sector.

The Alaskan Frontier has carried 25 loads since its delivery while the Alaskan Explorer has been sidelined after only one voyage, according to company officials.

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

Vessel	Type	Flag	Class	GT	DWT	Bit	Casualty
ARION	general	PAN	AB ABS	4,362	7,140	1985	Salvage services rendered to vessel under Lloyd's Open Form 12 May 2005 due to rudder problems about 700 miles east of Salvador. Vessel under tow to Rio de Janeiro, ETA 23 May.
ATLANTIC WIND	chem/oil carrier	CYP	LR	8,750	13,845	1982	Anchored in lat 50 00.1N, long 05 21.6W, May 13 due to turbo-charger problems. Vessel not disabled but further engine useage would cause further damage. Tug towed vessel to Falmouth, berthed May 14. Effecting repairs May 15.
BIG SEA 5	product tanker	THA	—	699	1,750	1982	Vessel capsized in upper province of Prachuap Khiri Khan, Thailand in heavy seas May 10. Oil spilt. Crew of a boat travelling with vessel unable to save vessel.
FRANKLIN STRAIT	general	ATG	GL	4,450	5,585	1999	Vessel experienced engine problems at Dominica May 7. Vessel arrived Port of Spain May 9 and was attended by class surveyor from GL. Vessel has suspected crankshaft or bearing damage and towed to Curacao by tug, ETA May 18.
HUI LONG	general	HKG	GL	12,233	16,113	1996	Vessel abandoned by its crew in lat 05 57N, long 84 22E, May 18 due to 25 degree list. All 23 crew rescued.
ISARGAS	lpg	LBR	GL	4,200	5,687	1991	In collision with Phoenix Beta in lat 51 23N, long 04 13E, May 16. Vessel grounded after the collision, refloated and towed to Antwerp for inspection. Forepeak heavily damaged.
MIMOSA	tug/supply	VNM	NV	1,242	1,869	1982	Sank near Dai Hung oilfield, Vietnam, May 12 following a collision with chemical/oil carrier <i>Trinity</i> . All 16 crew rescued. Small amount of fuel spilled. Investigation under way.
MYLINGUR	fishing	FRO	NV	459	—	1973	Sank during a storm in Patuakhali district, southern Bangladesh May 15. Vessel was struck by trawler Salleg at Torshavn May 16. Vessel sustained heavy damage, took in seawater and standing on the bottom. Rescue team is trying to fix hole, 1.8 metre by one metre so it can be taken to Torshavn shipyard.
OLYMPIAS	general	VCT	HR	5,567	8,199	1976	Had engine-room fire in northern Persian Gulf May 11. All 27 crew abandoned vessel and rescued by US Naval vessel. Reported on fire and adrift in lat 28 41.1N, long 50 26.7E, May 12.
PHOENIX BETA	crude oil tanker	HKG	AB ABS	59,831	110,000	2003	In collision with <i>Isargas</i> in lat 51 23N, long 04 13E, May 16. Vessel is proceeding to Antwerp under own power for inspection, no tug assistance required. Damage to one forepeak ballast tank and holed above waterline.
VOLGONEFT 107	product tanker	RUS	—	3,463	4,190	1972	Vessel ran aground in the entry to Neva River May 18. Vessel sustained damage to forepeak of the hull without leakage of cargo. No injuries to crew. Vessel will be refloated when the cause of the casualty is ascertained.

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The following reports are reprinted from Lloyd's List



AEGEAN SUN (Greece)
See under "Miscellaneous."

ANNIE B. (Belgium)
London, May 19 -- Fishing Annie B.: Insurers have not decided yet what to do with this vessel, whether it will be repaired or scrapped.

API IV (Argentina)
Buenos Aires, May 13 -- In the morning of May 5, trawler API IV had a rope in the propellers, which left the vessel without propulsion. She was towed to Puerto Madryn roads on May 7 by trawler Api II. Divers removed the rope tangled in the propeller and, after loading some supplies, the vessel weighed anchor and sailed on May 8. -- Lloyd's Agents.

ARCA (Canada)
Montreal, May 13 -- Tank barge Arca has been repaired and is back operating as usual, bunkering ships at the anchorage and at various piers. -- Lloyd's Agents.

ARION (Madeira)
Gibraltar, May 13 -- Passenger Arion (5888 gt, built 1965) arrived this morning on its scheduled visit with visible signs of having experienced a fire on board. Port surveyors are currently carrying out Port State Control. According to the master, the fire occurred on the sun deck on May 12 while on route from Calvi to Gibraltar and was extinguished 15 minutes later. No casualties. The vessel is presently berthed alongside North Mole. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, May 13 -- Passenger Arion, with 200 passengers, will sail on time at 0400, local time, May 14, as per schedule, although the Port Surveyor is still on board. The class surveyor, the flag state and the superintendent of the company have also boarded.

London, May 17 -- Passenger Arion sailed Gibraltar May 14.

ARION (Panama)
London, May 18 -- Understood salvage services were rendered to general cargo Arion (4362 gt, built 1985) under Lloyd's Open Form signed May 12, due to rudder problems approximately 700 miles east of Salvador. The vessel is presently under tow to Rio de Janeiro, ETA May 23.

ARMSTRONG (Vanuatu)
Aqaba, May 19 -- Bulk Armstrong (18108 gt, built 1995) caused damages to the port's tug boat while being tugged to Aqaba port, where arrived May 8. Armstrong departed the port about May 12 and the Port Authorities are planning to claim against the vessel's owner of huge damages

incurred. -- Lloyd's Agents. (Note -- Armstrong sailed Gladstone Apr 8 and subsequently sailed Safaga May 8.)

ATLANTIC WIND (Cyprus)
London, May 14 -- Following received from Coastguard Falmouth MRCC, dated today: Chemical/oil carrier Atlantic Wind (8750 gt, built 1982), in ballast, was reported anchored in lat 50 00.1N, long 05 21.6W, at 2136, UTC, May 13, due to turbo-charger problems. The vessel was not disabled but using the engine could have caused further damage and tug assistance was requested. A tug was contracted and the vessel was towed to Falmouth, where it berthed alongside Queens Wharf at 0920, UTC, May 14.

Falmouth, May 15 -- Chemical/oil carrier Atlantic Wind arrived Falmouth at 1000, May 14, in tow of tug/supply Anglian Princess. The vessel secured alongside Queens Wharf at 1130 same day, to effect engine repairs. -- Lloyd's Agents.

AURA (Cambodia)
London, May 18 -- A press report, dated May 17, states: Cambodian-flagged general cargo Aura (1995 gt, built 1966) has run aground after striking a waterside mansion in the Bosphorus waterways in Istanbul en route to Russia.

London, May 18 -- Following received from Ankara MRCC, timed 1023, UTC: General cargo Aura ran aground in lat 41 04.3N, long 29 03.3E, at 1836, UTC, May 17. Vessel has since refloated and is now anchored, pending an inspection.

Istanbul, May 18 -- General cargo Aura, Sea of Marmara for Black Sea, in ballast, had engine breakdown, drifted and came into contact with seaside residence at Uskudar, Istanbul, at 2130, local time, May 17. Vessel shifted by its own means and anchored off Ahirkapi. -- Lloyd's Agents.

B.NO.35 (U.S.A.)
London, May 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: Tank barge B.No.35 that struck a reef and spilled gasoline into the Hudson River in New Hamburg late last month spilled approximately 28,000 gallons of its 3.1 million gallon cargo, the U.S. Coast Guard said yesterday. "The barge right now is in Hoboken, New Jersey where it is being repaired and will be there throughout the month and hopefully in July we will be able to check out the repairs for that barge," Coast Guard Petty Officer Michael Hvozda said. The crew of the tug that was pushing the barge was tested for drugs and alcohol. The results of those tests came back negative, Hvozda said. The crew has no restrictions imposed on them following the incident, he said.

BIG SEA 5 (Thailand)
London, May 18 -- The marine ecosystem in Thailand's upper southern province of Prachuap Khiri Khan has been put in jeopardy by an oil tanker which capsized a week ago

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in fierce seas, just four kilometres from the coastline of a national park. The large oil tanker was found by local fisheries and marine resource officials, as they prepared to create an artificial coral reef yesterday. Completely upended, the Big C5 (product tanker Big Sea 5 (699 gt, built 1982)) was travelling from the southern Surat Thani Province to Bangkok when it sunk on May 10. The crew of a boat which had been travelling with the vessel said that they had attempted to salvage it and pull it to shore, but had been unable to do so. According to local reporters, the environmental damage from the disaster is already apparent. A film of oil now coats the surface of the water despite the fact that the oil tanker was not said to have been carrying any oil at the time of the accident. Home to several species of dolphins, the area where the tanker capsized is also thought to be a feeding ground for beluga whales. Yesterday marine resources officials said that measures had been taken to minimize the environmental damage.

BONGGAYA 91 (Malaysia)

See "Celebes Sea" under "Piracy."

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CALIFORNIA (Panama)

Gibraltar, May 16 -- Bulk California is still anchored on the East side of Gibraltar awaiting quotes for repairs, so has no date of sailing as yet. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Gibraltar, May 18 -- On May 17, Port Surveyors finally managed to board and detain bulk California, which has been drifting a few miles east of Gibraltar as its port windlass is inoperative, and the vessel has seven shackles in the water and so is unable to proceed to anchor in the bay. The vessel has been detained due to a number of deficiencies and Class are required to attend. -- Lloyd's Agents.

CANUM (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, May 13 -- General cargo Canum reloaded its cargo and sailed Brightlingsea at 0230, May 13, for Portugal. -- Lloyd's Agents. (See issue of May 12.)

CAPTAIN WALID (North Korea)

See "Cyprus" under "Port State Control".

CARAVOS HORIZON (Malta)

Piraeus, May 13 -- Bulk Caravos Horizon is currently approximately 1,200 miles west of Gibraltar, under tow of salvage tug Fotiy Krylov. The destination of the tow is not yet known. -- Tsavilris Salvage (International) Ltd.

CEC ASIA (Bahamas)

Freeport, Bahamas, May 13 -- General cargo CEC Asia is still here in Freeport, located at Grand Bahama Shipyard, and still under repair. It is anticipated that she will probably be here until the end of this month. -- Lloyd's Agents.

CEMCON (Bahamas)

London, May 17 -- Cement Cemcon arrived New York May 14.

CHINOOK (Cayman Islands)

Istanbul, May 13 -- Product tanker Chinook completed necessary repairs by its own means and upon inspection/formalities it sailed from Canakkale at 1520, local time, today. -- Lloyd's Agents.

COASTAL II (U.S.A.)

London, May 13 -- A Coast Guard New Orleans press release, dated May 12, states: The Coast Guard is responding to the scene of a fire on tank barge Coastal II (1000 gt) near the intersection of Highway 90 and Highway 190 today in West Pearl River about five miles south-east of Slidell, La. Personnel from Coast Guard Marine Safety Office New Orleans are on the scene of Coastal II, a 200-foot long tank barge that reportedly caught fire while moored at the Pearl River Navigation Facility this afternoon. Local fire response units are on scene and have extinguished the fire. The barge, reportedly empty, has a history of being used to transport asphalt. The barge reportedly caught fire due to welding operations. There are no reports of injuries or pollution at this time. The incident is under investigation by MSO New Orleans.

CRISTOFORO COLOMBO (Belgium)

London, May 14 -- A press report, dated today, states: Hopper dredger Cristoforo Colombo driven aground near Sakhalin last September will be utilized, a local administration reported. The vessel owned by European Dredging Company, ran ashore near the port of Kholmsk on the western coast of Sakhalin in the Sea of Okhotsk, after being caught in the strong typhoon "Songda" on Sep 8, 2004. The Sakhalin region's environmental prosecutors came to a conclusion that captain Nicolas Verbraken had ignored the demand of the port authorities to go out into open sea, as Kholmsk was not a safe harbour during the storm. After the wreck, several attempts were made to float off the dredge that was to work for Sakhalin Energy, laying a sea pipeline from the Sakhalin shelf, but they failed. Six months later the vessel's owner decided to utilize it, after even more powerful ocean tugs brought from Singapore had failed to bring it afloat. The contractor of the utilization project is Sakhalin-based Sakhalinremflot. Some other Russian contractors are also to take part in the project as it requires shore protection works and restoration and reclamation of the coastline. The vessel's master was charged with sea pollution. He was released on a \$100,000 bail and returned home.

DELTA KING (Canada)

London, May 12 -- At 1357, PDST, May 10, tug Charles H. Cates V reported barge Delta King (1394 gt,

built 1972), in tow, experienced a shifting of cargo, while en route near Second Narrows, Vancouver, BC, in lat 49 17.20N, long 123 02W.

DIA P. (Panama)

Istanbul, May 17 -- Bulk Dia P. passed Istanbul, eastbound, May 16. -- Lloyd's Agents.

EVA JOY (U.S.A.)

London, May 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: The US Coast Guard yesterday defended its response time to burning fishing Eva Joy (66 gt, built 1966) off the coast of New York, saying that, even with new home-security duties, its primary mission remains helping mariners in distress. The Port of Cape May scallop boat Eva Joy caught fire and sank Friday afternoon (May 13) about 45 miles south-east of Fire Island, NY. The master and crew have complained about how long it took the Coast Guard to respond and the equipment it deployed -- two aircraft but no vessels. All six on Eva Joy were plucked from the water by another commercial fishing boat. Nobody was hurt. Petty Officer 3rd Class Mike Lutz, of Coast Guard public affairs in New York, said there were no Coast Guard vessels in the vicinity. He said a Falcon jet was deployed from Cape Cod and a helicopter from Air Station Atlantic City. Eva Joy master Tom McNulty Jr said he never saw the Falcon, and the helicopter arrived about 90 minutes after the Cape May fisher Abracadabra rescued the crew. They would have been in the water during this time if not for the Abracadabra. He said the helicopter circled a few times and left. Tom McNulty Sr, who owns the vessel his son captained, was less critical of Atlantic City than the New York Coast Guard, which had jurisdiction over the incident. Petty Officer 3rd Class John Edwards of Air Station Atlantic City said they were notified at 1605 Friday and had a helicopter airborne at 1629 hrs. The helicopter arrived at 1715 hrs. According to Edwards, that was better than average time for the 90-mile trip. It took 46 minutes. He noted the Coast Guard has a boat station in Manasquan just 63 miles from the incident, but the boat would have taken at least one hour to get there. As far as circling and leaving, Edwards said once they realised everybody was safe on board Abracadabra, there was no reason to stay.

FEIXA (Argentina)

Buenos Aires, May 17 -- Fishing Feixa was towed to Caleta Paula because one injection pump sustained damage. Vessel could not berth at Caleta Paula and is now at Comodoro Rivadavia, where the damage is being repaired. -- Lloyd's Agents.

FLYING DOLPHIN XV (Greece)

London, May 17 -- Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: During the afternoon of May 16, while hydrofoil Flying Dolphin XV (142 gt,

built 1981) was six nautical miles off Piraeus and performing the schedule Aegina-Piraeus, it sustained damage to the port main engine cooling pump. On board were 43 passengers. The vessel continued the voyage on the starboard engine only and arrived safely at Piraeus where the passengers were disembarked. The vessel was prohibited from departing pending a survey.

FRANKLIN STRAIT (Antigua & Barbuda)

Port of Spain, May 17 -- General cargo Franklin Strait (4450 gt, built 1999) experienced engine problems at Dominica en route to Port of Spain on May 7. Vessel arrived Port of Spain on May 9 and was attended to by classification surveyor from Germanischer Lloyd office - Venezuela. Vessel has suspected crankshaft or bearing damage and vessel assisted to Curacao by a tug where ETA May 18. - Lloyd's Agents.

HUI LONG (Hong Kong)

London, May 18 -- Following received from Hong Kong MRCC, timed 1310, UTC: Reported that general cargo Hui Long (12233 gt, built 1996), VRAK8, was abandoned by its crew in lat 05 57N, long 84 22E, at 1204, UTC, today, after vessel listed 25 degs to port. All 23 crew were rescued by c.c. Nedlloyd Asia, which is proceeding to Colombo, where ETA May 19.

ISARGAS (Liberia)

London, May 16 -- Following received from Netherlands Coast Guard, timed 0520, BST: Lpg Isargas (4200 gt, built 1991) and crude oil tanker Phoenix Beta (59831 gt, built 2003) reported to have had head to head collision in lat 51 23N, long 04 13E, 30 minutes ago. Isargas grounded following the collision, refloated and being towed by tug to Antwerp for inspection. Phoenix Beta proceeding Antwerp under own power for inspection; no tug assistance required. Extent of damage unknown. (Note --Isargas arrived Antwerp at 0517, May 15, from Tees.)

Maassluis, May 16 -- Crude oil tanker Phoenix Beta, incoming, and lpg Isargas, outward bound, in collision at 0500, local time, today at Buoy 72-73, River Schelde. Nautical inspection team under way for both vessels. Isargas forepeak heavily damaged. Both vessels anchored River Schelde Schaar Ouden Doel. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents.

London, May 16 -- The managers and owners of crude oil tanker Phoenix Beta report that at approximately 0300, UTC, the vessel was in collision with Lpg Isargas, in the Pas van Rilland at the entry to the port of Antwerp. It is understood that both vessels had pilots on board at the time of the incident. The inbound Phoenix Beta, loaded with 67,000 tone of Laguna crude oil, sustained damage to one forepeak ballast tank and is holed above the waterline in the same area. There is no pollution or injury reported following this incident. Phoenix Beta is currently under way to

a berth within the port for discharge of cargo and further inspection.

London, May 16 -- At 0515, local time, today, there was a heavy collision in thick fog between crude oil tanker Phoenix Beta and lpg Isargas in the River Scheldt, in de Bocht van Rilland, near Buoy 72. Phoenix Beta was bound for Antwerp with a cargo of 67,000 tons of crude oil and the departing Isargas was empty from a cargo of ethene. They collided bow on bow and the damage was serious to both ships. There has been no oil leakage into the river. Both vessels went to the anchorage near Zandvliet locks and the river police performed an investigation into the cause of the accident. Now at 1400, both vessels have gone inside the locks into the docks. Phoenix Beta is moored now at Quay 289 and Isargas has moored on Quay 529.

KOTA GEMBIRA (Singapore)

Aqaba, May 19 -- The gantry crane of c.c. Kota Gembira (28676 gt, built 2002) has hit the accommodation bridge at Aqaba port today. The vessel is expected to leave Aqaba port today and the damages are not assessed yet. - Lloyd's Agents. (Note -- Kota Gembira sailed Aden May 14 and subsequently arrived Jeddah about May 16.)

LINDSAY (South Africa)

See Ouro do Brasil.

LISSOS (Greece)

London, May 16 -- Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: Passenger ro/ro Lissos (13881 gt, built 1972) grounded in shallow waters at Argostoli during the evening of May 15 while manoeuvring to depart from the port. At the time, the vessel was performing a cruise from Piraeus to Kalamata-Kefallonia-Kerkyra-Igoumenitsa-Gytheion-Piraeus with 620 passengers and 129 crew on board who remain in good health. The cruise was the first cruise of a new programme organised by the Workers Social Benefits Organisation. Following the incident, the vessel refloated under its own power, and there was no pollution. Kefallonia Port Authority prohibited the vessel from departing, pending diver inspections and the issuing of a new seaworthiness certificate.

London, May 17 -- Lloyd's casualty representatives in Piraeus report: Passenger ro/ro Lissos grounded for a second time inside the port of Argostoli at 1200, May 16. The vessel refloated at 1305 hrs and anchored. Following an inspection by a private diving company and the issuing of a Class maintain certificate, the vessel was permitted to sail at 1410 hrs and continued its cruise to Igoumenitsa.

LT LLOYDIANA (Italy)

London, May 17 -- C.c. LT Lloydiana is currently still at Singapore.

LYKES VOYAGER (Isle of Man)

London, May 16 -- C.c. Lykes Voyager sailed Hong Kong May 13 for Yantian.

MIMOSA (Vietnam)

London, May 13 -- A press report, dated today, states: A Vietnamese oil tanker (?anchor handling tug/supply Mimosa (1242 gt, built 1982) sank after being in collision with another foreign vessel, spilling tons of diesel off the country's southern coast yesterday. The Mimosa, operated by state oil giant PetroVietnam, went down yesterday near Dai Hung oilfield with a cargo of 100 tons of diesel oil after being in collision with chemical/oil carrier Trinity (23842 gt, built 2000). An oil spill appeared near the crash site, around 135 nautical miles south-east of the southern oil hub Vung Tau city, which is 125 km north-east of Ho Chi Minh City. All 16 crew of the Vietnamese vessel were rescued. There was no damage to the tanker. (Note -- Trinity sailed Singapore May 6 for Vietnam.)

London, May 13 -- A press report, dated today, states: Anchor handling tug/supply Mimosa collided with chemical/oil carrier Trinity and sank, spilling a small amount of diesel fuel off Vietnam's southern coast, officials said today. Trinity was in collision yesterday with Mimosa, owned by Vietnam's state oil monopoly, near the Big Bear oil field, director of Vung Tau Port Authorities. All 16 crew members onboard Mimosa were rescued and no injuries were reported. The crew managed to lock the fuel containers, which held about 170 tons of diesel fuel, before the ship sank, Chien said, adding only a small amount of fuel spilled into the sea. An investigation is underway to determine what caused the ships to collide.

London, May 13 -- A press report, dated today, states: Sixteen sailors were rescued safely when their ship, anchor handling tug/supply Mimosa, was struck by chemical/oil carrier Trinity at 0430 yesterday. When Mimosa sank it contained around 170 tonnes of diesel oil. Luong Truong Phi, Vice Director of the Centre for Search and Rescue, said Trinity, a vessel specialising in supplying oil to the Dai Hung and Bach Ho oil fields, collided with Mimosa when it was on the way to the Dai Hung oil field. Phi added that Trinity was also damaged and the ship is expected to leave the Dai Hung oil field today for Vung Tau where it will be checked for damage. Concerned agencies are currently investigating the cause of the accident.

MOVER (Netherlands)

London, May 16 -- This morning in thick fog tug Mover (built 1980), owned by Graaf & Meeuwssen Scheepvaartservice at Ridderkerk, ran into the moored dry-dock at quay Kraan 10, in the Canal Ghent, Terneuzen. After the collision the crew of the tug did try to moor the vessel on the canal bank to keep it afloat, but the tug sank very soon in the canal. At the moment the salvage company Multraship of Terneuzen is making preparations to raise the tug again. Divers have been down already. Around noon there should be a

sheerleg floating crane at the spot and salvage operations started. Tug *Multratug 2* and the vessel *Diver* are at the location for assistance. It is expected that the vessel will be raised today.

London, May 17 -- Tug *Mover* was raised yesterday.

MSC DENISSE (Panama)

Singapore, May 13 -- C.c. *MSC Denisse* sailed Singapore May 12 for *Laem Chabang*. -- Lloyd's Agents.

MUNSU (Belize)

London, May 13 -- Following received from Aarhus MRCC, timed 0931, UTC: At 0002 hrs, today, general cargo *Munsu* (398 gt, built 1977), northbound, in ballast, grounded in lat 55 57.38N, long 12 44.23E. Vessel is currently still aground and it is presently unknown whether any salvage agreement has been reached with the owners. There has been no pollution.

London, May 14 -- Following received from Aarhus RCC, timed 1645, UTC: General cargo *Munsu* has refloated and is proceeding on its voyage. Destination port is not known.

MYLINGUR (Faroe Islands)

Torshavn, May 16 -- Greenland prawn trawler *Salleq* berthing at Torshavn this morning struck the side of fishing *Mylingur* (459 gt, built 1973) lying at the quayside. *Mylingur* sustained heavy damage, took in seawater and standing on the bottom. A rescue team is trying to fix a hole, 1.8 m by one metre, so the vessel can be taken to the Torshavn shipyard. *Salleq* also caused damage to two other smaller fishing vessels. Police ascertained that the master of *Salleq* who was on the bridge during the incident was under the influence of alcohol, but also technical problems seem to have caused the accident. -- Lloyd's Agents.

NANA (Bolivia)

Istanbul, May 13 -- Passenger ro/ro *Nana* is still lying "as is" and there is no progress regarding salvage. -- Lloyd's Agents.

NEPTUNE OKEANIS (Malta)

Palermo, May 19 -- It is reported that there were two different explosions on the new construction ro/ro for the Greek Neptune Lines, vehicle *Neptune Okeanis* (27,500 gt) (at Fincantieri's yard in Palermo). The explosion happened at 1000, May 17. The four injured, one worker, two fireguards and one security officer, are in hospital. The explosion happened when the worker, a painter, was in the "chain deposit" and most probably one electric lamp was broken. -- Lloyd's Agents.

NONA MARY (Greece)

London, May 17 -- Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: Passenger ro/ro *Nona Mary* (2206 gt, built 1972) arrived *Laurium* at 1400, May 16, from *Agios Efstratios*. The vessel's log book revealed engine

damage during the voyage, and the vessel has therefore been prohibited from departing, pending survey.

NORSEMAN (Malta)

Tunis, May 18 -- Tug *Norseman* is still in same position at *Cercina* jetty. Vessel is retained by police authorities to make further enquiries about the dead people. No repairs have been made up to now. -- Lloyd's Agents.

NORWEGIAN MAJESTY (Bahamas)

London, May 13 -- A press report, dated May 12, states: Passenger *Norwegian Majesty* (40876 gt, built 1992) struck three yachts moored in *Powder Hall* anchorage, *St. George's*, *Bermuda*, yesterday morning and almost sucked one yacht under. An eyewitness and dock master at the *St. George's Dinghy Club*, *Gary Brangman*, said he just arrived at work at about 0900 hrs when he heard some people say the cruise vessel was coming into *St. George's*. *Mr Brangman* said the winds were gusting up to 33 knots at times as the *Norwegian Majesty* made its way through the *Town Cut*. "There was a yacht moored on the south side of the channel, almost inside the channel and it looked like the yacht's anchor chain got tangled in the cruise vessel's propeller," he said. *Mr Brangman* said it all happened very quickly and the yacht *Serengeti* appeared to lurch at a 45-degree angle and it looked as if it would be sucked under the cruise vessel and smashed to pieces. He said that, miraculously, the *Serengeti* seemed to bounce back up to the surface and float away but that the cruise vessel's propeller seemed to have been damaged as it swung sharply to one side and apparently couldn't turn -- knocking into two other yachts moored in *Power Hall Anchorage*. "It looked like the lines on these two yachts snapped loose and they broke away," he said. He said that, besides some obvious damage to its rigging, the *Serengeti* and the other two yachts appeared to have escaped serious damage. The incident is being investigated by the Marine Police and Pilot Warden *Edward Welch* said late yesterday afternoon that he was still waiting for the report from the pilot.

Hamilton, May 16 -- Passenger *Norwegian Majesty* sailed *Bermuda* May 13. -- Lloyd's Agents.

NOVA SCOTIA (Antigua & Barbuda)

Stanley, May 17 -- Ref *Nova Scotia* was towed from *Berkeley Sound* on May 4, after payment of court fines. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Buenos Aires, May 17 -- Ref *Nova Scotia* arrived at *Buenos Aires* on May 11. -- Lloyd's Agents.

NULLI CEDO

London, May 19 -- Inland c.c *Nulli Cedo*, length 105 metres, (built 1974) touched with its deck cargo of containers the *Vlakebrug* (*Vlake bridge*) at *Hansweert* at about 1500, local time, yesterday. The vessel was

on voyage from *Ghent* to *Weurt* in *Germany* with a cargo of containers. Because the deck cargo was too high, it touched with the upper layer of empty containers the underside of the *Vlakebrug*, which caused four empty containers to fall into the canal. The rest of the deck cargo slid backwards, causing damage to the wheelhouse of the vessel. Also the lower side of the bridge was slightly damaged. There has been a short obstruction for the shipping traffic in the canal. A floating sheerleg crane of the salvage company *Polderman* of *Hansweert* has recovered the four containers out of the water and put them ashore.

ODIGITRIA (Liberia)

London, May 17 -- Bulk *Odigitria* sailed *Quebec* about May 11.

OLYMPIAS

(St. Vincent & Grenadines)

London, May 12 -- Following navigation warning issued at 0729, UTC, May 12: General cargo *Olympias* (5567 gt, built 1976) reported on fire and adrift in lat 28 41.1N, long 50 26.7E, at 0400, UTC, May 12.

London, May 13 -- A press report, dated May 12, states: The crew of *USS Mustin* rescued 27 people from general cargo *Olympias* when an engine-room fire engulfed the vessel at 2300, local time, May 11, in the northern Persian Gulf. *Mustin*, currently conducting Maritime Security Operations (MSO) in the area, responded immediately after receiving word from *USS Carl Vinson* of the vessel in distress. *Carl Vinson* is also deployed to the northern Persian Gulf conducting MSO and providing air support for multinational forces on the ground in Iraq. The crew of *Olympias* notified *Carl Vinson* of the fire via bridge-to-bridge radio. When crew-members from the destroyer arrived on scene, they found the vessel's superstructure burning and 27 people from the *Olympias* jumping into a liferaft. *Mustin* sailors safely transferred 25 Indians, a Nepalese and one Sri Lankan to the destroyer's rigid-hull inflatable boats, or RHIBs.

London, May 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: The 27 people rescued from general cargo *Olympias* after an engine-room fire engulfed the vessel in the Northern Arabian Gulf, have been repatriated to their respective countries from *Manama*. The rescue mission was conducted on May 12 by *USS Mustin*, saving the lives of 25 Indians and one each Sri Lankan and Nepalese. Rescued at around 0230 hrs, the *Olympias* crew were transferred via helicopter from *Mustin* to *USS Carl Vinson* at approximately 0915 the same morning, and then flown to *Bahrain*. Representatives from the Indian Embassy met them before they flew out of *Bahrain* on a commercial flight. According to an Indian Embassy official, all the 27 people were in good health, they all had their passports with them when they were brought by the US Navy at the airport facility in *Manama* in a helicopter. Their

company arranged their tickets and they all left from Manama just after few hours of their arrival.

OSIRIS (Netherlands)

Maassluis, May 13 -- General cargo Alex-D., ex Osiris, sailed Rotterdam May 12. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents.

OURO DO BRASIL (Liberia)

London, May 19 -- A press report, dated today, states: Families of the 14 victims of a tragic May 8 shipping collision off the coast of Port Elizabeth are taking legal action against the vessel they say is responsible for claiming the lives of their loved ones. The dependents claim the negligence of the fruit juice tanker Ouro do Brasil caused the death of 14 of trawler Lindsay's crew members, and are seeking compensation for loss of support by the deceased as projected to retirement age, says their lawyer, Philip Shaw. In addition, the two survivors of the Lindsay's crew of 16, skipper Paul Landers, 36 and crewman John Ehlers, 37, are taking part in the claim, seeking compensation for any injuries and loss of income they have suffered. The claim was instituted last Friday (May 13), and should take a few months to be processed, said Shaw. Matt Ash, lawyer representing the Ouro do Brasil, confirmed that the claims are being defended, but said his client will not make an official statement until the results of the investigation are released. "Samsa (SA Maritime Safety Authority) must complete its investigation before anyone can make claims as to liability and responsibility. These concerns will be addressed in a formal court process," said Ash. According to earlier reports, large ships rounding the Cape of Good Hope from east to west come closer to shore to use the Indian Ocean's Aghulas current to speed their passage. From their high bridges, crew members often cannot see small vessels or manoeuvre fast enough to avoid them. Ian Gray, station commander of the National Sea Rescue Institute at Port Elizabeth, said he believed "human error" was involved in causing the accident. Gray was quoted as saying: "the bottom line is, obviously, somebody wasn't looking out."

OVERSEAS FULMAR (Marshall Islands)

Sydney, May 13 -- Product tanker Overseas Fulmar (25368 gt, built 1989) arrived in Port Kembla this morning after being towed in from an anchorage off the New South Wales coast where it was under repair. The vessel, laden with 12,000 tonnes of diesel and 32,000 tonnes of petrol, had arrived off Sydney to berth at the Port Botany liquids berth on Wednesday (May 11), when it lost all power 7.5 miles off Cape Banks. The vessel was initially moved offshore to anchor and carry out repairs. However, with the weather forecast to deteriorate later on today, the decision was taken to move it to a repair berth in Port

Kembla, NSW Maritime's general manager for shipping security and environment, Tony Middleton, said. The Overseas Fulmar is expected to be in Port Kembla for several days while mechanical repairs are made. It will be monitored by NSW Maritime, AMSA, and the port authority. The vessel was inbound from the BP refinery at Kwinana.

London, May 13 -- Following received from Australia RCC, timed 0440, UTC: Product tanker Overseas Fulmar is still anchored off Port Kembla undergoing repairs, with completion of same expected in another two days.

London, May 13 -- Following received from the managers of product tanker Overseas Fulmar, dated today: Owners and Managers of Overseas Fulmar report that they expect engine repairs to be completed later today, May 13. The main engine repairs, which have been undertaken at a Port Kembla repair berth, have been supervised throughout by the manager's technical superintendents, main engine manufacturer specialists, B&W, class surveyor, ABS, as well as qualified shore technicians. Overseas Fulmar is scheduled to depart its berth at midnight today and complete sea trials early tomorrow off Port Kembla. The vessel is expected to obtain port clearance from the local authorities during the morning and resume passage to Botany Bay for discharge of part cargo as per charterers' instructions.

Sydney, May 17 - Product tanker Overseas Fulmar sailed Botany Bay May 16. -- Lloyd's Agents.

PHOENIX BETA (Hong Kong)

See Isargas.

PRINCE OF PATUAKHALI (Bangladesh)

London, May 15 -- A press report, dated today, states: More than 100 people are missing in southern Bangladesh after overloaded passenger Prince of Patuakhali sank during a storm, police say. Rescuers have so far found the bodies of six people, four of them children. The ferry was licensed to carry 80, but reports say many more were on board. Witnesses say some 20 people survived the incident in Patuakhali district, about 200km south of Dhaka. Witnesses say those who survived swam to safety or were rescued by nearby boats. Government officials said a rescue vessel was on its way, but unlikely to reach the accident site before tomorrow morning. Survivors say more than 200 passengers were on board when the vessel capsized and sank in deep water near Golapchipsa, about 40km east of Patuakhali. One survivor, Oliul Islam, said: "The ferry was heavily loaded with passengers. At about a quarter-to-noon, it tilted in bad weather and strong tides. And when panicked passengers rushed to the other side, the ferry went down." Strong currents were hampering the rescue operation.

London, May 16 -- A press report, dated May 15, states: Passenger

Prince of Patuakhali, overloaded, capsized in southern Bangladesh, killing at least 22 people and leaving about 80 others missing, an official and a witness said. Rescuers recovered the bodies of 22 people, including four children. The death toll could be higher as several bodies were taken away by relatives who searched the vast river in wooden fishing boats. More bodies were also feared trapped inside the sunken ferry, which was yet to be located. A salvage ship was on its way to the find the boat, but strong currents were interfering with the rescue operation, he said. It was carrying more than 150 passengers, twice its capacity, toward Char Montaj from the coastal town of Patuakhali.

London, May 17 -- A press report, dated today, states: At least 45 people died and more than 40 others were missing after passenger Prince of Patuakhali sank in a storm in southern Bangladesh, rescuers said today. The toll grew after the boat, which was carrying more than 100 passengers, was salvaged. Rescuers retrieved nine bodies from the vessel, adding to the 36 already recovered. They said they were still looking for more bodies in the river. "We have registered 45 dead so far and hope few more are likely to be found in the river," one rescuer said. However, state-owned Bangladesh Television, quoting a private news agency, said 56 bodies had been recovered. Authorities deployed the navy to maintain order after a mob became agitated with police and rescuers, blaming them for a delay in recovering the ferry. "We have located the sunken vessel, but strong currents are repeatedly displacing it, delaying the rescue operation," said TI Quaderi, commander of the salvage vessel, at one stage. A police officer said: "Scores of bodies might be trapped inside the vessel as the passengers usually shut the doors of the deck during storms." A witness reported that 20 people had swum to safety or had been rescued by other vessels in the area, a transport authority official said. The report could not be confirmed. The vessel was registered to carry 80 people.

Dhaka, May 17 -- Hundreds of people crowded a river bank in Bangladesh on today, searching for dozens of loved ones feared drowned when overloaded passenger Prince of Patuakhali sank and killed at least 51 people, witnesses said. Nearly 40 people were still missing after the vessel went down on Sunday (May 15) during a storm in the choppy Tentulia river at Galachipa, 350 km south of Dhaka. Officials said they expected to end the search for survivors today but grieving relatives told reporters they would stay there for days to find their loved ones, dead or alive. The vessel was carrying more than 100 passengers and tonnes of merchandise, rescue workers told reporters at Galachipa. -- Reuters.

RAIPURA

London, May 18 -- A press report, dated May 17, states: Twin-deck ferry

Raipura, with more than 100 people on board, capsized in central Bangladesh today, officials said. Raipura went down in the Padma river at Aricha about 100 km west of Dhaka. One person was confirmed dead, police said. "The ferry was coming from the nearby district of Pabna and had over 100 people on board when it was caught by a cyclone and capsized at about 1730 hrs," said officer-in-charge Abu Yusuf. The ferry was caught by a thunderstorm only 10 minutes away from Aricha river port. The ferry overturned, trapping most of the people inside, as soon as the storm struck. Fire service divers were travelling from Dhaka to the scene of the accident and a salvage vessel would reach the area by early tomorrow. The sunken vessel was lying in the middle of the river in about 15 m of water.

London, May 19 -- A press report, dated May 18, states: Strong currents have forced a suspension of efforts to find the bodies of scores of passengers feared drowned when ferry Raipura sank. Two people were confirmed dead in yesterday's accident in central Bangladesh. "We have 10 fire service and 19 navy divers here but they can not do anything at the moment because the strength of the currents is making it too hazardous," said Nurul Haq, assistant director of the Dhaka fire brigade, at the scene. Difficult river conditions also delayed the arrival of the salvage vessel which was not expected to reach the scene before 1900 hrs, seven hours later than expected, the boat's commander Syed Mainuddin Haider said. Survivors said there were at least 100 people on board the ferry. The sunken vessel was lying in the middle of the river in about 15 m of water, officials said.

RATNA SHALINI (India)

Dubai, May 17 -- Crude oil tanker Ratna Shalini sailed Fujairah Apr 29 for Khor Fakkan. -- Lloyd's Agents.

RICKMERS GENOA (Marshall Islands)

London, May 13 -- Following received from the operators of general cargo Rickmers Genoa, dated today: Rickmers Genoa is currently in dry-dock at Shanghai under repair, ETC not known.

SAFA B. (Syria)

See "Cyprus" under "Port State Control."

SALLEQ (Greenland)

See Mylingur.

SANTA EMMA (Panama)

London, May 16 -- Following received from Dartmouth, NS, dated today: It is understood that ro/ro Santa Emma has been under PSC detention since January 2004, and under arrest since August 2004, at Cape Tormentine, New Brunswick. The crew were paid off in December 2004 and since then the vessel has been a "dead ship". The vessel was moored at an ex ferry dock and during the early morning hours of

Apr 29, during a period of high winds, broke its mooring lines and drifted to an adjacent position angled between the adjacent dock, grounding the bow onto the beach. The starboard side hull in way of the engine-room was breached on the adjacent dock corner. There has been no release of pollutants. Canadian Coast Guard are in control of operations to remove all pollutants and refloating of the vessel, which may be anticipated on May 23.

SEA BEE (Mongolia)

London, May 13 -- A press report, dated today, states: A Foreign Ministry spokesperson: Le Dung, yesterday refuted a speculation that during a military drill on May 2, Chinese naval ships fired at general cargo Sea Bee and sank it 100 nautical miles off the Shanghai shore. The speculation is groundless, emphasised the spokesman in response to an AP reporter. He quoted Vietnamese authorities as saying that the Sea Bee, which belonged to Viet Nam's Maritime University, had 23 Vietnamese sailors aboard and was carrying 5,000 tonnes of steel from China's Quinghuangdao port to Manila, the Philippines, when it sent out SOS signals on May 2, some 100 nautical miles off the Shanghai coast. The ship has Mongolian nationality and is managed by the Dong Long Sea Shipping Company. Chinese agencies have so far located the ship and two bodies, one of whom has been identified as chief mechanic Dam Cao Van, Dung said. Relevant Vietnamese agencies are working with Chinese concerns who are investigating cause of the accident, the spokesman concluded.

London, May 14 -- A press report, dated May 13, states: Vietnam's top insurer BaoViet has said it will pay US\$200,000 in preliminary insurance to the Vietnam Marine University for general cargo Sea Bee, which sank some 100 nautical miles off China's shore on May 2. The money will be used to continue the rescue mission, said university sources. Divers are still searching inside the wreck, and by May 11, rescue workers had discovered two bodies, one identified as chief mechanic Dam Cao Van, and the other as first mechanic Hua Viet Hai. The university is rushing to complete the paperwork at China's request in order to bring the two victims home. The cause of the accident, however, has not yet been determined and investigations are still going on, police said.

SEASPAN 940 (Canada)

See Victory V.

SEASPAN MONARCH (Canada)

See Victory V.

SELENDANG AYU (Malaysia)

London, May 13 -- An Unified Command press release, dated Kodiak May 12, states: Clean-up operations continue in earnest at the site of the bulk Selendang Ayu wreck. Shoreline Clean-up Assessment Team (SCAT)

personnel continue making progress and have surveyed 465 segments of the 799 beach segments identified as potentially impacted sites. Coast Guard Captain Ron Morris, Federal On-scene Co-ordinator said "The shoreline has been divided into segments as an aid for geographical referencing for response personnel. The segments surveyed are approximately equal to 224 miles of shoreline with some portion of 53 miles of those surveyed recommended for clean-up. The other 171 miles will not require further treatment. There is an estimated 245 miles of shoreline yet to be surveyed." To date cleaning crews have collected 1,407 cubic yards of oily waste. There are currently 158 field response personnel and 21 vessels involved in the clean-up operations. Officials hope to conclude clean-up operations by Oct 15. The responsible party is also devising a plan to deal with wreck removal in accordance with the State's requirements. Impacted wildlife consists of 781 birds observed oiled, 29 captured for rehabilitation, 10 released, and 1,609 dead. Mammals consist of 18 observed oiled, zero captured and six dead. No additional wildlife impacts have been reported since the commencement of Spring/Summer operations.

SERENGETI

See Norwegian Majesty.

SOLWAY HARVESTER (United Kingdom)

London, May 13 -- A press report, dated May 12, states: A company director who owned fishing Solway Harvester, which sank with the loss of seven men, was never told of crucial missing deck covers or faults with water pumps, a court heard today. Richard Gidney, 41, told police during interviews that skippers were responsible for all health and safety matters on board the firm's fleet of boats. Gidney, the sole director of Jack Robinson Trawlers Limited, is charged with seven counts of manslaughter following the sinking of the Solway Harvester off the coast of the Isle of Man in January 2000. The jury at the High Court in Douglas heard statements Gidney read to detectives during his interview as part of the police investigation. He told officers he periodically met the vessel's skipper Craig Mills both on the boat and in Gidney's office and was never told of the defect. Gidney said in interview: "I had not received any reports of the pumps not working in January 2000. I had not received reports of a missing scuttle cover. If I had I would have ordered a new one." The court had earlier been told the deck cover had been missing for two years and played a vital part in the sinking of the 21-metre boat. Gidney himself was skipper of the Solway Harvester in the years before he became director of the firm. He continued: "I hadn't been told there was a missing bilgewell cover. I was never told about any blockages on board the Solway Harvester after I

was skipper." He denied being told of serious floods in the years leading up to the vessel's sinking and agreed flooding in any part of the boat would be dangerous, adding if he had been told of it, the problem would have been addressed. He said: "The company delegated responsibility for all matters of health and safety to the skippers. The skipper had responsibility for safety on board the vessel and would nominate a safety officer. Periodic meetings were held with Craig in my office or on board the vessel. He never mentioned any defects to me during these meetings." He added he knew Mr Mills both socially and professionally and had come to regard him very highly. Gidney, from Gatehouse-of-Fleet, south west Scotland, denies seven counts of manslaughter. (See issue of Apr 26.)

London, May 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: The manslaughter trial of trawler owner Richard Gidney has been told that there was a catalogue of safety faults on board fishing Solway Harvester. A report by the Marine Accident Investigation Branch into the condition of the scallop-dredger when it was raised from the seabed found 11 safety flaws: An ice scuttle lid, missing for two years, had not been replaced allowing sea water to flow into the fish hold; there were no emergency distress flares kept on board; the main bilge pump used to clear flood water was found to be inoperative; a protective cover to stop debris falling into the slush well and blocking the bilge pump suction pipe was missing; four of the seven crew members had not attended mandatory basic safety courses; crew members could not easily access the bilge pump filter, which regularly blocked, in order to clear it; the flood alarm in the fish storage room was broken -- this was known when the vessel set sail on its final voyage; the two liferafts on board the vessel were inadequately stored and investigators criticised their condition; fishing gear weighing 2.8 tonnes was not secured and was left lying on the store-room floor; bulkhead doors which should have been kept shut and were essential to ensure the vessel was buoyant enough to endure the powerful swell, were left tied open; other bulkheads needed to maintain the vessel's reserve buoyancy were not fitted to the required standard.

London, May 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: The manslaughter trial of the owner of fishing Solway Harvester, Richard Gidney, collapsed at the Isle of Man High Court today after the judge ruled there was no case to answer. Mr Gidney was originally charged both corporately and individually with manslaughter, but only stood trial on the latter charge. He was accused of allowing the vessel to go to sea in a dangerously unseaworthy state, amounting to gross negligence on his part, which led to the seven deaths. Mr Gidney was cleared after Acting Deemster Andrew Moran QC ruled there was no case to answer after five weeks of prosecution

evidence. Explaining his reasons, he criticised several aspects of the prosecution case. He said Mr Gidney had demonstrated "proactive and safety conscious conduct" following a flood on board the sistership of the Solway Harvester. "The evidence put before the jury is insufficient to establish that there was any lack of care, particularly regarding what was the common and accepted practice of the vessels at the time," he said.

SOULA (North Korea)

Limassol, May 19 -- General cargo Soula, which was under arrest at Limassol port, has been released and sailed in tow of tug Flying Enterprise May 13 for Tartous. -- Lloyd's Agents.

SOUTHERN MOANA (Antigua & Barbuda)

Auckland, May 5 -- General cargo Southern Moana arrived Auckland May 2 and sailed May 4. -- Lloyd's Agents.

SPIRIT OF ONTARIO I (U.S.A.)

London, May 17 -- A press report, dated today, states: Rochester's high-speed ferry will be examined today to see if any damage occurred after it slipped off wooden blocks intended to support it in a dry dock yesterday. Passenger ro/ro Spirit of Ontario I was moved yesterday to the Port Weller Dry Docks, where it was expected to undergo routine maintenance, minor repairs and a new paint job. The vessel, now nicknamed The Cat, was piloted into a dock, where wooden blocks were stacked underneath to support it. As the water level was slowly lowered, The Cat slipped off the blocks and fell inches into the water. "She just slid down," said Doug Stones, vice president of the Port Weller Dry Docks. "I don't expect there to be any severe damage." An inspection will be needed to see whether any damage was done, but there was no sign of water coming into the ship, he said. He said the vessel fell "a matter of inches, a foot at the most" off the dock blocks. Stones said the ship would have to be refloated and a day's work was lost, but he wouldn't characterize the mishap as an accident. "It was a mistrial in the initial docking," he said. Don Cormier, vice president of Bay Ferries, which is now managing the city-owned ferry, had considered announcing rates and schedules today. Instead, he said his focus would be making sure the dry docking goes more smoothly. "To date, there has not been any damage found," he said. "It is not taking in any water. To my knowledge, there is no shell damage or structural damage to the vessel. But we will continue to inspect and investigate any damage there may be as a result of the incident." Cormier made his comments about an hour after the afternoon incident. He said the incident occurred "when the ship was under control of the dry docks," so they would be responsible for any damage found as a result.

London, May 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: Officials say

passenger ro/ro Spirit of Ontario I, which was involved in a drydocking accident, will get a thorough inspection before its start date. The vessel docked Monday (May 16) in Port Weller before slipping off wooden blocks and sliding back into the water. Rochester Ferry Company President Ben Douglas said there didn't seem to be any serious damage but a thorough inspection was planned. Officials at Bay Ferries Limited -- which is operating the ferry for the city of Rochester -- say the incident shouldn't delay the start of ferry service to Toronto next month.

STEEL QUEEN (Netherlands)

London, May 18 -- General cargo Steel Queen sailed from Gdynia on May 16, bound for Oxelosund.

STENA DANICA (Sweden)

Gothenburg, May 18 -- Passenger ro/ro Stena Danica: The final report from Maritime Administration was issued whereby the investigator, Sten Andersson confirms that Stena Danica did deviate from its original course and came too far north than normal and caused the incident. It was around 2130, Mar 7, when the crew and passengers noted a scratching sound from the bottom and when the vessel called Fredrikshavn port, it was investigated and a leakage was found in vessel's bottom structure. Without consulting or informed the Inspectors of Sjöfartsverket/The Administration the vessel departed Denmark and went to Gothenburg for drydocking. In the incident, the vessel, approaching Fredrikshavn, turned slightly starboard and came close to a "grounding area" where the vessel's speed and position made the amount of water underneath the keel less than normal causing scratches. -- Westax Marine Services AB.

SUN INVESTOR (Panama)

London, May 17 -- Chemical/oil carrier Sun Investor sailed Hong Kong May 12.

THIA CHRYSSOULA (Cyprus)

Piraeus, May 13 -- Bulk Thia Chryssoula is still aground. Lightering operations are expected to commence May 15-16. -- Tsavliris Salvage (International) Ltd.

London, May 17 -- Bulk Thia Chryssoula remains aground in the same position.

THOMSON CELEBRATION (Netherlands Antilles)

London, May 14 -- A press report, dated today, states: Passenger Thomson Celebration (33933 gt, built 1984) has cancelled its voyage and flown back 600 passengers because the toilets on board have broken down, the operators said today. The newly-refitted liner cut short its Mediterranean cruise in Lisbon after the plumbing in 250 cabins failed. A fleet of three aircraft was sent to pick up the passengers, who flew into Bournemouth and Gatwick airports last night, a spokeswoman for

Thomson said. They had paid £1,000 each for the voyage to France, Portugal and Spain. The vessel left Southampton on May 8 for the 14-night cruise but major problems with the pump started three days later, rendering some cabins and public toilets unusable. The 33,930-ton vessel docked in Bilbao in Spain and the passengers were taken off and put up in hotels while engineers fixed the problem. But on Thursday (May 12) the problems occurred again at sea and Thomson decided to dock in Lisbon and cancel the voyage. "Unfortunately the problem coming back was a real inconvenience to people and we could not send the cruise on so we took the decision to cut the cruise short and sail back to Southampton," the spokeswoman said. "It's not a decision we have taken lightly to cancel the cruise and we have tried everything possible to fix the problem." About 500 passengers who have toilets that work have stayed on board the vessel, which is due to dock in Southampton at 0900, this Monday. The spokeswoman added that all passengers would get a refund and 25% off their next booking.

London, May 18 -- Passenger Thomson Celebration arrived Southampton May 16.

TIGER III (New Zealand)

London, May 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: The crew of passenger Tiger III, which had engine failure before running aground and becoming submerged at New Zealand's Cape Brett in December, has been praised by the Maritime Safety Authority (MSA) for the way they handled the emergency. The vessel was written off as a total loss after the incident on Dec 18. The MSA report commends the master and crew for their handling of the situation including the evacuation of the 62 people on board. The report recommends some changes, including the need for the company's vessels to carry lifejackets for every child on board.

TILOS (Malta)

London, May 13 -- Bulk Tilos arrived Astoria 1455, May 10 and sailed 1600, May 11.

TRIJATA (Singapore)

Palermo, May 19 -- Crude oil tanker Trijata, now renamed Triwati, sailed Palermo at 1430, May 18, for Novorossiysk. -- Lloyd's Agents.

TRINITY (Marshall Islands)

See Mimosa.

TRINKET (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, May 14 -- Following received from Aarhus RCC, timed 1650, UTC: General cargo Trinket (1574 gt, built 1991) from Hamburg, ran aground in about 54 53N, long 11 43E at 1140, UTC, today. Vessel refloated by its own means about one hour ago. Understand that the vessel sustained no damage and it is awaiting an inspection. (Note -- Trinket sailed

Hamburg at 1810, May 13 for Norrkoping.)

London, May 16 -- Following received from Aarhus RCC, timed 0935, UTC: General cargo Trinket has been allowed to proceed following inspection.

VB 53 (U.S.A.)

London, May 14 -- Clean-up from tank barge VB 53 that ran aground on the James River leaking 2,000 gallons of diesel fuel is complete, the U.S. Coast Guard said yesterday. Workers recovered 9,600 gallons of oily waste, some of which was water recovered with the oil. The leaked fuel was contained by booms and the Coast Guard said the environmental impact was "minimal." The 300-foot barge, owned by Van Line Bunkering of Baltimore, was loaded with 1.76 million gallons of fuel Sunday (May 8) and en route to New York City when it ran aground south of Richmond. The results of an investigation into the grounding must be approved before being released, which could take several months, the Coast Guard said. The barge was moved to Lyon Shipyard in Norfolk for repair.

VICTORY V (Canada)

London, May 12 -- At 0355, PDST, May 5, tug Victory V (13 gt, built 1964) collided with tug Seaspan Monarch (376 gt, built 1977) and barge Seaspan 940 (4361 gt, built 1965), in Nanaimo Harbour, British Columbia, in lat 49 10N, long 123 55.08W.

VINCENZO FLORIO (Italy)

Palermo, May 19 -- Ro/ro Vincenzo Florio has been released from the arrest of local judge and is planned to sail on May 21. -- Lloyd's Agents.

VOLGONEFT 107 (Russia)

St. Petersburg, May 18 -- Product tanker Volgoneft 107 (3463 gt, built 1972), Yaroslavl for St. Petersburg, ran aground in the entry of Neva River at or about 0300, local time, today. In accordance with available information Volgoneft 107 sustained damage to the forepart of the hull without leakage of cargo. The crew of the vessel didn't sustain any injuries. The vessel will be refloated only when the cause of this casualty can be ascertained. Investigation of circumstances by the vessel's owners is already in progress. -- Lloyd's Agents.

WALNUT EXPRESS (Panama)

Halifax, May 13 -- Tug Atlantic Oak has departed Halifax to assist product tanker Walnut Express (27972 gt, built 2004) which has had a main engine bearing failure and will be towed to Halifax where current ETA is May 18, weather permitting. -- Lloyd's Agents. (Note -- Walnut Express was last reported to have sailed Hovensa Apr 27 for Boston, Mass.)

X-PRESS KAVERI (Singapore)

Singapore, May 11 -- C.c. X-Press Kaveri arrived Singapore 0815, May 10. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Piracy



CELEBES SEA

Manila, May 13 -- Information emerged about the fate of three Indonesian crew of tug Bonggaya 91, more than a month after they were kidnapped off the east coast of Sabah. A spokesman at the Indonesian consulate in the southern Philippine city of Davao, reported that the consulate had received mobile phone text messages claiming that a Muslim separatist group, calling itself the 'Jamiat al-Islamiah' was holding the crew hostage. The crew's kidnapers were said to be demanding a digital video camera to be used to convey their demands. This is the first news indicating that the three crewmembers could still be alive. Efforts by the Philippine Navy to track down the kidnapped crew and their captors have so far been futile, giving rise to speculations that the crew may be dead. The three Indonesians, master Ahmad Rumiati, Yamin Labusu and Ereksun Hutagul were kidnapped on Mar 30, while on board Bonggaya 91. Bonggaya 91 was towing barge Bonggaya 92 back to Sandakan from East Kalimantan when they were attacked by armed men on board a speedboat. The crewmembers are believed held captive somewhere in the island group of Tawi-Tawi, in southern Philippines. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Manila, May 18 -- A Muslim terrorist organisation calling itself "Jamiat al-Islamiah" is demanding a Pesos 43 million (US\$790,000 dollars) ransom payment for the release of three Indonesian crew from tug Bonggaya 91, that they kidnapped off the east coast of Sabah. The office of Philippine president Gloria Macapagal Arroyo also reported today that the President had ordered the Philippine armed forces to intensify efforts to find and rescue the three seafarers. The order was issued following a telephone call by Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono to President Arroyo requesting that the Philippines do more to free the hostages. The hostages are believed held in the southern Philippine province of Tawi-tawi. The Philippine military has so far been frustrated in its effort to find the hostages. The province is made up of hundreds of islets harbouring Muslim pirates and separatists. Reports from Indonesian embassy officials in the Philippines indicate that the three hostages are alive although one is ill with malaria and another has diarrhoea. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Port State Control

CANADA

See Santa Emma under "Marine."

CYPRUS

Limassol, May 13 -- General cargo Captain Walid (2592 gt, built 1974) which arrived at Limassol on May 11 from Novorossiysk, is under arrest due to deficiencies. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Limassol, May 19 -- General cargo Captain Walid was released and sailed Limassol May 16 for Beirut. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Limassol, May 19 -- General cargo Safa B. was released and sailed from Limassol May 13 for Alexandria. -- Lloyd's Agents.

GIBRALTAR

See Arion and California under "Marine"

Seizures & Arrests

AYAT

London, May 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: Interpol has tracked vessel Ayat, 1,600 tonnes, with a \$3 million (about Dh11 million) cargo that disappeared on its way to Iran. The vessel was on its way from Dubai's Al Hamriya port to Khorramshahr last month when it went missing. It was ultimately determined that the owner had changed the name of the ship and forged its documents and manifest. He then ordered the master to divert the ship to Kuwait. A case of fraud has been filed with the Dubai Public Prosecution. Lieutenant Colonel Abdullah Eisa Al Falasi, Director of Interpol in the UAE, was reported as saying that Lieutenant General Shaikh Saif Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Minister of Interior, requested the local Interpol office to solve the mystery of the ship's whereabouts. The ship, originally named Ayat, had 10 Indian crew and a Bangladeshi master. It belongs to Al Majaz General Trading and Contracting of Kuwait and had set sail on Apr 2. "The ship's cargo included refrigerators, tyres, glassware, car audio systems, furniture and other items," said Zohre Hadjian, managing director of Fulmar Shipping and Cargo, based at Al Hamriya port. "This is also the first time that we have done business with Al Majaz General Trading and Contracting Establishment," she said. "It takes about four days for the ship to reach Khorramshahr. We maintain regular contact with the ship during the journey, so I was surprised when I

found the ship's communication system had been switched off. And panic set in when I learnt that the ship did not reach the port in five days. "I called the ship's owner, he responded only after 12 days to say that the ship was damaged and stranded at sea. I alerted the harbour-master at Al Hamriya port and a message was sent out to all ports in the Arabian Gulf. But still we could not trace the ship." Hadjian said after a few days, the ship's owner called her again. "He told me that he had sent the cargo to India along with the crew and that it was now my responsibility. I was shocked. I lodged a complaint with Al Hamriya police on Apr 26. On May 9 the case was forwarded to the Dubai Public Prosecution. Within a day the case was with the Ministry of Interior and then Interpol," she said. Interpol traced the ship and its cargo to Kuwait, where the master, crew and owner were arrested. "The owner had changed the ship's name to Gulf King. He also got a forged port clearance certificate from Bandar Abbas to Kuwait, apart from other forged documents," Hadjian said.

CAN GIO (Honduras)

London, May 16 -- A press report, dated May 15, states: The Vietnamese ship detained in Tanzania since mid-2004 is at high risk of being sold by the court order to compensate a Tanzanian company involved in an unrelated trade dispute with a Vietnamese company. It is possible that the Tanzanian court will decide to sell the general cargo Can Gio at the final hearing scheduled for Wednesday, May 18, said Pham Ngoc Son, deputy director of Sea Saigon Shipping Company -- the owner of the ship. The Vietnam Embassy in the African country recently told us of the ship's situation. Mr. Son told Thanh Nien May 15. The money from the ship sale will likely make up for the damages that Tanzania's Mohammed Enterprises allegedly incurred as a consequence of a trading dispute with Vietnam's Thanh Hoa Company Ltd., even though the ship is not involved with the Vietnamese company, he added. Currently, there are still five sailors onboard. The seven other sailors have returned home.

CELTIC HORIZON (U.K.)

Malta, May 19 -- On contacting the yard where fishery protection Celtic Horizon was docked, we were informed that the Celtic Horizon was sold by Mr. Joseph O'Connor to Indian owners. We were also given the name of the vessel's agency at Malta at that time. However, on contacting the agency, we were informed that they did not have any information regarding the new owners and the vessel's whereabouts and flag. -- Lloyd's Agents.

FISHING VESSELS SEIZED BY AUSTRALIA

London, May 17 -- A press report, dated today, states: Federal Government figures show foreign

fishermen are continuing to target the country's northern waters despite a recent crackdown on illegal fishing activity. Australia's largest investigation into illegal fishing netted more than 20 Indonesian boats and almost 200 crew members over several months. Operation Clearwater patrolled the Gulf of Carpentaria and coastal waters north of Arnhem Land. Officials uncovered what the Commonwealth has described as a well organised, large-scale operation. In the three weeks since it finished, the Federal Fisheries Minister Ian Macdonald says a further 16 boats have been intercepted, 10 of which were apprehended. He says one caught earlier this month was carrying two tonnes of fish and more than 50 kilograms of shark fin, a haul worth tens of thousands of dollars on the Asian black market.

FISHING VESSELS SEIZED BY PHILIPPINES

London, May 19 -- A press report, dated today, states: Eighty fishermen were rounded up by operatives of the Philippine National Police Maritime Group in Manila Bay early yesterday morning for illegal fishing. The fishermen were caught while allegedly using trawl, a prohibitive fishing gear, according to PNP-Maritime Group acting director Chief Superintendent Reynor Gonzales. The operation was supervised by the National Capital Region Maritime Office regional officer Superintendent Edmund Gonzales and Special Operation Unit chief Superintendent Leonardo Suan, in co-ordination with the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, following reports of rampant use of prohibitive fishing gear by some fishermen in Manila Bay. The operation also resulted in the seizure of 11 fishing vessels and an undetermined quantity of fish. The use of trawl in large-scale fishing was banned by the government as it destroys fish corrals under the sea and even catch small fries. The Maritime police is also monitoring fishermen who use dynamite and chemicals in Laguna de Bay.

HERKULES II (Poland)

Maassluis, May 17 -- Tug Herkules II is currently under arrest at the Wilhelminahaven in Dordrecht. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents.

JACKIE MOON (Antigua & Barbuda)

Maassluis, May 17 -- General cargo Jackie Moon still under arrest at the Koningen Wilhelminahaven in Vlaardingen. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents.

KORAS NO.1 (South Korea)

London, May 16 -- A press report, dated May 14, states: The Argentine Coast Guard arrested fishing Koras No.1 (485 gt, built 1984) midday Thursday (May 12) for allegedly poaching north of Comodoro Rivadavia with over 200 tons of squid. This is the sixth vessel Argentina has caught illegally fishing in its EEZ since the

season began. A combined operation of the Argentine Navy and Coast Guard detected Koras No.1 early Thursday morning 198 miles off Solano Bay in the province of Chubut. However, when ordered to stop engines the jigger and its 32 crew headed full steam towards high seas. According to Captain Pedro Melle head of the Comodoro Rivadavia Coast Guard post, a few hours later a party from patrol vessel Azopardo finally boarded Koras No.1 and on inspection discovered approximately 20 tons of processed Illex squid plus an even greater unprocessed volume in the haul. "We had to pursue them in particularly severe weather with head winds of 40 miles per hour but we caught them", said Captain Melle. Koras No.1 will be officially detained in the port of San Julian, Santa Cruz province, where the owners and master will have to face federal charges. The Argentine Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Food Secretary announced the vessel would be fined Pesos one million (approximately US\$ 350,000) and its cargo confiscated.

SANTA EMMA (Panama)

See under "Marine."

SOULA (North Korea)

See under "Marine."

VINCENZO FLORIO (Italy)

See under "Marine."

Pipeline Accidents



FRIENDSWOOD, TEXAS, UNITED STATES

London, May 13 -- A press report, dated today, states: Crews yesterday were cleaning about 80 barrels of crude oil that leaked into Clear Creek. The crews were working near Randolph Park in Friendswood. A break in a pipeline owned by Oklahoma-based Sempipe is to blame for the release, city officials said. City officials were notified of the accident at 1100 Wednesday (May 11). The oil spilled when a kink in the pipeline beneath FM 2351 and Beamer Road created pressure and the line broke, according to a release from the Friendswood city manager's office. The oil seeped into Turkey Creek, which empties into Clear Creek. Marc Faber, Friendswood's assistant fire chief, said the environmental clean-up company Oil Mop Inc is working around the clock to clean up the site. A representative of Sempipe said work would likely be completed tonight or early tomorrow. "We've worked around the clock since we got a call from ExxonMobil that there was a spill in the Friendswood field," said Ronnie Kelley, Sempipe's Texas operations manager. "The oil belongs to ExxonMobil. We own the pipe that

goes from their field production site to a central treating facility." By 0735, yesterday morning the clean-up was 75% complete. By yesterday's end, we expect it to be 90 to 95% complete. We're predicting to be completed by Friday evening or Saturday; it's a non-stop operation until all the oil is cleaned up." Kelley said his company was investigating the cause of the break. "It's actually a fairly low-pressure line," he said. "The failure was the result of a hit on the pipe at some point in time. It was an outside force other than a Sempipe operation. We're interested now in the what, when and who." The Texas Railroad Commission is overseeing the clean-up and investigation.

RICHARDS BAY, SOUTH AFRICA

London, May 15 -- A press report, dated today, states: Hundreds of birds, some of them on the Red Data (endangered) list, could be affected by a massive pump failure on the Richards Bay pipeline, which pumps effluent into the sea. The Thulasihleka Pan Bird Sanctuary in Richards Bay, home to a large variety of water birds, has had its access road cut off and its birding hides covered in a metre of "steaming and foul-smelling" water. "We won't know what the impact will be until we know what contaminants were in the water," said Duncan Pritchard of BirdLife's South Africa Zululand Birding Route. The pipeline in question carries industrial effluent from the town's major industries out to sea - among them Mondi, Foskor, Bayside and Hillside. Speaking about the sequence of events, Pritchard explained that the pump had failed at about 1400, yesterday and effluent had been released through safety valves, overflowing out of the pipeline.

WASKOM AREA, TEXAS, UNITED STATES

London, May 13 -- A press report, dated today, states: Authorities are on the scene of a large natural gas explosion near the East Texas town of Waskom. A Harrison County sheriff's deputy says the fire is at a pump station that is part of a natural gas pipeline. A Harrison County Sheriff's Department dispatcher says the department received the first 911 call reporting an explosion at 0210 hrs. Large flames and smoke can be seen for several miles. "The sky is just orange and smoke and flames are filling the sky," said William Brazil, a witness. Other witnesses reported being shaken from their sleep. There are no reports of any serious injuries and no evacuations have been ordered. Roadways in the area are closed.

London, May 14 -- A press report, dated May 13, states: A natural gas pipeline exploded early today in north-eastern Texas, forcing the evacuation of homes up to a mile away and sending a fireball 500 feet into the air, authorities said. No serious injuries were reported. One worker was treated at a hospital for minor injuries and released, officials said. The pipeline rupture forced about 43

residents to evacuate, said a trooper with the Texas Department of Public Safety. "At this point, they are working to establish what may have caused the rupture in the first place," Trooper Jeanne Steeley told Shreveport, LA, television station KSLA. The blast happened at about 0200 hrs on a pipeline that serves a power plant co-owned by Entergy Corp, Northeast Texas Electric Cooperative and East Texas Electric Cooperative. The pipeline is owned by Houston-based Kinder Morgan Inc. A Kinder Morgan spokesman said today that he did not immediately have details on the blast. Smoke and flames were visible as far as 10 miles away.

Weather & Navigation



AUSTRALIA

London, May 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: Emergency crews in Perth have begun a massive clean-up operation after a savage storm swept through Western Australia's south-west early today. The storm hammered Perth's southern suburbs and caused severe damage in regional centres such as Bunbury as it crossed coastal areas. A suburban primary school was virtually destroyed by strong winds that reached more than 125 km an hour. Power failures left an estimated 10,000 homes and businesses without electricity, while fallen power poles and trees caused chaos with peak hour commuters. Traffic on Canning Highway is still blocked at the Canning Bridge, amid fears a large construction crane could topple over. The 55-metre crane on a construction site at the Raffle's Hotel is leaning at an angle and police fear it could fall over if another strong wind gust comes through. Construction engineers have examined the crane and a second crane has been brought in to try to anchor it. Elsewhere in the area council workers have been clearing debris which has littered surrounding streets. Witnesses say what seems like a mini-tornado ripped through the area just after 0600, AWST, tearing roofs from shops and bringing down trees. The weather bureau says the south-west town of Busselton has been hit hard by the storms, with up to 90 mm of rain falling there. Residents are being warned to expect flooding in the area and several roads have been closed by fallen trees.

London, May 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: Western Australia is facing a massive clean up, and a damage bill in the tens of millions, after a ferocious storm front cut a swathe across the coastline leaving a 600km trail of devastation. The storm brought winds gusting at up to 142km/h and left corridors of destruction reminiscent of a tornado, ripping roofs off houses, felling

hundreds of trees, cutting power to thousands of residences and forcing the closure of several schools. Hundreds of State Emergency Service (SES) volunteers scrambled to help, with Bunbury, 180km south of Perth, and the southern Perth suburb of Bicton the worst affected areas. Staff at Bunbury's ABC studio were lucky to escape with their lives after a 38m crane from a neighbouring construction site collapsed on their building, demolishing the newsroom. Bicton Primary School was almost destroyed, with damage estimated around \$5 million. Roofs were ripped off at least six buildings, demountable classrooms were destroyed and musical instruments strewn about the grounds. A spokesman for Education Minister Ljiljanna Ravlich said although the damage was still being assessed, the school may have to be demolished. Four more schools were closed due to damage and safety concerns. Premier Geoff Gallop told radio 6PR: "I think we're talking tens of millions of dollars, not only here but of course in Bunbury and the school (is) very, very badly damaged and it will take some time to clear that up. "I think all of the emergency people are cooperating very well and we're well geared up now to fix it up as quickly as we can." Electricity provider Western Power said residents in badly affected areas could be without power for an "extended period of time", saying storm damage stretched across a 600km front, from Geraldton to Bunbury. SES spokeswoman Nita Gill said there had been calls to 500 incidents across Perth city, with 150 volunteers from all 16 SES units asked to help. A further 150 volunteers were called in to help in the state's south-west. Perth's main roads were also severely affected by the weather, with a crane left in danger of toppling onto a highway, as well as debris, blacked out traffic lights and flooded suburban thoroughfares all causing traffic chaos. Wind gusts peaked at 142km/h at Rottnest Island, just off the coast of Perth, and reached 100km/h in Perth suburbs. In the 24 hours to 0900, today, Perth had 34mm of rain, while parts of the south-west recorded up to 80mm.

London, May 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: The severe storm that lashed Perth's southern suburbs and the south-west coast of Western Australia today has caused millions of dollars of damage. The Fire and Emergency Services Authority (FESA) has described it as the worst storm in 10 years. Five schools were damaged and at Bicton Primary School the music room was ripped from its foundation, spreading instruments all over the oval. It is estimated the damage bill for that school alone will be up to \$6 million. The Education Department has announced a number of schools will remain closed tomorrow due to extensive storm damage. In the metropolitan area, Bicton Primary School, Roleystone District High School and Roleystone Primary School

will be closed, and parents are being asked to make alternative arrangements for their children. The department says power and waters cuts have affected a number of schools in the south-west, but all are expected to be open tomorrow. At Kwinana one strong gust of wind about 0600,AWST, brought down power lines, sending sparks flying 50 metres over a nearby petrol station. The force of the wind blew in car windows. More than 100 SES volunteers are working to clean up the damage. Tens of thousands of Perth motorists faced a frustrating journey home this evening after the storm. The main problem for motorists is Canning Bridge, which has been closed amid fears a crane could fall on passing vehicles. WorkSafe inspectors are on the scene but Canning Highway was expected to remain closed until 2100, AWST.

London, May 17 -- A press report, dated today, states: Australia is facing a massive clean-up, and a damage bill in the tens of millions of dollars, after a ferocious storm cut a swathe across the coastline and left a 600km trail of devastation. The storm brought winds gusting at up to 142 km/h and left corridors of destruction reminiscent of a tornado, ripping roofs off houses, felling hundreds of trees, cutting power to thousands of residences and forcing the closure of several schools. Hundreds of State Emergency Service volunteers scrambled to help. Bunbury, 180 km south of Perth, and the southern Perth suburb of Bicton were the worst-affected areas. Bicton Primary School was almost destroyed and damage was estimated at about \$5 million. Roofs were ripped off at least six buildings, demountable classrooms were destroyed and musical instruments strewn about the grounds. A spokesman for Education Minister Ljiljanna Ravlich said the school might have to be demolished. Four more schools were closed due to damage and safety concerns. Premier Geoff Gallop said the bill could amount to "tens of millions of dollars." Electricity provider Western Power said residents in badly affected areas could be without power for an "extended period of time." SES spokeswoman Nita Gill said there had been calls to 500 incidents across Perth city, as 150 volunteers from all 16 SES units were asked to help. A further 150 volunteers were called in to help in the state's south-west. Perth's main roads were also severely affected by the weather. A crane was left in danger of toppling on to a highway. Debris, blacked-out traffic lights and flooded suburban thoroughfares all caused traffic chaos.

London, May 17 -- A press report, dated today, states: Emergency services crews in Western Australia are urging residents to be patient as the clean-up continues from the storm that lashed parts of Perth and the south-west yesterday. State Emergency Service volunteers have worked through the night to help residents and business owners clean up the damage, with fallen trees and

powerlines still causing problems. SES regional manager, Gordon Hall, says crews have worked through about half of the more than 800 calls they have received since early yesterday. Daryl Cameron from the Insurance Council of Australia says he is expecting claims to run into the millions of dollars.

London, May 18 -- A press report, dated May 17, states: Thousands of homes across the Perth metropolitan area and the south-west of Western Australia remain without power after yesterday morning's storm. State Emergency Services and Western Power crews have been working to clean-up debris, repair damaged homes and fallen powerlines. The SES says it has been able to attend 75% of the 855 calls received since yesterday. The worst-affected areas include Bicton, where the primary school was almost destroyed in the storm. The areas remaining without power include Bicton, Parkerville, Armadale, Kelmscott and Mosman Park. Western Power says it has so far restored supplies to about 85% of affected customers, but spokeswoman Marisa Chapman says some may be without power until tomorrow morning.

BANGLADESH

London, May 15 -- A press report, dated May 14, states: At least two people have been killed and 100 others injured when storms lashed parts of Bangladesh, destroying homes and damaging crops. The two were killed in north-western Pabna district, where some 100 homes were either destroyed or damaged, when a seasonal storm hit the area late last night, media reports said today, adding that crops were also damaged. In Dhaka, another storm also late last night uprooted some trees, which blocked at least one major road, and disrupted electricity supply. The storms left some 100 people injured nation-wide, majority of them in Pabna, the reports said. A cargo aircraft parked at Dhaka's Zia International Airport was spun 90 degrees as the winds picked up speed of upto 85 km per hour, the reports said. Two international and one domestic flights of Bangladesh's national carrier Biman, were forced to turn back and take shelter at Chittagong airport.

CHINA

Beijing, May 16 -- A freak blizzard and sand storm killed 15 explorers in mountainous remote north-west China on Friday (May 13), the Xinhua news agency said today. More than 70 explorers, hired by a company connected to oil giant China National Petroleum Corp., were working in Haixi prefecture in Qinghai province, bordering Tibet, when they were hit by a "heavy snowstorm, rainstorm and sandstorm simultaneously", Xinhua said. "Fifteen explorers were found dead and 13 others injured in the snowstorm which was unlikely to happen once in a century," an unnamed local official was quoted as

saying. Rescue and investigation efforts were continuing, Xinhua said. - Reuters.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

London, May 14 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Heavy downpours have been pounding the Dominican Republic for three days, killing three and flooding 290 houses. More than 70 communities are isolated and severe damages have been caused to agriculture and transportation throughout the Island. Transportation also suffered because of collapsing buildings, mudslides and floods, while Frank Rodriguez, director of the Hydraulic Resource National Institute, said Tavera and Rincon dams were opened in central El Cibao to prevent further consequences. More than 70 communities from the provinces of Maria Trinidad Sanchez, Espaillat, Puerto Plata and Sanchez Ramirez remain isolated by floods caused by rivers and streams. The Health Secretary and Presidential Social Plan began sending medical personnel and distributing food to the victims at seafont Gaspar Hernandez municipality where hundreds of houses remain flooded. The Civil Defense in Montecristi reported strong rains, thunderstorms and gust winds caused by a tornado that destroyed eight houses, trees, electricity pylons and agriculture.

RUSSIA

London, May 15 -- A press report, dated May 14, states: As many as 1,098 houses in 19 towns and villages, where 4920 people live, have been flooded across Russia's North Caucasus republics of Dagestan and Chechnya. The Emergency Situations Ministry's press service told Interfax today that 2,515 people have been evacuated from inundated areas. As many as 4,613 people and 245 pieces of heavy machinery, among them six boats and five helicopters, are involved in clean-up operations and work to reinforce dams. The Babayurt district, the worst hit area of Dagestan, where the main dam has been breached by rising floodwaters, has more than 46,500 hectares of inundated farmlands, 29 flooded private houses and 10 flooded farms. A total of 230 metres of the dam have already been rebuilt. A dam broke in the republic's Khasavyurt district when the Aksai river burst through its banks, flooding five towns and villages where 476 houses are located. A total of 2,670 people live there. As many as 593 houses have been flooded across Chechnya, where 2,199 people have been evacuated from inundated areas.

London, May 15 -- A press report, dated today, states: Population and infrastructure of thirteen Chechen districts and three districts in the republican capital of Grozny were affected as a result of floods that swept across the republic on May 9-10. According to the republican Emergencies Ministry, 643 people were evacuated from 143 fully

destroyed houses. More than 1,192 houses were inundated. All in all, over 5,000 residents of the republic suffered from the floods over those days. A landslide-prone situation emerged in Duba-Yurt village, Shali district, department chief at the Chechen Emergencies Ministry Ruslan Abazov said today. A landslide threatens 50 private houses in the village. Torrential waters in the republic damaged nearly 50 pedestrian and highway bridges and washed away more than 400 kilometres of roads, Abazov noted. Restoration work is now underway across the entire republic. Efforts are made to strengthen protecting levees on rivers. According to preliminary information, the damage from the floods in Chechnya amounted to 600 million roubles. However, experts believe that the sum may rise after detailed study.

TAIWAN

London, May 15 -- A press report, dated today, states: Torrential rain in Taiwan has caused mass flooding and landslides that have claimed the lives of four people and left another four missing, fire agency and government officials said today. "The bodies of the four victims have been found," said an official from the National Fire Agency, which coordinates rescue operations in Taiwan. A 60-year-old man was drowned in northern Hsinchu city. Two agricultural officials were found dead after they were washed away by rising floodwater outside the city in Hsinchu county. The fourth victim was working on a riverbed in southeastern Taitung county when he was engulfed by floodwaters, the agency said. Hundreds of residents were evacuated from Hsinchu county and central Nantou, where at least 500 millimetres of rain had fallen in three days, it said. "They were relocated to nearby places which are safe," Hsinchu's deputy council magistrate Peng Kwang-cheng said. Television footage showed two cities outside Taipei -- Sanchung and Hsinchuang -- were marooned, with flood rising to three metres in some places. Taiwanese authorities also ordered the hundreds of people to be evacuated from mountainous regions where the torrents of water were causing landslides. The downpours prompted landslide alerts in six counties and a city, interrupting the search for three people who went missing and were feared killed in a landslide while scaling a mountain in Nantou on Tuesday. Another man, a worker on a bridge in Hsinchu county, was washed away by rising floods, but is still listed as missing.

TROPICAL STORM "ADRIAN"

London, May 18 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office: Tropical storm "Adrian": At 0900, UTC, May 18, the government of El Salvador has issued a tropical storm watch for the entire coast of El Salvador and the government of Guatemala has issued a tropical storm

watch for the Pacific coast of Guatemala. Interests in Central America should closely monitor the progress of this system. Storm centre located near lat 10.8N, long 94.1W, at 0900, UTC. Position accurate to within 30 nautical miles. Present movement towards the north-east, or 045 deg, at six knots. Maximum sustained winds 40 knots with gusts to 50 knots. Radius of 34-knot winds and 12-foot seas 40 nautical miles. Forecast for 0600, UTC, May 19: Position lat 12.0N, long 92.4W. Maximum sustained winds 50 knots with gusts to 60 knots. Radius of 50-knot winds 20 nautical miles. Radius of 34-knot winds 40 nautical miles.

TURKEY

London, May 13 -- Traffic in the Istanbul Strait was suspended at 0320, local time, yesterday, due to dense fog. Northbound traffic resumed at 1200, local time.

VIETNAM

London, May 18 -- A press report, dated May 17, states: Droughts have damaged over 104,000 hectares of rice and reduced the yields from a number of hectares of fruit and industrial crops in the Mekong Delta by 15%. Deputy Head of the MARD's Water Conservation Department Nguyen Dinh Ninh estimated damages caused by droughts to Viet Nam's rice bowl at over dong 722 billion (US\$42.12 million) this year. He said Ben Tre province had been the worst hit with damages estimated at dong 570 billion. Droughts have destroyed almost 7,000 hectares of rice and 15,170 hectares of fruit in the province. Tens of thousands of hectares of other crops have either been destroyed or have had their yields reduced by 20-80%. In addition, more than 82,000 local families are in need of water and are having to buy clean water for between dong 50,000 and 70,000 per cubic metre. A similar situation is occurring in the entire region, causing hundreds of thousands of local families to suffer.

Earthquakes



INDONESIA

London, May 14 -- A press report, dated today, states: Australian authorities says a 6.9 magnitude undersea earthquake has rocked the Indonesian island of Sumatra, but is unlikely to trigger a tsunami. A spokesman for Geoscience Australia said the quake hit at about 1505, AEST, off the island's west coast near Padang. Geoscience Australia will assess the magnitude of the earthquake before deciding whether to offer help to Indonesian meteorological authorities. Media reports from Jakarta say there was no evidence of injuries or damage to property, but the

quake was felt in a number of Sumatran towns, including Sibolga and Medan in the north and Pekanbaru in the east.

KERMADEC ISLANDS, NEW ZEALAND

London, May 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: A strong earthquake was recorded in the South Pacific north of New Zealand today, but officials said it was not believed to have been strong enough to cause a tsunami. The US Geological Survey said the 6.6-magnitude quake struck in the ocean some 425 kilometres south-south-west of Raoul Island in the New Zealand territory of the Kermadec Islands, 700 kilometres north of Auckland. The quake hit at 1554 hrs and was not expected to cause a destructive tsunami, New Zealand Institute of Geological and Nuclear Sciences seismologist Ken Gledhill said.

SOLOMON ISLANDS

London, May 14 -- A report, dated May 12, states: A moderate earthquake occurred at 2052, UTC, today. The magnitude 5.7 event has been located in the Solomon Islands in lat 07.60S, long 156.13E, depth 7.7 km.

TURKEY

London, May 12 -- A press report, dated today, states: Two moderate earthquakes, the strongest registering 4.9 on the Richter scale, rattled northern Turkey today causing damage but no injuries, according to initial reports. A first quake of 4.7 in magnitude struck at 0900, GMT, in the province of Tokat, north-east of the Turkish capital Ankara, followed 30 minutes later by a second tremor, the Anatolia news agency reported. Several buildings in the city of Tokat were damaged and inhabitants in the area fled their houses in panic. There were no immediate reports of injuries.



MOUNT FERNANDINA, GALAPAGOS ISLANDS

Quito, May 13 -- A volcano spewed ash and lava onto part of the ecologically delicate Galapagos Islands today, threatening to kill vegetation and some animals on the island of Fernandina, officials said. The islands, of the coast of Ecuador, are considered one of the most important natural preserves in the world. "Evidently a lot of vegetation will be burned and some animals, especially iguanas, will die," Galapagos National Park Director Washington Tapia said. "But considering that Fernandina is the most pristine island of the archipelago, we don't have to worry much. This is a natural process," he said. No humans live on Fernandina,

the westernmost island in the formation. The volcano, also called Fernandina, shot a column of ash and gas seven kilometres into the air while lava descended its banks. The lava could reach the Pacific Ocean in five days, Tapia said. Sea lions, penguins and bullfinches also live on Fernandina. The most active volcano in the Galapagos, Fernandina has had between 20 and 22 eruptions since 1813. Ecuadorean authorities said they would not declare the island, which is formed mostly of lava, a disaster area. The eruption has not interrupted air traffic to and from the Galapagos. -- Reuters.

London, May 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: Scientists are monitoring a volcanic eruption in the Galapagos Islands. Rivers of lava have been flowing down the sides of the Cumbre volcano on Fernandina Island. The initial eruption on Thursday (May 12) sent a column of vapour and ash four miles into the sky. The islands, off the coast of Ecuador, are considered one of the most important natural preserves in the world. National Park director Washington Tapia said: "Evidently a lot of vegetation will be burned and some animals, especially iguanas, will die. "But considering that Fernandina is the most pristine island of the archipelago, we don't have to worry much. "This is a natural process." No humans live on Fernandina, the westernmost island in the formation. Ecuadorean authorities said they would not declare the island, which is formed mostly of lava, a disaster area.



AFGHANISTAN

Kabul, May 13 -- Seven people were killed and more than 20 wounded in protests in Afghanistan today, as anger spread over a report that US interrogators at Guantanamo Bay had desecrated the Koran, police and residents said. Four policemen and national army soldiers were killed in a clash with protesters in Ghazni province, to the south-west of the capital, residents there said. Three protesters were killed in the remote north-eastern province of Badakhshan during a protest there, said provincial police chief Shah Jahan Noori. -- Reuters.

London, May 17 -- A press report, dated today, states: A group of "thieves" has claimed responsibility for kidnapping an Italian relief worker in Kabul, police said today, reinforcing fears that criminals are borrowing tactics used in Iraq. Four armed men dragged Clementina Cantoni, 32, from her car in Kabul yesterday. She works for CARE International and was working with Afghan widows and their families. Today, the group of men contacted authorities to claim

responsibility, Gen. Jamil Jumbesh, head of the Interior Ministry's anti-terrorism division, told The Associated Press. He declined to say whether the group had made demands. Cantoni was the first foreigner kidnapped in Afghanistan since three U.N. election workers were seized in October and held for nearly a month. Security officials have warned that criminals might try to kidnap foreigners in an attempt to force the release of suspects recently arrested in the U.N. case. Afghan officials have said six men in custody, including a suspected bank robber, have confessed to those kidnappings. Police set up checkpoints around the city, said Gen. Mahboubullah Amiri, a police commander in the Interior Ministry. The Italian foreign ministry said a crisis unit was working on the case. NATO's security force stationed in Kabul also helped mount checkpoints, it said in a statement. The aid group said Cantoni had been engaged in humanitarian work for 10 years and lived since March 2002 in Afghanistan, where she led a project helping thousands of Afghan widows and their families. "CARE International is deeply concerned and calls for her immediate release," it said in a brief statement released in Brussels. An agency driver had just dropped a Canadian woman at a house in downtown Kabul yesterday evening when the kidnappers driving a sedan cut off the vehicle and abducted Cantoni, said Paul Barker, the agency's director in Afghanistan. "Four men carrying Kalashnikovs bashed in the window of her car and took her away. They told the driver not to move or he would be shot," Barker said.

Kabul, May 18 -- An Italian aid worker kidnapped from her car in the Afghan capital is well and her kidnappers have opened a channel of communication with Afghan authorities, an Italian embassy official said today. The government suspected a gang of criminals seeking the release of their detained leader was responsible, but Afghan and Italian officials have declined to elaborate on that suspicion, or on efforts to secure Cantoni's freedom. A source close to the negotiations told Reuters in Rome what the kidnappers wanted was not yet clear. "Contact has been made in order to clarify the aim of the incident," the source said. Negotiators had heard Cantoni's voice in a recorded statement played over the telephone, the source said. -- Reuters.

BANGLADESH

Dhaka, May 18 -- Shops and businesses shut down in Bangladesh's capital Dhaka today and streets were deserted after the main opposition party called a strike to protest against the killing of a party official. Khorshed Alam, a legal affairs secretary of the Awami League, was shot dead by unidentified gunmen as he stepped out of his home in Dhaka's Tejgaon area yesterday. The Awami League, led by former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina,

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

said Alam's death was a "pre-planned political murder" but did not give any details. Extra police patrolled the streets of Dhaka and monitored government buildings in the city of 10 million. Yesterday night, supporters of the Awami League incensed by the killing of the party official clashed with police and damaged vehicles. "The whole country has become a killing field, with gun-carrying killers roaming about almost freely under the eyes of law enforcing agencies," Awami League general secretary Abdul Jalil said. The government said it was doing everything it could to hunt down the killers. -- Reuters.

BOLIVIA

London, May 17 -- A press report, dated May 16, states: Thousands of protesters in Bolivia have marched through the main city of La Paz to pressure the president to toughen a controversial new energy bill. Police prevented the mainly indigenous demonstrators from entering the central square. There were a few clashes, but the march was largely peaceful. Elsewhere, other protesters set up roadblocks on several key highways. President Carlos Mesa refuses to sign the bill into law because he considers the level of taxes unworkable. The law, already approved by Congress, would raise the taxes paid by foreign energy firms to 50% of their revenues. President Mesa is backed by business groups, but opposed by peasants, coca farmers and trade unionists, who want the bill to be made stricter. The president has until tomorrow to make a final decision, but he is looking increasingly isolated. Trade unions, landless peasant farmers and neighbourhood groups are demanding the nationalisation of Bolivia's energy industry. They say that nationalisation of the gas industry is the only way they will benefit from Bolivia's greatest natural resource. Elsewhere in the country coca farmers, miners and supporters of opposition leader Evo Morales began a 200km march to La Paz.

BRAZIL

Brasilia, May 18 -- A 17-day protest march by 12,000 Brazilian landless peasants ended in violence yesterday as activists fought with police and demanded faster government land resettlement to cut rural poverty. Over 50 people were injured as mounted riot police charged into demonstrators at the end of the 150-mile march to pressure President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva to meet land reform promises. The clashes occurred as leaders of the Landless Workers Movement (MST) met with Lula and said they reached a deal to boost reform spending. Government officials denied any accord. Over 30 MST activists and 20 paramilitary police suffered bruises and broken bones after protesters tried to cross a police line at Congress. Mounted officers made repeated baton charges in the worst protest violence seen in Brasilia in years. "They just

came at us without provocation," said MST activist Gabriel Silveira as he staggered on the grass before Congress, complaining of a blow to his shoulder by police. Police Maj. Nevitton Pereira Junior said two officers could lose their sight after being speared in the face by bamboo poles. He showed welts where he said he had been beaten. MST leaders have threatened to increase the pace of land occupations, and could drop traditional support for Lula if he fails to meet a promise to settle 430,000 families by 2006. He is nowhere near the election pledge after focusing on market-driven economic policies and big farm producers to achieve steady growth needed to cut poverty. MST leaders left the Lula meeting telling reporters he agreed to free up nearly half the land reform spending he froze in 2005, or about reals 700 million reals (£154 million), and hire 1,300 new land reform agents to speed settlement of families. Agrarian Reform Minister Miguel Rossetto said the meeting had been "positive" but the government had made no deal and it would give its proposals to the MST today. MST leaders showed no sign of easing up on farm invasions that worry foreign investors and can cause political headaches for Lula as the opposition accuses him of being soft on "crime". "With the energy of this march we have to raise occupations even higher, with this energy we have to attack economic policy," MST leader Joao Pedro Stedile told cheering activists near Congress as police looked on. Since Lula's Workers Party moved away from its leftist roots the MST has lost its most powerful political backer. With such support gone, 44% of the 2005 land reform budget has been frozen to help the government hit a high budget surplus goal meant to cut debt. The government says it may settle as few as 160,000 families by the end of this year. The MST invades ranches to press the government to purchase and resettle unused land. The end goal is to cut deep land inequality where 1% of Brazil's 180 million people controls 45% of its farmland. Leaders of Brazil's peasant movements said they still backed Lula but could discuss ending support for his 2006 re-election campaign unless he spends more on landless settlement. Earlier in the day, crowds of peasants burned fast-food wrappers and other rubbish outside the U.S. Embassy to protest against what they called U.S. imperialism. The MST has strengthened relations with populist Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, and given support to his plans to counter a US-backed Free Trade Area of the Americas, as its relations with Lula have weakened. -- Reuters.

BURUNDI

London, May 16 -- A press report, dated May 15, states: The Burundian transitional government and the country's only active rebel group today signed a truce deal, according to a statement issued after talks between

Burundian President Domitien Ndayizeye and rebel leader Agathon Rwasa. "The two parties declared an immediate cessation of hostilities and decided to set up technical teams in a time frame not more than one month," Burundian Foreign Minister Therence Sinunguruza said in the statement. The technical teams will decide the mechanism of a permanent peace in Burundi. Today's meeting in Dar-es-Salaam was the first between the two sides since the Burundian authorities broke off contacts with the Forces for National Liberation (FNL) after the rebel group had claimed responsibility for the killing of 159 Congolese refugees at Gatumba north-west of Bujumbura in August last year. The Burundian transitional government and the rebel group agreed today to start negotiations on ending their hostilities and on bringing the FNL into the country's peace process.

CHAD

N'Djamena, May 11 -- Four people were killed in a camp for Darfur refugees in eastern Chad today, the same day the UN's refugee agency said it pulled staff from four other camps along the border with Sudan over security concerns. Two refugees and two Chadian police officers were killed when a group of refugees started trying to sell the plastic sheeting used to make their tents, a U.N. official in N'Djamena said. "There was a clash between refugees and police officers at (the town of) Goz Beida, in the Goz Amer camp. Two refugees were killed along with two police officers," the official said. UNHCR said in a statement today that a group of demonstrators armed with sticks and stones wounded five of its personnel and two other humanitarian workers at the Iridimi camp on Monday (May 9). Three refugees were also wounded, including one woman who was badly hurt and evacuated to the capital N'Djamena. The agency said it subsequently withdrew staff from the Iridimi, Touloum, Mile and Kounoungou camps, all of which lie at least 250 km north of Goz Beida. Other aid groups also withdrew their workers, it said. Ginette Le Breton, a spokeswoman for UNHCR in Chad's eastern town of Abeche, said around 40 workers were withdrawn. A UNHCR official in N'Djamena said refugees were unhappy about the way food was being distributed. The UNHCR said refugees in Iridimi and Touloum refused this week to be registered. In the other two camps, the refugees refused to take part in a new food distribution scheme which aims to verify the number of people in each family. "Today the situation is calm ... we are evaluating when services can be resumed in the camps," she said. -- Reuters.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Kinshasa, May 12 -- A peacekeeper from Bangladesh was killed and five others wounded when their convoy came under fire today in the Ituri

district of north-eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, the United Nations said. The attack occurred in a lawless region where the world body has taken a more aggressive stance against militia fighters since nine peacekeepers were killed there in February. However, much of the district is still ruled by warlords. About 20 members of a local militia attacked some 40 Bangladeshi blue helmets as they returned to their base from a surveillance mission in a convoy of two armoured personnel carriers and four jeeps, UN officials said. Three soldiers were injured when their jeep overturned and another three were hit by gunfire, and one of these died of his wounds a few hours later, the officials said. They had earlier said that seven peacekeepers were hurt in the attack. The ambush took place in Congo's Geti region 33 miles south-east of Bunia, the regional capital. A UN helicopter gunship flew to the site and opened fire on the gunmen. It later brought the wounded back to Bunia. The FRPI militia, one of five ethnic armed groups in Ituri, was thought to have carried out the attack, UN spokeswoman Rachel Eklou said. -- Reuters.

London, May 16 -- A press report, dated May 14, states: The National Assembly in the Democratic Republic of Congo has adopted a new constitution for the country. The text is intended to end years of war and political instability in the country and has been agreed by all the former warring factions. The constitution limits the powers of the president, who will now serve a maximum of two five-year terms, and allows a greater degree of federalism. It also recognises as citizens all ethnic groups at independence in 1960. This article is a recognition of the citizenship of thousands of ethnic Tutsis, who were transplanted to the then Belgian-ruled Congo back in the 19th Century. The constitution provides for free primary education for all, and an exact parity between men and women in power and it sets the minimum age for presidential candidates at 30, allowing current President Joseph Kabila, who is 33, to stand for office. Parliament speaker Raphael Luhulu said the constitution was the result of a difficult consensus between different factions of the regime. It replaces a transitional constitutional which emerged at a peace deal reached in the South African city of Pretoria in 2002. The text, which has already been passed by the Senate, now has to be approved in a national referendum within the next six months. If ratified, the current power-sharing government has until June 2006 to organise free presidential and parliamentary elections, the first for 40 years.

Kinshasa, May 17 -- At least two people were killed when hundreds of opposition supporters rioted in a southern mining town in the Democratic Republic of Congo today during a protest against plans to delay long-awaited elections, residents and authorities said. Protesters hurled

rocks at police, set up barricades and burned down the offices of two political parties in Mbuji Mayi, some 900 km southeast of the capital Kinshasa. Residents and police sources said security forces opened fire on the protesters. "Two demonstrators were killed and another five were injured but it also seems a policeman may have been burned alive," Provincial Governor Dominique Kanku said. At least five people were injured before the army quelled the disturbances, which underscore mounting frustration in the vast central African country over plans to delay the first democratic polls in more than four decades. "The (opposition) UDPS supporters went out into the streets at four this morning and set up barricades, burned tyres, started throwing stones and attacked three parties' headquarters," Kanku said. The presidential polls were set for June but government wrangling, legislative delays and logistical hitches have meant voting will be postponed. No new date has been set yet. Residents and police sources in Mbuji Mayi, which has attracted hundreds of thousands of people to mine for diamonds but lacks many basic services, said police opened fire on crowds of opposition supporters roaming around town. "The army was later deployed, the shooting has stopped and things have calmed down but transport has been paralysed and only military vehicles are moving around now," a resident said. The UDPS, a long-time opposition party that has refused to join the transitional government, says failure to meet the original June deadline for polls -- a key part of a 2003 peace deal -- means changes in the governing team are needed. The UDPS has also called for demonstrations tomorrow in Kinshasa, where the party has a strong support base. This week, Congo's parliament is due to debate a request by the head of the electoral commission to delay the vote, something still permissible under the peace deal which allows up to two six-month extensions to the transition. -- Reuters.

INDIA

London, May 13 -- A press report, dated today, states: Two people reportedly died and at least 44 others, including 11 children, were injured yesterday when suspected Islamic militants threw a grenade at a private school in Srinagar, the summer capital of India's Jammu and Kashmir State. The grenade was thrown as children were leaving the school in the centre of Srinagar, according to the Press Trust of India which quoted official sources.

INDONESIA

London, May 13 -- A press report, dated today, states: Indonesian troops have killed seven separatist rebels in the latest violence in tsunami-ravaged Aceh province, the military said today. The Free Aceh Movement (GAM) rebels were killed in two separate clashes in Bireuen and North Aceh

districts yesterday, said a local military officer who refused to be named. The Indonesian government said yesterday it planned to lift Aceh's one-year-old state of civil emergency but will continue its anti-rebel military operations.

London, May 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: Six people, including five policemen, were killed today when a police post in troubled Maluku province was attacked by unidentified gunmen, a spokesman said. Maluku police spokesman Maj. Hendro Praesetyo said the five officers belonged to the Mobile Brigade paramilitary unit. He said the attack occurred in the village of Loki on Seram, the largest island in the Maluku archipelago. A Maluku police spokesman says one attacker died in the pre-dawn incident.

London, May 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: Indonesia has lifted the state of emergency in the province of Aceh. The Government imposed martial law in May 2003, coinciding with a military offensive to try to defeat separatist rebels. It lifted martial law in May last year, substituting it with a state of civil emergency. The decision comes as talks continue between the Government and rebels of the Free Aceh Movement.

IRAQ

London, May 13 -- A press report, dated today, states: American fighter jets flattened a suspected insurgent safe house near the Syrian border, the US military said today, as hundreds of US troops searched remote desert villages house by house for followers of Iraq's most wanted militant leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. American forces have met little resistance since the first two days of Operation Matador, aimed at clearing a region believed to be a haven for foreign fighters slipping over the border from Syria, the military said in a statement today. American intelligence indicates the insurgents are either in hiding or have fled the region, US Capt Jeffrey Pool said in the statement. Villagers said today that gunmen still roamed some areas and they continued to receive US shelling. The US offensive -- one of the largest since militants were forced from Fallujah six months ago -- comes amid a surge of militant attacks that have killed more than 420 people in just over two weeks since Iraq's first democratically elected government was announced. A car bomb exploded in a jammed commercial district of the capital yesterday, setting cars, shops and restaurants ablaze in the most deadly of a string of attacks that killed 21 and injured more than 90. Iraqis expressed growing fury at the relentless bloodshed, throwing stones at police and US forces who responded to the bombing. Two more blasts rocked the capital today, both targeting American patrols, Iraqi police said. There were no immediate reports of casualties, but news footage of the blasts showed a US Humvee, its

hood open, consumed by flames on a highway leading to the airport. A 30-minute gunbattle erupted in Ghazaliyah, a nearby part of western Baghdad, when insurgents fired on Iraqi soldiers who were searching the area, said police Maj Abdul Karim. There were no immediate reports of casualties. Also in western Baghdad, snipers opened fire on the motorcade of the Interior Ministry's undersecretary Maj Gen Hikmat Moussa Hussein, killing one of his guards and wounding three, police Maj Moussa Abdul Karim said. Hussein escaped unharmed. North of the capital, a car bomb exploded today as an Iraqi army patrol was moving through Baqouba, killing three people and wounding six, police Col Mudhafar Mohammed said. The dead included two soldiers and a civilian, he said. At the Pentagon, Gen Richard Myers, chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, indicated yesterday that the insurgency could last for many more years. "This requires patience," he said at a news conference. "This is a thinking and adapting adversary. I wouldn't look for results tomorrow. One thing we know about insurgencies, that they last from three, four years to nine years." The US military said information gained from a "senior terrorist" captured during the operation near the Syrian border led Marines to the safe house yesterday in Karabilah, a village about 200 miles north-west of Baghdad. As Marines approached, at least four gunmen fired on them from the building, the military statement said. US F-18 Super Hornet jets destroyed the building with a combination of bombs and rockets, the statement said. The offensive was launched after US intelligence showed large numbers of insurgents had moved into the northern Jazirah Desert following losses in Fallujah and Ramadi, further east. The area is believed to be a staging ground for foreign fighters, who receive weapons and equipment there to launch attacks in Iraq's main cities. The US military has confirmed five Marine deaths so far and says about 100 insurgents have been killed in the operation. Gunmen were taking over the homes of Iraqi citizens to evade Marines in the area, the US military said today.

Baghdad, May 14 -- Iraq halted efforts to resume sustained crude oil exports through Turkey yesterday after a sabotage bomb hit the main pumping station that feeds its northern pipeline, an Iraqi oil official said. The blast at the Athana crude gathering and pumping station came as Iraq was reviving crude flows to storage tanks at Turkey's Ceyhan port, the official said. Just hours before the blast, shipping sources said Iraq had resumed pumping crude to Turkey and was exporting almost half a million barrels per day (bpd) on that route. The Iraqi oil official gave a more conservative figure, saying an average 100,000 bpd had been moving through the pipeline to Ceyhan, where about

400,000 barrels were stored. The latest sabotage blast is a blow to Iraq's new government, which was hoping to improve security in the north to bring in badly needed crude revenues to repair the battered economy. The northern pipeline linking Iraq's Kirkuk oilfield to the Turkish Mediterranean port of Ceyhan has been largely idle since December when exports were halted by massive sabotage. The oil official said another sabotage blast had hit a domestic pipeline from the oil centre of Kirkuk that feeds refineries. -- Reuters.

Baquba, May 15 -- Two suicide bombers attacked the convoy of the governor of Iraq's Diyala province today, killing three bystanders, police said. They said the governor, Raad Rashid, was not hurt in the attack, which appeared to have been well coordinated. The attack began when a suicide car bomber blew up his vehicle in the path of the governor's convoy. Police said nobody was wounded in the first blast, but a second suicide bomber ran towards the convoy on foot and detonated an explosive belt, killing three people. There has been a surge of suicide attacks over the past three weeks, since Iraq's political leaders unveiled a new cabinet after months of stalemate. At least three suicide bombs were reported yesterday, two in the northern city of Mosul and one in Baghdad. At least six people were killed in the blasts. -- Reuters.

Baghdad, May 16 -- The bodies of 12 Iraqi men, all of whom had been shot dead, have been found dumped in north-eastern Baghdad, police said today. They said the bodies had been found overnight. Since Saturday (May 14), at least 46 bodies have been found dumped at four locations in Iraq. Insurgents have regularly attacked Iraqis they accuse of working with the U.S.-backed government and security forces and dumped their bodies as a warning to others. On Saturday, the bodies of 10 Iraqi soldiers were found dumped in the western city of Ramadi. Yesterday 13 bodies were found in eastern Baghdad and 11 were discovered near Iskandariya just south of the capital. -- Reuters.

London, May 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: Three Iraqis working for Kuwaiti television were killed south of Baghdad, the Iraqi military said today. The victims were two journalists and their driver, the military said, adding that the three were on their way to Baghdad from the holy Shiite city of Karbala. The incident took place in an area near the town of Muhmudiya and Latifiya, a rebel area known as the "triangle of death."

Baghdad, May 17 -- Insurgents killed four Iraqi soldiers in clashes outside a power plant in a southern Iraqi town today, army sources said. The attack in Mussayib was part of an escalated campaign of suicide bombings and shootings by guerrillas that has pressured the new government to deliver on promises of improved security. -- Reuters.

Canberra, May 18 -- Iraqi militants holding an Australian hostage have told the leader of Australia's Muslims, Sheikh Taj al-Din al-Hilali, they will release the man in the next few days, a spokesman for al-Hilali said today. Keysar Trad, al-Hilali's spokesman, told Reuters the Mufti of Australia's Muslims had also had a telephone conversation with a man who said he was Douglas Wood, the 63-year-old engineer taken hostage in Baghdad more than two weeks ago. Al-Hilali travelled to Iraq last week in a bid to help free Wood. "He will be released in the next three days as soon as there is an opportunity," Trad said the militants had told al-Hilali. Trad said he had not spoken directly to al-Hilali but to the guide accompanying the Australian Muslim leader in Iraq. "He received a phone call purporting to be from the abductors and they put an English-speaking man on the phone who identified himself to the Mufti as Mr Wood and he said he was well. The Mufti then made arrangements to send this man his medication." "They said he would be released as a favour to the Australian Muslim community that has made so many public statements calling for his release." The militants had demanded that Australia start withdrawing its troops from Iraq or they would kill Wood. However, Australia's conservative government has stood firm on its refusal to give in to the militants. Indeed, a new batch of 450 Australian troops is due to arrive in southern Iraq in the coming weeks to provide security and train the Iraqi army. They will take the total number of Australian troops in and around Iraq to about 1,400. Wood's brother, Malcolm, has pledged an undisclosed donation to the people of Iraq and has asked the group holding Wood to tell them how they would like the money to be spent. He denied it was a ransom payment. -- Reuters.

Baghdad, May 18 -- Gunmen shot dead an Iraqi interior ministry official as he left his home in Baghdad today, police said, and al Qaeda's wing in Iraq claimed responsibility for the assassination in an Internet statement. Police said the wife of Brigadier Ibrahim Khamas, who worked in the ministry's criminal intelligence department, was wounded in the attack. The group has said it will target anybody working with Iraq's U.S.-backed government. -- Reuters.

ISRAEL

Tulkarm, West Bank, May 16 -- Israeli troops shot dead a Palestinian who tried to stab a soldier at an army checkpoint near the West Bank town of Tulkarm today, military officials said. It was the latest incident that has strained a three-month-old ceasefire between Israel and the Palestinians. Military sources said the knife-wielding Palestinian tried to attack a soldier south of Tulkarm and troops opened fire when the man ignored warning shots and orders to stop. Israel turned over Tulkarm to

Palestinian security control in March but has continued manning roadblocks in some areas outside the town. -- Reuters.

Gaza, May 18 -- Israeli forces in the Gaza Strip shot dead a Hamas gunman near the border with Egypt today, drawing a warning from the Palestinian militant group that a three-month-old ceasefire could be at risk. Israeli military sources said troops had opened fire after gunmen shot automatic weapons and anti-tanks missiles at them. Hamas, the most powerful Islamic faction, said one of its militants was killed while on a night patrol in southern Gaza. Hamas issued a statement warning Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon that "the security you are enjoying these days will not last long if aggression continues against our people". The pre-dawn incident put further strain on a de facto ceasefire agreed by Hamas and other militant groups after the Palestinian Authority and Israel declared a truce in February. -- Reuters.

IVORY COAST

Yamoussoukro, May 14 -- Ivory Coast's rebel and army chiefs agreed today that fighters would start laying down their weapons from Jun 27 in a big boost for a revived peace process meant to end a civil war once and for all. "The operations of DD (disarmament and demobilisation) will run from Jun 27 to Aug 10, 2005," said a statement signed by both sides after talks in the capital Yamoussoukro and read out by national disarmament committee head Alain Richard Donwahi. Today's talks grew out of a peace deal signed last month in South Africa and designed to draw a line under a conflict which has split the country in two. Prime Minister Seydou Diarra told the rebel and army delegations at today's signing ceremony that this time there was no going back. The accord signed in South Africa in April has raised hopes of a breakthrough in a conflict that has ebbed and flowed. Both sides have already begun to withdraw their heavy weapons from front lines, policed by 10,000 French and U.N. troops. But arms have been pulled back before and previous disarmament deals have stalled without any weapons actually being handed over. The statement signed today said the next few weeks before the planned start date would be used to set up disarmament sites and identify the fighters to be disarmed. These include shadowy pro-government militiamen. The reintegration of former combatants into society would begin in July and last until 2008, it said. Donwahi said fighters would get 500,000 CFA francs (\$960) to disarm and demobilise -- a significant sum in the region, which analysts said could draw in idle fighters from neighbouring countries like Liberia, where the reward for handing over guns is much lower. Casting some doubt on the process was a confidential World Bank report leaked

to the media this week which criticised the head of the disarmament body, saying his management of the committee lacked transparency. The World Bank is to pay nearly half of the disarmament costs, estimated at 85 billion CFA francs (\$164 million). Previous disarmament attempts have foundered on mutual accusations of cheating and several peace deals have crumbled after sporadic bursts of fighting. -- Reuters.

KYRGYZSTAN

London, May 13 -- A press report, dated today, states: Kyrgyzstan's Interior Ministry has announced that, according to its preliminary estimates, looting in Bishkek on the night of Mar 24, caused nearly 1 billion soms (\$24 million) of damage, RFE/RL's Kyrgyz Service reported. Initial estimates had ranged as high as \$100 million. The Interior Ministry has opened 188 criminal cases in connection with the looting and filed criminal charges against 87 individuals. Twelve of them are currently in jail, while an unspecified number of others are under house arrest. At present, only 3,330,000 soms worth of merchandise has been returned to merchants whose businesses suffered during the chaos.

MYANMAR

Washington, May 17 - President Bush today renewed broad sanctions against military-ruled Myanmar because of its continued repression of opposition threatens U.S. interests. Bush formally notified Congress that he was extending the sanctions for one year because Myanmar had made little progress on human rights and democracy. "These actions and policies, including its policies of committing large scale repression of the democratic opposition in Burma, are hostile to U.S. interests and pose a continuing unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States," Bush said in a message to Congress. "For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency with respect to Burma and maintain in force the sanctions against Burma to respond to this threat," Bush said. The United States and Europe have shunned Myanmar and slapped sanctions on Yangon to induce the military government to release democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi. In its annual human rights report issued in February, the State Department said the former Burma's "extremely poor human rights record worsened" during 2004. -- Reuters.

NEPAL

London, May 15 -- A press report, dated today, states: Communist rebels have abducted more than 500 students from their classrooms in a series of bold kidnappings in western Nepal, an army spokesman said today. International aid agencies also announced a pullout from a poverty-ridden district in the area after two local staff members of a German

development agency were severely beaten by the rebels when they refused to hand over money. The students were rounded up from their classes and taken on Friday (May 13) from village schools in neighbouring Tahanu and Palpa districts, a remote mountainous area 300 miles west of Katmandu, a spokesman at the Royal Nepalese Army headquarters said. The spokesman, who spoke on condition of anonymity according to army policy, said authorities had little information on the abductions.

London, May 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: Dozens of Maoist rebels in Nepal have been killed in clashes with government troops in the eastern hill district of Sindhuli, officials say. Two soldiers are also said to have died and four others wounded. Military officials say more than 50 rebels may have died but this cannot be independently confirmed and there has been no word from the Maoists. In the past, the rebels have accused the government of exaggerating their losses while hiding own setbacks. The latest clash occurred at a remote village when government troops reportedly came across a large number of rebels. The rebels were said to be returning from the neighbouring Sirha district where they suffered heavy casualties following a major clash last week.

Kathmandu, May 17 -- Nepal's Maoist rebels have killed nine soldiers and policemen in the east of the country, an army officer said today, the biggest loss to security forces since the king lifted emergency rule. Details of the clash at Lekhgaon in Udayapur district, 400 km east of the capital yesterday, were unclear due to poor communication links with the remote area, the officer said. "We have nine fatalities on our side. The terrorists must have also suffered losses but we have no details," the officer told Reuters, adding that some soldiers were also wounded. -- Reuters.

Kathmandu, May 18 -- Three heavily armed Maoist rebels stormed a television station in western Nepal, overpowered the guards and bombed transmitters, a police officer said today. No one was injured in the overnight attack at the state-owned Nepal Television tower in Palpa, 300 km west of Kathmandu, but TV transmission to several districts was cut off. The building, transmitters and other equipment at the TV station located on top of a forested hill were damaged, the police officer told Reuters. -- Reuters.

NIGERIA

London, May 15 -- Police in northern Nigeria have arrested 43 people after two days of clashes between Muslim sects which left two people dead and many injured. Shia and Sunni Muslims in the town of Sokoto have been in dispute since the start of the year over access to the two central mosques. The predominantly Muslim town of Sokoto is home to the Sultan of Sokoto. He is the spiritual leader of all Nigerian Muslims, who account for

roughly half the country's population. The fighting began on Friday (May 13) as worshippers gathered at the mosque for midday prayers. According to eyewitnesses, a group of youths carrying sticks, stones and swords tried to prevent the Shias from entering. The situation quickly degenerated into violence and two people were killed. A Shia primary school was also set ablaze. The fighting continued on Saturday when youths set up barricades in central Sokoto and looted shops. The police say the town has returned to normal.

London, May 18 -- A press report, dated May 17, states: Hundreds of youths stormed a police station and set fire to cars in southeastern Nigeria today after a protester was fatally shot by a police rifle, officials said. The youths began protesting this morning over demands that a local oil refinery and petrochemical plant employ more people from the area, said police chief Samuel Adetuyi. They set fire to part of a police station in the Niger delta village of Ogale and burned an SUV in its courtyard. One protester was killed when he tried to grab a rifle from a police officer and the gun accidentally went off, he said. Police fired tear gas to disperse the other protesters, who were demonstrating outside the oil plants, Adetuyi said. A police official said around 400 protesters then carried the dead body to the police station before smashing and burning cars. The local police commander ordered his men not to open fire "because many lives would have been lost," said the official. Adetuyi said four people had been arrested. Discontent is high among people in the Niger delta over unemployment and continued poverty despite booming oil production in their area.

PHILIPPINES

London, May 14 -- A press report, dated today, states: Soldiers killed six members of the Al Qaeda-linked Abu Sayyaf Muslim extremist group in a clash today on the southern Philippine island of Jolo. "At least six Abu Sayyaf terrorists were killed by soldiers and we recovered the bodies and their weapons," said Brigadier General Alexander Aleo, head of an anti-terror task force on the island. Two Marines were also wounded in the clash, Brigadier General Aleo said. An undetermined number of Abu Sayyaf were also wounded in the battle, said Colonel Juancho Sabban, head of the Marine force on the island.

RUSSIA

Moscow, May 12 -- Russian troops killed up to 40 Chechen rebels in counter-terrorist operations in the Caucasus, an army spokesman said today. "It was a number of local special operations, mainly in mountainous regions," said army spokesman General Ilya Shabalkin who also said that the operations ran from May 5 to 10. -- Reuters.

London, May 16 -- A press report, dated May 15, states: Security forces

and police killed six suspected militants, including two female suicide bombers, who had holed up in an apartment in Cherkessk, in southern Russia, officials said today. Meanwhile, Russian forces in Chechnya killed four rebels, including a man believed to be the republic's former separatist vice president Vakha Arsanov. The four rebels were killed in a village outside the capital Grozny after Interior Ministry forces surrounded a house and demanded that fighters surrender, the ITAR-Tass news agency reported, citing Chechen deputy Interior Minister Sultan Satuyev. The report quoted him as saying that Arsanov's body was identified by local residents who knew him well. However, other news reports suggested the bodies were badly disfigured by fire that broke out in the house. A spokesman for the Interior Ministry, Ruslan Atzayev, told The Associated Press that the identity of those killed could be confirmed only after examination by experts.

London, May 17 -- A press report, dated today, states: Russian security services today killed a prominent Chechen rebel wanted for a series of planned chemical attacks, Russian news agencies reported, citing the top spokesman for Russian forces in Chechnya. Maj.-Gen. Ilya Shabalkin identified the dead rebel leader as Alash Daudov, a former police official who was also accused of complicity in the 2002 seizure of a Moscow theatre, attacks on police in Grozny and Nazran in 2004, and the seizure of more than 1,200 hostages at a school in the southern town of Beslan in September. Shabalkin said that Daudov had been the third-ranking rebel leader, following warlord Shamil Basayev and a Jordanian named Abu Mudjaid. The Federal Security Service earlier this month said that Daudov headed the so-called Amanat (Silence) jamaat, a group of adherents to the extremist Wahhabi branch of Islam. The federal officials said the group was implicated in planning attacks using poisons and toxic substances to poison water supplies and crowded places in the capitals of the North Caucasus region and several large regional centres elsewhere in Russia.

SOMALIA

Nairobi, May 12 -- The Transitional Federal Parliament (TFP) of Somalia will hold its next session in the Somali capital, Mogadishu, the speaker told IRIN today. "The parliament will meet in the capital on 17 May," Sharif Hassan Shaykh Aden, the TFP speaker, said. The move follows a controversial parliamentary session held by a group of MPs in the absence of the speaker yesterday in Nairobi. The session debated two contentious motions: the proposed deployment of peacekeeping troops from neighboring countries, and the temporary relocation of the government to the towns of Jowhar and Baidao, in south and south-central Somalia, respectively. Yesterday's motions were tabled by MPs who support the

deployment of troops from Somalia's immediate neighbours - Ethiopia, Kenya and Djibouti - as part of any peacekeeping force. Government spokesman Abdirahaman Dinari told IRIN today that the nearly 150 MPs present overwhelmingly voted in favour of the two motions. "The parliament has made a decision, and it is binding," he said. Aden, however, called the vote "null and void" under the interim constitution. "It was an illegally convened session," he said. "I am, as the speaker, the only one charged with setting the date for sessions of the parliament. It is therefore an illegal meeting and nothing passed by it is binding on parliament." The government had asked the speaker to set a date to debate the motions. "I have set a 17 of May," Aden said. "That date still stands." Dinari, however, disputed that the speaker was the only one who could set a date for parliamentary business. "The president has the power, within the law, to call an emergency session of parliament, and that is what he did. The speaker was approached, and he refused." -- Reuters.

Nairobi, May 16 -- Somalia's interim prime minister sacked his information minister, an aide said today, underlining a growing split threatening the fledgling transitional government. The administration, tasked with ending 14 years of chaos in Somalia, is facing an acrimonious division over where it should be based after relocating from neighbouring Kenya where it was formed at peace talks last year. "It's true that Mohamud Abdullahi Jama has been replaced as the information minister, I can confirm that," said Yusuf Ismail Baribari, a senior figure in the interim government, speaking on behalf of Prime Minister Ali Mohamed Gedi. Jama said he had not been informed of his demotion. Jama is close to warlords in Mogadishu who want the capital to be based there, against the wishes of Gedi and President Abdullahi Yusuf, who say the city is too dangerous for now. Under Somalia's interim constitution, Jama, who was sacked yesterday and replaced with Mohamed Ibrahim Hayr in the information portfolio, retains his post as deputy prime minister unless parliament votes him out. Gedi and Yusuf want to temporarily relocate the administration to the south-western town of Baidoa and to Jowhar, a town just north of Mogadishu, saying they will move to Mogadishu when security permits. Baidoa is held by a militia boss opposed to Yusuf and there have been reports that several militia chiefs allied to Yusuf are gathering armed forces in the vicinity, according to humanitarian sources in Nairobi. -- Reuters.

SPAIN

London, May 16 -- A press report, dated May 15, states: Four small bombs have exploded at industrial sites in Spain's Basque region,

injuring three people. Two policemen and a security guard were treated after inhaling toxic fumes at a chemical plant hit by one of the blasts, Spain's interior ministry said. Local officials blamed the armed Basque separatist group, ETA, for the blasts. The four devices went off in the space of about an hour starting at 0300 hrs (0100, UTC) in the towns of Beasain, Bergara, Elgoibar and Sorluze, police said. They said the blasts targeted two chemical plants, a paint factory and a metalworks facility. Spain's anti-terrorism officials said no warning had been given about the attacks. The Basque regional government said "all the data and the composition of the explosives point to ETA as being responsible", without giving further details.

SRI LANKA

London, May 18 -- A curfew was eased in northeastern Sri Lanka earlier today, but a strike continued for a second straight day, and officials said tension remained, while international donors met in the central town of Kandy. A total of nine explosions ripped through the town of Trincomalee yesterday, one of which caused casualties, police said. Trouble erupted over a Buddha statue erected by taxi drivers, police said, explaining that ethnic Tamils, who are also Hindus, strongly objected. A policeman said the volatile region was still tense although the curfew was eased at dawn. Shops and offices remain closed and public transport is at a standstill. The violence was not linked to protests over a two-day aid review meeting by bilateral donors and multilateral lending institutions, but underscored the underlying tensions in the country, officials said. Donors meeting in the central town of Kandy pushed the Sri Lankan government and the Tamil Tiger rebels to revive their peace talks which have been stalled since April 2003.

THAILAND

London, May 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: One soldier was killed and five others wounded in a bomb attack on their truck as they patrolled in Thailand's southern Narathiwat Province yesterday. According to police, the afternoon attack was similar to others that have targeted security forces in the area.

TURKEY

Diyarbakir, May 13 -- Two Turkish soldiers were killed and three injured today in a clash with Kurdish militants during an anti-rebel operation involving some 10,000 troops in south-east Turkey, military officials said. The firefight occurred a day after Europe's top human rights court ruled that the trial of the militants' jailed leader, Abdullah Ocalan, was unfair. Guerrillas from the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) ambushed the soldiers in Bingol province, inflicting the casualties in the first burst of gunfire, Turkish military officials said. There was no word of any rebel

casualties. The injured soldiers were taken to a nearby hospital. -- Reuters.

Diyarbakir, May 17 -- Two Kurdish rebels were killed in a failed attack on a governor's house in south-east Turkey and four soldiers died in a landmine blast amid rising tension in the region, officials said today. Police in Siirt province said two suicide bombers were killed late yesterday after officers foiled their attack on the governor's house. One bomber had killed himself, while another died trying to escape police. A police officer was wounded. But the PKK said the men were not suicide bombers and that one had died after detonating his hand grenade and the other was killed in a shoot-out with police, according to Europe-based Mezopotamya news agency, which is close to the rebels. Separately, four soldiers were killed in a mountainous area of Siirt province today when their vehicle hit a landmine in the road. Officials said rebels had planted the mines. -- Reuters.

UZBEKISTAN

London, May 13 -- A press report, dated today, states: Thousands of people, many of them armed, took to the streets of an eastern Uzbek city today, attacking a prison to protest the detention of prominent businessmen on charges of Islamic extremism, witnesses said. Uzbek President Islam Karimov and other leaders immediately rushed to the city of Andijan amid reports that police in two districts were surrounded by armed protesters. The Russian news agency ITAR-Tass said nine people were killed in clashes and 34 wounded. Tensions were also running high in the capital Tashkent, where a suicide bomber was shot and killed outside the Israeli Embassy this morning. The 23 defendants are charged with anti-constitutional activity and forming a criminal and extremist organization, but rights activists say the case is part of a broad government crackdown on religious dissent. Valijon Atakhonjonov, the brother of one of the accused, said security forces fired shots in the air as thousands of people massed in front of the local administration building. "The people have risen," he said by telephone. Armed demonstrators went to a prison to free inmates overnight, Atakhonjonov said, but he could not confirm reports that the crowd had attacked an army garrison as well. A government spokesman said administrative buildings remained under government control. On Wednesday (May 11) several thousand people turned out to protest the allegations against the men, who have been on trial since early February on charges of being Islamic extremists. It was one of the largest anti-government demonstrations in the ex-Soviet republic.

Andizhan, May 14 -- A bloody military operation to disperse rebels and thousands of protesters who had seized a state building in the eastern Uzbek town of Andizhan had left

"many, many dead", a doctor said today. Troops opened fire yesterday on the crowd of about 3,000 that had gathered outside a regional government building in the centre of Andizhan, a town in the Ferghana Valley, seen as a hotbed of Muslim extremists by the authoritarian government. The protesters, some of them calling for long-serving President Islam Karimov to stand down, had gathered after the rebels freed inmates from a local prison, including 23 businessman on trial on religious extremism charges. "We have 96 wounded and many, many dead," a doctor in Andizhan said, speaking through the hospital gates. By early today it was not clear if the operation to re-take the building was successful. A government source said the building had been taken back, but the area was sealed off and sporadic machine gun and assault rifle fire could be heard. There were no official casualty figures. Earlier yesterday official figures said nine people were killed when the rebels raided a police station and military barracks, before storming the prison. They took about 10 police as hostages. The authorities, in a statement carried on state television, said the rebels had refused to compromise. Peaceful protests broke out in Andizhan earlier this week to demand the release of the 23 Muslim businessmen. They were charged with belonging to a little-known sect, Akromiya, which supporters dismissed as an invention of the security services. In Washington, White House spokesman Scott McClellan urged the Uzbek government and demonstrators to show restraint. The European Union blamed Karimov's government policies for provoking the violent protest. -- Reuters.

Andizhan, May 15 -- Uzbeks today prepared to bury more of the people killed when troops fired on protesters and rebels in the eastern town of Andizhan. Up to 500 people may have died in Friday's (May 13) violence in the tightly-controlled Central Asian country, a human rights campaigner said, a casualty toll which would make it the bloodiest incident in the state's post-Soviet history. Russian state-run television showed men dragging dead bodies away while women wept. Some of the town's residents said many more bodies were being stored in the hospital and clinic, waiting to be removed. The autocratic president, Islam Karimov, in power since 1989 in the mainly-Muslim country, said yesterday that 10 police and troops had been killed and a higher number of rebels. He gave no figure for the number of dead civilians. Karimov accused the outlawed Islamist group Hizb ut-Tahrir of being behind the violence in his country, an ally in the US war on terrorism. Hizb ut-Tahrir denied starting the trouble. Andizhan's streets were heavily patrolled by armed police and soldiers, backed up by plain-clothes security officers. Armoured vehicles moved slowly around the town and roads were blocked by trucks and buses.

Fears of further violence in the area have prompted some Uzbeks to try to flee the country. Around 500 refugees broke through the border into Kyrgyzstan, closed on Friday because of the unrest, and set up a camp. Thousands of other locals massed at the border, many simply wanting to visit relatives on the Uzbek side as usual. Uzbekistan is one of the world's leading cotton exporters, produces gold and has some oil and gas reserves, but its largely state-controlled economy has failed to attract investment. Rights groups say there are at least 6,000 religious and political prisoners in Uzbekistan, where only state-sponsored Islam is allowed, and that torture is widely used. -- Reuters.

London, May 16 -- A press report, dated May 15, states: Eight Uzbek soldiers and three Islamic militants died in a clash near the Kyrgyz border today and more than 500 Uzbeks fled to safety across the frontier, witnesses said, in spreading violence that further threatened stability in the Central Asian country, a key American ally and host to an important US military outpost. The explosions of pent-up anger have now hit at least two Uzbek border towns in the volatile Fergana Valley in eastern Uzbekistan. As many as 500 people were reportedly killed on Friday (May 13) in Andizhan, Uzbekistan's fourth-largest city about 30 miles west of the Kyrgyz frontier, when government troops were called in to put down an uprising by alleged Islamic militants and citizens protesting dire economic conditions. About 500 bodies were laid out in rows at an Andizhan school, according to a respected doctor in the town, seeming to corroborate other witness accounts of hundreds killed in the fighting. Relatives were arriving at Andizhan's School No. 15 to identify the dead, said the doctor. The doctor also said about 2,000 people were wounded. Security was tight in Andizhan as residents cleaned blood off streets guarded by troops and armoured vehicles. One man said he saw the bodies of three people apparently killed by a soldier today, two days after government forces put down the uprising. "The city was burying its victims throughout the entire day, and the people are very angry at the president for his order to open fire at protesters," said the man. The Uzbek Foreign Ministry today denied that government forces had opened fire on demonstrators. President Islam Karimov has said 10 government soldiers and "many more" protesters died in the conflict and at least 100 people were wounded. Since then the government has imposed a near-total news blackout on the region. Karimov has blamed Islamic extremists for the uprising, in which protesters stormed a prison, freed inmates and then seized local government offices before government troops put the protest down with force. The violence was Uzbekistan's worst since gaining independence in 1991. Reports of 11 dead today in fighting in

the border village of Tefektosh could not be confirmed, but blood stains were visible on the streets. One villager said eight government soldiers were killed, another said three civilians also died. Other accounts said more than 500 people, including militants, crossed into Kyrgyzstan after the clash. In Korasuv, another border community, the village was strewn with the charred remains of police cars today and the streets littered with documents from torched government offices. An estimated 5,000 people went on a rampage a day earlier and forced authorities to restore a bridge across a river that marks the border with Kyrgyzstan. The bridge had been closed more than two years ago by the government, and locals saw the closing of it and other river crossings as an attempt to deny them access to the better-developed economy and more open politics of Kyrgyzstan. No government forces were visible around Korasuv today, apparently reflecting the authorities' reluctance to engage in another conflict.

London, May 19 -- A press report, dated today, states: Uzbek troops are reported to have retaken the border town of Korasuv, where locals threw out their leaders last week in a popular protest. The uprising's leader, Bakhtiyor Rakhimov, who said he intended to build an Islamic state, has been arrested. The uprising in Korasuv followed a bloody crackdown on protesters in the nearby town of Andijan. Uzbek troops killed hundreds of people in Andijan, according to witnesses, causing an international outcry.



AFGHANISTAN

See under "Political & Civil Unrest."

BRAZIL

London, May 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: The families of Brazilian footballers are increasingly being targeted by the country's ruthless kidnap gangs. In November 2004, the mother of star Santos striker Robinho was abducted from a family party. She was freed five weeks later after Robinho reportedly paid a ransom of 200,000 reals (more than £60,000) - in a country where the minimum wage is 300 reals a month. Since then footballers' mothers have been kidnapped at a rate of nearly one a month. Joel Antonio dos Santos, a police investigator with Sao Paulo's anti-kidnapping unit, said: "The kidnapers pursue those with a lot of money, it doesn't really matter who they are. They began targeting players mothers because they realised that it was a lucrative deal. Robinho paid the ransom, and now it has become trendy to go after the players money." The

spate of kidnappings has prompted footballers to look for new ways to protect their families, hiring bodyguards and buying armoured cars to travel in. Since Robinho's mother was abducted, four other kidnappings have occurred in Sao Paulo state alone. The mother of FC Porto striker Luis Fabiano was released last week after more than 60 days in captivity. The mother of Corinthians defender Marinho, who was abducted on May 3, in Santos, is still being held captive. In March, police freed the mother of defender Rogerio, who plays for Portugal's Sporting Lisbon, three days after she was abducted from her home in Campinas, near Sao Paulo. A month earlier, the mother of Sao Paulo striker Grafite was kidnapped near Sao Paulo, but was freed by police after a day.

NEPAL

See under "Political & Civil Unrest".



ARGENTINA

London, May 17 -- A press report, dated May 16, states: Employees of the National Institute for the Investigation and Development of Fishing (INIDEP) have been on strike for nearly a month. The workers, members of the Government Employees Association (ATE), are demanding a wage increase and that 50 temporary employees be made permanent. An assembly of workers met on May 13 and decided to continue the strike for another week because of the failure of negotiations with government fishing authorities. The country's fishing industry depends on INIDEP reports to formulate its fishing strategy for the season. The strike prevented the completion of reports on the Whiting catch in South Atlantic waters, which would have determined how many fish could be caught this season. In addition, fishing was suspended in waters that Argentina shares with Uruguay. ATE leaders indicated the strike would expand to include government agricultural inspectors, who have held intermittent strikes. A united struggle by both groups of workers would paralyze beef exports and the transportation of agricultural produce in addition to the fishing industry.

AUSTRALIA

London, May 13 -- A press report, dated today, states: About 600 workers at Alcoa's Pinjarra refinery, in south-west Western Australia, are expected to return to work today, after resolving a dispute over safety concerns. The workers walked off the job on Wednesday (May 11) for the second time in a week. The Australian Manufacturing Workers Union says

some workers' faces were burnt by a caustic substance that overflowed from faulty equipment. Alcoa denies the claim and says only one worker received medical treatment for an eye irritation. The union's Mark Goleworthy says the workers will return to work when a safety inspection is conducted.

FINLAND

London, May 15 -- A press report, dated today, states: Finnish pulp and paper workers will begin a two day nationwide strike tomorrow, possibly followed by an industry lockout later in the week, union and company officials said today. The labour action, which would shut down one of Finland's key industries, follows another series of failed contract negotiations over the weekend. Labour and management negotiators are not scheduled to resume talks until Tuesday (May 17). The industry, which includes the pulp and paper mills of UPM Kymmene Corp (UPM) and Stora Enso Oyj , has threatened to respond with a two-week industry-wide lockout if the union goes forward with the strike. The rancorous talks over pay and seasonal working schedules already hit the industry with a week of warning strikes last month. The companies want to abandon a contract provision providing time off during Christmas and mid-summer holidays. The union has refused to accept the change. The Finnish paper workers union said today that little headway was made in this weekend's mediated talks. "There was not even a proposal," said union spokesperson Paivi Turtiainen. She said the machinery in some pulp mills would already begin shutting down tonight. Each day of work stoppage costs UPM up to EUR5 million and Stora Enso around EUR3 million a day.

LONDON, MAY 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: Workers in the Finnish pulp and paper industry launched a two-day nationwide strike in a bid to break a deadlock in negotiations with employers over a new collective wage agreement for the sector, union sources said. The stoppages, in force since late yesterday, are primarily affecting Stora Enso and UPM-Kymmene. The Finnish paper sector has estimated the loss from strike action at 40 million euros per day. Employers and unions in the paper industry have been negotiating since December over a new agreement for the industry's 24,000 workers and technicians. But despite nearly 40 meetings between the two sides they have yet to reach a deal. Disagreements have centred on pay for bank holidays and on bonuses.

London, May 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: A four-month-old conflict in the paper sector could have a negative impact on Finland's economic growth, Finance Minister Antti Kalliomäki warned. 'The conflict in the paper and forestry industry is such that it could affect growth or cause concern, which could

have negative consequences on growth perspectives,' he said late yesterday on the eve of a lockout of staff by sector employers. He said a wage agreement for 2005-2007 signed by the Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions and the Confederation of Finnish Industries in December stimulates employment and growth. He denied the accord dampens productivity, as argued by the Finnish Forestry Industries Federation, which has refused to sign up. The paper and forestry industry, which accounts for six percent of Finnish growth and 25 percent of exports, has been hard hit for more than four months by production stoppages prompted by the conflict. Stora Enso and UPM-Kymmene, two of the world's biggest paper groups, have already warned that their second-quarter earnings will be affected by the strikes and overtime blockades being undertaken by the 24,000 members of the paper workers' union. Following talks between the two sides which made no progress on yesterday, forestry industry employers confirmed they would go ahead from today with a planned lock-out of staff. Talks have stumbled over holidays and bonuses, with companies arguing that days worked at Christmas and over the summer are too costly and hinder competitiveness.

FRANCE

London, May 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: Millions of French workers are to stay at home today in protest against the scrapping of a traditional holiday. France has previously observed the Pentecost holiday along with several other European countries, but the government has now cancelled it. Disgruntled trade unions are holding strikes across the country, just as political parties start their campaigns over the European constitution. The unions are expected to protest against the constitution as well. The idea in France was to make the former bank holiday a day of solidarity with the old and the infirm, following the deaths of 15,000 mainly elderly people in a heatwave two years ago. A penitent nation promised that would never happen again, so the government decided that the income generated by this extra day's work - public sector staff are expected to forego their pay - would be put into a special fund for the care of the elderly. But it has not quite worked out that way. While many will be taking this as a day off, others are expected to join strikes across the country to protest against the loss of a day's holiday and the government's plans to loosen the rules on France's 35-hour working week. The rallies will also offer trade unionists a chance to demonstrate against the European constitution.

Paris, May 17 -- Strikes disrupted public transport and emptied classrooms across France yesterday as workers defied a government decision to scrap a public holiday to generate

funds for healthcare for the elderly. Members of the government brushed off the protests over what unions called "a day of free work", but the action dealt a blow to President Jacques Chirac and his government two weeks before a vote on the European Union constitution. In another setback for France's conservative leaders, two opinion polls released yesterday showed 51 percent of voters who have decided how to vote on May 29 will reject the constitution. France's cash-strapped government hopes taxes yesterday's production will generate an extra 2 billion euros to be spent on healthcare for the aged. The Education Ministry said one in five teachers was on strike and the teachers' union said only 10 to 15 percent of pupils aged from 11 to 18 were at school. French unions said 27 regional transport networks had no service and services were disrupted in more than 70 others. But Transport Minister Gilles de Robien said there were no major disruptions on the SNCF rail network or Paris underground services, and called the situation "very good overall". The holiday was for the Christian Pentecost, or Whitsun, which fell on Sunday. Responses to its scrapping varied from sector to sector, and from region to region. Air traffic returned to normal in the afternoon after protests caused short delays in northern France and at Orly airport south of Paris, air traffic authorities said. About a third of postal workers were on strike and energy workers protested, unions said. Many shops remained closed. Opinion polls at the weekend suggested more than half of workers planned to stay at home. By dumping what was one of 11 public holidays, Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin hopes to avoid raising taxes on individuals. -- Reuters.

ITALY

London, May 13 -- A press report, dated today, states: Alitalia said it was cancelling 211 flights scheduled for today after unions representing air traffic controllers called a four-hour strike that day. Alitalia said yesterday that 97 domestic flights and 114 international flights scheduled for today were cancelled. Air traffic controllers will stop work from noon until 1600 hrs. The UGL minority union that called the strike represents about 10 percent of the 1,500 Italian controllers, a spokesman said. Two other unions have called for a strike on May 28.

London, May 17 -- A truck driver strike has blocked the delivery of about 100,000 cars from factory lots since industrial action started four weeks ago, the daily La Repubblica said without giving a source. The strike is affecting Fiat SpA and other car makers, it said. The broker Cheuvreux said that Fiat could be losing unit sales of about 4,500 cars per working day. If the strike does not end soon, its impact on the group's second quarter results could be 'significant,' it said.

Awards & Settlements



ALLEGED MISLEADING INFORMATION, UNITED STATES

London, May 17 -- A press report, dated May 16, states: A jury in West Palm Beach, Fla., ordered Morgan Stanley today to pay \$604.3 million in damages to the billionaire financier Ronald O. Perelman, who claimed in a lawsuit that the firm knowingly misled him in a 1998 deal. The jury's decision was the expected outcome of an unexpected twist in the trial in late March. Declaring that Morgan Stanley had deliberately withheld important files, Judge Elizabeth Maass ordered the jury to assume that the firm had worked with the Sunbeam Corporation, one of its clients, to defraud Mr. Perelman and other investors. As a result, the nine-member jury had only to consider whether Mr. Perelman, who is also chairman of Revlon, lost money by relying on the firm's information when he decided in 1998 to sell Sunbeam his controlling stake in the Coleman Company, a maker of camping equipment. Mr. Perelman received a sizable stake in Sunbeam in return. Shortly after the deal was completed, accounting irregularities became apparent at Sunbeam. Mr. Perelman claimed that Morgan Stanley knew about these irregularities but pushed the purchase anyway. The firm has argued that it was also duped, pointing out that it underwrote \$750 million in bonds that Sunbeam issued to help finance the transaction. Sunbeam filed for bankruptcy protection in February 2001, and Mr. Perelman's stake became close to worthless. Today's ruling is an embarrassment for Morgan Stanley, a Wall Street institution that has already suffered several setbacks this year. The company's management ranks have been in turmoil, and a group of former executives is waging a public campaign for the ouster of its chief executive, Philip Purcell. Now it is being ordered to pay Mr. Perelman far more than the \$360 million that it had set aside to cover any damages. Moreover, the jury has yet to consider whether Morgan Stanley should also pay punitive damages, which may reach \$1.8 billion under Florida law. Mr. Perelman, who once offered to settle the case for \$20 million, has been seeking \$2.7 billion over all. Morgan Stanley said in a statement that it would appeal on multiple grounds and that it was confident that the decision would be reversed. "The verdict, while disappointing, is not surprising, given the unprecedented and highly prejudicial rulings imposed by the trial judge," the company said. "Morgan Stanley was denied a fair trial." The company added: "Far from

being part of the Sunbeam fraud, Morgan Stanley was a victim of that fraud, losing \$300 million when Sunbeam collapsed, one of the many true facts that the jury was not allowed to hear." A spokeswoman for Mr. Perelman, Christine Taylor, said Mr. Perelman was "very pleased" by the jury's decision and appreciated the jury's "thoughtful attention to the facts in reaching what we believe is a just verdict." The decision sends a very clear message that those who aid a fraud will be held accountable," she added. Shares of Morgan Stanley rose 58 cents today to close at \$48.80 on the New York Stock Exchange.

BREACH OF INVESTMENT TREATY, UNITED STATES

London, May 18 -- A press report, dated May 17, states: CMS Energy Corp said today that an international arbitration tribunal had awarded it at least \$149 million in damages to be paid by Argentina, over regulatory changes in that country which devalued a CMS investment. Jackson-based CMS said the International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes, which operates under the auspices of the World Bank, found that Argentina had violated its obligations under a bilateral investment treaty between that country and the United States. Adjustments in the structure by which Argentina paid companies such as CMS to transport gas devalued CMS investment in an Argentine gas-transportation company by 95%. CMS subsidiary CMS Gas Transmission owns a 29.4% interest in Transportadora de Gas del Norte. CMS said the tribunal awarded compensation of \$133 million plus interest, bringing the current award to \$149 million. If Argentina pays CMS Energy the awarded amount plus an additional \$2.15 million by May 12, 2006, CMS must transfer its interest in the gas-transportation company to Argentina. Argentina can seek annulment of the award from a new tribunal.

CONTRACT DISPUTE, UNITED STATES

London, May 17 -- A press report, dated May 16, states: Bally Total Fitness Holding Corp disclosed today that an arbitration tribunal awarded damages in a contract dispute last Thursday (May 12), resulting in a net award to a financial institution of roughly \$14.3 million. The commercial operator of fitness centres said in a document filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission that the dispute related to a program of transferring membership receivables balances into a credit card program funded and managed by an independent financial institution. Bally said its prior management instituted the program in 1995. The current management terminated the program in 2003 in order to stem excessive losses the company believed were caused by the financial institution's management of the

program. The ensuing arbitration related to allocating program losses resulting from accounts transferred to the program prior to February, 2003. Bally said it believed the award was unreasonable and was exploring all of its options.

COPYRIGHT DISPUTE, UNITED STATES

London, May 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: Hello! magazine has won its challenge to a high court order that it should pay more than £1 million in damages for publishing paparazzi pictures of the wedding of Catherine Zeta Jones and Michael Douglas. The court of appeal today ruled that rival magazine OK! should pay back the £1,033,156 in damages it received after Hello! spoiled its exclusive by publishing snatched photographs of the wedding. Hello! told the appeal court last December that the pictures were published as a "spoiler" to lessen the impact of OK!'s exclusive £1 million contract with the Douglasses to cover the New York marriage ceremony. James Price QC, representing Hello!, told three judges that "spoilors" were a well-known tactic in the newspaper and magazine industry and that his clients had been victims in the past. "This was something previously not considered unlawful. We are in the position that if you are going to compete in this industry you have to publish spoilers. "But what happened to Hello! was that it was caught by a law which said 'stop it' retrospectively," said Mr Price. However, appeal court judges Lord Phillips, the Master of the Rolls, and Lords Justices Clark and Neuberger rejected the magazine's appeal against the damages due to the couple, who were awarded a total of £14,600. The original ruling against Hello! followed a six-week high court hearing in 2003 at which Zeta Jones told how she felt "devastated, shocked and appalled" when she realised unauthorised photographers had gatecrashed her wedding at the Plaza Hotel in November, 2000. She said she and her husband had signed the deal with OK! after turning down a higher offer from Hello!. Mr Justice Lindsay ruled that Hello! had breached the couple's rights of confidence but that they had no claim in law for invasion of privacy. Hello! appealed over its liability to the magazine and the Hollywood couple and the amount of damages to be paid to OK!. Lawyers involved in the case have estimated that the total costs could amount to £4 million.

INJURIES CAUSED IN MOTORCYCLE ACCIDENT, UNITED KINGDOM

London, May 17 -- A press report, dated May 16, states: A man who was left in a vegetative state after he was thrown from a motorcycle he was riding pillion is set to receive more than £8m damages. Danny Thacker, 26, from Hillingdon, Middlesex, suffered brain damage in the incident in October 2000. He was left tetraplegic with only limited use of his

left hand and problems with his intellect and memory. Frank Burton QC at London's High Court said he would receive a lump sum of £1.3m with annual payments of £236,424. He said Mr Thacker had now emerged from a vegetative state due to the efforts of his family. Mr Thacker cannot speak but now communicates what he wants and how he feels through his eye and head movements after gaining cognitive awareness in 2002. He is being cared for by his mother Kerry and other family members at their home, which has been specially adapted. Judgment was entered against motorcyclist Gary Steeples, from West Drayton, but the court agreed that the insurance body Motor Insurers Bureau would pay 85% of any damages assessed.

LIABILITY FOR CLEAN-UP OF INDUSTRIAL WASTE, UNITED STATES

London, May 17 -- A press report, dated May 16, states: The state of California can add a \$16 million victory in its quest to recover damages caused by the Stringfellow toxic dump, following a jury verdict today. Five insurance companies that refused to settle and fought the state through 12 years of legal wrangling and a six-week trial must now make good on their policies, the Superior Court panel decided. "It's been a long time coming," said Beth Jines, spokeswoman for the State Water Resources Control Board, which along with Cal EPA was suing the firms. "The jury found, when you buy insurance, the insurance companies have an obligation to pay." The five holdout insurance firms involved in today's verdict were CNA, Wausau, Yosemite, Horace Mann (ACE) and Stonebridge. Despite the victory, the state will attempt to recover more money from the insurance companies on appeal, state Attorney General spokesman Tom Dresslar said. "We hope on appeal to raise it to \$28 million," he said. The state has recovered about \$121 million from other insurers. In February, Lloyd's of London and 15 other companies settled for \$93 million. The money will go towards ongoing clean-up of the Stringfellow Acid Pits, which operated between 1956 and 1972 in a box canyon above the Jurupa Valley community of Glen Avon. Hundreds of firms, including aeronautics, metals and chemical companies and the US Air Force, dumped more than 34 million gallons of hazardous liquid waste at the 17-acre site through the years. The waste, which was deposited in evaporation ponds, came primarily from metal finishing, electroplating and pesticide production. Several times, heavy rains caused the ponds to overflow, sending waste into creeks and the community below. Contaminated groundwater also invaded area wells. Glen Avon has been receiving its water from a public utility since 1989. Clean-up of the Stringfellow dump, which is expected to take decades, has already cost the

state about \$300 million. "This has been a success for the state," San Francisco insurance attorney Paul Glad said of the verdict. The firms Glad represented, which included American Home and New Hampshire Insurance Co, opted out of the trial and settled with the state about three weeks ago. While Glad declined to disclose financial terms of the settlement, Jines said it amounted to about \$20 million. Although the state can claim victory, it was not successful in retrieving anywhere near the money it was originally pursuing, which was in excess of \$500 million, Glad said.

MEDICAL MALPRACTICE, UNITED STATES

London, May 14 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: A jury awarded \$2.3 million to the mother of a three-year-old boy whose toes were burned when he was a baby at Westchester Medical Center. The jury found the hospital liable for negligence and nursing malpractice after an eight-day trial in state Supreme Court in White Plains. The family's lawyer, William Cooper, says baby Elijah Dodson of Newburgh was taken to the hospital in Valhalla when he was two weeks old and suffering from respiratory problems. The injury was caused by a nurse treating the baby in the pediatric intensive care unit. Cooper said the baby had cool extremities and in order to warm the feet, she put hot water into a diaper and placed the diaper directly onto the foot. Cooper said the water was apparently too hot and four of the baby's toes suffered third-degree burns. He said the burn went down to the blood supply and the toes eventually developed gangrene, and all fell off within three months. Cooper says the child was left only with the big toe on his right foot. A hospital spokeswoman says the hospital would move to set aside the verdict or reduce it. Spokeswoman Kara Bennorth says the medical centre contended that the baby's injuries were due to a blood clot that formed and cut off circulation to the toes.

London, May 15 -- A press report, dated May 14, states: A Park County, Wyoming, jury awarded almost \$1.2 million to a Thermopolis man for a botched spinal surgery, one of the state's largest medical malpractice jury awards in years. Wyoming Medical Society president Dr. Robert Monger, of Cheyenne, criticized Tuesday's (May 10) verdict, saying it would increase malpractice insurance rates and exacerbate the state's doctor shortage. However, Todd Hambrick, the Casper attorney who represented Chad Ooten, blamed the case and the doctor shortage on the insurance industry. Ooten, 33, was awarded \$230,000 for medical expenses and lost wages and \$770,000 for pain and suffering and other non economic damages; his wife was given \$175,000 for loss of consortium. In 2000, Ooten underwent spinal surgery at Big Horn Basin Orthopedics in Cody, where Dr.

Stephen Emery removed the wrong cervical disc from Ooten's back. "Within a week, he had to go to Billings to have neurosurgeons perform the surgery at the correct level," Hambrick said. "Since then, unfortunately the wrong surgery never healed." Two additional operations were carried out. According to the Wyoming Trial Lawyers Association, no Wyoming malpractice case resulted in a jury award of \$1 million or more between 1989 and 2002. A jury in Cheyenne awarded \$999,999 in a case last year, but Tuesday's award was thought to be the highest in Wyoming in several years.

NON-PAYMENT, RUSSIA

London, May 16 -- A press report, dated May 13, states: The Moscow Arbitration Court has ordered Russian oil producer OAO Yukos to pay Rubles 62.4 billion in damages to OAO Yuganskneftegaz, the Prime-Tass news agency reported today. The case relates to oil that Yukos received from Yuganskneftegaz between July and December 2004, but did not pay for. Yuganskneftegaz used to be Yukos' main production unit before it was seized by the Federal Bailiff Service and sold off to cover tax arrears at the parent company. State-owned oil company OAO Rosneft is now the owner. Yuganskneftegaz is suing its former owner at Rosneft's instigation. Yukos denies any wrongdoing and says the charges against it are due to a deliberate misunderstanding of Russian accounting law.

PHYSICAL ABUSE, UNITED STATES

London, May 18 -- A press report, dated May 17, states: A jury has ordered Florida's child protection agency to pay \$26 million for botching an investigation that left an abused girl permanently disabled. The adoptive parents of six-year-old Marissa Amora sued for lifetime medical care. The girl attended the trial in her wheelchair. Marissa, born Moesha, was initially hospitalised as a toddler four years ago because she couldn't walk. Tests found a tumor on her spine as well as an unexplained broken collarbone. The Miami Children's Hospital staff also noticed the girl's mother spank and berate her. Hospital officials contacted the state, and an abuse investigation was launched while the girl was still in the hospital. She was beaten unconscious less than a month after her discharge. Her mother's boyfriend is suspected but went home to Haiti and has not been prosecuted. DCF blamed the Miami hospital for failing to recognise the girl's injuries as abuse. The jury determined the hospital was 20 percent responsible and her biological mother, Guerlande Pierre-Louis, was five percent to blame in a total \$35.1 million verdict, but they were not defendants in the trial. The state's 75 percent share totaled \$26.3 million. The financial award against DCF may be largely symbolic. State law limits judgments

against public agencies to \$200,000 unless lawmakers pass a special claims bill for a larger amount. Marc Brotman, the family's attorney, claimed hospital bills took priority over the girl's safety. She went to her mother's Lake Worth apartment even though a DCF investigator found no crib or anything else for the girl in the home. Cynthia Gutierrez, spokeswoman for Miami Children's Hospital, had no immediate comment on the verdict but issued a statement saying, "DCF was fully advised by our staff of child abuse experts regarding our concerns for Moesha's safety." The jury foreman said the decision had more to do with meeting Marissa's needs than punishment.

WRONGFUL DEATH, UNITED STATES

London, May 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: A woman whose daughter was murdered during a trip to India with her NRI fiance two years ago has been awarded \$4 million by an American court in a wrongful death lawsuit. Judge Isabel B Stark of a court in Hackensack, New Jersey, awarded the sum to Madeleine Swiderski, who had sued NRI businessman Pragnesh Desai claiming he was liable for the wrongful death of her 33-year-old daughter Leona. Mr. Desai, who maintains his innocence and is fighting extradition from India, along with Leona flew to India in February 2003 and was planning to marry her. Leona disappeared shortly after the plane landed in Mumbai and her body was found days later. Mr. Desai was later charged with hiring a childhood friend to kill Leona to collect \$1 million in insurance. Although the pair were acquitted in India, authorities there are appealing the acquittal.

Railway Accidents



AMAGASAKI, JAPAN

London, May 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: West Japan Railway Co President Takeshi Kakiuchi indicated yesterday he would resign to take responsibility for the deadly train wreck last month in Amagasaki, Hyogo Prefecture. Appearing before a Diet committee, Kakiuchi said he would announce his resignation at an appropriate time, adding he did not know at this point when that would be. He had earlier said he had no intention of resigning over the accident that claimed 107 lives because, he claimed, he had to instruct staff on how to work together to prevent accidents and ensure safety. "Corporate reform of JR West will take three, five or maybe 10 years, but I do not intend to stay that long," Kakiuchi said. Kakiuchi said he did not necessarily think the carrier's tight operating schedule was directly

connected to the April 25 accident. The Hyogo Prefectural Police suspect JR West's timetable contributed to the accident by placing a psychological burden on its train drivers. The crash investigation found that the driver was operating the ill-fated train at an excessive speed to make up for a 90-second delay caused by overrunning a stop at an earlier station. The tight schedule "may have been one of the background factors, but I cannot say if it was directly linked" to the crash, Kakiuchi said. Kakiuchi also reiterated that JR West may buy the nine-story apartment building the Fukuchiyama Line train crashed into and erect a memorial there to hold an annual ceremony in remembrance of the disaster. He said the company would offer its apologies to the apartment residents and explain its compensation plan for them in the near future. All the residents except for two have moved out of the complex. Kakiuchi again stated that JR West would change its management philosophy and place priority on safety. "Our safety efforts were insufficient," he said. "We will make the necessary capital investments for our facilities. Besides investing in the hardware, we would like to nurture a corporate culture that attaches importance to safety." About reopening the Fukuchiyama Line, transport minister Kazuo Kitagawa said, "I would like to consider the timing of the reopening after thoroughly checking JR West's safety enhancement plans to be submitted at the end of May."

CITICO CREEK AREA, TENNESSEE, UNITED STATES

London, May 14 -- A press report, dated May 13, states: Two rail cars completely left the tracks on a bridge crossing Citico Creek, with one of them coming to rest in the creek bed late this afternoon, said Battalion Chief Mike Knox. The derailment happened at around 1700 hrs on DeButts Yard property, and did not have any impact on city streets. Chief Knox said one rail car was normally used to carry benzene, but was reportedly empty; the other railcar was carrying what was described as "limestone slurry." Chief Knox said neither rail car appeared to be leaking, and there was no danger to the public. The derailment occurred on a "feeder line" and Norfolk Southern Railway officials said they should be able to work around the accident site until they can get a repair crew on the scene to fix the track and remove the damaged railcars. That operation could take a day or two. Since the rail cars are not leaking, Tim McDonald with Stormwater Management said the derailment would have little, if any, impact on Citico Creek, or the surrounding environment. The Chattanooga Fire Department responded to the scene and Norfolk Southern officials will investigate the cause of the derailment.

HOUSTON AREA, TEXAS, UNITED STATES

London, May 14 -- A press report, dated May 13, states: Crews worked for most of today to clean up a train that derailed while transporting a flammable liquid in north-east Houston, Local 2 reported. Officials said 11 cars went off the tracks at the Union Pacific Train Yards on Liberty Road near North Wayside Drive at 0120 hrs. Three of the cars fell into Hunting Bayou and another car fell on top of several vehicles parked in the rail yard's parking lot. One power line was knocked down during the derailment. The tanks carried chemicals used for grilling and to make tyres, officials said. No leaks or injuries were reported. About 30 employees at the rail yard were evacuated from their offices while authorities removed the cars from the bayou. Officials were concerned that the cars only partly filled with the gas could have caused a leak or explosion, but they were safely removed. "The vessels only partly filled have a little more pressure, which can build up in the vessel itself. An empty-tank car is a little more dangerous for the firefighters than a full-tank car because of the vapor space," HFD Capt. Gilbert Bennett told Local 2. The clean-up took more than 14 hours. More heavy equipment had to be brought in to move the train cars when a crane got stuck in the mud. Accident investigators said engineers were sorting the trains, getting them ready to depart for their next destination, when the accident happened. The exact cause of the derailment remained under investigation. The Houston Fire Department shut down a half-mile section of Liberty Road between North Wayside Drive and Ranger Street. Rail traffic had resumed normal service by 0700 hrs.

KODDA DISTRICT, BANGLADESH

London, May 16 -- A press report, dated May 15, states: Two trains collided at Kodda in the district this morning, injuring at least five people and disrupting rail communications on Dhaka-Chittagong and Dhaka-Sylhet routes for four hours. Locals said a Dhaka-bound container train rammed "Turna Nishitha," a Chittagong-bound inter-city train from Dhaka, at Kodda on the Akhaura-Bhatshala section of the railway's eastern route at about 0630 hrs. "One of the bogies Turna Nishitha derailed following the head-on collision, leaving five of its passengers injured," said an eyewitness account of the train accident. Train movement on the two busy inter-city ways resumed after a relief train from Akhaura salvaged the derailed bogie at about 1030 hrs. Agitated passengers of the Turna Nishitha ransacked the train's cabins, as they were also exasperated by its mechanical breakdown earlier on its way. Before the derailment, the train halted near Bhairab bazar for three hours as its engine went out of order. The train service resumed after replacement of the engine.

LALMAI, BANGLADESH

Karachi, May 13 -- Bangladesh Railway said after a freight train derailed at Lalmai Station in southern Bangladesh, that train services on the Dhaka-Chittagong route remained suspended for ten hours, May 11. According to railway sources, the engine and two bogies of the Chittagong-bound train from Comilla derailed at 2200 hrs due to faulty rail tracks. After derailment, all trains on the route came to a halt. Later, railway authority dispatched a salvage train from Akhaura which took about two hours to clear the line. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA, UNITED STATES

London, May 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: Four freight cars derailed on a CSX freight train in Orange County early yesterday. Two compact cars were damaged as the rail cars tumbled. The Florida Highway Patrol says there were no injuries to the train's engineer or motorists. The cause of the derailment is under investigation.

PEKIN AREA, INDIANA, UNITED STATES

London, May 13 -- A press report, dated May 12, states: Those evacuated from their homes after a train derailment in southern Indiana were allowed back in late today. The derailment happened at about 0730 hrs, today, when at least 10 CSX cars came off the track in Washington County, just north of Pekin, near state Road 60, which is expected to be closed from Salem to Borden until tomorrow morning. As of 1700 hrs, it was reported that the process of righting 10 or 11 train cars had not commenced, and was expected to take at least 12 hours. Several emergency crews worked the scene, and officials said a hazardous chemical was the reason for the evacuation. The chemical, phosphorous pentasulfide, is used to make lubricants and can be fatal if inhaled. It can smell like rotten eggs when it leaks, but no such smell was ever reported today. Officials are speculating that a bent rail caused the train to come off the track. No injuries were reported.

PORT ARTHUR, TEXAS, UNITED STATES

London, May 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: A train has derailed in Port Arthur and police are shutting down 60th Street for most of today. The accident happened shortly after sunrise near Twin City Highway and 60th Street in Port Arthur. Police have confirmed the cars involved are not carrying any hazardous materials and no evacuations have been ordered. No injuries have been reported. There is no word as yet on what caused the derailment or how many cars are involved.

London, May 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: The Port Arthur Police Department estimates it will take 36 hours to clean up a train

derailment that occurred this morning. The accident happened shortly after sunrise near Twin City Highway and 60th Street in Port Arthur. Police have confirmed the 12 railcars involved are not carrying any hazardous materials and no evacuations have been ordered. No injuries have been reported. Maps of the city of Port Arthur show the tracks belong to Kansas City Southern. The Port Arthur Police Department says traffic on 60th Street from Twin City Highway to 9th Avenue will be closed to traffic for about three days while crews work to clean up the Soda ash the cars were carrying.

PRITCHETT AREA, TEXAS, UNITED STATES

London, May 15 -- A press report, dated May 14, states: Less than 24 hours after re-opening repaired tracks in Upshur county, a second train derailed in the exact same spot this morning at Pritchett, on the tracks parallel to Highway 155. Early this morning, several Union Pacific train cars derailed, dumping a load of brand new automobiles into the ravine on a bridge overpass. Dozens of the cars were crushed. "Right now theres a tanker sitting over there on the other side of the bridge that is in the creek and we don't know whats in it" said local resident Christie Files. Locals had tried to get back to normal after a derailment at the same location on Wednesday morning (May 11) where 21 cars crashed off the tracks. "We've been fortunate that there were no chemicals on these cars, no chemical spills" said Mike Files. Residents say sloppy work by railroad repair crews, the first time, made this second derailment a sure thing. "I think it boils down to a lack of maintenance, routine maintenance would take care of this, routine maintenance probably would have kept this from happening" Mike Files said. At several spots, railroad spikes were only half driven in. The second incident in three days, has those who live near the tracks worried about whats next. There was no word from Union Pacific on when the line will be reopened.

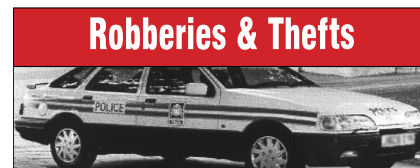
PUEBLO, COLORADO, UNITED STATES

London, May 13 -- A press report, dated today, states: A train derailment has shut down a prominent intersection in Pueblo. A train carrying grain derailed just after midnight. The train was headed south when it derailed at 29th and Lowell. More than ten boxcars tipped over and were damaged, but no one was injured in the incident. The intersection will be closed for the three days, while authorities clean up the site. The cause of the derailment is still unknown.

STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN

London, May 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: Ten people have been taken to hospital after a train on Stockholm's underground metro caught fire. The fire started at 0800

hrs, today, as the train pulled in to Rinkeby station, in the capital's north-west suburbs. Police say that arson is a possible cause of the blaze. The fire started while the train was moving. Witnesses say they heard two loud bangs as the train travelled between Duvbo and Rissne stations. By the time the train arrived at Rinkeby station a powerful fire had started in one of the carriages, producing lots of white smoke. When the fire brigade arrived on the scene, the square outside Rinkeby station was clouded in smoke, and the area was sealed off by police. Thick smoke prevented three people from exiting the station, and they escaped the blaze by walking through the tunnel to Rissne station. Other passengers were treated by ambulance crews outside Rinkeby station. Police say that they have checked the station and tunnels and are confident that all passengers and staff managed to escape. Carl-Johan Svensson, leading the emergency services operations at the scene, said the fire was difficult to put out, and the first attempt to extinguish it failed. At 0940 hrs, the fire brigade reported that the fire had been put out. The cause of the fire is currently unclear, although a police spokesman said that the fact that passengers reported hearing two bangs could point to arson. Our technicians are going to investigate whether it was sabotage, or whether the fire could have been caused by a technical fault, a police spokesman Towe Hogg said. The train was travelling away from the city centre when the fire broke out. Had it been going in the other direction, it is possible that many more people would have been affected. Stockholm Transport (SL) says that buses will replace trains on the affected stretch of track for the rest of the day, and that Rinkeby station will be closed until further notice.



JEWELLERY FROM SHOP, IKSAN, SOUTH KOREA

London, May 14 -- A press report, dated today, states: More than won 10 billion (£5.3 million) in jewels were stolen earlier this week from a 29-store jewellery sales centre in Iksan, North Jeolla province. Store managers said they suspected two men who called themselves security company employees and showed up to check alarm systems. Police are focusing on the two after discovering that 15 alarm sensors covered by bathroom tissue went off after the paper was removed. Twenty-four stores lost a combined 50,000 pieces of jewellery, some of them worth nearly won 200 million each. The vendors and the security workers were away on Tuesday (May 10), a regular holiday

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for the jewellery centre. At the time of the incident, only one security guard was present. The two-floor jewellery centre, which was established in 1989, does not have insurance cover for the stolen gems.

WATCHES FROM JEWELLERY SHOP, DUSSELDORF, GERMANY

Berlin, May 12 -- At least five men armed with sub-machine-guns got away with watches at a marketable value of over Euro two million in a raid on a jeweller's shop on the morning of Apr 23. While fleeing in the crowded city centre of Dusseldorf the offenders shot ruthlessly at passers-by and the police. The insurance company and the shop-owner have together offered a reward of Euro 325,000 for information leading to the robbers and their haul. The men drove up in front of the jeweller's shop, Rene Kern, on the busy Koenigsallee in a stolen car. Two of the masked men wearing bullet-proof jackets forced the guard posted outside into the shop and fired several shots into the ceiling. One of the thieves threatened the six staff and four customers at gun-point, while the other began to smash the glass show-cases with a sledge-hammer and to plunder the watches on display. A 66-year-old passer-by noticed the hammer with which the thieves were holding the shop door open. He grasped the tool and entered the shop. One of the thieves thereupon shot at him twice directly, but the man hurled himself to the ground and remained uninjured. However, a saleswoman sustained slight injuries to her left ankle as a result of a ricochet bullet. After about five to eight minutes the criminals left the shop with their loot in sacks and shot at two police cars that had just arrived before racing away in their car. While escaping, they shot repeatedly at the police car pursuing them. In view of the obvious brutality of the thieves and the extensive crowds in the city centre the police refrained from shooting back. The risk of injury to innocent bystanders would have been too high. In the city centre the robbers set fire to their first escape car with a petrol incendiary device and fled towards the autobahn in another car, continuing to fire at the police. The police finally had to break off their pursuit. A police helicopter, called in to assist, was unable to locate the escape car. The criminals were last seen in their Audi with an Aachen number plate racing along the hard shoulder of autobahn A 61 at a speed of about 200 kilometres per hour, roughly five kilometres away from the Dutch border. The search is still in full swing. Photos of the robbers taken by a surveillance camera in the jeweller's shop were later shown on the German TV programme "AktENZEICHEN XY ... ungel'st" (equivalent to "Crime Watch UK"). To intensify the search the same photos will be shown on the Dutch TV programme "Opsporing verzocht" on 9 May, since it is suspected that the robbers may have escaped to the Netherlands. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Computer Systems



COMMWARRIOR VIRUS

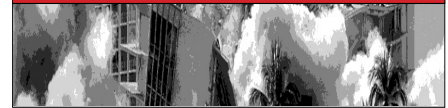
London, May 18 -- A press report, dated May 17, states: The cell phone virus Commwarrior recently surfaced in Italy, in a sign that the destructiveness of the Symbian OS virus is on the increase. As feared, the virus is showing its propensity for spreading. Italy is the third nation in only three weeks to suffer Commwarrior attacks, according to security experts F-Secure. The other nations are India and Oman. Originating in Ireland in January, the virus forces cell phones to send to random contacts versions of its malware that are hidden inside premium messages based on multimedia messaging (MMS) technology. The virus can also spread through Bluetooth connections. It infects only those phones based on the Symbian operating system -- devices known as "smart phones" for their ability to replicate features normally found in personal computers. While the number of infected phones is below 50, Commwarrior alarms security experts because it is the first virus spread via MMS, which can instantly reach most cell phones and PCs connected to the Internet. Commwarrior's strength also hinges, in part, on users' relative naivete about cell phone viruses. To fall victim to Commwarrior, a user has to open the e-mail and download the attached malware. On a PC, the same e-mail would raise a number of red flags that users would be unlikely to miss. To fool recipients, Commwarrior virus writers use more than 20 legitimate-looking types of messages, including one purportedly containing a Symbian software update. "We know people are curious, and there are always some people who will install Commwarrior, especially since via MMS they seem to receive the file from someone they know," F-Secure warned on May 13.

SOBER WORM

London, May 17 -- A press report, dated May 16, states: E-mail users perplexed by the barrage of German-language spam waiting in their inboxes this morning can point the finger of blame at the latest version of the Sober mass mailing worm which began rapidly spreading over the weekend (May 14-15). Sober.q uses both German and English-language messages to direct recipients to Web sites with right-wing German nationalistic content, according to an advisory from e-mail security company MX Logic. One of the URLs points to the Web site of the right-wing German NPD party, it says. The security firm says that it had seen over 125,000 instances of Sober.q overnight Saturday and into Sunday, and labeled it as a high severity threat.

The variant is downloaded by computers already infected by the Sober.p worm, which began circulating earlier this month, MX Logic says. The virus writers appear to have remote control over the Sober.p infected machines, giving them a network from which to launch future spam and denial of service attacks, it adds. The latest Sober variant is one of a relatively new type of "propaganda spam," meant to spread political messages rather than sell a product or service, MX Logic says. Circulation of the worm coincides with ceremonies marking the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe and examples of subject lines it sends include "Dresden 1945" and "Du wirst zum Sklaven gemacht!!!" ("You are made slaves!!!"), according to MX Logic. "We are certainly seeing more propaganda spam," says Graham Cluley, senior technology consultant with Sophos. Security researchers began detecting religious spam selling a particular view of life last year, Cluley says. Although Sophos is seeing a lot of German-language spam sent by the new Sober variant, the worm itself doesn't appear to be spreading anymore, Cluley says. E-mail users are advised to update their spam filters to guard against the new Sober spam.

Miscellaneous



AEGEAN SUN (Greece)

London, May 13 -- A press report, dated May 12, states: A fine of Euros 5.2 million was imposed on the owners of ro/ro Aegean Sun, which approached the port of Famagusta in the occupied part of Cyprus illegally. Minister of Merchant Marine Manolis Kefalogiannis ordered the vessel's master to return immediately to the closest Greek port and as a result the vessel sailed into the port of Piraeus empty of cargo. Aegean Sun had approached the port of Famagusta illegally in spite of the fact that Greek ships are not allowed into the occupied ports of Cyprus.

COLLAPSE OF RAMP, CALAIS, FRANCE

London, May 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: The Calais Chamber of Commerce expects a new berth, to replace the one out of action since Feb 8, to be open within the next fortnight and thereby have services at the port back to normal.

OUTBREAK OF "BIRD FLU"

London, May 13 -- A press report, dated today, states: Initial tests showed a man in northern Vietnam was contaminated by the bird flu virus, the first human case in more than three weeks, doctors said today. "Initial tests showed that the 55-year-old man from Vinh Phuc province was positive to the H5N1 virus," said doctors from

Institute of Tropical Diseases in Hanoi. The case came one day after government officials said the country had reported no poultry or human bird flu cases for at least 21 days. Vietnam suffered 36 of the 52 known human deaths from bird flu since late 2003.

Hanoi, May 16 -- A 52-year-old Vietnamese man has been infected with the H5N1 bird flu virus after eating meat from a chicken which died of the disease, the country's first human case in a month, a health official said today. The man from the northern province of Vinh Phuc was hospitalised with a fever last Thursday (May 12) after eating the chicken with his family, a provincial medical official said. "We have taken blood and saliva samples of four family members for bird flu tests and those of the man were confirmed positive," he said. Three family members are under surveillance and the area surrounding their home in Vinh Phuc, 63 km north-east of Hanoi, was disinfected, the official said. Vietnam's last human H5N1 case was in early April, and no new outbreaks among poultry have been reported for nearly a month. The virus has killed 52 people in Asia since 2003, 36 in Vietnam, 12 in Thailand and four in Cambodia. Vietnamese doctors treating a 20-year-old Cambodian woman said today her condition was worsening since she was transferred to a Vietnamese hospital from Cambodia's Kampot province last Wednesday. She has been on a respirator, they said. A researcher at the Ho Chi Minh City-based Pasteur Institute said preliminary tests on the Cambodian woman showed she was not infected by the virus, but more tests were being conducted. The woman is from the same area where four Cambodians died earlier this year from bird flu. Health experts fear the virus could mutate into a form which can pass easily among humans and trigger a global pandemic that could kill millions. -- Reuters.

London, May 17 -- A press report, dated today, states: Two men from Vietnam's northern region have fallen victim to the bird flu virus strain H5N1, local newspaper Vietnam News quoted a doctor at the Institute of Tropical Diseases as saying today. A 52-year-old man from Vinh Phuc province and a 58-year-old man from Thanh Hoa province were admitted to the Hanoi-based institute last Thursday and Friday (May 12-13), respectively, with typical symptoms of bird flu infection, said doctor Nguyen Hoang Ha. The condition of the two men was stable, he noted. On May 11, Vietnam's Preventive Medicine Department said the country had detected 49 infection cases since December, 2004, raising the total to 76 since bird flu first hit it in December, 2003. Of those, 37 have been fatal.

OUTBREAK OF BOVINE SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHY, WORLDWIDE

London, May 13 -- A press report, dated today, states: A 5-year-old

Holstein cow in Sunagawa, Hokkaido, was diagnosed as the 18th case of mad cow disease in Japan, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare said yesterday. The cow was born in August 1999 - before feeding cows with meat-and-bone meal was banned in 2001 due to fear of infection with the disease called bovine spongiform encephalopathy, ministry officials said.

OUTBREAK OF MARBURG VIRUS, ANGOLA

London, May 17 -- A press report, dated today, states: The world's worst outbreak of the deadly Marburg virus is not over and is spreading to new parts of Angola, the World Health Organization says. Some 292 people have now died, out of 336 known cases. "We are very concerned about the situation," said WHO spokesperson Ashaluck Bhatisevi. There is no known cure for Marburg, which is related to Ebola. Early symptoms are diarrhoea, nausea and vomiting, and then bleeding. New cases of the haemorrhagic fever have been found in parts of the northern Angolan province of Uige, which had not previously been affected, Mr Bhatisevi said. Most of the 336 cases have been recorded in Uige or in people who have travelled from the town of Uige.

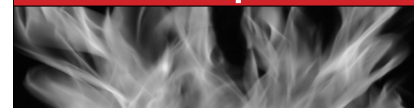
POWER OUTAGE, CHITTAGONG, BANGLADESH

Karachi, May 13 -- Chittagong port city and its surrounding areas in southern Bangladesh sustained a power failure, its second in eight years, yesterday when all the regional power stations in Chittagong simultaneously went out of operation. According to local media reports, electricity supply was suspended in Chittagong for more than 16 hours from 0930, Wednesday (May 11) until 0245, yesterday. According to the system control room of the Power Development Board (PDB) in Chittagong, the disaster occurred when two units of the Rauzan Thermal Power Plant tripped together. The PDB engineers assumed that the major power station of the region went out of order due to overload prompted by higher demands of electricity at the consumer ends at the advent of ugly summer and the persisting heat wave. Two units of the power plant had been supplying 420 megawatts electricity in the national grid before facing the automatic shutdown. Sudden idling of the units had shifted load on to the other generating units on operation and ultimately made those idle too within a few minutes. The port city alone needs approximately 470 megawatts of electricity a day. Engineers after frantic efforts brought two of the tripped units back to order at about 0245, yesterday. An engineer at the system control room said that all the tripped units would be synchronised by this afternoon. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

VESSELS IMPOUNDED, DELTA REGION, NIGERIA

Lagos, May 12 - Fifty ocean-going vessels, worth several billions of naira, were impounded from oil bunkerers by security agents in the Niger Delta region between January and April 2005, the Minister of State for Defence, Dr. Rowland Oritsejafor, has said. This disclosure shows the high activities of the oil thieves in the oil producing parts of the country, through which Nigeria is said to be losing an estimated 500,000 barrels of oil per day. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Fires & Explosions



APARTMENT COMPLEX, DALLAS, TEXAS, UNITED STATES

London, May 18 -- A press report, dated May 17, states: Fire raged through a North Dallas apartment complex this morning. The blaze occurred at the Glen Oaks Apartments in the 8300 block of Skillman Street, and fire investigators said an exploded drug laboratory might have sparked the blaze. Residents had seconds to evacuate their units as the blaze ripped through the building. Fourteen families were displaced after the fire destroyed 16 units. Some residents reported hearing an explosion about the time the fire began spreading at about 0530. The fire ultimately reached four alarms. Residents also said two men lived in the unit in which the fire might have started. The men have not been seen at the complex since the fire broke out. Fire investigators said they have not determined an exact cause of the fire, and the investigation would exhaust all possible causes. "The initial assessment, we're thinking that this fire may be incendiary in origin," Lt. Joel Lavender of Dallas Fire and Rescue said. "That guides us to think one of two things, or one or two places this fire may have started or how this fire may have started. The fire caused about \$1.1 million of damage. Structural damage accounted for \$1 million in losses, and destroyed apartment contents accounted for about \$100,000. Management at the complex are searching for vacant units for the displaced residents.

CHEMICAL PLANT, HUKOU COUNTY, JIANGXI PROVINCE, CHINA

London, May 19 -- A press report, dated May 18, states: Four people were killed and twenty-one were injured by a strong furnace blast at a chemical plant this afternoon in Hukou County of east China's Jiangxi Province. A fire broke out at the melting furnace at the nitration workshop section of the Jiujiang Fuda Industrial Co., Ltd at 1552 hrs, today. The melting furnace exploded about ten minutes later, killing two people

on the spot and injuring twenty-three. Two of the wounded failed to survive in the hospital. A rescue effort and further investigation of the accident are still underway.

COAL MINE, CHENGDE CITY AREA, HEBEI PROVINCE, CHINA

London, May 19 -- A press report, dated today, states: Fifty-one miners are missing and feared dead after a gas explosion ripped through the Huanerhe coal mine near Chengde city in northern China's Hebei province. "At around 0300 today a gas explosion accident at the Huanerhe mining company (state-owned local mine) in Hebei province's Chengde city occurred," the State Administration of Mine Safety said on its website. "Fifty-one mine workers were in the mine shaft and it is not clear if they are alive." Local and provincial leaders have rushed to the state-owned mine to oversee rescue operations, while a group of experts had also been dispatched to investigate the cause, the administration said.

COAL MINE, KEMEROVO REGION, RUSSIA

London, May 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: A methane blast rocked coal mine No. 12 in Kiselyovsk in the Kemerovo region at 1330, today. "Preliminary reports indicate that 132 miners were underground at the moment when the blast occurred," Russian Emergency Situations Ministry spokesman Viktor Beltsov said. The ministry has no information about possible casualties now. Seven mine rescue squads have been engaged in a rescue operation, Beltsov said.

COAL MINE, PANZHUIHUA, SICHUAN PROVINCE, CHINA

Beijing, May 17 -- A gas explosion has killed 21 miners in south-western China, Xinhua news agency said today, the latest in a string of accidents in the world's deadliest mining industry. Thirty-one workers were working underground when the accident happened last Thursday (May 12) at a small coal pit in the city of Panzhuihua in Sichuan province, it said. "The initial investigation shows the accident happened due to improper exploration and chaotic administration," Xinhua said without elaborating. Ten miners had been rescued, it added. It did not say why it had taken so long to report news of the disaster. -- Reuters.

COAL MINE, QITAIHE, HEILONGJIANG PROVINCE, CHINA

London, May 13 -- A press report, dated today, states: A gas explosion at a coal mine in north-eastern China killed nine miners, the government said today. Two miners escaped after the blast, which occurred Wednesday (May 11) evening in Qitaihe, a city in the north-eastern province of Heilongjiang, while nine were trapped underground, the official Xinhua News Agency reported. Rescue operations

ended yesterday when the bodies of the nine were recovered, but work was continuing to remove toxic gas from the mine shaft so that investigators can visit the site, it said. The two survivors were hospitalized, the report said.

COAL MINE, SHANXI PROVINCE, CHINA

London, May 14 -- A press report, dated today, states: A gas explosion at a mine in northern China killed at least 14 miners, the government said today. The blast yesterday at the Longhua Colliery in Shanxi province occurred when 31 workers were underground. Sixteen managed to escape but 14 were killed and one remained missing.

FOREST, KAMCHATKA, RUSSIA

London, May 13 -- A press report, dated today, states: Forest and tundra fires rage on a total territory of 185 hectares in Kamchatka, the local forest-protection air base said today. It said a forest fire was localised near a settlement of Kozyrevsk and posed no threat to its residents. In May Kamchatka registered four forest fires caused mostly by carelessness of the people who go to the countryside for rest. Three fires were quickly extinguished on a total territory of 29.7 hectares.

HOTEL, GAVLE, SWEDEN

London, May 18 -- A press report, dated May 17, states: A fire destroyed a hotel with a history of over a century in central Swedish city of Gavle, forcing 146 guests to evacuate their rooms early today, according to reports of the Swedish News Agency. The fire started in the early morning in the night club of the Scandic Grand Central Hotel and spread to the hotel. The 146 hotel guests and inhabitants of adjacent apartment buildings were safely evacuated, according to the reports. Some 100 firefighters rushed to the scene, but the fire had not been brought under control until this afternoon. So far there is no report of serious injury, except for several people being treated for smoke inhalation. Investigators suspect arson as police technicians detected traces of flammable material put intentionally in the hotel. The hotel's night club is a very popular entertainment centre for local residents.

MANUFACTURING COMPLEX, LOCKPORT, NEW YORK, UNITED STATES

London, May 18 -- A press report, dated May 16, states: A company investigation was launched into a May 11 fire at Delphi Thermal & Interior that a company official said might have caused \$1 million in damage. Delphi spokesman Lindsey Williams said the fire in one of the six wind tunnels at the manufacturing complex at 200 Upper Mountain Road, Lockport, extensively damaged or destroyed equipment, including instrumentation such as solar lighting

panels in the ceiling and floor. A Dodge Durango SUV being tested in the tunnel was a total loss, he said. Williams said no Delphi employees were injured and the fire had no effect on plant operations, other than the test being conducted in the tunnel.

NAVY BASE, ST. PETERSBURG AREA, RUSSIA

London, May 18 -- A press report, dated May 17, states: A fire broke out at a navy base in northern Russia today, setting off ammunition explosions that injured six people, officials said. One of the injured had burns over 40% of her body, said Andrei Alyabyev, spokesman for the St. Petersburg and Leningrad regional emergency service. All the injured were workers on the Kronstadt base, about 30 km west of St. Petersburg. The fire started in a section of the base where depth charges are stored, and a Russian navy spokesman, Capt. Igor Dygalo, said it was caused by "careless handling" of the charges. Russian television footage showed one large shell blasting into the air from the fire site. Alyabyev said about 20 explosions were heard during the fire, which reportedly was brought under control several hours later.

OIL DEPOT, XINGANG, CHINA

London, May 14 -- An explosion at an oil depot in north-west China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region killed five people and seriously injured one yesterday afternoon. The blast took place at 1530 hrs when an oil depot at the No. 2 Hongyanchi Power Generation Co Ltd exploded. The explosion triggered a big fire. The region was sealed off by police. The depot belonged to a municipal power plant in Urumqi, capital of the autonomous region. After the fire was extinguished at 1800 hrs, police called off the curfew. The explosion did not affect normal power supply in the city. According to a witness, about 1,000 tons of oil were stored at the depot. Initial investigation showed the explosion was caused by violation of safety rules.

PREMISES, EDMONTON, CANADA

London, May 15 -- Two massive fires whipped by high winds yesterday destroyed homes worth millions of dollars and left dozens of people homeless, including a Conservative MLA. A fire in south Edmonton extensively damaged the Garneau Mews condominiums, while outside the city at Wizard Lake, flames razed four homes and a cabin. There were no reports of injuries to residents of the three-storey structure. About 60 people, some alerted to the danger by passersby, were evacuated when the fire broke out around 1445 hrs. About 50 firefighters and 12 fire trucks responded. No cause or damage estimate was available. The fire was contained to the top suites. At one point, witnesses watching from a neighbouring highrise said flames had destroyed sections of the roof, exposing five apartments. Meanwhile,

at Wizard Lake, three or four houses went up in flames, said Capt. Chuck DeJong of Calmar Fire and Rescue. Strong gusts of wind picked up the fire and spread it from home to home. No one was injured. Firefighters estimated there was at least \$2 million damage. Schick, an Edmonton realtor, put the figure closer to \$4 million or \$5 million.

PREMISES, SHENZHEN, CHINA

London, May 13 -- Two people have been killed and 24 injured in explosions in Shenzhen over the past two days. A blast at Hong Kong "toy king" Francis Choi Chi-ming's Early Light International Holdings' factory in Longgang district killed one worker. Eight others were admitted to hospital after welding sparks ignited nitrogen in a diesel tank under repair on Wednesday morning (May 11). Six of the injured are in critical condition. A factory spokesman said maintenance workers had failed to release all the nitrogen, which was used to check for leaks, before welding cracks on the tank. The underground tank had been in use for six years. A house standing on top of the tank was destroyed in the explosion. The factory, one of several Mr Choi operates in Shenzhen, employs 17,000 workers. Yesterday morning, an accident triggered four explosions within 30 minutes at a construction site in Futian, one of Shenzhen's busiest districts, when workers broke a gas duct. Eighteen people were taken to hospitals, one of whom was later certified dead. Most of the injured were onlookers drawn to the site after the first explosion.

REFINERY, TEXAS CITY, TEXAS, UNITED STATES

Houston, May 17 -- BP said today it accepted responsibility for a deadly explosion at its Texas City, Texas, oil refinery that killed 15 workers and injured 170 others on Mar 23. BP said employees made "deeply disturbing" mistakes that led to the blast at the nation's fourth largest refinery, but a labour union official said the London-based company failed to provide a safe workplace. Five BP employees, two of them supervisors, were fired for their roles in the events, according to sources familiar with the matter. A company official said she was unable to confirm any firings related to the incident. Ross Pillari, the president of BP's North American subsidiary, BP Products North America, said at a news conference in Texas City this morning, "we regret that our mistakes have caused so much suffering." Pillari said the company was trying to contact families of those who were killed, and hoped to reach fair settlements without the need for lawsuits. Industry sources said they expected the explosion to cost BP less than \$400 million (£218 million), down from initial estimates by risk analysts of about \$1 billion. Pillari said supervisors and labourers working on one of the refinery's fuel-processing units failed to follow correct procedures and failed to sound

evacuation alarms when they realized there was a problem. A tower on the isomerisation unit, used in production of gasoline, was overfilled with volatile, heavier-than-air hydrocarbons, which were then overheated. The liquid flowed into a blowdown drum, which has a 113-foot stack and is intended to contain and then dissipate liquid from the unit. "It was not designed to receive and contain the massive volume of liquid that poured into it Mar 23," Pillari said. That overflow shot out of the stack like a "geyser," witnesses have told government investigators. Liquid and vapour flowed to the ground, some of it pooling underneath temporary trailers where contract workers were meeting. An unknown ignition source triggered the blast, which was felt five miles away. All those killed were in the temporary trailers within 150 feet of the unit. United Steelworkers Regional Vice President Gary Beevers said the design of the unit where the explosion occurred and the location of temporary workers' trailers near the unit led to the tragedy. The isomerisation unit should have been connected to the refinery's flare system, which burns off excess hydrocarbons, to reduce the chances of an uncontrolled explosion, Beevers said. Because of the Texas City explosion, BP has decided to replace blowdown drums with flare systems at its Texas City Whiting, Indiana refineries. Beevers said the union had repeatedly called for elimination of the blowdown drum. Pillari said the refinery's owners had also recommended switching to a flare system. Locating the trailers so close to units processing volatile chemicals also placed workers at greater risk, Beevers said. BP's decision to locate a trailer within 150 feet of the isomerisation unit was made after reviews, none of which considered "the possibility of such significant release of hydrocarbons from the stack," Pillari said. Since the blast, the company has said trailers may not be located within 500 feet of blowdown drums and flares and non-essential workers will be removed from process areas. "They failed to provide a safe workplace," Beevers said. The United Steelworkers, which represents workers at the plant and is the largest industrial union in North America, will carry out its own investigation into the blast. "We're going to spend whatever money we have to, we're going to use whatever resources the United Steelworkers has to find out what happened and make sure this never happens again," Beevers said. Pillari said the company is contacting survivors of those killed in the blast to discuss compensation. "Our goal is to provide fair compensation without the need for lawsuits and lengthy court proceedings," Pillari said. At least 40 plaintiffs have filed lawsuits against BP in Galveston County District Court, said a lawyer who has brought 11 of the cases. "I think the victims will be encouraged that BP has taken responsibility for the tragedy," said

Houston attorney Terry Bryant. "And this may allow the cases to move forward more quickly." -- Reuters.

TEST SHOP FACILITY, GLASGOW, UNITED KINGDOM

London, May 13 -- A press report, dated May 12, states: Glasgow's biggest engineering firm has been left with a multi-million pound bill after a fire destroyed a test shop and halted production. The £7million bill was revealed by Chairman Sir Robert Smith at the engineering giant's annual general meeting at the Burrell Collection. Major customers - most of them based abroad - have been told it will be months before orders for Weir's new range of giant industrial pumps can be delivered. Sir Robert said: "The March fire in the UK test shop at Weir Pumps will delay £5m of sales and £2m of contribution which we expect to recover in the second half of the year." More than 40 fire fighters tackled the blaze which began after a transformer caught fire. It was almost a week before full production got back under way.

WAREHOUSE, WASHINGTON BOULEVARD, BALTIMORE, UNITED STATES

London, May 17 -- A press report, dated May 16, states: Fire investigators returned to the scene of a six-alarm warehouse fire today in hopes of finding clues leading to a cause. The fire broke out at a vacant warehouse in the 3800 block of Washington Boulevard, near Commerce Drive and the beltway. Officials said the fire caused about \$5.1 million in damage. Baltimore County officials said it may take investigators several days to determine an official cause. They said an overwhelming majority of the damages amounts from the destruction of the 80,000-square-foot building. The fire began at about 1900. Saturday (May 14) when more than 120 firefighters, including crews from Anne Arundel and Howard counties and Baltimore City, responded. As many as four firefighters reported minor injuries of smoke inhalation or minor burns.

WILDFIRES, HAWAII, UNITED STATES

London, May 14 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Hawaii County firefighters are battling a brush fire, which has burned about 900 acres so far. Fourteen fire companies responded to the brushfire, which started near Kaalualu Bay yesterday afternoon. The blaze initially burned four acres in the area, but strong trade winds spread the fire south-west toward South Point. Crews set up a firebreak and a night watch. The brush fire is on state Hawaiian homelands. No homes are in danger so far.

London, May 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: A stubborn brush fire in Nanakuli that has been burning for nearly a week is expected to cost taxpayers tens of thousands of dollars

by the time it's finally extinguished. And several smaller brush fires during the weekend have added to the total cost. Just operating Air One helicopter has cost the city more than \$23,000, said Capt. Kenison Tejada, a spokesman for the Honolulu Fire Department. Air One has been in the air about 12 hours a day since the fire started on Tuesday. It costs \$325 an hour to operate. There were no total cost estimates for battling the brush fires this early in the fire season, but on Saturday night alone (May 14), 22 engines, about half of the Honolulu Fire Department's total, responded to brush fires on the Leeward Coast. That left 20 engines to cover the rest of Oahu. On that night, strong winds caused the Nanakuli fire to flare up after fire officials had brought it under control a day earlier. By yesterday, the fire had burned about 2,200 acres of brush, and firefighters will return to the area today should any more flare-ups occur. Tejada also noted that the fires have disrupted the Waianae community, closing schools, displacing people and forcing many employees to leave work early. The wind has made it difficult for helicopters to drop water on the flames, but four helicopters, two from the military, one from the Department of Land and Natural Resources and another from the Honolulu Fire Department, dropped water on stubborn areas above Nanakuli High and Intermediate school. About 50 firefighters and five tankers battled the fire on the ground. Pauline Sato, the Nature Conservancy's Oahu program director, monitored the brush fire from the school. She said the Honouliuli Preserve, which is managed by the Nature Conservancy, was not threatened. "Even though it didn't get into the preserve, doesn't mean the situation is good. It could be bad the next time," Sato said, adding that they might start to clear grassy areas as a precautionary measure. Meanwhile, fire officials believe someone may have started the fires on the Leeward Coast this weekend. "With the frequency and time intervals (of the brush fires), it leads officials to believe the fires were intentionally set," Tejada said. A fire burned 30 to 40 acres of brush near Ala Hema Street at 0005, yesterday. Eleven engines and four tankers responded. Tejada said the fire came to within 100 to 200 yards of homes. Firefighters had it under control at 0318. There were no reports of injuries. Two other brush fires occurred Saturday. One consumed 400 acres near Leihoku Elementary School in Waianae at 1933. It was under control by 2327. Sixteen engines and four tankers responded to the fire near the elementary school. More than 20 federal firefighters equipped with tankers and trucks also assisted city firefighters. Two hours after that fire was reported, firefighters responded to another brush fire close to the elementary school, near Hakimo and Paakea Roads, at 2143. Tejada said six engines responded to that fire, which

scorched about 10 acres. He noted that a witness saw a man leaving the area where the fire started.

WILDFIRES, RUSSIA

London, May 14 -- A press report, dated May 13, states: Forest and tundra fires rage on a total territory of 185 hectares in Kamchatka, the local forest-protection air base told Tass today. It said a forest fire was localised near a settlement of Kozyrevsk and posed no threat to its residents.

WILDFIRES, UNITED STATES

London, May 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: A wildfire that struck Tonto National Forest over the weekend (May 14-15) raged out of control today, scorching 6,000 acres of desert scrub and chaparral and threatening nearby recreation areas. The "Bart" fire broke out at 1500 yesterday north of Bartlett Lake Road. Firefighters who had just contained the 1,920-acre St. Clair fire to the east pounced on the new blaze 10 minutes after it started. But it quickly escaped their control, consuming more than 1,200 acres of high Sonoran Desert within hours. More than 100 fire personnel swarmed the fire, working around the clock in an effort to keep it from spreading. Still, there was no estimate today on when the blaze might be contained. The fire threatened the Bartlett Lake and Horseshoe Lake recreation areas as well as the private KA Ranch.

London, May 17 -- A press report, dated May 16, states: More than 100 firefighters, aided by air tankers and helicopters, are fighting a wildfire near Bartlett Lake that has charred some six-thousand acres. The Bart fire began about 1700 yesterday and is burning in desert scrub and chaparral in the Tonto National Forest. It's about ten miles east of the north Scottsdale and Carefree areas. The Forest Service says the fire poses a threat to a ranch, as well as recreation sites within the Bartlett and Horseshoe recreation areas. Bartlett Lake Road is closed at the intersection with Cave Creek Road. Visitors to recreation areas have been evacuated.

London, May 17 -- A press report, dated Picacho, May 16, states: A wildfire that destroyed a triplex, a single-family home, a mobile home and two other buildings had been contained by today and was no longer a threat to this southern Arizona community, a fire spokesman said. The Tree House fire started and destroyed the buildings yesterday, said Cliff Pearlberg, a spokesman for the Arizona State Land Department's fire management division. He said the fire was much smaller than the 40 acres that had been reported earlier today by officials. "Apparently the fire started in one of the structures that was involved and spread to the wildland and other structures," he said. "Only about an acre of wildland was involved." The cause of the fire is under investigation, he said. Pearlberg said one and possibly two of the

dwellings were occupied. There were no injuries, however. The fire caused two small gas line leaks, which authorities addressed Monday, Pearlberg said.

London, May 18 -- A press report, dated May 17, states: Aided by slowing winds and increased humidity, firefighters today made progress against a 9,500-acre grass and brush fire north-east of Phoenix near Bartlett Lake, a spokesman said. Firefighters cut a fuel-free barrier line around about three-quarters of the Bart fire after temperatures and winds dropped overnight. A rise in the humidity levels cut back fire activity but also halted firefighters' efforts to burn away vegetation near their lines, said Wendell Peacock, a spokesman for the fire crews. "We're in a lot better shape now than we were yesterday," when 35 mph winds and triple-digit temperatures pushed the blaze, Peacock said. "It was terrible conditions to try to fight a fire." By this morning, he said, firefighters "were hard-pressed to find either smoke or fire." Peacock said the fire was more than 20% contained. Firefighters hope to have it fully contained by Friday night (May 20). A \$5,000 reward has been offered for information leading to the arrest and conviction of whoever started the fire, Peacock said. Firefighters were concentrating on the hot spots along the east flank, trying to keep the fire away from the Verde River and Bartlett Lake, Peacock said. The fire was fuelled by grasses that grew lush this spring from ample winter rains but have since dried out. Drought conditions remain, Peacock said. About 340 firefighters and support staff, including 12 elite Hotshot crews and two helicopters, fought the blaze. One heavy air tanker and two single-engine tankers were on standby, Peacock said. Early on, the fire, which began on Sunday, threatened a number of buildings, and recreational sites at Bartlett and Horseshoe lakes were closed Sunday night. The Bartlett Lake and Horseshoe Dam roads, which form the fire's east and west boundaries, remained closed. Firefighters also used a burned out area from a previously contained fire as part of their containment line.



AIRCRAFT HIT BY TURBULENCE ON FLIGHT FROM LAS VEGAS TO SAN JOSE, UNITED STATES

London, May 18 -- A press report, dated May 17, states: Severe turbulence struck a Southwest Airlines Boeing 737 with 127 people on board, injuring two passengers and three flight attendants, officials said. The five were treated at a hospital after the aircraft, bound from Las

Vegas to San Jose, landed yesterday, said Joanne Sanfilippo, spokeswoman for Mineta San Jose International Airport. Sanfilippo said the injuries included a leg injury and a head injury. "We don't know how far the aircraft dropped, but it was clear air turbulence -- nothing that was visible to the pilot," Sanfilippo said. Two teams of mechanics examined the aircraft but found no damage, she said. The turbulence happened as the aircraft was cruising at about 30,000 feet, Sanfilippo said.

BANNING OF TURKISH AIRLINE BY THE NETHERLANDS, SWITZERLAND, FRANCE AND GERMANY

London, May 17 -- A press report, dated May 16, states: Turkish airline Onur Air has held talks with Dutch officials to try to end an airport ban over its safety record that has left some 40,000 people grounded. The airline has been suspended from taking off and landing by four European countries for alleged safety breaches. Onur Air denies that its airplanes fail to meet required safety standards and says the ban is unfair. France, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Germany have all stopped Onur Air's planes landing or taking off. An Onur Air spokesman said the talks with Dutch aviation authorities were continuing. Hendrik Dek, of the Dutch transport ministry, said each country was to have separate talks with the airline, according to AFP. Onur Air was grounded late last week by the Dutch authorities, who say they will not allow the airline to pass through the country's airports until it tightens security standards. The move was then followed by German, Swiss and French authorities. The airline denies all the allegations and says it will begin legal action unless a full explanation is provided for the ban. "The security reasons cited are unjustified," the airline's vice-president, Shabettin Bolukcu, has said, according to Reuters. "We would never allow any plane that had the slightest fault to fly." Onur Air, in operation since 1992, is a low-cost airline operating 26 planes and transporting some 1.4 million passengers per year.

CRASH, ADELAIDE AREA, SOUTH AUSTRALIA

London, May 15 -- A press report, dated today, states: Two people believed to be men have been killed in a light aircraft crash north of Adelaide. Police said the registered single-engine two seater light aircraft crashed at Stonefield, near Truro, at about 1540, CST, today, killing two people. An Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) spokesman said he believed the victims were men but details were still sketchy. "The aircraft crashed and burnt and we will be dispatching an investigation team from Canberra in the morning," he said. Police would guard the site until ATSB investigators arrived.

London, May 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: Investigators have begun sifting through the wreckage of a light aircraft which crashed north of Adelaide, killing a 63-year-old man and a teenager. The businessman and the 17-year-old man died when the two-seater Citabria aircraft plunged into a field near Truro. Their names have not been released. Investigators from the Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) began sifting through the wreckage. Investigator in charge, Bryan Aherne described the crash scene as horrific. "The aircraft is severely damaged, it's burnt out," he told reporters. "There's not a lot left." Mr Aherne said he could not yet determine who was flying the aircraft but he expected his team to remain at the scene for several days. The aircraft came down just 300 metres from a private airfield. There were reports that relatives and friends of those killed in the crash witnessed its terrifying plunge.

London, May 17 -- A press report, dated today, states: Investigators believe there is only so much they will be able to learn from examining the wreckage of a light aircraft which crashed near the Barossa Valley on Sunday (May 15) afternoon. The aircraft crashed and burst into flames moments after taking off from a private airfield, near Truro. Bryan Aherne from the Australian Transport Safety Bureau says since the aircraft did not have a flight recorder, investigators will have to rely on the maintenance records and witness accounts to determine what happened. "The aircraft is severely damaged, it's burnt out and you can see for yourself there's not a lot left of it," he said.

CRASH, ANDES MOUNTAINS, ARGENTINA

London, May 17 -- A press report, dated today, states: A Chilean light aircraft with at least nine persons on board crashed in Argentina, said national police, who sent out a search party without finding the passengers. The aircraft crashed in the Andes mountains today, which separate Chile and Argentina, in an area with snow and high winds, Roberto Caserotto, a spokesman for Argentina's national police told reporters. "In the area are very heavy snow and high winds," he said. "Today's temperatures were less than 20 degrees below zero," Caserotto said. He also said that the company that owns the aircraft, Don Carlos, sent another aircraft to the area and was able to locate the downed aircraft. However, the rescue team used an aircraft and a helicopter to search for survivors, but had seen none, Caserotto said. The aircraft was flying between two points inside Chile, but crashed 130 km from Perito Moreno, in southern Argentina, Caserotto said.

CRASH, CORDOBA, ARGENTINA

See LV-LXO.

CRASH, KILDER, THE NETHERLANDS

London, May 16 -- A press report, dated May 15, states: Two people died in the eastern Netherlands today after a small plane crashed into a house setting it on fire, a local news agency reported. A police spokesperson said it was not clear if the victims were the inhabitants of the house in the village of Kilder or the occupants of the plane. The cause of the crash was not immediately known.

CRASH, KOOSKIA AREA, IDAHO, UNITED STATES

See N8805W.

CRASH, RUBY MOUNTAINS, NEVADA, UNITED STATES

London, May 14 -- A press report, dated May 13, states: Authorities were today trying to get to the site of a small aircraft crash in Elko County's Ruby Mountains. Sheriff Neil Harris said the aircraft went down late yesterday afternoon in the rugged terrain. A search and rescue team was able to observe the crash site from the air, but unstable weather made it impossible to rescuers on the ground. Authorities said the aircraft apparently hit a 10,500-foot peak and then tumbled into a ravine. Harris said two people were believed to be on board the twin-engine aircraft. No survivors were seen from the aerial survey of the site. Harris said flight records indicated the aircraft was flying from California to Salt Lake City.

CRASH, SAN GUILLERMO, MORONG, PHILIPPINES

London, May 18 -- A press report, dated May 17, states: Two persons were killed when a Bonanza Air Cessna cargo aircraft crashed in Morong, Rizal east of Manila this evening, apparently due to stormy weather, according to local media reports. Morong police was quoted as saying that the crash occurred around 1830, local time, in San Guillermo, Morong, as stormy weather hit the area around Manila. Authorities identified one of the fatalities as its pilot, Captain Felimon Mendoza. Reports said the Bonanza Air V-35 came from Palawan and was carrying tons of Lapu-Lapu, a local fish. Colonel Restituto Padilla, Philippine Air Force spokesman, confirmed the incident. Padilla said he received a report that the pilot was forced to crash land because of thunderstorms. He said Air Force personnel were dispatched to the area on foot for a rescue operation. "Our speculation is that a thunderstorm occurred in the area," said Padilla, adding the incident was reported to the Air Force operation centre by the Philippine Rescue Coordinating Centre.

CRASH, TRURO AREA, SOUTH AUSTRALIA, AUSTRALIA

London, May 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: Investigators have begun sifting through the wreckage of a light plane which crashed north of

Adelaide yesterday killing a 63-year-old man and a teenager. The businessman and the 17-year-old man died when the two-seater Citabria aircraft plunged into a field near Truro. Their names have not been released. Investigators from the Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) began sifting through the wreckage. Investigator in charge, Bryan Aherne described the crash scene as horrific. "The aircraft is severely damaged, it's burnt out," he told reporters. "There's not a lot left." Mr Aherne said he could not yet determine who was flying the plane but he expected his team to remain at the scene for several days. The aircraft came down just 300 metres from a private airfield.

EMERGENCY LANDING, BARCELONA, SPAIN

London, May 17 -- A press report, dated today, states: A flight from Robin Hood Airport in South Yorkshire had to make an emergency landing after losing cabin pressure. The Thomsonfly flight to Alicante was forced to divert to Barcelona during yesterday afternoon's incident. A spokeswoman for Thomson said "a thorough investigation" is under way. The plane landed safely at Barcelona and the 126 passengers were taken by coach to Alicante - a 345-mile journey. The spokeswoman said: "There was a pressure change in the cabin caused by a technical fault in the air conditioning system. The captain made the decision to make an early landing at Barcelona, where the alarm was raised and emergency procedures enacted." The passengers were delayed in Barcelona for four hours before their eight-hour trip to Alicante. The Thompson spokeswoman said: "As passenger safety is Thomsonfly's most important concern we will be conducting a detailed and thorough investigation of the aircraft systems."

EMERGENCY LANDING, KIRKSVILLE REGIONAL AIRPORT, MISSOURI, UNITED STATES

London, May 14 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Turbulent weather forced a Midwest Airlines jet bound from Kansas City to Washington to make an emergency landing during the night at Kirksville, a Midwest spokeswoman said. Carol Skornicka of the Milwaukee-based airline said there were no injuries to the 76 passengers and four crew members on board the Boeing 717, which landed at the Kirksville Regional Airport in north-east Missouri at about midnight. There were strong thunderstorms in the Kansas City area yesterday night and the departure of Flight 490 from Kansas City International Airport to Washington was delayed for several hours. Skornicka said the aircraft was flying around 23,000 feet when it ran into the turbulent weather. She initially said the storm caused a "mechanical issue" with the aircraft, but later said the pilots landed solely because of the weather.

EMERGENCY LANDING, LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, UNITED STATES

London, May 15 -- A press report, dated May 13, states: A commuter jet with a reported cockpit fire made an emergency landing at Los Angeles International Airport today, but no one was hurt, a fire official said. The aircraft landed shortly before 1100 hrs and everyone on board got off safely, said Melissa Kelley of the Los Angeles Fire Department. American Eagle Flight 121, with 41 people aboard, made the emergency landing after a fire was reported in the cockpit. It wasn't immediately known where the commuter jet took off or where it was headed. The cause of the fire was under investigation.

EMERGENCY LANDING, MCGREGOR POINT, HAWAII, UNITED STATES

London, May 18 -- A press report, dated May 17, states: Three Native Hawaiian plant experts were aboard a Windward Aviation helicopter that made an emergency landing on rocks off of McGregor Point yesterday morning. The helicopter piloted by Don Shearer, owner of Windward Aviation, narrowly missed a dunking in the ocean around 0830 hrs after his aircraft's engine failed. Shearer and his three passengers walked away from the incident, apparently unhurt. They were taking a non-working trip aboard the helicopter to view native Hawaiian plants and restoration efforts around the island. Donn Walker, spokesman for the Federal Aviation Administration in Los Angeles, said the agency will be looking into the cause of the incident. The group took off from Kahului Airport at 0758 hrs, and 36 minutes later they ran into trouble. The group had just visited the Auwahi district on the slopes of Haleakala and also the La Perouse area and were on their way to West Maui when they were alerted that something was wrong. Shearer said there was a change in the noise level, and then the engine-out warning system kicked in. The pilot quickly switched into auto rotation and looked for a place to land. The helicopter's tail rotor ended up in the water, but everyone was able to get out of the helicopter safely, he said. Less than half an hour after the landing, Shearer got help from Pacific Helicopter Tours Inc., which used its Huey, a utility helicopter, to lift Shearer's Hughes helicopter from the rocks and onto the level gravel at McGregor Point. He said he wanted to get the helicopter off the rocks as soon as possible because it was so close to the ocean. Shearer said other than the damaged tail rotor and the broken engine, there was no other damage to the helicopter. The helicopter was taken back to Windward Aviation's hangar by Maui Tow & Transport Co. Yesterday afternoon, Shearer said FAA officials were still examining the helicopter, which was built in 1977 and has been owned by Windward since 1999.

EMERGENCY LANDING, RISALPUR, PAKISTAN

London, May 15 -- A press report, dated today, states: Governor Khalilur Rehman escaped unharmed yesterday when his helicopter had to make an emergency landing after developing a technical fault. The governor was on his way to Abbottabad when the helicopter requested an emergency landing in Risalpur, a spokesman for Governor's House said in a press statement. He said the governor's visit to Abbottabad to inaugurate an integrated development vision was postponed, and he along with the military secretary and the additional secretary returned to Peshawar by road. "All on board the helicopter are safe and unhurt," he said, but gave no details about the nature of the technical fault that forced the helicopter to make the emergency landing.

EMERGENCY LANDING, SANTA CRUZ AREA, JAMAICA

London, May 17 -- A press report, dated today, states: A helicopter transporting Prime Minister P J Patterson was yesterday forced to land in a private field near to the town of Santa Cruz in St Elizabeth due to bad weather. However, the prime minister's press secretary Sandra Graham last night denied a report that Patterson was left stranded after the emergency landing because no police vehicle was available at the time to transport him. "His drivers were nearby and the local police arrived on the scene about 10 minutes after the copter landed and directed his security team to the area," Graham said. The Santa Cruz police also said they responded quickly.

EMERGENCY LANDING, SCOTTSDALE AIRPORT, ARIZONA, UNITED STATES

London, May 18 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Scottsdale Airport reopened at about 1600, yesterday after being closed for two hours when a twin-engine Cessna made a belly landing. The aircraft, owned by the Sabena Airline Training Centre at Scottsdale Airport, skidded off into a dirt area between the runway and east taxiway after making the gear-up landing. Three people aboard were not injured, but fire crews had to foam the aircraft due to a fuel leak, according to a Rural/Metro Fire Department spokesperson. Blustery winds were gusting at about 14 miles per hour at the time of the accident. The long closure was due to the airport having to wait for a crane operator to arrive from across the Valley to remove the heavy twin engine. During the closure, Scottsdale air traffic controllers were diverting aircraft to Deer Valley Airport in Phoenix and Falcon Field in Mesa.

EMERGENCY LANDINGS, CHITTAGONG, BANGLADESH

London, May 14 -- A press report, dated today, states: Three flights of Bangladesh Biman, the national flag-

carrier, were today forced to make emergency landings in Chittagong due to inclement weather in the capital. Airport sources said stormy wind and rain did not allow Biman's Singapore flight (BG 085) and Karachi flight (BG 032) to land at Zia International Airport in their scheduled time at 1945 hrs and 2015 hrs respectively. These two international flights changed their direction and went for emergency landing at Shah Amanat Airport in Chittagong, some 212km south-east of Dhaka. Another domestic flight from Sylhet was scheduled to land in Dhaka at 1855 hrs but that too landed in Chittagong. Later, the three flights came back to Dhaka much behind their schedules. A violent storm, accompanied by rain, lashed the capital city and its adjoining areas in the evening, according to the United News of Bangladesh, another private news agency. The storm, packing a speed of up to 85km per hour, swept the city at about 1900 hrs and continued for about an hour. The tropical storm uprooted a number of trees.

INCIDENT AT BRADLEY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, UNITED STATES

London, May 17 -- A press report, dated May 16, states: Things are back to normal at Bradley International Airport this afternoon, but earlier a Delta Airlines flight from Atlanta had reported a problem with its gear box doors not closing properly. The aircraft landed safely just after 1100 hrs. A Bradley spokesperson tells News Channel 8 the airports runways had to be closed for about 15 minutes while maintenance crews searched for debris.

INCIDENT AT HOBART AIRPORT, AUSTRALIA

London, May 17 -- A press report, dated today, states: Three passengers have suffered minor injuries during an emergency evacuation of a Jetstar flight at Hobart airport. The Boeing 717's 25 passengers were evacuated at about 0600 hrs after an engineer noticed smoke and sparks coming from its right-hand engine as it prepared for take-off. Jetstar's manager of corporate relations Simon Westaway said. Three passengers reported minor injuries after using the safety slide to evacuate the aircraft, Mr Westaway said. Mr Westaway said officers from the Air Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) were on site to assess the aircraft, but a blown starter motor was the early diagnosis. The ATSB is expected to finish its inquiry late today. Almost all the passengers, including those who had reported injuries, flew to Sydney on a Qantas flight later in the morning.

London, May 18 -- A press report, dated May 17, states: A Jetstar aircraft has been evacuated on the tarmac in Hobart after sparks and smoke were seen coming from an engine. The 25 passengers on board the 0600 hrs flight to Sydney were evacuated on the emergency chute

after an engineer noticed the engine sparking. Jetstar's manager of corporate relations, Simon Westaway, says two passengers reported sprained wrists and one a sprained ankle but all three were treated at the airport and took the next Qantas flight to Sydney. Mr Westaway says the Australian Transport Safety Bureau were examining the aircraft. "The aircraft will be out of service today and we'll have a full diagnosis of the engine and the aircraft," he said.

LV-LXO

London, May 17 -- Piper PA-31-350, LV-LXO, operated by Chieftain SA, struck an antenna during an instrument landing system approach to the International Airport Ambrosia Tar Avella, Cordoba, at approximately 2227, UTC, May 8. The pilot, co-pilot and four passengers were killed and three passengers received serious injuries. The aircraft was destroyed.

N144SM

London, May 12 -- Robinson R-44 (Astro), N144SM, operated by Helimark LLC, while on a training flight, from Gustine, California, with two persons on board, rolled to starboard on take-off, struck the ground and rolled over, at Gustine, at 1645, UTC, May 11. The helicopter was substantially damaged. The crew were uninjured.

N333LP

London, May 18 -- A press report, dated May 17, states: The wreckage of an aircraft (N333LP) was discovered yesterday afternoon in a remote area about 5 miles south-west of Palm Springs International near Tahquitz Canyon about 4,200 feet high in the mountains. Police have confirmed that it's the same aircraft that was reported missing May 15 and say it's likely there are no survivors. The Palm Springs Mounted Police and others were called in to join the search for the missing aircraft early yesterday. Police say the Cessna 182 went missing May 15 after it took off from Palm Springs International Airport around eight in the morning. Police believe the pilot did not follow his flight plan. He was headed to John Wayne International Airport in Orange County. He never made it, so his family reported him missing. The family today hired a private helicopter to search for the aircraft. Palm Springs Search and Rescue left the command post this evening, after their job of recovering the two bodies was over. The National Transportation Board will be on scene to examine the wreckage further on Thursday (May 19).

London, May 18 -- Cessna 182M, N333LP, crashed near Palm Springs, California, at 1655, May 15, while on a flight from Palm Springs to Santa Ana, CA. The aircraft was destroyed. The two persons on board were killed.

N364FE

London, May 18 -- A press report, dated May 17, states: The pilot of a

Federal Express cargo aircraft that caught fire after landing at Memphis Airport on Dec 18, 2003, was largely responsible for the accident, the National Transportation Safety Board said today. The board also found that the flight captain, who was evaluating the pilot, failed to adequately monitor and correct her landing. The pilot, First Officer Robyn S. Sclair, did not do enough to account for gusty winds and sufficiently slow the aircraft as it approached the airport. She brought down the McDonnell Douglas DC-10-10 (N364FE) slightly to the right of the runway's centre line. The faulty landing overtaxed the right main landing gear, causing it to collapse, and the aircraft caught fire after veering off the runway, investigators said. In addition to the two pilots, five FedEx pilots were riding to Memphis as passengers. All seven escaped through cockpit windows after a passenger inadvertently released an inflatable escape slide from the side of the aircraft. Two people, including Sclair, were injured. Sclair was undergoing a company-mandated evaluation from Capt. Richard W. Redditt after deviating from an assigned altitude over England a month earlier. NTSB reports showed she received two unsatisfactory ratings on MD-11 aircraft in 1999 and 2001. Those scores went up after she received more training. However, Sclair's story led the board to recommend creating oversight and training programs for crew members who showed deficiencies or experienced failures in training environments. "If you took a look at the person as a whole, you may find a pattern that this person may have some deficiencies that can be, in fact, improved and be corrected before they get into a situation like we've seen here," said Mark Rosenker, acting NTSB chairman. Investigators also found crew members had not received adequate training on how to handle exit slides. The board recommended providing more hands-on learning and ensuring training equipment matches the slides used on actual aircraft. "All of the training programs highlighted have been updated since the accident," said FedEx spokeswoman Kristin Krause. Krause said Redditt had retired and Sclair was on leave from the company. Capt Gary Janelli, a representative of the Air Line Pilots Association said the report should have given more weight to wind conditions and the first officer's lack of recent training on MD-10 aircraft. "This accident, like many others, is the result of multiple failures and multiple factors," he said. The aircraft was flying from Oakland, Calif., on the last leg of a four-day trip. Fatigue was ruled out as a factor in the accident, as were weather conditions, though wind shear advisories were in effect that day. Investigators said it was not clear exactly how the fire started but the flames consumed the right wing and charred the side of the aircraft.

N4734Q

London, May 17 -- Cessna 188 (AG Wagon) N4734Q crashed near Atwood, Kansas, at 1300, May 14, while on a local flight from Atwood. The aircraft was destroyed. The one person on board was killed.

N55165

London, May 15 -- A press report, dated May 14, states: The Delaware State Police are investigating an aircraft crash. They say the single-engine aircraft crashed shortly after take-off from the Chandell Airport off Delaware Route 9 and White Oak Road. Investigators believe the aircraft developed engine problems during take-off which caused the aircraft to nose down and crash on the runway. Jason Bergman, 23, who is believed to be the pilot was airlifted to the Christiana Hospital by Trooper 4 and treated for minor injuries. The other two occupants were transported by ground to Kent General Hospital. They were both treated for minor injuries. The crash remains under investigation by the state police and the FAA.

London, May 17 -- Piper PA-28-140 (Cherokee) N55165 ran off the runway on landing at Chandelle Estates Airport, Dover, Delaware, at 0330, May 14, and crashed. The aircraft was destroyed. The three persons on board suffered minor injuries.

N588SC

London, May 17 -- Eurocopter EC 120B (Colibri) N588SC had engine failure and came down in the Gulf of Mexico, near Galliano, Louisiana, at 1426, May 13, while on a flight to Port Forchon, LA. The two persons on board suffered minor injuries.

N5990Z

London, May 17 -- A press report, dated May 16, states: A single-engine airplane crashed today near a small airport, killing the teenage pilot and passenger, authorities said. The plane, a Piper Super Cub, crashed shortly after take-off in trees outside John C. Tune Airport, authorities said. The pilot was identified as John Cheadle III, 19, of Nashville, who had been a licensed pilot for two years, said Lynne Lowrance, spokeswoman for the Metro Nashville Airport Authority. His passenger was identified Trevor Yarbrough, 18, of Nashville. The Federal Aviation Administration closed the airport following the crash. The National Transportation Safety Board and FAA were investigating.

London, May 18 -- Piper PA-18-150 (Super Cub), N5990Z, crashed on take-off from John C. Tune Airport, Nashville, Tennessee, at 2301, May 16. The aircraft was destroyed. The two persons on board were killed.

N6807R

London, May 14 -- A press report, dated May 13, states: A small aircraft that originated from Cable Airport in Upland crashed on White Horse Mountain in south-western Colorado, killing four people, the Civil Air Patrol reported tonight. The single-engine

Cessna was en route to Elbert, CO, when it was reported missing yesterday, the CAP said in a statement. Three men and one woman were on board the aircraft, officials said. Their remains were found in the wreckage, the CAP said. The search agency said terrain and avalanche dangers were too great to attempt to recover the bodies this evening, but that a rescue would be co-ordinated with Ouray County when conditions improve. The CAP said the aircraft left California on Wednesday (May 11), but no flight plans were filed. The aircraft was reported overdue yesterday, and searchers used radar information to narrow their search to south-western Colorado, the CAP said. Wreckage was scattered across a wide area, Sherwin said. Five aircraft and 20 volunteers from the Colorado Civil Air Patrol participated in the search.

London, May 15 -- A press report, dated May 14, states: Four people on board a single-engine Cessna 210 were killed when the aircraft crashed near 13,492-ft White Horse Mountain. The Civil Air Patrol began searching Thursday (May 12) for the aircraft, which had been en route from Cables, Calif., to Elbert, Colo., and located the wreckage Friday. A high altitude Air Force helicopter from Buckley Air Force Base was called in and its crew reached the scene, and confirmed the fatalities, said Civil Air Patrol spokesman Lt. Mark Young. Due to the steep terrain and avalanche danger, it was not possible to recover the bodies. A recovery operation will be launched when conditions improve.

London, May 17 -- Cessna T210G (Centurion) N6807R crashed near Ouray, Colorado, at 0001, May 12, while on a flight from Page, Arizona, to Elbert, CO. The aircraft was destroyed. The four persons on board were killed.

N704JJ

London, May 15 -- A press report, dated May 14, states: A Walla Walla man has been killed in an aircraft crash in Idaho's Clearwater County. Sheriff's deputies say the aircraft crashed during take-off from the air strip in Elk River yesterday afternoon. The passenger of the aircraft died, the pilot was taken to a Moscow hospital with injuries.

London, May 18 -- Cessna 150M, N704JJ, crashed near Elk River Airport, Clearwater City, Idaho, at 1900, May 13. One of the two persons on board was killed and the other was seriously injured.

N8805W

London, May 12 -- Piper PA-28-235 (Astro), N8805W, operated by Paul C.Herr, while on a flight from Jackson, Wyoming, to Pasco, Washington, with one person on board, crashed in the backcountry, near Kooshia, near Lowell, Idaho at 2337, UTC, May 9. The pilot was seriously injured.

OY-JET

London, May 16 -- A press report, dated May 15, states: A small

corporate jet landing in Atlantic City ran off the runway when its brakes failed, careering into a bay. None of the four people on board -- rescued by a boater and some residents -- were seriously injured. The Cessna Citation crashed at about 1630 today at Bader Field Airport, authorities said. The pilot, co-pilot and two passengers -- all residents of Denmark who were in Atlantic City for a convention -- were returning from a trip to Burlington, Vermont. They were taken to a hospital where they were treated and released tonight. An unidentified boater fishing in the area pulled the co-pilot and the two passengers from the jet. Some area residents who saw the crash used a small boat to reach the pilot. One of the residents, Joe Clark, told the Courier-Post of Cherry Hill that the pilot was "calm but concerned with the plane." Clark said he thought about using the boat to tow the aircraft closer to the docks but he abandoned that idea when one of the aircraft's engines suddenly revved up, causing flames and smoke to shoot out. "I thought it was going to blow up," Clark said. The 10-passenger jet, owned by Weibel Scientific Inc of Denmark, was expected to be towed away sometime tomorrow. A company spokesman declined comment on the crash, which is being investigated by the Federal Aviation Administration, the National Transportation Safety Board and state police.

London, May 17 -- Cessna Citation II OY-JET ran off the runway and into the water on landing at Bader Field Airport, Atlantic City, New Jersey, at 1948, May 15, following a flight from Burlington, Vermont. The four persons on board suffered minor injuries.

RPC-808

London, May 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: A Beechcraft twin-engine aircraft, RPC-808, crashed in the waters of Ipil town in Zamboanga Sibugay around 1330, today, the military said. Major General Gabriel Habacon, commander of the Army's 1st Infantry Division, said the aircraft plunged into the waters of Magdaop, Bukana barangay (village), correcting his earlier statement that the plane had overshot the runway. Habacon said the pilot, identified as Dioscoro Migallos Jr., and co-pilot Julie Lee, were both killed. Their bodies were recovered several hours later. In a separate interview, Assistant Secretary Nilo Jatico of the Air Transportation Office said the crash occurred at about 1300 hrs. Jatico said earlier today that the aircraft from Cebu City was on its final approach when it crashed on the shoreline near the runway.

London, May 16 -- A press report, dated May 17, states: A manager of an air charter company and his female co-pilot died when their light aircraft that took off from Mactan-Cebu International Airport yesterday afternoon crashed in waters off Ipil, Zambo-anga Sibugay. Witnesses said the Beechcraft, a twin-engine Baron B55 model, exploded midair just two

miles away from the Ipil airport. It again exploded upon impact in seawaters. The fatalities were Capt. Dioscoro Migallos Jr., who managed Top-flight Airways Inc., and Capt. Julie Lee, the co-pilot. Their bodies were recovered hours after the crash. Retired Maj. Gen. Nilo Jatico, assistant secretary of the Air Transportation Office (ATO), said the aircraft was chartered to pick up cargo from Ipil and bring it to Cebu. It left MCIA at noon and crashed one mile from the shore of Sitio Sibakya at 1430. The aircraft, with registration RPC-808, is owned by Topflite Airways Inc., which is in the aircraft charter, rental and leasing service, with a hangar at MCIA. Lee was one of its pilots. Supt. Arturo Evangelista, chief of the Police Centre for Aviation Security, said elements of the Seaborne Patrol of the Philippine Army recovered the bodies of the victims.

VH-TFU

London, May 13 -- A press report, dated today, states: Police say the investigation into the cause of the Iron Range air disaster (VH-TFU), in far north Queensland could take up to a year. Fifteen people died in the tragedy near Lockhart River on Cape York on May 7. Acting Superintendent Michael Keating from Cairns police says a report will be prepared for the coroner. But he says it will not be an easy process. "It's the process of statement making, gathering more evidence, preparing reports, assessing what we've got, discussing amongst various agencies about what we're finding, it's just that laborious investigative process which needs to be extremely thorough," he said. "This will take probably 12 months before it's all finalised, so we have to be methodical, take our time and do what needs to be done."

Product Recalls



CHILD CAR SEATS, UNITED STATES

London, May 18 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: A child safety seat manufacturer that produces gear for several brand names will recall

about 190,000 rear-facing seats, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration said today. The recall of products made by Dorel Juvenile Group includes Eddie Bauer, Safety 1st and Cosco brand seats. Dorel has received complaints that the harnesses on seats can loosen after a child has been buckled in, the agency said in a news release. The models involved in the recall are: Eddie Bauer -- 22-625 AFD GB1B, 22-625 GLC GB1B, 22-625 EDG GB1B, and 22-625 MAC GB1B Safety 1st -- 22-325 CMB GB1B, 22-325 VIN GB1B, 22-325 DTA GB1B, and 22-325 TST GB1B Cosco -- 22-300 JOS GB1B Only those seats manufactured between Aug. 19, 2003, and Oct. 20, 2004, are affected. Dorel will mail a free repair kit with two harness clips and instructions to owners who return their registration cards.

FORD MOTOR VEHICLES, UNITED STATES

London, May 14 -- A press report, dated May 13, states: Ford Motor Co is recalling more than 150,000 vehicles used by police departments and taxi companies because of reports of problems with insulation on the dashboard becoming overheated, the company said today. Ford said the recall involved 2003-2005 model year versions of the Crown Victoria used by police departments and Commercial Heavy Duty vehicles used by taxi companies. More than 130,000 of the vehicles are used in the United States and the remainder are used in Mexico and Canada. The nation's second-largest automaker received a small number of reports of smoke or charring conditions coming from the insulation of the dashboard under high temperatures, spokeswoman Kristen Kinley said. Kinley said the insulation could sag near a high-temperature component in the engine and become overheated. She said the reports had not been confirmed and the company had not been able to duplicate the conditions in tests. The vehicles are specially designed for police departments and taxi companies. Owners would be notified in the coming weeks and they will not be charged to have the problem fixed.

TOYOTA MOTOR VEHICLES, JAPAN

London, May 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: Toyota Motor Corp. said today it will recall about

23,800 units of its Landcruiser Prado and Hilux Surf sport-utility vehicles to fix a defect in their suspensions which caused a traffic accident in 2003. In a report filed with the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport, Toyota said the suspension parts for the front wheels deteriorate faster than they should due to inadequate assembling work, and this could make it impossible to drive the vehicles. In September 2003, the defect caused an accident involving minor injuries to two people on a highway in Matsuida, Gunma Prefecture. Five other cases of trouble have also been reported in connection with the defect. The vehicles to be recalled were manufactured in the period from May 2001 to October 2002. Hino Motors Ltd., a Toyota Motor subsidiary, also said the same day it will recall about 200 trucks in three models due to a clutch defect. The vehicles concerned were manufactured from June to November 2004.

London, May 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: Toyota Motor Corp said yesterday it will fix a suspension defect of about 790,000 vehicles, including Tacoma pickups, in one of its largest recalls in the United States. The recall includes 100,000 units of the 2001-2002 versions of 4Runner sport utility vehicles, known as the Hilux Surf in Japan, in addition to 300,000 units of the 2001-2004 models of the Tacoma.

Port Conditions



ITALY

Genoa, May 16 -- Port situation May 16: Genoa: Two bulk carriers waiting for berth. La Spezia: No vessels awaiting normal berths. Savona: One vessel awaiting normal berth. No vessels awaiting special berth. Average delay in berthing one day. -- Lloyd's Agents.

SYRIA

Lattakia, Apr 30 -- Waiting delays at Lattakia port one day and two days at Tartous. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Port Delays

Country/Port	Date of report	No.of vessels waiting and/or days delay
Australia		
Abbott Point	16-May-05	Coal: 1 vessel berthed; 9 vessels due by 28/5; no delays expected.
Brisbane	16-May-05	Coal: Fisherman Island coal berth: 2 vessels berthed; 2 vessels due by 27/5; no delays expected.
Dalrymple Bay	16-May-05	Coal: 3 vessels berthed, 28 anchored; 42 vessels due by 1/7. 10-30 days berthing delay subject to cargo availability and berth congestion; waiting times vary greatly due to different stem supply issues.
Dampier	16-May-05	Iron ore: Shippers are experiencing some cargo grade shortages and stockpile problems; some vessels will berth out of turn and berthing may change at short notice. Parker Point: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 6 anchored; 9 vessels due by 5/6; up to 9 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; East Intercourse Island: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 3 anchored; 13 vessels due by 27/5; up to 7 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; a shift to a lay-by berth for loaded vessels is always a possibility.
Geraldton	16-May-05	Iron ore: 2 vessels due by 21/5; 1-2 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Gladstone	16-May-05	Coal: R.G. Tanna coal terminal: 3 vessels berthed, 6 anchored; 32 vessels due by 5/6; up to 6 days berthing delay expected subject to port congestion and cargo availability; Barney Point: 9 vessels due by 25/6; up to 2 days delay at present; shiploading activities ceased at 06.00 hrs. 16/5 until 06.00 hrs. 26/5 to enable repairs to be carried out to wharf deck..
Hay Point	16-May-05	Coal: 2 vessels berthed, 2 anchored; 11 vessels due by 24/5; up to 5 days berthing delay expected subject to cargo availability and berth congestion; vessels berthing in order of cargo availability.
Newcastle	16-May-05	Coal: Kooragang 4, 5 and 6: 5 vessels anchored; 40 vessels due by 11/6; Dykes 4+5: 1 vessel berthed, 2 anchored; 18 vessels due by 15/6; no unallocated vessels; up to 4 days delay expected prior to berthing due to planned maintenance at Kooragang terminal, coal product problems with some shippers and cargo receipt.
Port Hedland	16-May-05	Iron ore: BHP Iron Ore Pty. Ltd., Mt. Newman (Nelson Point), "A" berth: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 2 anchored; 4 vessels due by 26/5; up to 6 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; shiploader will be closed for repairs for 72 hours from ca. 23/5; "B" berth: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 2 anchored; 5 vessels due by 27/5; up to 4 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; BHP Iron Ore Pty. Ltd., Goldsworthy (Finucane Island) "C" berth: 1 vessel berthed and loading; 1 vessel due 22/5; no delays expected; "D" berth: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 1 anchored; 6 vessels due by 24/5; up to 2 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Port Kembla	16-May-05	Coal: 1 vessel anchored; 12 vessels due by 30/6; CB-1: no vessels; up to 1 day's delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Port Walcott	16-May-05	Iron ore: 1 vessel berthed and waiting, 2 anchored; 19 vessels due by 26/6; up to 7 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability. There will be one berth operation whilst loader maintenance is carried out at berth No. 2 from 16-19/5 and at berth No. 1 from 19-22/5. Line-up expected to change at short notice. Cargo grade shortages and stockpile problems may result in vessels berthing out of turn.
Azerbaijan		
Apsheron	16-May-05	Oil products: Dubendi terminal: Four vessels at berth (1 fuel oil, 2 crude oil, 1 naphtha); 8 vessels in roads (3 crude oil, 5 fuel oil); 3 vessels due by 17/5 (1 fuel oil, 1 crude oil, 1 gasoil).
Brazil		
Paranagua	16-May-05	Fourteen vessels berthed of which 3 fertiliser dischargers, 2 wheat loaders, 1 pellets loader, 1 container vessel, 1 sugar loader, 2 reefer loaders, 4 other loaders/dischargers; 12 vessels waiting in roads, of which 5 to load (2 pellets, 3 other vessels), 7 to discharge (3 fertiliser, 1 containers, 3 others); 45 vessels due over the next 7 days.
Rio Grande	16-May-05	Three vessels berthed of which 1 potassium chloride discharger, 1 sorghum discharger, 1 soya oil loader; 4 vessels waiting in roads; 19 vessels due over the next 10 days.
Santos	16-May-05	Sixteen vessels berthed of which 2 fertiliser dischargers, 5 sugar loaders, 1 pellets loader, 2 wheat dischargers, 2 bulk oil loaders, 3 chemical products dischargers, 1 bulk salt discharger; 26 vessels waiting in roads; 31 vessels due over the next 7 days.
Sao Sebastiao	16-May-05	Four vessels berthed, 2 waiting in roads; 6 vessels due over the next 10 days.

Port Conditions

Vitória 16-May-05 One pig-iron loader berthed; Terminal Vila Velha: 1 granite loader; Tubarao: 1 soya loader, 2 iron ore loaders, 1 other vessel; Praia Mole: 3 steel products loaders, 2 coal dischargers; Portocel: no vessels; Ubu: 1 iron ore loader; 21 vessels waiting in roads; 24 vessels due over the next 7 days.

Bulgaria

Bourgas 16-May-05 Thirteen vessels in port operating, of which 9 loading (2 bulk ammonium nitrate, 1 copper anodes, 4 coils, 1 metals, 1 empty vessel), 4 discharging (1 billets, 1 concrete/iron, 1 pipes, 1 zinc concentrate); 5 vessels waiting in roads, of which 4 to load (1 coils, 1 metals, 2 empty vessels), 1 to discharge iron ore; 17 vessels due, of which 7 to load (2 coils, 1 steel sheets, 1 containers, 1 lead, 1 bulk ammonium nitrate, 1 transformers), 10 to discharge (1 jet oil, 1 magnetite, 2 zinc concentrate, 1 containers, 1 LAB, 1 lead concentrate, 1 slabs, 2 coal).

Varna 16-May-05 Varna East, Varna West, Electrical Power Station, Balchik: Conditions 9-15 May: Forty vessels in port operating of which 20 loading (2 sunflower seeds, 1 scrap, 10 soda, 2 equipment in packing cases, 1 TSP, 1 sulphuric acid, 1 silica sand, 1 packed hardboard, 1 technical salt), 11 discharging (5 bulk coal, 3 copper concentrate, 1 raw phosphate, 1 citrus, 1 clay), 9 discharging/loading containers.

Chile

Antofagasta 16-May-05 Four vessels berthed, 3 berths vacant; 13 vessels due this week to load/discharge concentrates, bulk copper, containers and general cargo.

Arica 16-May-05 Four vessels berthed, 3 berths vacant; 14 vessels due this week.

Iquique 16-May-05 Four vessels berthed, 3 berths vacant; 11 vessels due this week.

Punta Arenas 16-May-05 Four vessels at terminal, 3 berths vacant; 8 vessels due this week.

San Antonio 16-May-05 Five vessels berthed, 4 berths vacant; 21 vessels due this week.

San Vicente 16-May-05 Three vessels berthed, 2 berths vacant; 13 vessels due during the week; Steel pier: 1 vessel at terminal, 1 berth vacant; no vessels due this week; Coronel pier: 2 vessels at terminal, 2 berths vacant; 2 vessels due this week; Oil terminal: 1 tanker at terminal, 1 berth vacant; 1 tanker due this week.

Valparaiso 16-May-05 Two vessels berthed, 6 berths vacant; 3 vessels anchored; 12 vessels due this week.

Colombia

Buenaventura 16-May-05 Shore cranes operational. Seven vessels berthed (2 containers, 5 bulkers), 1 general cargo vessel anchored; 29 vessels due (21 containers, 2 general cargo, 1 bulker, 2 tankers, 3 PCC), with 2 days delay expected for bulkers.

Santa Marta 16-May-05 Shore cranes operational. Two vessels berthed (1 containers, 1 general cargo), no vessels anchored; 11 vessels due (2 containers, 3 general cargo, 2 bananas, 2 bulkers, 2 tankers), with no delays expected.

Cyprus

Limassol 17-May-05 Seven container vessels loading/discharging at berth, 1 conventional vessel discharging at berth; 9 vessels due 18/5, of which 5 containers, 1 conventional vessel, 3 passenger vessels; no delays expected.

Larnaca 17-May-05 Five conventional vessels discharging at berth; 2 conventional vessels due 18/5; no delays expected.

Egypt

Adabiya 16-May-05 Six vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 3 general cargo, 1 livestock, 1 containers, 1 bulk carriers.

Alexandria 16-May-05 Forty-one vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 30 general cargo, 6 bulk carriers, 2 tankers, 3 containers; 16 vessels dry-docked; 23 vessels at inner anchorage, 8 at outer anchorage.

Damietta 16-May-05 Nineteen vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 12 general cargo, 3 bulk carriers, 1 tanker, 1 Ro/Ro, 2 containers; 2 vessels at inner anchorage, 5 at outer anchorage.

Dekheila 16-May-05 Eleven vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 1 general cargo, 8 bulk carriers, 2 containers; 3 vessels at outer anchorage.

Port Said 16-May-05 Nine vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 1 general cargo, 8 containers.

Suez 16-May-05 Seven vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 1 general cargo, 3 reefers, 3 passenger vessels; 1 vessel dry-docked; 4 tugs.

Suez Canal 16-May-05 Thirty vessels transiting Northbound, 27 Southbound.

Port Conditions

Estonia

Tallinn 16-May-05 Paljassaare (formerly Kopli): 1 fertiliser vessel loading at berth; no vessels waiting at anchorage; 1 vessel due, with 9 days berthing delay expected.

Georgia

Poti 16-May-05 Oil products: One vessel loading gasoil at berth; 4 vessels due by 29/5, all to load (1 gasoline, 1 crude oil, 1 kerosene, 1 gasoil).

Israel

Ashdod 17-May-05 Three general cargo vessels loading at berth, 13 vessels discharging at berth (9 general cargo, 4 bulkers), 4 vessels loading/discharging at berth (3 containers, 1 car carriers); 4 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (3 general cargo, 1 bulker), 1 container vessel waiting at anchorage to load/discharge; 1 vessel awaiting orders; 19 vessels due, with 2-3 days delay expected.

Haifa 17-May-05 Two vessels discharging at berth (1 general cargo, 1 bulker), 6 vessels loading/discharging at berth (2 containers, 3 tankers, 1 passenger vessel); 2 general cargo vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge; 2 vessels under repairs/dry-docked, 1 awaiting orders; 17 vessels due, with 2-3 days delay expected.

Kazakhstan

Aktau 16-May-05 Oil products: Four vessels loading crude oil at berth; 4 vessels in roads, all to load; 1 vessel due 16/5 to load.

Pakistan

Karachi 16-May-05 Three vessels loading at berth (1 ethanol, 1 rice, 1 cement), 2 vessels discharging at berth (1 general cargo, 1 crude oil), 1 container vessel loading/discharging at berth; 1 container vessel waiting at anchorage to load, 2 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (1 containers, 1 chemicals); no vessels bunkering, none under repairs/dry-docked, none awaiting orders; 3 vessels due (1 containers, 1 general cargo, 1 chemicals), with no berthing delays expected.

Port Qasim 16-May-05 One project cargo vessel loading at berth, 2 vessels discharging at berth (1 canola seeds, 1 iron ore); 1 container vessel waiting at anchorage to load, 2 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (1 containers, 1 phosphoric acid).

Poland

Gdansk 16-May-05 Seven vessels loading at berth (2 coal, 2 general cargo, 3 bulkers), 2 vessels discharging at berth (1 bulker, 1 grain); 14 vessels under repairs/dry-docked; no vessels waiting at anchorage, 2 waiting in roads (1 bulker, 1 general cargo); 24 vessels due.

Gdynia 16-May-05 Two vessels loading at berth (1 bulker, 1 coal), 2 discharging at berth (1 general cargo, 1 grain); 20 vessels under repairs/dry-docked; no vessels waiting at anchorage, none waiting in roads; 39 vessels due.

Russia

Novorossiysk 16-May-05 Twenty-three vessels in port operating, of which 20 loading (1 bulk cement, 1 bulk urea, 1 HBI, 1 DRI, 5 steel billets, 2 pig-iron, 1 coils, 1 pipes, 1 bulk ammonium nitrate/NPK, 1 coils/copper, 2 oil, 1 wheat, 1 diesel oil, 1 aluminium/other), 1 discharging bulk NPK, 2 discharging/loading containers; 4 vessels waiting in roads, all to load, of which 1 bulk cement, 1 steel billets, 1 coils, 1 scrap/cars; 64 vessels due. Oil terminal: 1 tanker berthed loading crude oil; 4 tankers in roads, all to load, of which 3 crude oil, 1 diesel oil; 7 tankers due, all to load, of which 6 crude oil, 1 diesel oil.

Spain

Bilbao 16-May-05 Twenty-seven vessels operating (6 tankers, 21 others), of which 6 loading, 11 discharging, 10 loading/discharging.

Cadiz (May 17) 17-May-05 Twenty-four vessels in port of which 12 operating (3 Ro/Ros, 4 containers, 1 salt, 1 vegetable oil, 1 soya flour, 1 soya, 1 passenger vessels), 12 vessels under repair; no delays.

Sagunto 16-May-05 Twenty-five vessels in port operating of which 16 discharging (12 steel products, 1 vehicles, 1 fruit, 1 anhydrous ammonia, 1 machinery), 1 loading cement, 6 Ro/Ros discharging/loading general cargo, 2 vessels loading/discharging steel coils; no vessels outside commercial wharf; no berthing delays at present.

Port Conditions

Sri Lanka

Colombo	16-May-05	Berthing/unberthing (pilotage) delays being experienced on breakbulk/conventional vessels. Delays to conventional vessels are due to the fact that container/feeder vessels are given priority at breakbulk berths if there is container congestion. Conventional cargo vessels at BQ 1 and 2 are facing navigation delays. Twelve container/feeder vessels loading at berth, 18 vessels discharging at berth (11 containers/feeders, 1 bagged cement, 1 bulk clinker, 1 bagged urea, 1 bulk LPG, 1 bulk cement, 1 housing units, 1 essential services); no vessels waiting at anchorage; 3 vessels dry-docked, 1 under arrest; no vessels at new tanker berth; 7 vessels due (5 containers/feeders, 1 bulk urea, 1 bulk cement), with no delays expected.
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Ukraine

Ilichevsk	16-May-05	Ten vessels in port operating, of which 4 loading (3 steel products, 1 wheat), 2 discharging ore, 4 discharging/loading containers; 1 vessels in roads to discharge/ load containers; 17 vessels due, of which 10 to load (5 steel products, 3 vegetable oil, 1 containers, 1 wheat), 3 to discharge steel products, 4 to discharge/load containers..
Mariupol	16-May-05	Six vessels in port operating, all loading, of which 1 steel, 1 coal, 2 fire-clay, 1 sulphur, 1 coke; 3 vessels in roads, all to load, of which 1 ferrous metals, 2 fire-clay; 42 vessels due, of which 38 to load (16 steel, 8 coal, 1 coke, 10 fire-clay, 1 wheat, 1 fertiliser, 1 sulphur), 4 to discharge/load (1 containers/steel, 3 containers).
Odessa	16-May-05	Seventeen vessels in port operating, of which 9 loading (3 metal, 1 metal/wood, 1 scrap, 2 corn, 2 wheat), 7 discharging (1 citrus, 1 bananas, 1 sugar, 1 building materials, 2 wheat, 1 luggage), 1 discharging/loading containers; 3 vessels in roads, all to load, of which 1 wheat, 2 metal; 51 vessels due, of which 23 to load (17 metal, 1 scrap, 1 ore, 1 barley, 1 corn, 1 wood, 1 sunflower oil), 8 to discharge (2 metal, 1 citrus, 1 sugar, 1 oil, 1 equipment, 1 general cargo, 1 bananas), 20 to discharge/load containers.

United States

Corpus Christi	17-May-05	No new restrictions in draft (normal 45 ft. 0 ins. BW max. channel draft reported). Channel open under normal traffic. Interstate grain terminal: 2 days delay expected; ADM terminal: 2 days delay expected.
Kalama	17-May-05	Kalama export terminal: 2 days delay expected; United Harvest terminal: no delays expected.
Seattle	17-May-05	Louis Dreyfus (Pier 86) terminal: 2 days delay expected.
Tacoma	17-May-05	Temco terminal: 2 days delay expected.
Vancouver, WA	17-May-05	United Harvest terminal: 2 days delay expected.

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