

August 26 2005

Fury as Japanese insurers slap on Malacca Strait premium

Shipowners warn of blow to national economy, writes Mike Grinter — Friday August 26 2005

JAPANESE shipowners are reeling from a decision by the country's main non-life insurance companies to levy an unconfirmed \$250-a-voyage premium on vessels using the Malacca Strait.

The insurers gave notice of the surcharge, as yet unquantified, after the strait was assessed as an area at risk from terrorism and related perils for hull war risk insurance cover.

Additional premiums will be levied on all Japanese-owned ships that navigate the strait from midnight on September 1.

The decision by all four of Japan's top non-life insurers — Tokio Marine, Nichido Fire Insurance Co, Misui Sumitomo Insurance Co and Sompo Insurance — was conveyed to the Japanese Shipowners Association.

The move follows the controversy surrounding the Lloyd's and London insurance market Joint War Committee's decision to declare the Malacca Strait a war-risk zone.

More than 80% of Japan's oil imports arrive by way of the strait and the country's shipowners are up in arms.

Ricky Ueki, head of MOL's legal and insurance department, said: "We are shocked by the decision and completely supportive of the efforts of the littoral states of Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia in their efforts to refute the war risk assessment."

While insurers have yet to put a figure on the additional premium, Mr Ueki added: "Rumours in the market suggest that the likely additional per-voyage charge for vessels navigating the Malacca Strait will be in the region of \$250. For MOL this is likely to mean an additional \$400,000."

Approached by Lloyd's List, a spokesman for the Japanese Shipowners Association referred to a Kaiji Press report on the association's response to the move.

"If this new listing results in the imposition of additional premiums it will not only have enormous effects on the management of Japanese shipping companies but will also generate serious repercussions on the entire Japanese economy, including the shippers industry," the JSA was quoted by Kaiji Press as saying.

The report added that the JSA had contacted insurers urging them to exercise prudence in the light of the adverse effect on the Japanese economy.

Mr Ueki said that it was perhaps less well-known that other exclusion zones included on the Joint War Committee list included Ambon (Seram), Balikpapan (southeast Borneo), the northeast coast of Borneo including Kudat and Tarakan islands, and Jakarta. Ships sailing in these regions will also be penalised by Japanese marine hull insurers.

"Japanese insurers will impose an additional levy equal of 0.025% of the insured value of the ship," he said. "If you take an average vessel value to be around \$30m, MOL will have to pay an additional \$7,000 per vessel per voyage for ships sailing in those waters."

Lloyds List contacted Misui Sumitomo Insurance for a response and was told that its position would be e-mailed. No reply had arrived by press time.

It is believed that Japanese insurers represent the first concerted move to impose additional premiums for ships using the Malacca Strait since the Joint war Committee edict was announced at the end of June.

- A spokesman for the International Chamber of Shipping said that as far as he was aware Japan was the first country in which hull insurers have acted on the Joint War Committee's designation, writes David Osler .

"If this is correct it is rather disappointing," he said. "We were hoping it would be subject to negotiation between individual owners and underwriters."

A spokesman for the Liberian Shipowners' Council said while his organisation understood the concerns of the insurance industry it did not favour additional premiums and was "reviewing the issue with our members".

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

Vessel	Type	Flag	Class	GT	DWT	Bit	Casualty
<i>CLEOPATRA STAR</i>	passenger	HND	LR	9,598	1,981	1970	Caught fire while undergoing welding at Port Said Aug 11. Fire extinguished same day. Damage to bridge and some passenger cabins.
<i>DAITEI MARU NO.15</i>	fishing	JPN	—	135	—	1950	On fire and adrift in lat 38 23.7N, long 141 54.6E, Aug 15. Reported Aug 18 sunk.
<i>KAPITAN VASYUKOV</i>	general	RUS	RS	898	247	1967	Water ingress in hold off Slavyanka Aug 14. Took 25 deg list to starboard. Towed to Slavyanka repair yard. Repairs ETC 16 Aug.
<i>MALASPINA CASTLE</i>	bulker	CYM	LR	21,173	32,587	1981	In collision with ref Matterhorn in lat 57 47.8N, long 10 44.8E, near Skagen, Aug 16. Sustained forward damage. Anchored outside Skagen for investigation.
<i>MATTERHORN</i>	refrig	LBR	NV	5,102	9,752	1985	In collision with bulk Malaspina Castle in lat 57 47.8N long 10 44.8E, near Skagen, Aug 16. Sustained damage amidships. Anchored outside Skagen for investigation.
<i>NATIONAL PROSPERITY</i>	bulker	PAN	NV	39,283	75,100	1995	Reported stranded/grounded on the breakwater off Port Hoping, Taiwan, Aug 6. Refloated by salvors Aug 12. Expected to dock at Kaohsiung. Repairs ETC 20 days.
<i>NORTRANS</i>	fishing	NIS	NV	375	—	1967	Arrived at Harstad Mar 11 in tow. Reported Aug 12 lying at the Kaarbo yard awaiting probable scrapping.
<i>PHOCEA</i>	yacht	CYM	BV	530	—	1976	Reported Aug 16 "crashed" into hidden rocks at Porto Cervo, Sardinia. Three people seriously injured.
<i>REEF PEMBA</i>	general	VCT	(BV)	2,704	2,587	1981	Sank off Oman, in lat 24 16N, long 58 33E, following collision with lpg carrier <i>Gas Vision</i> Aug 14. Crew rescued by the <i>Gas Vision</i> .
<i>ZIEMIA GORNOSLASKA</i>	bulker	LBR	NV	17,427	26,209	1990	Sustained rudder problems in lat 45 12.5N, long 74 14W, Aug 15 and anchored at St. Zotique. Rudder blade loose and pintles damaged. Tug required to tow to Valleyfield for further investigation.
<i>ZHUYANG III</i>	general	CHN	—	—	—	—	Capsized during strong winds in Bo Hai Bay Aug 17. All 15 crew rescued. Three injured.

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The following reports are reprinted from Lloyd's List



AMBITIOUS F. (Cyprus)

Port Louis, Mauritius, Aug 16 -- C.c. Ambitious F. completed repairs and left Port Louis Aug 12. -- Lloyd's Agents.

ARION (Panama)

Santos, Aug 16 -- General cargo Arion arrived Santos at 0830 hrs, Aug 15, from Rio de Janeiro. -- Lloyd's Agents.

ASIA CONCERTO (Cyprus)

London, Aug 14 -- A press report, dated today, states: A missing Filipino seaman is feared dead as rescuers have not been able to locate him since his vessel, general cargo Asia Concerto, sank following a collision with general cargo Pine Pia off Japan on Wednesday (Aug 10). An official of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) noted that assuming First Engineer Jose Dinamling Lugo is already dead, it may take a week before Japanese authorities could fish his body out from the sunken vessel. The official noted that Lugo may have been trapped inside the bottom of the vessel when it sank off the coast of the Yamaguchi Prefecture Wednesday morning. A vessel engineer is usually assigned at the vessel's engine located at the bottom of the hull and may have been there at that time when water began coming in, the DFA official explained. Lugo is one of the 13 Filipinos among the 15 crew members of the Asia Concerto.

BALTIC SPIRIT (Canada)

See Seaspan Venture.

BBC TEXAS (Antigua & Barbuda)

Beiriut, Aug 18 -- General cargo BBC Texas is still under arrest (at Tripoli). - Lloyd's Agents.

CANADIAN TRANSFER (Canada)

London, Aug 16 -- Bulk Canadian Transfer was reported arriving at and sailing from Sandusky on Aug 8.

CHINOOK (Chile)

Santiago, Aug 11 -- Ro/ro Chinook, after changing damaged plates on the bottom caused by grounding, repairing the rudder and propeller, left the Asmar shipyard 15 days ago. The ship is now moored alongside the Asmar mole in Bahia Catalina awaiting the season to commence tourist trips to the Antarctic. The vessel is now owned by Soc. Naviera DAP y Cia. Ltda. and the ships name will be changed at a later date. -- Lloyd's Agents.

CHOYANG SUNSHINE (South Korea)

Busan, Aug 16 -- The correct name of the product tanker that was in collision with general cargo Eisho Maru 1 is Choyang Sunshine, not

Joyang Sunshine as before reported. Choyang Sunshine completed permanent repairs Aug 10 and returned to normal service as a coastal tanker. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents.

CLEOPATRA STAR (Honduras)

Port Said, Aug 13 -- The old passenger vessel, unknown Cleopatra Star, was under repairs at Port Said arsenal, opposite the port. The vessel caught fire at 1300, Aug 11, apparently when undergoing welding repairs. The fire was extinguished later in the day. However, the vessel sustained complete damage to the bridge and some passenger cabins. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Aug 15 -- A press report, dated Aug 12, states: A fire erupted on passenger Cleopatra Star docked at Port Said yesterday, hours before it was to take on pilgrims to Saudi Arabia. A number of crew members were injured. Dense black smoke loomed over the ship, while ambulances, fire fighters and port rescue teams were deployed to try put out the fire and protect other ships in the port from catching fire. Thirty-five crew members were on board the ship when it caught fire. Several of the crew were injured. The ship was scheduled to travel from Port Said to Suez to pick up hundreds of pilgrims for Jeddah.

Port Said, Aug 15 -- Passenger ro/ro Cleopatra Star, Honduras flag, call sign HQWY2, is ex Tipasa (9598 gt, built 1970). -- Lloyd's Agents.

CONDOR 10 (Singapore)

London, Aug 18 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: The general manager of a Guernsey ferry company says the recent problems with its fleet are unprecedented in his 20 years with the company. Passengers have experienced delays with all three of the high-speed ferries suffering problems. Condor said today that it was hopeful that normal service would be restored later in the day. The Guernsey to St Malo route has been running behind schedule, with the ferry Condor Vitesse (5007 gt, built 1997) operating on reduced power. A fault in a spring drive was expected to be fixed today. Mechanical problems with the fleet's ferry Condor 10 (3240 gt, built 1993) are now thought to be repaired, while the ferry Condor Express (5005 gt, built 1996) has been suffering problems with its cooling system. General Manager Jan Milner said: "We dry dock them for a major service every 12 months and they undergo a constant round of minor services overnight. What happened was extraordinary." "If we didn't service them and carry out regular maintenance it would be a lot worse."

CONDOR EXPRESS (Bahamas)

See Condor 10.

CONDOR VITESSE (Bahamas)

See Condor 10.

CSCL KOBE (Liberia)

See "Forest, Indonesia and Malaysia" under "Fires & Explosions."

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

DAITEI MARU NO.15 (Japan)

London, Aug 16 -- Following Japan Navigational Warning, dated today, states: Fishing Daitei Maru No.15, 135 gt, on fire and adrift in lat 38 23.7N, long 141 54.6E at 1845, UTC, Aug 15.

London, Aug 18 -- Following Japan Navigational Warning, dated yesterday, states: Fishing Daitei Maru No.15 has sank.

DOGGER (Bahamas)

See Sierra Express.

EDNA MARIA (Comoros)

London, Aug 11 -- Following notice to mariners issued at 1526, UTC, Aug 10: General cargo Edna Maria aground vicinity lat 13 27.74N, long 92 52.41E.

EISHO MARU 1 (Panama)

See Choyang Sunshine.

EVCO 99 (Canada)

See Seaspan Venture.

EWL TRINIDAD (Cyprus)

See "Drugs Found on Cyprus Vessel at Bridgetown, Barbados" under "Miscellaneous."

FRONT RIDER (Singapore)

London, Aug 14 -- Following received from Singapore Port Operations, timed 0150, UTC: Bulk/oil Front Rider (89004 gt, built 1992) from Singapore, ran aground north of Horsburgh at 2200, local time, yesterday. Vessel remains aground.

London, Aug 14 -- Following received from Singapore Port Operations, timed 1200, UTC: Bulk/oil Front Rider is still aground.

London, Aug 15 -- Following received from Singapore Port Operations, timed 0510, UTC: Bulk/oil Front Rider refloated at about 0715, local time, today. Understand vessel is proceeding to China.

London, Aug 15 -- Following received from managers of bulk/oil Front Rider, dated today: V Ships report that Front Rider, loaded with 165,000 tonnes of iron ore, which grounded on sandy bottom 12 nautical miles north-east of the Horsburgh Light on the Eastern Bank of the Middle Channel, Singapore, on Aug 13, was successfully refloated at 0715 hrs, local time, today. The master of the vessel reports that contact by way of the port bow resulted in no ingress of water, no pollution and no injuries to crew members. A divers inspection has now been completed and no damage is reported. The Front Rider will now resume its passage to China for discharge of cargo. The V.Ships UK Contingency Team was assisted in the refloating operation by Lloyds SERS and SMIT, who were contracted on a commercial basis. The Managers will undertake a full investigation into the causes of this incident.

GAS VISION (Panama)

See Reef Pemba.

GOLDEN BAY (Malta)

Valletta, Aug 12 -- A press report, dated Aug 9, states: A bunker barge

carrying diesel oil collided with the jetty at Lighter's Wharf, yesterday but no pollution ensued, the Malta Maritime Authority said. No one was injured in the incident which occurred at about 1000 hrs while non specific tanker Golden Bay was being shifted from Flagstone Wharf to Ras Hanzir. The MMA said a boat moored in the area was sunk as a result of the incident. The jetty was slightly damaged. The Ports Directorate is compiling information about the collision and is liaising with the police to establish the cause. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Valletta, Aug 12 -- Non specific tanker Golden Bay: While turning hard to port the vessel was caught by the wind and made contact with the knuckle of the Regatta Club at Bridge Wharf doing some damage to both the vessel and the jetty. Damage to the vessel was minor and did not effect it's integrity. At the time of the incident Golden Bay was in ballast and the wind was north-west 5/6. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Aug 13 -- Non specific tanker Golden Bay sailed Valletta Aug 12.

GRANDE NAPOLI (Italy)

London, Aug 15 -- Ro/ro Grande Napoli was reported arriving at Nagoya on Aug 13, from Kuwait.

GRETA (Antigua & Barbuda)

See under "Miscellaneous".

HAJ FAYEZ (Cambodia)

Tunis, Aug 18 -- General cargo Haj Fayez is presently undergoing repairs at Gabes port. The vessel was towed from Bizerta to Gabes at 1450 hrs, Aug 12. -- Lloyd's Agents.

HORIZON NAVIGATOR (U.S.A.)

London, Aug 14 -- Various emergency teams including nine companies of Los Angeles Firefighters and three LAFD Fire Boats, under the direction of Assistant Chief Ralph Terrazas, responded to a fire on c.c. Horizon Navigator (28212 gt, built 1972) at 2500 South Navy Way in the Terminal Island/Fish Harbor area, at 1108, Aug 12. First units on the scene reported smoke showing from the hull of the docked vessel. Investigating the source of the heavy smoke emitting from a cargo hole, firefighters quickly ascertained that a fire was in the insulation of a cargo hole cover and in one container in the cargo hole. Firefighters aggressively used handlines from the deck to attack the fire in the container while LAFD Fire Boats and LAFD ground units simultaneously used heavy streams and handlines to passively cool the hull of the vessel. Firefighters contained the fire to the one container and extinguished the fire in just one hour and nine minutes. Damage was limited to the vessel's insulation, along with the glass and wood products enclosed in the thirty-foot container. Using a dockside crane, seven cargo containers were removed from the cargo hole to insure that the

fire had not spread to other containers. No injuries were reported and the cause of the fire is listed as the misuse of a welder's torch and rod. (Note -- Horizon Navigator arrived Los Angeles at 1630, Aug 11.)

London, Aug 15 -- C.c. Horizon Navigator was reported departing from Los Angeles at 1945 hrs, Aug 13, bound for Honolulu.

JOYANG SUNSHINE (South Korea)

See Choyang Sunshine.

KAPITAN VASYUKOV (Russia)

Vladivostok, Aug 15 -- Following information was obtained from the Vladivostok Salvage Co-ordinating Centre, dated today: Yesterday, Aug 14, general cargo Kapitan Vasyukov (898 gt, built 1967), in ballast, sailed Slavyanka for Japan. At 1735 hrs, a leak was discovered in the hold of the vessel. Due to a heavy list (25 degs to starboard), the master made a decision to cast ashore, in order to prevent the vessel from sinking. At 1745 hrs, the vessel was "tugged" to Slavyanka Repair yard by tug Slavyanets. A hole with an approximate size of 500 x 220 mm in the underwater part of the hull was discovered. At the present time the vessel is in the dock. Repair work will be completed tomorrow, Aug 16. None of the 24 crew members were injured. - Lloyd's Agents.

KERAVNOS (Greece)

London, Aug 12 -- Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: While ferry Keravnos (195 gt, built 1972) was sailing two nautical miles from Piraeus port, damage was sustained to the starboard main engine at 1810, local time, Aug 11. With one engine in operation, the vessel arrived safely at Piraeus at 1827 and the passengers were disembarked. Departure has been prohibited pending inspection of the repairs.

KIPEROUSA (Malta)

London, Aug 17 -- A press report, dated Aug 16, states: The 1400 ton Dormac barge Jumbo and its attendant tug Pentow Service, from Durban, put into East London over the weekend in weather which demanded top seamanship. The vessels will be used by salvors, SvitzerWijsmuller, to salvage hardwood logs from the wreck of the stranded bulk Kiperousa. Swells of six metres prevented the operation from starting on Friday (Aug 12). "The weather forecast was for big seas until at least Monday, so we decided to head for East London and, as you see, conditions are still pretty rough," said salvage master Nic Sloane yesterday. "Hopefully we can look at starting work on Wednesday or later in the week," he added. He added that the crack in the hull of Kiperousa had widened but at present there was no imminent danger of the logs awash in the four flooded holds being lost overboard. Both Pentow Service and Jumbo are berthed on the West Bank.

A second tug and barge which the salvors intend using in the new phase of the Kiperousa salvage operation are proceeding to the Sunshine Coast from the Middle East.

LANDS END (U.K.)

London, Aug 15 -- A press report, dated Aug 12, states: Yacht Lands End which ran afoul of a reef off Corsica sank yesterday after spending three days half-submerged with a gaping hole in its hull, French officials said. British master, Christopher Jones, 52, was put under criminal investigation for putting the lives of those on board the yacht at risk through negligence by hitting the charted reef off southern Corsica in calm weather, state prosecutor Jose Thorel said. Jones, who was free on bail, was also put under investigation for polluting the waters around the island with fuel that leaked from the stricken vessel. The uppermost part of the wreck lay 1.5 metres underwater, said officials who had been preparing a salvage operation.

Marseilles, Aug 17 -- Yacht Lands End ran aground off Sagone coast, south-west Corsica, on Aug 9. On Aug 10 formal notice to stop any pollution was sent to owner by French Maritime Affairs (PRE.MAR.MED). Due to yacht's very unstable position on reef it slipped from reef and sunk on Aug 12. During bank holiday weekend, arrangements were made on behalf of owner for pumping operation of 70 cubic metres gazoil jointly with PREMARMED and local anti-pollution means. Weather conditions allow operation to start today until tomorrow. Meanwhile tenders have been submitted for wreck removal which should take place shortly. -- Lloyd's Agents.

LOK RAJESHWARI (India)

Tunis, Aug 16 -- Bulk Lok Rajeshwari is still under arrest by receivers Office Ded Cerales and has not yet commenced repairs. -- Lloyd's Agents.

MAARTEN JACOB (Netherlands)

London, Aug 13 -- Fishing Maarten Jacob arrived Scheveningen Aug 12.

MADRUS (Estonia)

London, Aug 14 -- A press report, dated today, states: Firefighters in St. John's, Newfoundland, are battling a blaze on board trawler Madrus (1602 gt, built 1986). A fire broke out on board Madrus yesterday morning, in a room containing cardboard boxes. At the time, the vessel was near the Flemish Cap, about 470 kilometres east of St. John's. The 32 crew members were unable to extinguish the fire, but managed to keep it contained to one room. A search and rescue spokesman in St. John's said a Coast Guard vessel escorted Madrus to St. John's this morning. Both vessels arrived in port shortly after 1000, local time, with no reports of injuries.

London, Aug 15 -- A press report, dated Aug 14, states: Officials credited the quick action of the crew on board trawler Madrus that caught fire off

Newfoundland and Labrador for containing the blaze that caused extensive damage to one of the ship's compartments. Madrus arrived in St. John's this morning after the fire broke out the day before. No one was hurt in the blaze. The fire was spotted in a room containing cardboard boxes. Crew members shut the hatches to the room to smother the flames, then contacted search and rescue officials. A coast guard vessel arrived and escorted the trawler and its 32 crew members into St. John's as the fire continued to burn. The blaze was extinguished in about five minutes by about a dozen local firefighters. The cause of the fire was not known.

MALASPINA CASTLE (Cayman Islands)

See Matterhorn.

MATTERHORN (Liberia)

London, Aug 17 -- Following received from Aarhus MRCC, timed 0925, UTC:Ref Matterhorn (5102 gt, built 1985), Klaipeda for Valparaiso, in ballast, and bulk Malaspina Castle (21173 gt, built 1981), Porsgrunn for Uusikapunki, in ballast, were in collision near Skagen, in lat 57 47.8N, long 10 44.8E, at 0142, UTC, yesterday. Matterhorn sustained damage amidships and Malaspina Castle sustained damage forward. There has been no leakage. Both vessels are still at anchor outside Skagen for inspection and investigation by authorities. (Note -- Matterhorn had sailed Klaipeda 1400, Aug 12.)

META (Malta)

See "Meta" under "Miscellaneous".

MGM 3030 (U.S.A.)

London, Aug 18 -- A Coast Guard Houston press release, dated Aug 17, states: The Coast Guard, working in conjunction with Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and local officials, continues to monitor a sulphuric acid spill that resulted from grounded tank barge MGM 3030 (1851 gt, built 1965) today. The tank barge and the cargo are owned by Martin Product Sales. The barge was moved approximately a quarter mile, to open Chocolate Bayou and to make removal of its cargo easier. Approximately 126,000 gallons of acid cargo was off loaded from the tank barge onto a smaller barge for transfer and storage at a facility. The tank barge that grounded on the banks of the bayou Monday (Aug 15) night is leaking some of its sulphuric acid cargo. Continued water sampling shows changes in pH levels, indicating the presence of acid in the water. Samples taken early this morning were the first indication that the barge was leaking. The direction and density of the acid plume is being tracked through the use of water samples. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department biologists continue to monitor the situation and advise the incident command team regarding potential impacts to fish and wildlife

resources. However, the extent of the spill and its effects on wildlife are still being determined. The Chocolate Bayou area is considered ecologically important because it has significant wetlands and marshes that provide habitat for waterbirds, wildlife and many species of fish. Estuaries like this one, where freshwater from rivers meets saltwater from the sea, are among the most important ecological features on the Texas coast, providing "nursery" areas that form the foundation of the coastal food chain. The Coast Guard, TCE, TP&W, Brazoria County Office of Emergency Management, and Brazoria County Sheriff's Office Marine Patrol are on scene overseeing the response and recovery efforts. T&T Marine has been hired by Martin Product Sales for operational response. The tank barge was grounded Monday evening when it started to sink. The starboard bow of the barge is now partially submerged. At the time of the grounding it was carrying 425,000 gallons of sulphuric acid. Coast Guard investigators from Marine Safety Unit Galveston, Texas, are on scene gathering information to determine the cause of the accident. The Coast Guard has established a safety zone for Chocolate Bayou near Peterson Landing. There are no injuries associated with this incident.

MISTY II (Canada)

See Seaspan Venture.

MITHRIL (Netherlands)

London, Aug 15 -- General cargo Mithril was reported arriving at Hansweert at 1245 hrs, Aug 14.

MSC AL AMINE (Morocco)

Tunis, Aug 15 -- General cargo MSC Al Amine is still under repair at the dry-dock of CMR (TUNISIA). There is no fixed date on the completion of repairs so far, but according to our surveyor, the vessel is expected to remain in the same position for another four weeks at least. -- Lloyd's Agents.

NATIONAL PROSPERITY (Panama)

Copenhagen, Aug 11 -- Danish managers of bulk National Prosperity (39283 gt, built 1995) report vessel stranded/grounded on breakwater off Port Hopping, Taiwan, Aug 6. Salvage arranged by interested underwriters and lightering vessel has been necessary. Vessel expected to dock at Kaohsiung. Repairs are expected to last 20 working days. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Aug 15 -- Understand bulk National Prosperity was refloated Aug 12, after cargo lightering, by local salvors.

NICKOLAOS (Panama)

London, Aug 17 -- General cargo Nickolaos was reported arriving at Houston at 1610 hrs, Aug 15, and sailing at 1630 hrs, Aug 16.

NORA VITTORIA (U.S.A.)

London, Aug 15 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Boston Harbor

Cruises passenger Nora Vittoria (98 gt, built 1998) struck two small pleasure crafts that were anchored in the harbour, causing minor injuries to four people, the Coast Guard said today. The accident occurred shortly after 2100, yesterday and involved the Nora Vittoria, one of Boston Harbor Cruises' larger catamarans that carries up to 400 passengers. Three of the four people on board the smaller crafts were treated and released from South Shore Hospital.

NORASIA TAURUS (Antigua & Barbuda)

Limassol, Aug 12 -- C.c. Norasia Taurus, now renamed Norasia Balkans, is currently berthed alongside Larnaca port; discharge of cargo has been completed with the exception of the fire damaged containers, which are expected to be discharged today. Discharged containers are in Larnaca port and will be shipped to final destination. The vessel arrived at Larnaca under own power with salvors tug escort, not towed as previously reported. Services under LOF were terminated on Aug 3. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Limassol, Aug 17 -- C.c. Norasia Taurus, now named Norasia Balkans sailed from Larnaca on Aug 14, for "Open Sea" (believed to Greece). -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Aug 18 -- C.c. Norasia Taurus, now named Norasia Balkans passed through the Suez Canal (into the Red Sea) on Aug 15. -- Lloyd's Agents.

NORTRANS (NIS)

Trondheim, Aug 12 -- Fishing Nortrans (375 gt, built 1967), which arrived at Harstad, in tow, on Mar 11, is still lying at the Kaarbo Yard, Harstad. Understand from the trustee that as this yard is bankrupt, the vessel will most probably be scrapped. -- Lloyd's Agents.

NORWAY (Bahamas)

London, Aug 14 -- Understand passenger Norway arrived in tow at Port Klang at noon, Aug 10.

London, Aug 16 -- A press report, dated Aug 13, states: Passenger Norway, currently anchored off Port Klang: Understand vessel's turbines are still dismantled, making its imminent use as an active, albeit slowed-down, cruise or casino vessel in the region unlikely. It is reported that inspections by 14 Indian scrap merchants have been undertaken and that there is a possibility the vessel could be towed to Mormugao in the next few weeks.

NORWEGIAN DREAM (Bahamas)

London, Aug 13 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Hundreds of cruise ship passengers missed flights and had to spend last night in Seattle after passenger Norwegian Dream (50764 gt, built 1992) arrived about seven hours late after two of the vessel's four engines failed. The company said the engine problems affected the vessel's speed, but not its

safety. The company said passengers were advised of the engine problem before they left on the Alaska cruise. (Note -- Norwegian Dream arrived Seattle at 1410, Aug 11 and sailed the same day.)

London, Aug 15 -- A press report, dated Aug 12, states: The Coast Guard boarded Norwegian Cruise Line passenger Norwegian Dream yesterday afternoon after it arrived in Elliott Bay more than six hours late, stranding many of its passengers in Seattle overnight. A passenger called the Coast Guard to report that two of the ship's four engines were not working, so a team was sent to explore Norwegian Dream after it docked, said Lt. Cmdr. Rick Rodriguez. The team found two engines working and two under repair. It has sufficient power to leave port, Rodriguez said. Norwegian Cruise Line officials in Miami said yesterday that the ship has had a "minor technical issue" affecting its speed "for a number of cruises." In addition, the ship suffered another technical issue on the return of its most recent cruise, said Susan Robison, a spokeswoman for the cruise line. In addition to the slow cruise speed, the ship skipped Sitka, one of the main ports of call. Many on board who did not book their flights through Norwegian Cruise Line were left to buy new tickets. Robison said it was "physically impossible" for the cruise line to know everyone's flight schedules, so instead, they offered their "cruise-only" guests free Internet and telephone service to make travel arrangements. Norwegian also promised to put all stranded passengers up overnight at a downtown hotel. "We do not anticipate that the additional technical issue will affect this upcoming cruise," Robison said. According to passengers on Norwegian Dream, they were told before leaving Seattle that the ship was without an engine. Robison said that passengers were given the opportunity to cancel and receive a refund before leaving Seattle. The same opportunity was given to passengers on board the next cruise, which left Seattle late last night. The next cruise will skip the port of Ketchikan, and passengers on board now are being offered a credit of \$300 per cabin as a gesture of good will.

ORLA (Malta)

London, Aug 15 -- Bulk Orla was reported passing Gibraltar at 2346 hrs, Aug 13, on passage for Torre Annunziata.

OSTRIA I (Panama)

London, Aug 16 -- Chem.tank Ostria I was reported passing through the Dardanelles, in a westerly direction, on Aug 15, on passage Gelibolu for Piraeus.

PHOCEA (Cayman Islands)

London, Aug 17 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Prince and Princess Michael of Kent had to be rescued from the £30million yacht

Phocea (530 gt, built 1976) after it crashed into rocks off Sardinia. The Princess and her husband were badly shaken after the crash and had to be taken to safety by motorboat after the accident at Porto Cervo. Three people on the 246ft yacht, owned by Lebanese billionaire Mouna Ayoub, were left seriously injured in hospital. The four-masted Phocea smashed into hidden rocks shortly after setting sail from the port. It is not known how or why the crash happened.

PINE PIA (South Korea)

See Asia Concerto.

POCHARD (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Aug 17 -- Bulk Pochard sailed from Paranagua on Aug 2 and was next reported arriving at Santos at 0650 hrs, Aug 16.

PRIDE SOUTH SEA (Liberia)

London, Aug 16 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Drill ship Pride South Sea (10456 gt, built 1977) while they were dropping the anchors, the rig suddenly tilted at about 1600, yesterday afternoon, about 120km from Mossel Bay. One of crew said "Within five minutes it had tilted about 16 degrees. It was too steep to walk up against the platform." The front end of the rig had tilted so low that the lifeboat hanging from that side was a mere 6m above the water. He estimated the swells to have been between 10m and 15m high. If the rig had tilted another two degrees, it would have toppled. "Even with all the technology in the world, they would never be able to tilt an oil rig as quickly as it did on Sunday afternoon," said another crew man. While some of the crew battled to stabilise the rig, the rest were told to prepare for evacuation. Of the 97 people on board, 81 left the rig. The rig left Cape Town, where it had been undergoing repairs for several weeks, on Aug 9. On Aug 11, it reached an oil point near Mossel Bay. The rig, which was built in 1977, must undergo a regulatory run to dry dock for repairs and maintenance every 30 years. Captain Saleem Modak, acting operational manager of the South African Maritime Safety Association (Samsa), said the rig was stabilised late on yesterday. By 1300, today, it was tilting at an angle of 6% and by 1600 hrs about 2%. Since rough seas prevented divers from examining the outside of the rig, they tried to find out from the inside what had caused the rig to tilt. It has to be decided whether any faults can be repaired at sea, or whether it must be towed back to Cape Town. According to Tumo Mogamisi, spokesperson for PetroSA, which is renting the rig, it was decided to evacuate non-essential crew because it was not known what had caused the rig to tilt. In order to facilitate a quick evacuation, the crew was taken to other oil rigs and to George. The crew, which comprise South Africans, Britons, Americans and French personnel, will return to the platform as soon as their safety can be assured.

Mogamisi said no oil was spilt when the rig tilted, as the crew had not started drilling yet.

QUINTE LOYALIST (Canada)

London, Aug 12 -- At 1200 hrs, Aug 5, with 64 passengers and cars on board, ferry Quinte Loyalist (205 gt, built 1954) lost main engine on approach to the Adolphustown wharf, Adolphustown lat (44 02.51N, long 77 03.51W) and struck the wharf. No damage to vessel and no injuries. Minor damage only to wharf fender.

REEF PEMBA (St. Vincent & Grenadines)

Muscat, Aug 14 -- Understand general cargo Reef Pemba (2704 gt, built 1981) has struck some 38 miles off the Omani Coast (exact location not known) following a collision with lpg Gas Vision (44694 gt, built 1996). Crew has been saved by Gas Vision. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Aug 14 -- Following received from Stavanger RCC, timed 0815, UTC: General cargo Reef Pemba sank following collision with lpg Gas Vision in lat 24 16N, long 58 33E, just after midnight last night. Crew of Reef Pemba safely picked up by Gas Vision.

ROYAL PACIFIC (Panama)

Taipei, Aug 15 -- According to the web news of the port of Kaohsiung, the current situation of passenger Royal Pacific is: Pumping out of the 160 tonnes fuel/lub oil stowed in the oil tanks was completed on Jul 26. The salvage company Smit will arrange a heavy lift salvage vessel for the lifting operation. The lifting operation is to commence on Aug 23 and complete on or around Sep 30. -- Lloyd's Agents.

SAMUDRA SURAKSHA (India)

See "Damage to Undersea Internet Cable, Arabian Sea" under "Miscellaneous."

SEA STAR (Singapore)

London, Aug 16 -- Following received from Singapore Port Operations, timed 0700, UTC, today: Chemical/oil carrier Sea Star (4338 gt, built 1988) grounded in approximately lat 01 11.08N, long 103 52.95E, Aug 7. Vessel was refloated with tug assistance 2300, local time, Aug 8. Vessel then proceeded east bound. (Note -- Sea Star had sailed Pulau Bukom 0200, Aug 7 for China.)

SEASPAN VENTURE (Canada)

London, Aug 11 -- On Aug 6 tug Seaspans Venture (83 gt, built 2001) was towing barge Evco 99 (2125 gt, built 1962), bound for Metro Mitchell berth in Mitchell Slough, B.C. (lat 49 12.24N, long 123 04.06W). Both bridles to the tow broke and the barge struck the berth, the yacht Baltic Spirit (13 gt) and fishing Misty II (12 gt).

SELENDANG AYU (Malaysia)

London, Aug 18 -- A Coast Guard Anchorage press release, dated Aug 11, states: Four months into the resumption of the bulk Selendang Ayu

spring and summer shoreline cleanup, the Unified Command reports that oil is steadily disappearing from Unalaska Island shorelines due to the clean-up crews' efforts. Shoreline Clean-up and Assessment Teams designated 123 of 806 pre-identified segments as requiring treatment. Of these areas, 95 segments, 77%, have been cleaned. Once a segment is treated, the pre-assessment team carefully scrutinizes it for final inspection or further treatment. To date, respective landowners have inspected 72 segments, 59%, and State, Federal and responsible party representatives have certified them as clean. During the height of the clean-up, 26 vessels were on-scene providing berthing accommodations and support for over 200 workers. Clean-up progress has allowed for the demobilization of several vessels and over 60 workers. Beach treatment methods include manually removing heavily concentrated oil, cutting oiled vegetation, dry tilling, and sediment relocation. During dry tilling, heavy equipment is used to mix up a shallow layer of oiled sediment on the beach, breaking up the oil and exposing it to air. Sediment relocation involves moving lightly oiled shoreline sediments into the tidal zone, breaking up the oil through wave action. Prior to relocating sediment, containment boom is deployed on the site to prevent oil from remobilizing. Both methods accelerate natural degradation processes. Sites are cleaned of heavily concentrated oil to the maximum extent possible before either method is used. Selendang Ayu remains aground and broken in two at Spray Cape, with the bow section completely underwater. A local contractor has begun salvage operations to remove the superstructure and deck equipment from the stern section.

London, Aug 18 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Workers are dismantling the grounded bulk Selendang Ayu which went aground and broke in half on Unalaska Island in the Aleutians in December. But much of the shipwreck will remain in place, at least for now. State policy calls for total removal of the vessel, but officials may decide to leave part of the broken freighter in place, since cutting up and hauling off both halves could do more environmental damage than leaving it in place, said Leslie Pearson of the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation. The state will make a final decision this winter on what to do with the vessel, Pearson said. Removal could begin next year, along with additional beach cleanup if necessary. Workers have stripped its interior of furniture, fixtures and thousands of gallons of paint, hydraulic fluid and other toxic fluids, according to Dan Magone, president of the Unalaska salvage company Magone Marine Services Inc. Last week, Magone's crew started cutting apart the five-story white superstructure using welding torches

and a huge crane. The work will likely be finished by late October, said Magone.

SEMLOW (St. Vincent & Grenadines)

See "Somalia" under "Piracy."

SHINOUSSA (Greece)

London, Aug 15 -- Product tanker Shinoussa, Tees for New York, passed Dover Strait Aug 13.

SIDER MARLEEN (Italy)

London, Aug 13 -- General cargo Sider Marleen arrived Malaga Aug 9 from Volos.

SIERRA EXPRESS (Greece)

Falmouth, Aug 12 -- C.c. Sierra Express completed repairs and sailed 2200, Aug 11, for Port of Spain. General cargo Dogger moved to Duchy Wharf, Falmouth Docks, 1000 today to tranship cargo to be taken to Santander. -- Lloyd's Agents.

SIR TRISTRAM (U.K.)

London, Aug 16 -- Following received from Coastguard Liverpool MRSC, timed 0716, UTC: Ro/ro Sir Tristram (6824 gt, built 1966), alongside at Cammel Lairds, lat 53 23.2N, long 03 00.4W, undergoing refurbishment, reported a fire on board in a store-room, at 0610, UTC. Fire brigade on scene and standing by incident dealt with by crew. Fire extinguished at 0627, UTC, with fire units remaining on scene to ventilate the area. No reports of any casualties.

SOULA (North Korea)

Aleppo, Aug 17 -- Our Tartous office reports that according to the owner of general cargo Soula the vessel is still in Tartous port. -- Lloyd's Agents.

STAD AMSTERDAM (Netherlands)

London, Aug 18 -- A press report, dated Aug 17, states ClipperStad Amsterdam (723 gt, built 2000) has run aground in the IJ River as the flagship was heading the procession of over 600 boats from Ymuiden to Amsterdam for SAIL 2005. Crown-Prince Willem-Alexander was steering the vessel at the time of the accident. Tugs freed Stad Amsterdam and pulled it into deeper water shortly after "1400" hrs a news agency reported.

London, Aug 18 -- A press report, dated Aug 17, states: Although his flagship, clipperStad Amsterdam, ran aground briefly while he was steering, Crown Prince Willem-Alexander performed the opening ceremony for SAIL 2005 on schedule today. Stad Amsterdam, with the prince and Mayor Job Cohen on board, arrived in Amsterdam from IJmuiden at 1345 hrs. It had set out at the head of a 600-strong fleet of Tall Ships and other vessels from Ymuiden at 1100 hrs. Tugs were needed when Stad Amsterdam got stuck briefly in the IJ River. Stad Amsterdam was meant to be the first to arrive at the SAIL terrain near Amsterdam's Central Station, but the Norwegian Statsraad Lehmkuh got in first.

STRYMON (Greece)

London, Aug 16 -- Chem.tank Strymon was reported sailing from Montreal on/about Aug 10.

SUNA (Russia)

See Mithril.

SUNNY JEWEL (Panama)

London, Aug 16 -- Following navigation warning issued at 1940, JST, Aug 4: Diving and sunken wreck (? chem.tank Sunny Jewel) removal works, within 500 metres of lat 33 38 11N, long 132 11 53E, daytime daily Aug 6 to Nov 30.

SWEET LADY II (Malta)

London, Aug 11 -- Following received from Coast Guard New Orleans, timed 1911, UTC: Bulk Sweet Lady II was successfully refloated earlier this morning, but after proceeding only 100 feet, the vessel re-grounded. Further lightering operations will now be undertaken and it is anticipated it will be three days before another refloating attempt can be made.

London, Aug 15 -- Following received from Coast Guard New Orleans, timed 1430, UTC: Bulk Sweet Lady II was refloated with tug assistance at 0930, UTC, yesterday following lightering of cargo. It subsequently proceeded to Buzzichem Terminal, New Orleans, for class inspection.

TALLIN (Antigua & Barbuda)

Miami, Aug 12 -- G/L gave an extension for repairs to effected to general cargo Tallin until Aug 31. The vessel departed the river on the morning of Aug 10. They are currently soliciting bids for repairs. -- Lloyd's Agents.

TAYLOR CATHERINE (U.S.A.)

London, Aug 15 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Five crew members on 96 foot supply Taylor Catherine were rescued late Friday (Aug 12) after their vessel struck an unmanned, unlit rig in the Gulf of Mexico about 30 miles east of Venice, the Coast Guard said. The crew of four men and one woman called the Coast Guard at 1013 hrs, reporting that the vessel was taking on water, Guard spokesman Petty Officer Robert M. Reed said. A helicopter crew from the Coast Guard air station at Belle Chasse delivered a radio to the crew at 2340 hrs, and a vessel from the Venice Coast Guard station picked up the stranded group. The crew was brought to the Venice station and picked up by representatives of the Grand Isle company that owns the vessel, Reed said. The vessel was left tied to the rig, Reed said. There were no injuries in the incident.

TRANSFER (Antigua & Barbuda)

Belize, Aug 15 -- With the passing of Hurricane "Eileen," Jul 15-16, near to Belize, part c.c. Transfer was pushed higher onto the reef. Attempts to refloat her have been unsuccessful. The owners are presently in discussion with their Underwriters with regard

to the next move. In the meanwhile, the salvage operation is on hold. -- Lloyd's Agents.

TUGCE-T. (Turkey)

Monrovia, Aug 17 -- Product tanker Tugce-T. left Monrovia yesterday for Lagos. -- Lloyd's Agents.

WHITE STAR (Cayman Islands)

Genoa, Aug 12 -- Yacht White Star sailed from Genoa at the beginning of August for the South of France. -- Lloyd's Agents.

WINDWARD II**(St. Vincent & Grenadines)**

See under "Miscellaneous".

YONG NING NO.7 (China)

Tianjin, Aug 18 -- Vessel Yong Ning No.7, length 116.2 metres, breadth 16.80 metres, 7238 dwt, owner China Zhejiang Huangyan Sanjiang Shipping Co, cargo "mine powder," sank at 1620, Aug 17. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Aug 18 -- A press report, dated Aug 17, states: A cargo ship of Zhejiang Province sank this afternoon in the Bo Hai Bay, and all the 19 crew members were rescued 20 minutes later. A source with the North China Sea Salvage Bureau under the Ministry of Communications said that a strong wind measuring nine (strong gale) on the Beaufort Scale occurred on the Bo Hai Sea, making the Zhejiang cargo ship, carrying sand from Ningbo to Qinhuangdao, sink at "1520" hrs. The bureau received the SOS signal that a cargo ship was about to sink at 1400 hrs and mobilized two ships and a helicopter to save the cargo ship immediately. All the crew members, who abandoned the ship when it was sinking, were rescued at 1542 hrs.

YONG TONG (Hong Kong)

London, Aug 15 -- Bulk Yong Tong was reported passing Gibraltar at 0528 hrs, Aug 13, bound for Puerto Ordaz. (See issue of Aug 4.)

YUAN ZHI (China)

See "Bangladesh" under "Piracy".

ZHU YANG No.3 (China)

London, Aug 17 -- A press report, dated today, states: General cargo Zhu Yang III, Tianjin for Ningbo, cargo 4,000 tons of coal and 30 containers, capsized early today in the Bo Hai Bay, and all the 15 crew members were rescued about five hours later. The source with Hebei provincial marine search and rescue centre said a strong wind measuring nine (strong gale) on the Beaufort Scale occurred on the Bohai Sea, causing Zhu yang III to h capsize. The centre received the SOS signal and mobilized six ships and one helicopter to save the cargo ship at 0810 hrs. All the crew members are rescued at 1018 hrs, three injured. The local government is dealing with the aftermath work.

Tianjin, Aug 18 -- General cargo Zhu Yang No.3 (length 99.2 metres breadth 14 metres, 4000 dwt, owner:

China Ningbo Xu Yang Shipping Co, Tianjin for Ningbo, cargo coal, sank at 0907, Aug 17. -- Lloyd's Agents.

ZIEMIA GORNOSLASKA (Liberia)

Montreal, Aug 16 -- Bulk Ziemia Gornoslaska (17427 gt, built 1990), loaded with steel products for various ports in the Great Lakes, experienced rudder problems in the area of Valleyfield and is now at the St. Zotique anchorage. Divers have found that the rudder stock is loose in the rudder blade with damage to the pintles. The vessel cannot move without tug assistance. Owners are considering moving the vessel to Valleyfield harbour in the St. Lawrence Seaway for further investigation. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Aug 16 -- At 1347, EDST, Aug 15, the bulk carrier bulk Ziemia Gornoslaska lost steering after rudder became in operative in lat 45 12 50N, long 74 14 00W. Anchored for inspection.

**BANGLADESH**

Karachi, Aug 15 -- - The Bangladesh Coast Guard foiled a piracy attempt on bulk Yuan Zhi (21392 gt, built 1983) at Chittagong outer anchorage on Aug 12. It is said that a regular Coast Guard patrol boat arrested four pirates from an "engine boat", and they have confessed that they were trying to commit piracy in the said ship. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

SOMALIA

London, Aug 13 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Somali pirates who hijacked a UN-chartered general cargo Semlow nearly seven weeks ago have dropped demands for a cash ransom for the release of the vessel and its crew but are now insisting on keeping its cargo in exchange for their freedom, an official in Somalia said today. Mohamed Sheikh Ali, the warlord-appointed district commissioner in the hijackers' home of Haradere, where the ship, the vessel, has been held since late June, said the only demand now was that the 850 tonnes of food on board be offloaded there. "The only demand is that the food should be unloaded in Haradere natural port," he said by radio from Haradere. "There is no need to take the food to any other place." Under the terms of an alleged agreement reached last week by Somali elders, officials from the lawless nation's transitional government and diplomats, the pirates had been expected to release the vessel and crew on Monday (Aug 8) or Tuesday. But the deadline passed with no action or movement from the vessel and officials with the World Food Programme (WFP), which announced the deal, said they had heard nothing from vessel or hijackers since.

Mogadiscio, Aug 17 - Somali pirates who hijacked U.N.-chartered general cargo Semlow with a 10-man crew seven weeks ago have begun offloading its cargo of food aid in their home area, local residents said today. The U.N. World Food Programme said if the reports were true then it condemned such "looting". Inhabitants in the northern Harardheere area said the rice, donated by Japan and Germany, was brought ashore on small boats. Some was being given away to the poor and the pirates' close relatives, while the rest was being sold. "We are still trying to confirm this is actually happening but if it is we condemn it and call for an end to this looting," WFP spokesman Peter Smerdon said. "We again call for an unconditional release of the ship, its crew and whatever is left of the cargo." Locals said the offloading of such a large quantity of rice had sent local prices through the floor. "The pirates began off-loading late last night. The residents of here woke up and saw this morning the commodity brought to the markets, which caused the prices of rice to fall," said Abdi Guled, a resident of Harardheere town. In Kenya, Inayet Kudrati, director of Mokatu Shipping Agency which leased the ship to WFP, said he was unaware of the food being distributed. "I have no news because I thought the weather is not good enough to discharge," he said. -- Reuters.

Mogadishu, Aug 17 -- Six unidentified gunmen seized a fishing vessel and its crew in southern Somali waters in the latest in a spate of acts of piracy off the coast of the lawless country, a militia spokesman said today. Abdullahi Sheikh Fartag, spokesman for the Juba Valley Alliance (JVA) militia which controls the main southern port of Kismayo, told the gunmen to release the vessel. "They should release the ship unconditionally otherwise our militia will attack them and rescue the crew," Fartag said in remarks broadcast on HornAfrik radio. The hijacking was believed to have taken place late yesterday or early today in waters south of Kismayo. "Up to now we do not know where the vessel came from or who its owners are. They hijackers of the vessel are not among us," Fartag said, meaning they were not members of the JVA. A Kismayo journalist contacted by Reuters from Mogadishu said he saw several gunmen unloading a cargo of fish, lobsters and shark fins on the shore. The journalist reported the gunmen saying they had stolen the cargo from a ship their colleagues were holding along with its 10 "Indochinese" crew. -- Reuters.

Seizures & Arrests



AL BIRUNI (Egypt)

Alexandria, Aug 18 -- General cargo Al Biruni is still under arrest at Alexandria. -- Lloyd's Agents.

CAN GIO (Honduras)

London, Aug 12 -- A press report, dated today, states: A Tanzanian appeals court has ordered the release of Vietnamese general cargo Can Gio, held for 13 months over a \$1.4m rice dispute. The Can Gio arrived in Tanzania in July 2004 with a load of rice and other cargo. Its 12 crew members were held because a rice deal between another Vietnamese shipping company and Tanzanian importer Mohammed Enterprises Ltd turned sour in 1999 when the goods were never delivered. The appeals court yesterday rejected the argument by Mohammed Enterprises that the Can Gio, owned by SEA Saigon Shipping Ltd, should be held pending resolution of the company's dispute with Thanh Hoa Ltd. A three-man appeals court reversed earlier decisions by the Tanzania's High Court and Commercial Court on July 27 2004 and October 8 respectively, said the ship company's lawyer, Dilip Kesaria. "I am happy that justice has been done to my client after a 13-month long saga," Kesaria said. He said that the vessel will sail as soon as its crew arrives in Tanzania "in the next five or six days." After the vessel was impounded, the crew were detained in Tanzania until April this year. The judges ruled that both parties will share the costs of the case.

CHANGXIANG (Panama)

London, Aug 15 -- Bulk Changxiang (1427 gt, built 1989), HO2757, which arrived at Hong Kong at 1006 hrs, today, was subsequently reported at South West Lamma Anchorage, Hong Kong, under arrest.

London, Aug 16 -- Bulk Changxiang sailed from Hong Kong at 2053 hrs, Aug 15.

CHINA SEA DISCOVERY (Liberia)

London, Aug 18 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Passenger China Sea Discovery (24799 gt, built 1956) has been sold at its third auction for US\$42m to Indian scrap merchants. The vessel is currently listing and under arrest at Kaohsiung. Its last operators, China Sea Cruises, bought it in 2000 and the vessel sailed briefly on overnight cruises from Hong Kong and Kaohsiung but was soon laid up and abandoned.

EGASCO FORTUNE (Egypt)

Alexandria, Aug 18 -- Bulk Egasco Fortune is still under arrest at Alexandria. -- Lloyd's Agents.

FENGSHUN 7 (St. Vincent & Grenadines)

London, Aug 11 -- General cargo Fengshun 7 (2875 gt, built 1981), which arrived at Hong Kong at 1124 hrs, today, was subsequently reported to be at Western Anchorage No.1, Hong, under arrest.

London, Aug 15 -- General cargo Fengshun 7 departed from Hong Kong at 0706 hrs, Aug 14.

GLOBAL AFRICA (Brazil)

London, Aug 15 -- Ro/ro Global Africa was reported arriving at Nacala on

Aug 2, and sailing on Aug 5, bound for Durban.

MAWASHI AL-GASSEEM (Kuwait)

Adelaide, Aug 12 -- Livestock Mawashi Al-Gasseem: The federal court are presently making arrangements to look after the crew with food, pending possible repatriation. Discussions are presently in hand concerning the disposal of the vessel. The federal Court has however adjourned these discussions for two weeks with effect from Aug 11, apparently pending representation from owners. -- Lloyd's Agents.

MAZNAH (Indonesia)

London, Aug 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: Twenty-one crew members of Indonesian-registered general cargo Maznah (10751 gt, built 1977) were abandoned off the port of Tawau without fresh water and food for almost three months after their vessel was "sealed" following a Sabah High Court order. The crew of Maznah have been relying on the goodwill of boatmen in Tawau, and more recently, the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF), for survival. "We had to ration our food and fresh water supplies but we are completely without fuel to run the generator for electricity. We do not know how long this will last," said Captain Silas Zola Makalew in a telephone interview. He said the crew were not paid their salary, amounting to about US\$86,000 by the Singapore-based ship owners E-Maritime Pte Ltd since May. Maznah arrived at Tawau port from China on May 27 to load cargo for its next destination. However, on July 5, the vessel was sealed when marine gas and oil supplier, Gulf and Continental Bunker Fuels Co Ltd, obtained an order from the Kota Kinabalu High Court after E-Maritime failed to settle its debt of US\$177,592. Makalew said supplies on the ship ran out after the first week and the crew had to depend on local boatmen for food and water. He even went to the Indonesian consulate in Kota Kinabalu but it only provided a lawyer to handle their case.

MEX (Comoros)

Alexandria, Aug 18 -- General cargo Mex (2981 gt, built 1983) is currently under arrest at Alexandria. -- Lloyd's Agents. (Note -- Mex arrived at Alexandria on Aug 9.)

RA NAM (North Korea)

London, Aug 15 -- General cargo Ra Nam (9112 gt, built 1982), HMAX, which arrived at Hong Kong at 1109 hrs, today, was subsequently reported at South East Lamma Anchorage, Hong Kong, under arrest.

SALEM TWO (Egypt)

Alexandria, Aug 18 -- General cargo Salem Two, now renamed C.H.M.T., remains under arrest at Alexandria. -- Lloyd's Agents.

SENTINEL (Comoros)

Genoa, Aug 18 -- General cargo Sentinel is still under court arrest at Genoa. -- Lloyd's Agents.

ST.TROPEZ (Bahamas)

Miami, Aug 15 -- Passenger St.Tropez is up for auction on Sep 20. It has been at anchor off Port Everglades for around a month. Eller & Co, the vessel's agents, are bringing it into port every two weeks overnight and then returning it to anchorage. It will be in port Aug 22 for one day and will then again return to anchorage. -- Lloyd's Agents.

YOUSSEF MAR 1 (North Korea)

Savona, Aug 17 -- Bulk Youssef Mar 1 (1879 gt, built 1972) which arrived in Savona on Aug 11, to discharge 2,850 tons of bulk cement from Izmir, has been detained by the Harbour-master due to the vessel's safety conditions. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Pipeline Accidents

**LUFKIN, TEXAS, UNITED STATES**

London, Aug 12 -- A press report, dated Aug 11, states: A construction worker was seriously burned in a fiery pipeline accident north of Lufkin today. Angelina County Constable Kelly Russell said a worker operating a bulldozer hit a crude oil pipeline, sparking the blaze. The explosion occurred shortly after 1100 hrs, while workers cleared some land and began moving a vacant house, which also caught fire. Nearby houses and businesses were evacuated. The injured man was taken to a Houston hospital.

London, Aug 15 -- A press report, dated Aug 14, states: Angelina County residents as far south as Huntington said they heard and felt the explosion that released a mighty black pillar of smoke high into the air at 1100 hrs, on Thursday (Aug 11) after a construction worker hit a pipeline. Clean-up should be completed within two weeks, according to Sunoco spokesman Gerald Davis on Friday (Aug 12). "There is no crude oil in the right-of-way," Davis said. "We will be doing a clean-up so there should not be a health risk. Davis said that, after identifying the landowners of the property, contaminated soil will be disposed of by Sunoco and trees which were burned would be taken down. "We would expect that the crude oil should be cleaned up in two weeks to the satisfaction of the regulatory agencies," he said. "Again, there is no oil in the rights of way. There is soil to be disposed of. We don't know at this time the cost of cleanup, but that will be part of the investigation." Sunoco's 10.75-inch-diameter East Texas Trunk Line is approximately 197 miles in length, according to Davis and the Texas Railroad Commission. The

interstate pipeline system originates in Beaumont, connects to various other pipeline systems in the Longview area and carries the crude oil product to Midwestern states, he said.

NEW DEHLI, INDIA

London, Aug 10 -- A press report, dated today, states: A fire broke out in a section of India's state-owned GAIL's (India) gas pipeline in New Dehli today, officials said. With the safety system detecting the fire, gas supply to the affected section was stopped and the blaze extinguished, GAIL officials said. The cause of the fire that broke out near an Indian Army hospital at Dhaula Kuan is yet to be ascertained. "Gas supply remains uninterrupted in the DESU-Maruti pipeline (section)," the company said in a statement. "The fire was extinguished by isolating the pipeline section and the supply of gas was maintained through loop line." To ascertain the cause and extent of the fire, GAIL is planning to remove grass and shrubs over the covered pipeline. With the fire being detected immediately, there was no loss to life or property, the company said.

PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 18 -- A press report, dated Aug 17, states: A water main in Pittsburgh ruptured today, flooding streets and businesses, knocking out electrical power and floating cars in underground parking garages. City officials said they did not know what caused the 80-year-old, 36-inch main to break at about 1035 hrs, beneath Fort Duquesne Boulevard, a major thoroughfare along the Allegheny River. "Age could be a factor. Pressure could be another factor," said Mike Lichte, the city's director of engineering and construction. Officials estimated that 20 million to 30 million gallons of water gushed out over several hours before city workers shut valves leading to the broken line. Water rose as high as four feet in the garages, which were part of at least seven major buildings that had water damage, Mayor Tom Murphy said. The buildings included a high-rise with 380 apartments. Murphy said it was too early for a damage estimate. At Gateway Center Two, a 20-story office building, elevators were shut down and workers were evacuated. Fred Williams said some of his co-workers were in the basement when water quickly came up to their knees.

SUI, PAKISTAN

See "Pakistan" under "Political & Civil Unrest".

SUNOL AREA, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 16 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: A road grader ruptured a gasoline pipeline owned by Chevron Corp., forcing the closure of a fire road in southern Alameda County, Chevron said today. The pipeline was shut down immediately after sensors

detected a drop in pipeline pressure, and there were no reports of injuries, said Michael Barrett, a spokesman for San Ramon-based Chevron. Work crews were working this afternoon to get the pipeline back in operation and reopen a section of Calaveras Road near Sunol, Barrett said. The company did not know how much gasoline was spilled, and workers were evaluating whether there was any ecological damage. The rupture was not big enough to disrupt gasoline production, Barrett said.

Weather & Navigation

**AFGHANISTAN**

London, Aug 15 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Severe flooding caused by torrential rains left at least two dead in eastern Afghanistan and washed away scores of homes, gardens and killed livestock, officials and witnesses said today. The flash floods affected the districts of Mohmand Dara and Pachir Wa Agam, some 100 kilometres east of Kabul yesterday evening. "At least one person died and several others were wounded, hundreds of houses and agricultural farms were washed away in Pachir Wa Agam," the district governor Haji Naeem Khan Shinwari said. A woman was killed and four other men were wounded in the Mohmand Dara district of Nangarhar province.

BULGARIA

London, Aug 16 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: A fourth wave of floods hit Bulgaria this weekend (Aug 13-14), causing rivers to burst their banks as more heavy rains poured down. The area around the capital Sofia was again affected as houses, roads and railways were all damaged by the floods. The storm also brought hail to the region, which damaged rooftops across Smolian. Reports indicate that overall over 7.8 million Bulgarians have been affected by the flooding this year, with 20 deaths recorded so far. According to the Deutsche Presse Agentur, damages so far have amounted to \$633 million and the Bulgarian government has asked for assistance from the European Union to repair the damage.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Bangui, Aug 12 -- Floods caused by heavy rains have left around 20,000 people in Central African Republic homeless, forcing many to seek shelter with relatives or even sleep under trees, the communications ministry said today. The start of this year's rainy season has particularly affected crowded districts of the capital Bangui in the past week, where around 3,000 poorly constructed houses crumbled. "It would be right to say about 20,000 are homeless when you count whole

families," Tchakpa M'brede, an official at the communications ministry said. He said homeless families were seeking shelter at the homes of relatives or neighbours or even sleeping under trees. A Red Cross official said earlier this week there had been no deaths but said there were fears the water could spread disease in the city of 600,000 where there are many open latrines and drainage is poor. -- Reuters.

CHINA

London, Aug 12 -- A press report, dated today, states: The International Red Cross says floods and related disasters have killed 910 people in China since May. Another 218 are missing. "Since the end of May, floods, typhoons and other disasters have hit 27 of China's 31 mainland provinces," the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies said in a statement. "Some 910 people are reported dead, 218 are unaccounted for and almost three million have been evacuated." The information was provided to the federation by China's Red Cross, which obtained it from the Ministry of Civil Affairs. The figures, which include people killed in landslides and heavy rain, go up to Aug 10 and have yet to be made public by the ministry. A Red Cross appeal will focus on helping five provinces that are worst-affected and are some of the poorest in China, Anhui, Guangxi, Hunan, Jiangxi and Sichuan. The international appeal aims to provide food and other aid to 400,000 of the neediest people in these five provinces. "Food is the top priority," the statement said. "Several million hectares of land have been flooded. There has been widespread loss of crops and a large percentage of the people affected are subsistence farmers."

London, Aug 15 -- A press report, dated today, states: Torrential rainstorms and ensuing floods in northeast China's Liaoning Province since Friday (Aug 12) killed 10 people, injured 46 and left 35 others missing, according to sources with the provincial department of civil affairs today. The floods hit 20 counties of seven cities in Liaoning, affecting 1.44 million people. The precipitation in the city of Fushun amounted to 150 mm and it reached 174 mm in Tieling City. A total of 6,531 homes were destroyed and 118,000 hectares of farmland were left fruitless. The provincial government has allocated 4.5 million yuan, about \$544,000, for emergency disaster relief. The department of civil affairs relocated 188,000 homeless people and already sent three working teams to the flood-hit area to organize the disaster relief work.

Beijing, Aug 16 -- Floods caused by heavy rains in the north-east Chinese province of Liaoning have killed at least 10 people and left 35 missing, the Ministry of Civil Affairs said today. And more rain is forecast across the country this week, prompting the National Meteorological Centre to

issue new flood warnings. More than 2.3 million people have been affected by the flooding, which caused more than 30 thousand houses to collapse, resulting in direct economic damage of 2.31 billion yuan (\$285 million), the ministry said. -- Reuters.

CYCLONE "INGRID"

London, Aug 17 -- A press report, dated today, states: One of the most powerful cyclones to hit Australia in recent times destroyed about 10 per cent of the Great Barrier Reef, scientists said today. Researchers from the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) said today that "Ingrid", a category-4 cyclone which struck in March, had damaged sections of the reef up to 100km away from the direct path of the storm. Scientists predict some of the estimated 260 damaged sections of reef could take two decades to recover, although some would bounce back in as little as three years. "Ingrid" wreaked most damage between Princess Charlotte Bay and the Lockhart River, off Queensland's far north coast. A recent 15-day study of the cyclone's effect on the delicate ecosystem found 80 individual reefs took the full brunt of the extreme weather system when it hit Queensland. Damage was also recorded up to 100km away from the cyclone centre, AIMS project leader Dr Katharina Fabricius said today. "We saw massive coral two to three metres in diameter lifted on top of reef flats. The amount of energy that took was incredible. "But knowing that the reefs are so healthy up there because human pressures are so low makes me fairly certain they will recover reasonable quickly from the impact." Dr Fabricius said the study found the corals on the outer reef were more robust to breakage compared to their more fragile counterparts on the inshore reefs. "They are more fragile by nature because they don't normally experience high reef damage," she said.

HURRICANE "FERNANDA"

London, Aug 14 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office: Tropical storm "Fernanda": Storm centre located near lat 18.9N, long 129.4W, at 0900, UTC. Position accurate within 30 nautical miles. Present movement towards the west-south-west, or 255 deg, at eight knots. Estimated minimum central pressure 994 mb. Maximum sustained winds 55 knots with gusts to 65 knots. Radius of 50-knot winds 35 nautical miles. Radius of 34-knot winds 75 nautical miles north-east and north-west and 60 nautical miles south-east and south-west. Radius of 12-ft seas 120 nautical miles. Forecast for 0600, UTC, Aug 15: Position lat 17.9N, long 131.7W. Maximum sustained winds 45 knots with gusts to 55 knots. Radius of 34-knot winds 60 nautical miles north-east and north-west and 40 nautical miles south-east and south-west.

London, Aug 15 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated

today: At 0900, UTC, today, the centre of tropical storm "Fernanda" was located near lat 17.5N, long 132.1W. The position is accurate to within 30 nautical miles. The present movement is towards the west-south-west, or 250 deg, at eight knots. The estimated minimum central pressure is 990 mb. Maximum sustained winds 60 knots with gusts to 75 knots. Radius of 34-knot winds: 70 nautical miles in the north-east quadrant, 40 nautical miles in the south-east and south-west quadrants and 80 nautical miles in the north-west quadrant. At 0600, UTC, Aug 15, the centre is predicted to be near lat 16.6N, long 134.4W, with maximum sustained winds of 45 knots with gusts to 55 knots.

London, Aug 16 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0300, UTC, today, the centre of tropical depression "Fernanda" was located near lat 17.2N, long 135.1W. The position is accurate to within 30 nautical miles. The present movement is toward the west, or 270 degs, at 10 knots. The estimated minimum central pressure is 1008 mb. The maximum sustained winds: 25 knots with gusts to 35 knots. At 1200, UTC, Aug 17, the centre is predicted to be near lat 16.6N, long 141.0W, with maximum winds of 25 knots and gusts to 35 knots. This is the last forecast/advisory issued by the National Hurricane Centre on this system.

London, Aug 12 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: Hurricane "Fernanda" located near lat 17.9N, long 122.6W at 0600, UTC, today. Position accurate within 20 nautical miles. Movement past six hours 305 deg at seven knots. Radius of 64-knot winds: 40 nautical miles. Radius of 50-knot winds: 50 nautical miles south-west quadrant, 60 nautical miles elsewhere. Radius of 34-knot winds: 75 nautical miles south-west quadrant, 100 nautical miles elsewhere. Forecast position at 1800, UTC, today, in lat 18.6N, long 124.0W. Maximum winds 65 knots, gusts 80 knots.

HURRICANE "IRENE"

London, Aug 14 -- Following received from the meteorological office: Tropical storm "Irene": Storm centre located near lat 32.6N, long 70.3W, at 0900, UTC. Position accurate within 20 nautical miles. Present movement towards the north, or 360 deg, at eight knots. Estimated minimum central pressure 999 mb. Maximum sustained winds 55 knots with gusts to 65 knots. Radius of 50-knot winds 40 nautical miles north-east and 30 nautical miles south-east. Radius of 34-knot winds 90 nautical miles north-east, 75 nautical miles south-east, 60 nautical miles south-west and 40 nautical miles north-west. Radius of 12-ft seas 200 nautical miles north-east and south-east, 75 nautical miles south-west and 100 nautical miles north-west. Forecast for 0600, UTC, Aug 15: Position lat 36.1N, long 68.4W. Maximum sustained winds 60 knots with gusts to 75 knots.

London, Aug 15 -- Tropical Storm "Irene" strengthened into a hurricane yesterday, but turned away from the East Coast and posed no threat to land, forecasters said. Hurricane "Irene" had top sustained winds of 80 mph, just above the 74 mph threshold to become a hurricane. At 2300, EDT, "Irene" was about 355 miles east of Cape Hatteras, N.C., and 325 miles north-west of Bermuda, according to the National Hurricane Center in Miami. It was moving north-northeast at nine mph and was expected to turn north-east.

London, Aug 15 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0900, UTC, today, the centre of hurricane "Irene" was located near lat 36.1N, long 68.3W. The position is accurate to within 20 nautical miles. The present movement is toward the north-east, or 35 degs, at 10 knots. The estimated minimum central pressure is 985 mb. The maximum sustained winds: 75 knots with gusts to 90 knots. Radius of 34 knot winds: 90 nautical miles in the north-east and south-east quadrants, 40 nautical miles in the south-west quadrant and 60 nautical miles in the north-west quadrant. At 0600, UTC, Aug 16, the centre is predicted to be near lat 38.1N, long 63.8W, with maximum winds of 75 knots and gusts to 90 knots.

London, Aug 16 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0900, UTC, today, the centre of hurricane "Irene" was located near lat 36.7N, long 63.5W. The position is accurate to within 30 nautical miles. The present movement is toward the east, or 90 degs, at eight knots. The estimated minimum central pressure is 983 mb and the eye diameter is 15 nautical miles. The maximum sustained winds: 75 knots with gusts to 90 knots. Radius of 34 knot winds: 70 nautical miles in the north-east, south-west and north-west quadrants and 100 nautical miles in the south-east quadrant. At 0600, UTC, Aug 17, the centre is predicted to be near lat 37.8N, long 60.1W, with maximum winds of 65 knots and gusts to 80 knots.

London, Aug 17 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0900, UTC, today, the centre of hurricane "Irene" was located near lat 36.6N, long 60.1W. The position is accurate to within 20 nautical miles. The present movement is toward the east, or 80 degs, at seven knots. The estimated minimum central pressure is 983 mb. The maximum sustained winds: 75 knots with gusts to 90 knots. Radius of 34 knot winds: 80 nautical miles in the north-east quadrant, 90 nautical miles in the south-east quadrant, 65 nautical miles in the south-west quadrant and 60 nautical miles in the north-west quadrant. At 0600, UTC, Aug 18, the centre is predicted to be near lat 41.0N, long 52.8W, with maximum winds of 60 knots and gusts to 75 knots.

London, Aug 18 -- A press report, dated Aug 17, states: Hurricane

"Irene" weakened to a tropical storm today and began accelerating toward its end over the cold waters of the northern Atlantic, forecasters said. At 2300 hrs, "Irene" had top sustained winds near 70 mph, down 15 mph from earlier in the day, as it assumed a northeastern course across the open seas. "Irene"'s forward speed jumped from 12 to about 21 mph and was expected to increase even more while the storm begins deteriorating over colder waters, said forecasters at the National Hurricane Centre. The centre of the storm was about 550 miles south of Cape Race, Newfoundland.

London, Aug 18 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0900, UTC, today, the centre of tropical storm "Irene" was located near lat 41 18N, long 51 00W. The present movement is toward the north-east, at 30 knots. The maximum sustained winds: 60 knots. At 0600, UTC, Aug 19, the centre is predicted to be near lat 54.0N, long 40.00W, with maximum winds of 50 knots.

IRAN

London, Aug 10 -- A press report, dated today, states: At least 20 people have drowned and dozens are missing in flash floods in Golestan province in north-eastern Iran, local media reported today. Several villages have been cut off as a result of hours of heavy rain, which started yesterday. Scores of livestock have also been killed in the floods and vast areas of farming land have been damaged. Floods have struck Golestan province for several days. At least 27 people were killed.

LITHUANIA

London, Aug 11 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: A total of 35,000 people have been left without electricity in Lithuania because of a storm, an official from the Lithuanian company for distribution of electricity yesterday. He said repair work is impeded, as most of the damaged power lines go through woodland. Besides, many forest roads have become impassable for repair vehicles because of unremitting rains. Torrential rains have persisted in the country since Saturday (Aug 6). Houses have been partially flooded in many cities and towns. The level of water in some rivers rose by up to 30 centimetres, but the Meteorological Centre says there is no danger of floods. All emergency repair services are engaged in removing fallen trees from roads.

London, Aug 12 -- A press report, dated today, states: Torrential rains in August and hail at the end of July brought damage of around US\$3.3 to Lithuania, the country's Agriculture Minister Bronius Markauskas told reporters today. "The calamity cut down the farmers' revenues by a factor of five," he said. The eventual real damage will be bigger than that, since the showers and hail destroyed a part of the crop and badly affected the quality of young plants, Markauskas said, adding that he predicted

bankruptcy of many farms. Agriculture Ministry experts say, in the meantime, the showers and gale did far more damage than the hail that pounded the Panevezys district Jul 30, when lumps of ice reaching 3.5 inches in size poured down on to the area. The ministry said then the damage from the hail stood at around US\$1.3 million.

MALACCA STRAIT

London, Aug 15 -- A press report, dated today, states: Northport and Westport has assured the port fraternity that there will be no container congestion despite slowdown in operations due to severe haze. Since last Wednesday (Aug 10), both Northport and Westport have temporarily suspended their operations sporadically due to hazardous air quality and poor visibility. Despite the Government declaration of haze emergency in Port Klang, which required offices to shut down, the ports worked on crucial and urgent cargoes. Port Klang Shipping Agencies Association president M. Gopala Krishnan said they were worried over the situation because the prolonged environmental disaster could lead to container build-up and bunching of ships. He said they had been receiving calls from principles overseas expressing anxiety on the situation, which could upset shipping schedules and container transportation. When the terminals stopped operating for several hours during the peak hazy conditions, hauliers were unable to pick up boxes from the ports. Westport executive chairman Tan Sri G. Gnanalingam said container build-up and congestions were not a main concern because there was ample space in the yard. øShips are still coming in and hauliers are still picking up boxes but at a slower pace. Our priority now is the health of our workers in the long run. Productivity too, is a concern as we do not operate the cargo volume as before,ø he said. Since visibility worsened c.c. CSCL Kobe ran aground at the South Channel while being piloted by a port pilot to Westport on Aug 8. It was freed 12 hours later and continued to sail to Chiwan two days later. The ship did not suffer any serious damage but the Port Klang Authority is conducting an inquiry into the mishap, believed to be caused by poor visibility. The vessel traffic system (VTS) personnel are closely monitoring ships arriving and leaving the ports to ensure their safe voyage. Both ports also reported a slower pace in cargo operations, adding that it was unlikely to shut down. The port management has also beefed up safety and health measures by providing masks for their workers, citing them as their topmost priority. Northport (Malaysia) Bhd chief executive officer Datuk Basheer Hassan Abdul Kader said the port could not totally shut down as it was offering essential services. øWhen visibility improves, we resume operations. But when the haze is bad, we slow down temporarily.

øWe are mindful of our workersø health and safety,ø he said, adding that Northport stopped operating between 1430 and 1600 on Aug 11. øUrgent and essential containers are still being processed at the terminals while ships are still berthing and sailing as scheduled,ø he said. Basheer said Northport was monitoring the situation very closely and was in constant contact with the Meteorology Department for advanced notification on the Air Pollutant Index (API) reading, which crossed 500. Westport Malaysia head of container operations M. Nanthakumar said the wharf areas were temporarily closed between two and three hours since 1500 the same day. øMovement of crucial cargoes to vessels are still being carried out and we are still receiving shipment,ø he said. Nanthakumar added that Westportø's inhouse doctors provided round-the-clock service for the portø employees and a mobile water dispenser for cleansing purposes. Employees have also been put on a three-hourly job rotation to minimise outdoor exposure. Maritime Rescue Co-ordinating Centre (MRCC) reported visibility was at 0.5 nautical miles at Pintu Gedung, the south entrance to Port Klang. It has been giving out hourly haze alerts to ships plying the Straits of Malacca (SOM) on the haze. An official said they were particularly concerned about the One Fathom Bank ø the narrowest area of the SOM and advised safety measures to be taken by vessels . Malaysian Maritime Institute (Ikmal) president Capt Jaffar Lamri said all vessels without radars should stop going out to sea because they could pose a danger to ships. He said although vessels with radars could navigate in restricted visibility, they should cruise at a low speed.

ROMANIA

London, Aug 18 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Violent storms killed seven people yesterday and today in Romania, an interior ministry spokesman said. Four of them were struck down by lightning and three drowned in flash floods. Torrential rain that fell overnight left hundreds of houses flooded and damaged several bridges. The environment ministry said more rain was expected over the next few days.

RUSSIA

London, Aug 11 -- A press report, dated Aug 10, states: Over 1,700 settlements with the population of 31,000 people have been left without power supply in Russiaø's North-Western Federal District hit by gale-force winds and downpours, a spokesman for the Ministry for Emergency Situations told Itar-Tass today. The storm hit the Pskov, Novgorod, Leningrad and Kaliningrad regions, Viktor Beltsov said. All in all 2,800 electricity substations were shut off, and 161 power supply lines were damaged, Beltsov added. He said 1,320 towns and settlements were left without electricity alone in the Pskov

region. As for the Leningrad region, 368 settlements where about 19,000 people live were cut off from electricity supply during the storm. "About 2,000 local residents in 75 settlements were left without electricity" in the Novgorod region, Beltsov stressed. As for the Kaliningrad region, 13 industrial enterprises were partially flooded there. The spokesman said ministry brigades are working in all regions of the North-Western Federal District. Beltsov said there is no shortage of drinking water and foodstuffs in the regions hit by the storm.

London, Aug 12 -- A press report, dated Aug 11, states: According to latest reports, 6,028 settlements have suffered from downpours and gale-force winds, which have been raging in Belarus this week, the Ministry for Emergency Situations reported today. One person was killed in the Vitebsk region. Over 6,000 cities and settlements have been left without electricity. About 1,000 houses and industrial buildings have been damaged, as well as almost 7,000 km of electric power lines and 253 telephone stations. Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko has issued an instruction to liquidate the aftermath of the storm in cities, settlements and at industrial enterprises by the end of the day. He said the priority task was to take care of the people.

SUDAN

London, Aug 16 -- A press report, dated Aug 15, states: Pounding rains on Friday (Aug 12) night damaged a dam, causing heavy flooding that affected nearly 800 displaced families in Abu Shouk camp in the strife-torn Sudanese state of North Darfur, aid workers said. "According to a rapid assessment by the humanitarian agencies, 778 families were affected by the flooding," Lidia Hernandez Alonso, camp coordinator for the Spanish Red Cross in Abu Shouk, said. "The rain damaged a dam that was built to prevent the wadi to the west of Abu Shouk from flooding," Alonso added. Sections of Abu Shouk were still under water yesterday and several parts of the nearby capital of North Darfur, El Fasher, were also flooded, according to Caesar Hall, the UN Children's Fund water and environmental sanitation project manager in the state. The acting head of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in El Fasher, Aoiheann O'keeffe, told IRIN the families closest to the wadi had lost their homes, shelter materials and a month's food rations, which had been distributed just before the flooding. "No deaths have been reported," she added. It was not immediately clear whether the flooded area could be rehabilitated or whether the residents near the wadi would have to be relocated. The water supply in El Fasher town was badly affected, however, after three pipelines crossing the wadi near the airport were swept away in the flood. Damage to another, larger pipeline, due to flooding on Aug 3, had not yet been repaired. As a

result, no piped water was available in El Fasher. Eight people died in the heavy rains that flooded El Fasher town on Aug 3. More than two thousand families were affected and an estimated 600 houses destroyed, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies reported on Wednesday.

THAILAND

London, Aug 14 -- A press report, dated today, states: At least five villagers were injured and five others are reported missing in widespread flash floods that hit the North early yesterday, authorities said. The pre-dawn floods, triggered by a heavy downpour, wrought havoc in parts of Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Phayao and Mae Hong Son, with reports of mudslides in some places. Hundreds of families were affected and thousands of rai of farmland were inundated. Chiang Dao was the hardest-hit area in Chiang Mai as several roads were cut off by floods. Traffic on a road linking Chiang Mai and Chiang Dao was paralysed after police closed a 200m submerged section. The water level was still rising at press time. Military and police helicopters rescued villagers who fled the floods and evacuated people to higher ground. Heavy rain burst the banks of the Ping river, uprooted trees and caused landslides. In some areas, the flood water was up to a metre deep. Five injured villagers in the district were admitted to hospital. In Mae Hong Son's Pai district, five people were swept away by floods. In Phayao, several areas in Muang, Dok Kham Tai, Chun and Chiang Kham districts were badly affected by flash floods and water run-off. The local weather office said the heavy downpour, which started late on Friday (Aug 12) night, was caused by a low-pressure ridge. The northern weather forecast bureau urged people in the North to stay on alert. Flash floods devastated Mae Suai, Phan, and Wiang Pa Pao districts in Chiang Rai, leaving villages and farmland under water. There were no reports of casualties. Meanwhile, a military development unit in charge of a scheme to tackle flooding in the south and west of Chiang Mai municipal area, said the municipal area was likely to be spared from floods.

London, Aug 16 -- Five people including a girl have been killed and 11 are still missing in weekend (Aug 13-14) flooding in northern Thailand which Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra described yesterday as the worst in 11 years. The increase from Sunday's total of two dead included two more bodies -- including the girl -- found in Pang Ma Pha district of Mae Hong Son province, and another body found in Lampang province, the interior ministry said in a statement. Floodwaters have swirled across seven northern provinces affecting nearly 60,000 people. Some 39 people have also been injured after flash floods hit northern provinces including Mae Hong Son, Lampang, Chiang Mai and

Chiang Rai. They damaged almost 50 bridges, 18 roads, three reservoirs, and more than 3,000 acres of farmland. The cost of the damage was still being estimated, the ministry added.

TROPICAL STORM "GREG"

London, Aug 14 -- Following received from the meteorological office: Tropical storm "Greg": Storm centre located near lat 15.2N, long 116.1W, at 0900, UTC. Position accurate within 30 nautical miles. Present movement towards the west-south-west, or 245 deg, at five knots. Estimated minimum central pressure 1002 mb. Maximum sustained winds 40 knots with gusts to 50 knots. Radius of 34-knot winds 50 nautical miles south-east and 70 nautical miles south-west. Radius of 12-ft seas 60 nautical miles. Forecast for 0600, UTC, Aug 15: Position lat 14.6N, long 118W. Maximum sustained winds 45 knots with gusts to 55 knots. Radius of 34-knot winds 50 nautical miles north-east, 70 nautical miles south-east, 70 nautical miles south-west and 50 nautical miles north-west.

TROPICAL STORM "IRENE"

London, Aug 11 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: Tropical storm "Irene" centre located near lat 24.2N, long 61.0W at 0900, UTC, today. Position accurate within 40 nm present movement toward the west-northwest or 295 degrees at 12 knots. Forecast position lat 24.9N, long 62.8W at 1800, UTC, today. Maximum winds 40 knots, gusts 50 knots. Forecast position lat 26.0N, long 64.9W at 0600, UTC, Aug 12. Maximum winds 45 knots, gusts 55 knots.

London, Aug 12 -- A press report, dated today, states: A renewed Tropical Storm "Irene" was gradually intensifying yesterday as it moved closer to the East Coast, forecasters said. Irene could become a hurricane by today, and it was expected to continue over the next five days toward the coast somewhere from South Carolina to New Jersey, according to forecasters at the National Hurricane Centre in Miami. "A possible US landfall by Tuesday (Aug 16) cannot be ruled out at this time," hurricane specialist Stacy Stewart said. "Irene" had top sustained winds near 50 mph and was expected to strengthen as it moves over warm waters. At 2300, EDT, "Irene" was centred about 410 miles south of Bermuda. It was moving west-northwest near 15 mph and was expected to slow down, forecasters said. "Irene" weakened into a tropical depression Monday (Aug 8), but regained tropical storm strength Wednesday.

TYPHOON "SANVU"

London, Aug 12 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office: Tropical storm "Sanvu" located near lat 19.7N, long 119.9E at 0600, UTC. Movement past six hours: 300 deg at 14 knots, position accurate to

within 60 nautical miles, position based on centre located by satellite. Present wind distribution: maximum sustained winds 45 knots, gusts 55 knots. Radius of 34-knot winds: 25 nautical miles east semicircle, 35 nautical miles west semicircle. Forecast for 0600, UTC, Aug 13: Position near lat 22.7N, long 116.4E with maximum sustained winds of 45 knots and gusts to 55 knots. Radius of 34-knot winds: 25 nautical miles north-west quadrant, 35 nautical miles elsewhere.

London, Aug 13 -- A press release from Reuters, dated today, states: Typhoon "Sanvu" is forecast to strike China at about 0000, GMT, today. Data supplied by the US Navy and Air Force Joint Typhoon Warning Center suggest that the point of landfall will be near lat 22.7N, long 117.0 E. "Sanvu" is expected to bring 1-minute maximum sustained winds to the region of around 120 km/hr. Wind gusts in the area may be considerably higher.

London, Aug 13 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office: Tropical storm "Sanvu" located near lat 23.6N, long 116.2E, at 0600, UTC. Movement past six hours 320 deg at 12 knots. Position accurate to within 60 nautical miles, based on centre located by satellite. Present wind distribution: Maximum sustained winds 55 knots with gusts to 70 knots. Forecast for 0600, UTC, Aug 14: Maximum sustained winds 25 knots with gusts to 35 knots. Dissipating as a significant tropical cyclone over land.

London, Aug 15 -- A press report, dated today, states: Typhoon "Sanvu" battered coastal areas in South China's Guangdong Province over the weekend, claiming at least two lives, injuring another six and causing a loss of up to 180 million yuan (US\$22 million). Houses collapse after being hit by floods in Fushun, in Northeast China's Liaoning Province, yesterday. The local government has warned residents to be on their guard against more floods, which have been caused by heavy rain. In north-east China's Liaoning Province, torrential rain triggered floods, leaving eight people missing since Saturday (Aug 13). In south China, two pedestrians were killed, and three others were injured when a two metre-high wall on a construction site collapsed in Shenzhen's Bao'an District.

UNITED STATES

London, Aug 14 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Residents had just five minutes warning before a tornado tore into a mobile home park, killing two people and destroying dozens of homes. About a dozen people were injured, but only one remained hospitalized today. Three people who had been listed as missing last night were found safe. The twister touched down yesterday afternoon in this coal-mining town of 1,500 people about 100 miles northeast of Casper. It was on the ground an estimated 10 to 15 minutes, destroying 40 to 50 mobile homes and scattering metal siding,

furniture and debris throughout the town. At the site of one destroyed home, only some chairs remained standing.

London, Aug 15 -- A press report, dated today, states: Thousands of people across the Northeast had no electricity for alarm clocks and air conditioners Monday following waves of violent thunderstorms. Wind gusting to 80 mph knocked trees onto power lines, lightning started fires and torrential rain flooded streets in parts of eastern Pennsylvania, northern New Jersey, south-eastern New York, Connecticut and eastern Massachusetts yesterday. "It's really testing our crews. It's pretty extensive," Connecticut Light & Power spokesman Mitch Gross said of the damage late yesterday. Boston's South Shore was hit particularly hard, with severe flooding in Quincy, Braintree, Weymouth and Brockton. "Half of the city is under water," Brockton police dispatcher Darrelyn Jordan said last night. "We have reports of water going into basements all over the city. We've had people stuck in cars all over the city. We even had to tow a police cruiser out of there with water flowing over the hood." The mayor of Stamford, Conn., said the damage was the worst since an ice storm in 1973. More than 50,000 homes and businesses in Massachusetts and more than 80,000 in New Jersey lost power, though most had service restored by this morning. Thousands more were blacked out in the New York City suburbs.

London, Aug 17 -- A Coast Guard Paducah press release, dated Aug 16, states: A safety zone remains in effect today, closing the Ohio River from mile marker 969 to mile marker 976 to all vessel traffic until a sufficient channel can be located and marked. Dredging began Sunday (Aug 14) and is expected to take approximately eight days to complete. The first 2,000 feet of the dredge cut, starting at mile marker 974, is critical in resuming vessel traffic and is expected to take approximately four days. There are currently 59 vessels, 40 southbound and 19 northbound, waiting to transit the area. Due to rising river conditions, several vessels are being permitted to transit the area after they receive authorization from the Captain of the Port Ohio Valley. Vessels requesting transit are being prioritised based upon several factors, including draughts of vessel, number of barges and their cargoes. Those cargoes designated by the Coast Guard, waterways management committees and the towing industry as being of a critical need are and will receive priority in transiting the area. The staff of Coast Guard Marine Safety Unit Paducah is working very closely with the Army Corps of Engineers and industry partners to facilitate the safe flow of vessel traffic.

VIETNAM

London, Aug 17 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: At least 13 people have been killed in Vietnam's

central Nghe An province, including six victims aged eight to 16. Reports in the local Vietnam News newspaper also state that four others have been injured. Over 1,000 houses have been damaged and nearly 9,000 hectares of farmland have been inundated - leading to damages estimated at almost \$12.7 million. The floods lasted all weekend, leaving those affected stranded. However, local authorities are offering help to victims in the shape of rice and kerosene. Last week the northern province of Yen Bai also fell victim to the floods, leaving four dead and one still missing.

London, Aug 17 -- A press report, dated Aug 16, states: Seventeen people were killed when storms pounded northern and central Vietnam at the weekend (Aug 13-14), causing heavy floods, officials and state media said today. Thirteen people were killed in central Nghe An province alone, with the other victims coming from three other provinces, weather officials and state media said. The storms had also flooded and damaged nearly 1,300 houses and more than 10,827 hectares of paddy fields in Nghe An, an official from the provincial flood and storm control department said. "We are still exerting efforts to overcome the consequences of floods and these figures may continue to rise," he said

Earthquakes



CHILE

London, Aug 16 -- A report, dated Aug 14, states: A moderate earthquake occurred at 0239, UTC, today. The magnitude 5.9 event has been located in Tarapaca, Chile, in lat 19 74S, long 69 02W. The hypocentral depth was estimated to be 84 km.

CHINA

London, Aug 14 -- A press report, dated today, states: An earthquake measuring 5.3 on the Richter scale shook south-west China's Yunnan province yesterday toppling houses and causing several injuries, state media reported. "Injuries have been reported in seven townships of Wenshan County," the official Xinhua news agency reported. "The earthquake has also toppled some houses. However, the exact number of injuries and economic losses is unavailable," the report said. The quake's epicentre was in an area where the three townships of Matang, Binglie and Hongdian meet, Xinhua said. Four experts from the State Seismological Bureau have been dispatched to the affected area, as well as a 28-member team from Yunnan's provincial seismological bureau, the report said.

INDONESIA

London, Aug 14 -- A press report, dated today, states: A moderate

earthquake shook parts of Indonesia's Sumbawa island yesterday, but no damage or injuries were reported. The 5.6-magnitude quake was centred about 150 miles beneath the Flores sea and 25 miles north-west of Sumbawa Besar, capital of Sumbawa island, according to Budi Waluyo of the Meteorology and Geophysics Agency. The quake, which struck yesterday morning, also was felt in the neighbouring tourist islands of Bali and Lombok, Waluyo said.

JAPAN

London, Aug 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: A powerful earthquake registering a magnitude of 6.8 has rocked the north-east coast of Japan. The tremor triggered a tsunami alert for the Pacific coastal region and shook buildings in Tokyo, more than 300km away. The quake's epicentre is thought to have been 20km below the ocean off Miyagi prefecture, striking at around 0246, GMT. There are reports of dozens of people injured in the nearby city of Sendai. Bullet trains were suspended, a nuclear power station was shut down and flights at Tokyo's Haneda airport temporarily halted as a precaution, it was reported. At least 80 people were injured when the roof of an indoor pool collapsed in Sendai, state broadcaster NHK reported. "We have heard that there were some injuries. We do not know details yet," a spokeswoman for the city said.

London, Aug 16 -- A press report from Australia, dated Aug 17, states: An earthquake with a magnitude of 7.2 jolted northern Japan yesterday, injuring at least 46 people, causing power outages and transport chaos. Towering buildings swayed in Tokyo, about 300 km to the south, when the tremor struck at 1146 hrs, 1246, AEST, but there were no reports of damage or injuries in the capital. Most casualties occurred when the roof of a gymnasium collapsed, police said. Nineteen people were hurt in the city of Sendai when the roof of the SpoPark Matsumori, a sports facility which has a gym and an indoor pool, partially caved in. Japan Meteorological Agency official Yasuo Sekita said strong aftershocks could still occur. One expressway was closed and trains, including high-speed bullet trains, were halted. But there were no derailments. Tokyo's major airports resumed operations after runways were briefly closed for checks. Nearly 17,000 households were without electricity, Tohoku Electric said. Tohoku Electric said all three nuclear power generators at its Onagawa plant stopped automatically after the quake and Nippon Oil said it suspended operations at its local refinery.

London, Aug 17 -- A press report, dated today, states: The number of people injured following yesterday's magnitude 7.2 earthquake in eastern Japan totalled 61 as of this morning. The injuries were reported in Miyagi, Iwate, Fukushima, Saitama and Tokyo.

MAUG ISLAND, MARIANAS ISLANDS

London, Aug 15 -- A 5.8 magnitude temblor shook Maug Island late Saturday (Aug 13) afternoon, while government monitoring agencies tallied more than 570 quakes in the ongoing seismic swarm being recorded on Sarigan Island's seismometer. The Emergency Management Office and the U.S. Geological Survey also reported that tremor levels on Anatahan reached 90 percent of peak levels, but added that seismicity on the island continues to fluctuate. The agencies said the quake occurred near Maug at about 1737, Saturday. Maug lies at the northern end of the Marianas chain, flanked to the north by Farallon de Pajaros and to the south by Asuncion Island.

RUSSIA

London, Aug 11 -- A 5.5 magnitude quake struck east of Kuril Islands in lat 48.6°N, long 158.19E, at 1247, UTC, Aug 10.

Political & Civil Unrest



AFGHANISTAN

Kabul, Aug 11 -- Taliban fighters killed a U.S. soldier and wounded another during an ambush in Afghanistan today, after the insurgents lost 10 men over the past two days in clashes elsewhere in the troubled southeast. Hundreds of people, including 41 U.S. soldiers, have died in militant-related violence so far this year, making the run-up to Sep 18 parliamentary polls the bloodiest period since 2001. The latest American casualties belonged to a road-working detail led by U.S. engineers in Paktika province, where two days earlier a joint U.S.-Afghan patrol encountered a band of Taliban fighters close to the border with Pakistan. A U.S. military statement said the enemy fighters took cover in caves. Six insurgents were killed and three U.S. soldiers and an Afghan interpreter wounded in ensuing firefights. "Afghan and U.S. forces pursued the enemy combatants toward the cave complex killing one," it said, adding that several hours later the same forces came into contact with additional militants and killed five more. Four more Taliban fighters had been killed and seven captured in an assault by Afghan and U.S. forces in neighbouring Zabul province since Wednesday, Bashir Ahmad, a provincial official said. There was no immediate comment on the incidents by the Taliban, but spokesman Abdul Latif Hakimi said the guerrillas had killed two Afghans in the central province of Uruzgan for "spying" for the Americans. Separately, Afghan doctors in a hospital in Zabul said patients had told them that at least three members of a family were killed

during a U.S. air raid on Monday (Aug 8) night. "We have received six wounded people from the bombing and they say that three civilians ... had died," Doctor Abdul Malik, at Qalat hospital in the provincial capital, told Reuters. The U.S. military said earlier this week that 17 suspected Taliban insurgents had been killed in a U.S.-Afghan ground and air operation in the area, but spokeswoman Lieutenant Cindy Moore said today she had no reports of civilian casualties. -- Reuters.

London, Aug 15 -- A press report, dated today, states: Fighting across southern Afghanistan has left 28 suspected Taliban rebels dead, officials said today, amid stepped up violence in the countdown to crucial legislative elections next month. Meanwhile, U.S. Marines and Afghan Special Forces in eastern Kunar province today pushed deeper into Korengal Valley, which is controlled by militants suspected of ambushing a team of U.S. commandos and shooting down a special forces helicopter on Jun 28. U.S. military spokesman Col. James Yonts said the forces were making progress in the operation, but cautioned it may take a long time. The bloodiest battle between Afghan forces and the Taliban occurred yesterday in Zabul province when Afghan forces attacked a group of suspected militants, killing 16 of them and arresting one, the Defense Ministry said in a statement. Among the dead was a local Taliban commander, Mullah Nasir, it said. Also yesterday, in neighbouring Uruzgan province's Dehrawud district, a gunbattle between Afghan soldiers and insurgents left five militants dead, the ministry said. In Zabul, alleged insurgents mistakenly detonated a mine that was intended to hit a convoy of U.S.-led coalition and Afghan forces yesterday, killing one militant and wounding another, Sori district chief Rovi Khan said. Then in an adjacent district, Tirin Kot, police hunted down and killed six suspected guerrillas who attacked a highway checkpoint, provincial Gov. Jan Mohammed Khan said. Nine alleged militants were also arrested in a sweep of the area. No security forces were hurt in any of the clashes, according to the statement and governor.

London, Aug 17 -- Taliban militants kidnapped a Lebanese engineer and four Afghans in southern Afghanistan Sunday (Aug 14) night, an Afghan official said yesterday. Ahmad Reza, the Lebanese engineer who was working for a Turkish road construction company, was kidnapped in Qalat, capital of Zabul province, Guldd Shah Alikhel, a spokesman of Zabul governor told Xinhua. Four Afghans were released while the searching operation is underway, said the spokesman. Taliban spokesperson Latif Hakimi claimed that they have kidnapped the engineer, saying "the engineer is in good condition, but we haven't decided on his fate yet." Some 30 suspected Taliban militants were killed and 28 were captured in

renewed violence in southern Afghanistan, said Afghan officials on Monday.

London, Aug 17 -- A press report, dated Aug 16, states: A helicopter carrying NATO peacekeepers crashed in a western Afghan desert today and another flying with it made an emergency landing, killing 17 Spanish troops and injuring five others providing security ahead of landmark legislative elections. There were conflicting reports about what caused the crash, the biggest loss of life for NATO forces in Afghanistan. A spokesman for NATO's International Security Assistance Force said the crash and emergency landing in Herat province were believed to be accidents, but Spain's defense minister said he did not rule out hostile fire. Afghan President Hamid Karzai said the crash was caused by a sandstorm. However, Afghan army commander Abdul Wahab Walizada, whose troops provided security at the crash site, said the weather was fine. He said the helicopters were flying too close together, and the rotor blades of one clipped the other. One helicopter burned while the other was damaged severely, he said. The 17 dead - 12 soldiers and five crew - were on the chopper that crashed, ISAF spokesman Maj. Andrew Elmes said. The five injured were on the second, which made a "hard landing," he said. They were in stable condition at an ISAF hospital in Herat. Twelve other troops on the second helicopter were not injured. In Washington, Pentagon spokesman Bryan Whitman said preliminary information showed no indication the aircraft was shot down or collided with another craft. Bono said two Spanish Cougar AS532 helicopters were flying together at the time. One pilot reported seeing a column of black smoke in a nearby valley, flew closer to the spot, concluded it might signal an attack from the ground and decided to make an emergency landing. The other helicopter crashed, the defense minister said. Bono said Spanish officials initially believed the crash was likely an accident, but they later saw a photo showing that the area where the helicopter crashed was level, making it conducive to an emergency landing. That "leads the military high command not to rule out the hypothesis that it could be an attack rather than an accident," he said. The victims were the first Spanish troops killed in Afghanistan, officials said. Spain has about 800 troops in Afghanistan assisting the NATO-led force.

Kabul, Aug 18 -- A Lebanese engineer kidnapped by the Taliban last week was released today after his company agreed to stop operations in Afghanistan, a spokesman for the hardline Islamic group said. Taliban spokesman Abdul Latif Hakimi told Reuters that Reza was released this morning at 1000 hrs (0530, UTC), but there was no immediate way to independently confirm this. "His company has agreed to leave

Afghanistan from today," Hakimi told Reuters. He said Reza had been released near a U.S. base in Shajoy, Zabul province. Hakimi said the Turkish Construction Company (TCC), which he said had hired Reza to work on a U.S.-funded road project, had agreed to pull out of Afghanistan. -- Reuters.

BANGLADESH

Dhaka, Aug 17 -- A series of bombs exploded almost simultaneously in the Bangladesh capital Dhaka, the main port city Chittagong and other towns today, injuring at least 20 people and triggering widespread panic. "We have reports of blasts from different areas and security forces have rushed to the spots. What caused the explosions are yet to be ascertained," a police officer of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police said. A police officer in Chittagong said they believed the bombs were locally made and remotely controlled. He gave no details. Authorities said they had immediately tightened security around the country and ordered a crackdown on possible suspects. Reports from all over the country said the bombs exploded on the streets, at court premises and near key government buildings between 0500 to 0530, UTC. One bomb also exploded outside Dhaka's Sheraton Hotel, security officers said. -- Reuters.

BURUNDI

Bujumbura, Aug 17 -- The only remaining Burundian Hutu rebel movement, Front National de Libération (FNL), has for the first time since 1993 intensified its attacks, moving its offensives from the traditional strongholds of Bujumbura Rural and Bubanza provinces to other areas in the north of the country. National army spokesman Maj Adolphe Manirakiza said FNL attacked an army position in Matongo and Muruta communes, north Kayanza Province, yesterday and looted from several families. The rebels did not kill any civilians but, Manirakiza said, "FNL lost two combatants." FNL fighting was also reported last week in Musigati Commune, Bubanza Province, near the Kibira Forest. The army pounded the rebels with warplanes; a weapon that Manirakiza said was used because it was difficult to penetrate the forest on the ground and not because the rebel force was powerful. The FNL's lack of strength, Manirakiza said, was evidenced in its reluctance to engage the army in combat. The UN Mission in Burundi (ONUB), which has deployed military observers, would not comment on the current increase in FNL attacks. The Burundian government and the palipehutu-FNL had signed a declaration to stop the hostilities and start negotiations, but they have since accused each other of violating the deal. -- Reuters.

COLOMBIA

Bogota, Aug 15 -- Two Roman Catholic priests were killed in a

mountain ambush by suspected leftist rebels today. Police said the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia detonated a bomb when a car carrying the priests drove down a mountain road and then opened fire with assault rifles. Two workmen accompanying Father Vicente Roza Bayona and Ramon Emilio Mora also were killed in the attack, which occurred in Norte de Santander province in the country's northwest near the border with Venezuela. FARC rebels claim to respect the Catholic Church, which has sometimes mediated in the country's four-decade-old insurgent war, but at least 60 Catholic priests have been killed by the rebels or by far-right paramilitaries in Colombia in the past 10 years, according to official figures. - Reuters.

ECUADOR

London, Aug 18 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: A major pipeline resumed pumping crude today, one day after protests in two Amazon provinces halted operations, an executive with state-owned Petroecuador said. Jorge Pazmino, an operations manager, told Dow Jones Newswires that the Sote pipeline resumed late yesterday, after eight hours of inactivity. "Now the Sote is transporting around 360,000 barrels," he said. "Petroecuador is evaluating the damages that occurred yesterday when protesters in Lago Agrio (blocked) the pipeline operation station." An executive from the state-run oil company later told Dow Jones that crude output had fallen 68 percent early Wednesday due to the continuing protests in Orellana and Sucumbios provinces. Petroecuador lost more than US\$12 million in revenue between Monday (Aug 15) and early today as a consequence of protests, the official said. Since Sunday morning, residents of the Orellana and Sucumbios provinces, in Ecuador's northeast Amazon, have blocked the main access roads to oil fields in the zone, and have also halted operations at two provincial airports. The region produces at least 75 percent of state oil production and about 50 percent of private oil production in Ecuador. The protesters, among other things, are demanding that companies hire more locals, pay higher wages and invest more in local infrastructure. CRE radio reported today that Sucumbios' provincial governor, Guillermo Munoz, asked the government to enter into direct negotiations to end the demonstrations. He also asked for restraint from the military, which he said had fired rubber bullets at peaceful protesters in the jungle city Lago Agrio, 180 kilometres north-east of Quito, where demonstrators overran a Petroecuador control station.

London, Aug 17 -- A press report, dated Aug 16, states: Protests in two Amazon provinces have halted a major pipeline operation run by Ecuador's state-owned Petroecuador, a company executive has said. The official, who

spoke on condition of anonymity, said the SOTE oil pipeline - one of two of the Andean nation's main oil arteries - was shut at 1000 hrs. Since Sunday (Aug 14) morning, residents of the Orellana and Sucumbios provinces, in Ecuador's north-east Amazon, have blocked the main access roads to oil fields in the zone, and have also halted operations at two provincial airports. The protesters, among other things, are demanding that companies hire more locals, pay higher wages and invest more in local infrastructure. The official said residents of the jungle city Lago Agrio, 112 miles northeast of Quito, had overran a control station there. He said the pipeline transports about 325,000 barrels of crude daily.

HAITI

London, Aug 11 -- A press report, dated today, states: At least 35 people have been shot to death in violence-wracked Haiti in the last four days, hospital officials said yesterday. At least 35 bodies riddled with bullets were processed at the morgue in Port au Prince's general hospital between Saturday and yesterday, according to hospital sources. At least 23 bodies were taken there last week, sources said. The staggering figure came as nine suspected criminals were killed in a police operation in the Port au Prince slum of Bel Air yesterday, police told local radio. Police this week have conducted raids in Port au Prince neighbourhoods considered bastions of supporters of former president Jean Bertrand Aristide, who fled the country amid an armed uprising last year.

INDIA

Jammu, India, Aug 13 -- Islamist militants opened fire on a Hindu family in Indian Kashmir, killing five people and wounding nine others, police said today. The shooting took place near Chargu, a remote village 65 km east of Jammu, the winter capital of Jammu and Kashmir state, police said. "The militants attacked a Hindu family of village defence committee members with automatic weapons," a senior police officer said. "Five people were killed on the spot and nine others were wounded. Five of the wounded are in a critical condition," he said. Indian security agencies have organised groups of villagers in remote areas of Jammu and Kashmir into village defence committees and provided them arms and training to protect themselves against militant attacks. -- Reuters.

INDONESIA

London, Aug 15 -- A press report, dated today, states: The Indonesian government and rebels from the Free Aceh Movement (Gam) have signed a peace deal aimed at ending their near 30 year conflict. Representatives from each side signed the official document in Helsinki. The agreement was reached after five rounds of talks mediated by the former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari. In the provincial capital, Banda Aceh, big

screens were set up in the main mosque so that people could witness the signing. Locals have also begun two days of prayers in support of the peace process, in the hope that this time it really does signal the start of a new chapter for their beleaguered, tsunami-hit province. Both sides have made concessions in order to reach today's agreement. The rebels have put to one side their demand for full independence, accepting instead a form of local self-government and the right eventually to establish a political party. Under the terms of an amnesty, the Indonesian government will release political prisoners and offer farmland to former combatants to help them reintegrate into civilian life. The first real test is likely to come in one month's time, when rebels are supposed to start handing in their weapons. At the same time the Indonesian military will begin to withdraw its forces. The process will be overseen by a joint European Union and Asean monitoring team. Previous peace deals have fallen apart and on the ground there is still deep mistrust between the two sides.

IRAQ

Ramadi, Iraq, Aug 13 -- An attack on a US military patrol followed by heavy US gunfire left 15 Iraqis dead and 17 wounded in a town west of Baghdad, residents said today. Residents of Nasaf, a town just outside Ramadi, west of Baghdad, said a roadside bomb exploded next to a US armoured patrol as it passed near the Ibn al-Jawzi mosque shortly after prayers yesterday. Following the explosion, US troops opened fire, the residents said, shooting towards those emerging from the mosque. Munem Aftan, the director of Ramadi General Hospital, said 15 people were killed and 17 wounded. The death toll was initially reported as two dead but doctors said it had risen sharply overnight, with several of the severely wounded succumbing to their injuries. -- Reuters.

Baghdad, Aug 14 -- Three US soldiers were killed and another was wounded when their patrol struck a roadside bomb in northern Iraq, the US military said today. The attack at Tuz, some 180 km north of Baghdad, occurred late on Friday (Aug 12), the military said in a statement. -- Reuters.

London, Aug 15 -- A press report, dated today, states: United States officials say Iraqi forces have killed a senior aide to the militant leader, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. Officials said Abu Zubair was shot dead in the northern city of Mosul, in an ambush set by Iraqi forces. He had been wanted for his alleged role in several attacks, including an attack on a police station in Mosul last month, which killed five policemen. No other details of the operation were provided, and there is no independent confirmation of the US statement. Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and his group are believed to be behind the kidnapping and beheading of several foreigners in Iraq. His group -

originally known as Tawhid and Jihad, but now known as al-Qaeda in Iraq - is also believed to be behind a long list of suicide bombings and attacks on Iraqi and US forces.

Baghdad, Aug 16 -- Iraq's parliament, pushed to the brink of a midnight deadline, gave negotiators an extra week yesterday to complete a draft constitution after weeks of intensive talks failed to bridge sectarian and ethnic rifts. Shi'ite, Sunni and Kurdish leaders now have seven more days to agree the extent regions can have autonomy from Baghdad and how they will share oil and resources. If they fail, parliament will again face a dissolution crisis and the prospect of new elections in an atmosphere poisoned by sectarian and ethnic strife. In the end yesterday, refusal by leaders of the Sunni minority to grant wide autonomy -- and control of oil income -- to the southern Shi'ite majority appeared to break any accord. Prime Minister Ibrahim Jaafari, a Shi'ite Islamist, said the sticking points had been federalism and sharing out revenues. Kurdish autonomy, secured de facto after the 1991 Gulf War, has been less of an issue but other groups are wary of demands from some Kurds to push for a possibility of outright secession. Just an hour before parliament would have been forced to recognize that it had failed to draft a constitution by Aug 15 and so must face dissolution under a U.S.-backed interim law, negotiators went to the chamber to ask for 10 more days. Delayed again by a typical Baghdad power blackout, and after what had sounded like mortar blasts nearby earlier in the evening, the National Assembly voted unanimously for a motion from the speaker to grant just a week, to Aug 22. It was 20 to midnight (1940, UTC) when the vote was passed. The Transitional Administrative Law (TAL), an interim constitution drawn up under U.S. occupation last year, called for the interim legislature to be dissolved and elections by December for a new constitution-drafting body if no draft permanent constitution was ready by Aug 15. This legislation was amended to set the new Aug 22 deadline by yesterday's vote. Quite what will happen if that deadline is not met is unclear. If a constitution is agreed, it will go to a referendum by Oct 15 and a full-term parliament would be elected by December. -- Reuters.

Baghdad, Aug 17 -- Three car bombs killed more than 40 people in a co-ordinated attack on a Baghdad bus station in the morning rush hour today, ending a lull in insurgent attacks as Iraqi leaders resumed talks on a new constitution. At least 43 people were killed and 76 wounded, an official in the Interior Ministry said, adding: "The casualty figure could rise as there are charred bodies all over the place." Police and medics were among the dead, struck by the third bomb between the bus station and the nearby Kindi hospital as victims of the earlier blasts were being taken there.

One witness said a bus about to depart for Iraq's second city of Basra, in the Shi'ite south, had been incinerated by the blast and it appeared many of passengers were killed. The multiple explosions suggested an attack by one of the Islamist radical groups active in the Sunni Arab insurgency against the U.S.-backed, Shi'ite-led government -- although unlike many bombings by groups like al Qaeda, police said they did not think any of the cars was driven by a suicide attacker. If not, then it would have been an elaborately laid trap to place and time a car bomb to go off just at the point where rescue services were moving casualties toward medical aid. The U.S. military said in a statement one bomb -- it was not clear which in the sequence -- had been detonated by its driver. Later, police said it seemed all the bombs were in empty cars. It was the first attack on this scale in Baghdad for nearly a month. -- Reuters.

ISRAEL

Neve Dekalim, Gaza Strip, Aug 15 -- Defiant Jewish settlers blocked the gates of Gaza's most hardline settlements today, preventing soldiers from delivering 48-hour eviction notices as Israel began its pullout from the coastal territory. Troops were deterred by protesters in some enclaves but walked door-to-door in others, telling settlers to leave by Wednesday (Aug 17) or face forcible eviction under Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's plan to end Israel's 38-year occupation of Gaza. While many settlers vowed not to budge, a growing number took heed and started packing up and moving out. In the largest Gaza settlement, Neve Dekalim, settlers used makeshift barricades and their bodies to impede an operation that paves the way for Israel's first uprooting of settlements on land Palestinians want for a state. Protesters scuffled briefly with police, pelted them with paint-filled balloons and set fire to tyres. Sharon blamed the confrontations on youths who had slipped into the Gaza settlements and vowed to press ahead. "We will not tolerate violence and incitement from those who would force their opinions upon us," he was quoted as telling his cabinet. Eviction warnings to 9,000 settlers in all 21 settlements in Gaza and four of 120 in the West Bank went into effect at midnight yesterday under Sharon's plan to "disengage" from conflict with the Palestinians. Under a rare agreement, 7,500 Palestinian security men in Gaza moved into position on the outskirts of the fortified settlements to ward off possible militant attacks. Two makeshift rockets hit Gaza settlements but caused no casualties. Many of Gaza's 8,500 settlers streamed out before Israel set the pullout in motion today, but more than half remained. They were reinforced by 5,000 ultranationalists who had infiltrated in recent days, raising fears of violence. In an apparent bid to avoid early confrontations, the army said it had decided not to go into five of the

settlements, widely seen as bastions of resistance, until evacuation day. Troops swept in without opposition to the more secular settlements of northern Gaza, already largely abandoned. Hundreds of settlers have signed state compensation deals to leave. Those who refuse to go could lose a third of the money, which ranges from \$150,000 to \$400,000 per family. -- Reuters.

London, Aug 16 -- A press report, dated Aug 15, states: Israeli security forces clashed with hundreds of opponents of Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip today, arresting dozens of people in the roughest confrontation between troops and settlers since the start of the operation. The confrontation came hours ahead of a midnight deadline for all Jewish settlers to leave the Gaza Strip voluntarily or face forcible removal. Officials said they were hopeful many settlers would leave the area before the deadline, but also issued a stern warning of tough action against anyone who resists. The number expected to still be in the settlements at midnight is estimated at about 10,000 people. By midday, three Gaza settlements and two West Bank communities were empty, while five other Gaza settlements were rapidly thinning out, but residents and their supporters in several communities appeared to be digging in for a fight. Jewish settlers have vowed to resist the pullout peacefully, but officials estimate Jewish extremists from outside Gaza, many of them fervently religious teenagers, have infiltrated the settlements in recent weeks. After failing to enter Gaza's largest settlement, Neve Dekalim, yesterday, police moved in early today and dismantled the main entrance gate to clear the way for some 120 moving trucks to enter. Officers used an electric saw to cut through the gate, then dragged the metal barrier away and threw it on the side of a road.

London, Aug 17 -- A press report, dated today, states: Israeli soldiers have begun an operation to evict inhabitants from Gaza settlements after a deadline for them to leave expired. Hundreds of troops escorted by bulldozers marched into Neve Dekalim settlement, a focus of resistance where thousands have defied orders to leave. There have been several reports of protesters being carried away kicking and screaming onto buses, but despite resistance troops have got on with their job. The evacuation could be completed within days rather than weeks, Israeli officials said. Some army units have been delayed by sporadic protests from mainly young protesters. There have been scuffles and a number of arrests. Meanwhile Prime Minister Ariel Sharon praised the troops for showing "great sensitivity" in the operation. In other developments, a woman in southern Israel was badly burned after setting herself on fire during a protest against the pull-out and a female soldier is

lightly wounded after being stabbed by a protester in Morag, Haaretz newspaper reports. Demolitions of settlers' houses at the Nissanit settlement has begun, Reuters news agency reports. AP reports that the settlements at Dugit, Peat Sadeh and Rafiah Yam are now empty, while others are thinning out. Residents of Ganei Tal and Tel Katifa have agreed to leave peacefully, Israeli media say. Four isolated West Bank settlements are also being evacuated. The Israeli army said two of them - Ganim and Kadim - were already empty. Responding to the events, a leader of the Palestinian militant group Hamas said Israel's non-violent pullout was appreciated by all sides, but Mahmoud Zahar said Palestinian resistance would grow if Israel continued to expand settlements in the West Bank. Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas has formed a working group to coordinate the smooth takeover of the settlements once the Israelis leave, which will include representatives of Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

London, Aug 18 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Israeli gunman has opened fire on Palestinians in the West Bank, killing three people and injuring two others, Israeli and Palestinian medics have said. Soldiers have begun removing Jewish settlers from Gaza Israeli police said the assailant was a driver who had taken Palestinian workers to jobs in Shiloh, a Jewish West Bank settlement. Once there, he snatched a security guard's gun and turned it on his passengers before firing at others in the industrial zone. He was later arrested. Media reports suggested he opened fire in an attempt to disrupt the Gaza pullout. Saeb Erekat, a Palestinian government spokesman, condemned the attack and urged "the Israeli government to arrest the perpetrators and bring them to justice immediately". Hamas, the Islamic militant group, threatened to avenge the attack.

Jerusalem, Aug 18 -- Jewish settlers should be out of Gaza by Tuesday (Aug 23), Israeli officials said today. "The assessment is that it will take much less time than expected and is likely to be completed by Monday or Tuesday," said an aide to a minister who attended a meeting today of the ministerial committee on disengagement. The Israeli Web site of the newspaper Maariv reported earlier that Prime Minister Ariel Sharon had told the meeting the evacuation of the strip's 8,500 settlers and thousands of their supporters would be completed by Monday (Aug 22). The pullout had been expected to last three weeks, but the aide said a new assessment, based on progress since the start of forced evacuations yesterday, was made by the authority overseeing the pullout and the public security minister. The assessment for the 21 Gaza settlements did not include the pullout also from the two West Bank settlements yet to be evacuated under Sharon's plan to leave some occupied lands where Palestinians want a state. -- Reuters.

MAURITANIA

Nouakchott, Aug 10 -- Mauritania's military rulers named a new civilian government today a week after staging a bloodless coup, although many of its members hailed from the ousted president's party. The military junta, which ended two decades of authoritarian rule by President Maaouya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya, has pledged presidential elections within two years, winning widespread support at home and cautious international approval. However, opposition politicians voiced disappointment at the make up of the new 20-member cabinet and particularly at the choice of Ahmed Ould Sid'Ahmed as foreign minister. Under Taya, he had been instrumental in establishing diplomatic ties with Israel in 1999, angering many Arabs in the country. "For us a break in relations with Israel would be irrefutable proof of a break with the old regime," said Messaoud Ould Boukheir, leader of a radical opposition party, after the decree naming the new ministers was read out on state radio. Diplomats say there are relatively few experienced civil servants in the country who were not in some way linked to Taya's regime, and that many had membership of his PRDS party for pragmatic rather than philosophical reasons. "Those who have experience of working in government are all members of the former ruling party because you had to be a member to have a job," said one Western diplomat. "All the other bureaucrats are either in exile or they haven't worked for 20 years," he said. The United States has dropped a demand that Taya should be restored and diplomats in Nouakchott have said they will support the military council if it shows it can keep its promise to organise transparent polls. Mauritania, which is due to start pumping oil next year, became only the third Arab country to open formal ties with Israel after being encouraged by the United States to support the Middle East peace process. The move upset many Arabs in the mostly desert Islamic Republic, who accused Taya of trying to ingratiate himself with Washington, and ostracised Mauritania from other Arab nations. Opposition politicians have already put pressure on last week's coup leaders to cut ties with Israel, one of a host of popular grievances with the old regime from corruption to the repression of Islamic groups. The military council has promised that members of the caretaker government will not be allowed to stand in elections at the end of the transition period. In the new cabinet, Mohamed Ali Ould Sidi Mohamed, previously head of the state electricity company which like other public firms helped fund Taya's party, will take over as energy minister. -- Reuters.

NIGERIA

London, Aug 18 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Anglo-Dutch

energy giant Royal Dutch Shell said that it shut down around 14,200 barrels of daily production after local communities in Nigeria surrounded one of its oil fields. "Some members of some communities have surrounded the Agbada 1 flowstation" in the oil-rich but troubled Niger delta in southern Nigeria, said Simon Buerk, a London-based spokesman for Shell. "Some 14,200 barrels per day of production is shut-in," he added. A spokesman of the Shell Petroleum Development Company (SDPC) in Nigeria, confirmed that some disgruntled members of the local communities shut down the flowstation in a bid to get more compensation from the company over a spill that happened about 20 months ago. "A spill happened. Negotiations for more compensation broke down. The communities now felt they need more money and they shut down the flowstation in a bid to exert pressure on the company to get more money," said the spokesman who demanded anonymity. "We met today with representatives of the communities. We asked them to open the flowstation. After the meeting, they said that they would discuss the matter with their people. We expect that the flowstation will be reopened by tomorrow," he also said by telephone. Royal Dutch Shell produces more than a third of its crude production in Nigeria -- approximately 1.0 million barrels per day -- and the affected oil field only accounts for a small fraction of that.

PAKISTAN

London, Aug 16 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Suspected tribal militants today blew up a gas pipeline and a railway track in southwestern Pakistani province of Baluchistan, said police. A railway track near Much area, 70 km south of Quetta, the provincial capital, was blown up today morning, damaging two and half feet of the track, said a police official. In another incident, the source said that a high-intensity bomb tore apart a gas pipeline in the mineral-rich Sui town, partially disrupting gas supply to several parts of the Southern Sindh province. Police did not blame any group but suspected local Baluch nationalist elements behind it. Nationalist elements in Baluchistan have been struggling for more provincial autonomy and royalties from the gas that is supplied nationwide from the province's Sui town.

PHILIPPINES

Manila, Aug 10 -- Two explosions in the southern Philippine city of Zamboanga today wounded at least six people, police and residents said. They said the first explosion in a parked jeep damaged nearby shops and wounded four people, while the second, in a room of a nearby hotel, wounded two. The explosions occurred as officials counted votes from five Muslim provinces for the election of the head of the autonomous region on

Mindanao island. Zamboanga, which is not part of the autonomous Muslim region, is the staging point of all military operations on Mindanao island, which Muslims in this mainly Catholic country consider as their ancestral homeland. "The vehicle was a total wreck," said city councillor Manuel Dalipe. "The explosion created a shallow crater and damaged some stores," he said. "It was not a normal explosion." Police said they were investigating both incidents. No group claimed responsibility for the attacks. -- Reuters.

London, Aug 11 -- A press report, dated Aug 10, states: Two bomb blasts ripped through the downtown area of Zamboanga late today, wounding at least 26 people and knocking out power in the area, police and hospital officials said. The bombings struck underneath a parked van and at an inn atop a restaurant. The city's mayor blamed "terrorists," but said police had no immediate leads pointing to a specific group. Zamboanga, about 530 miles south of Manila, is a bustling seaport that has been hit by deadly bombings in the past and continues to receive threats from Muslim militants, including the al-Qaida-linked extremist Abu Sayyaf group. The first bomb went off at 1915 hrs underneath the van along a street where commuters were waiting for a ride home, wounding at least five people, officials said. They said the bomb was home-made. The blast scattered the van's metal parts several yards away and partly damaged a nearby wooden house, said Superintendent Jose Bayani Gucela, Zamboanga's deputy police chief. While police investigators were sifting through the wreckage of the van, a second bomb struck the inn, Zamboanga Mayor Celso Lobregat said. "There was no warning, and that's why we are very, very shocked when this happened," Lobregat said. "We are condemning the perpetrators. We also should not show fear because if we are terrorised by this, this is what the terrorists want us to feel." Col Edgardo Gidaya, head of the military's Task Force Zamboanga, said he suspected a room at the inn might have been used as a bomb factory. He also said the al-Qaida-linked Muslim extremist Abu Sayyaf group may have been involved. Lobregat said four of those wounded were being investigated for possible involvement. The second blast snapped an electric cable, knocking off power in the neighbourhood and shattering the restaurant's glass panels, police said. Dr. Romeo Ong, director of the government-run Zamboanga Medical Centre, said that explosion wounded 21 people, one seriously. Police cordoned off the two blast sites, and business establishments immediately closed down. Fire trucks, ambulances and police cars stood by. Road checkpoints were set up to thwart other possible bomb attacks.

RUSSIA

London, Aug 10 -- A press report, dated today, states: The Adygei Republic makes vigorous efforts to prevent pollution of the Kuban River with oil from the damaged Khadyzhenskaya-Krasnodar oil pipeline. The oil spill took place on Aug 7 as a result of a criminal cut-in outlet near the village of Takhtamukai 15 kilometers south of Krasnodar, it was learnt today at the southern regional centre of the Russian Ministry for Emergencies. The oil spilled over an area of 70 square meters. Oil also got in several drainage canals, and the total area of the polluted water surface increased to 50,000 square metres. The oil film is three-five mm thick. Ten lines of boom barrages were set up as of this Wednesday to prevent oil leakage into the Kuban River. Specialists hauled away 60 cubic meters of polluted water, and over 30 cubic meters of spilled oil were collected from water surface. According to preliminary data, the total volume of the oil discharge amounted to 100 cubic metres. Special absorbents are also used to neutralize chemicals. It is planned to set today for another four boom barrages. The collection of oil from water surface and haulage of polluted soil continue.

Moscow, Aug 14 -- A Russian regional commander and four other officers were killed in an ambush as they responded to a guerrilla attack on the home of a local official in war-torn Chechnya today, Russia's NTV television reported. One rebel fighter was killed during the attack on the official's house, which was burned down, it said. Rebels with grenades and machine-guns ambushed the officers as they drove towards the village of Roshni-Chu where the house was under attack. Colonel Alexander Kayak, military commander of the Chechen region of Urus-Martan, died along with three fellow officers. A fifth died later of his wounds, and another was seriously injured. The official was not hurt. His son was taken away by the attackers but managed to escape. Earlier an Interior Ministry spokesman confirmed three deaths, including that of Kayak, but he was not available to confirm the NTV report. -- Reuters.

Moscow, Aug 15 -- Up to 160,000 civilians and troops have died or gone missing in the two wars Russia has launched in rebel Chechnya, but only a quarter of them were ethnic Chechens, a top pro-Moscow official said today. "Between 150,000 and 160,000 dead - this is the death toll of the two campaigns," Interfax news agency quoted Taus Dzhabrailov, head of Chechnya's interim parliament, as saying. "Rough estimates show that between 30,000 and 40,000 ethnic Chechens have died in the republic in both campaigns," he said, according to Itar-Tass news agency. Dzhabrailov did not explain why he believed ethnic Chechens made up such a small proportion of the death toll, but in the absence of reliable Kremlin figures,

his remarks came as a rare official assessment of the price of Moscow's drive to reinstate its grip on the North Caucasus province. Russia suffered a humiliating defeat in its first military campaign in Chechnya in 1994-96. Troops sent to the region in 1999 ended its short-lived independence, but have yet to defeat separatist fighters. The government has never published conclusive figures of military losses in the second Chechnya campaign, whose widely advertised success is among the key factors of President Vladimir Putin's popularity. It has been even more reticent about the death toll in the botched first war, described by current Kremlin leaders as a "national shame". Civilian losses in the Chechen wars have never been calculated and official statistics seem to be targeted at hiding the truth rather than revealing it. According to estimates by human rights organisation Memorial, published in December 2004, the number of killed or missing civilians was up to 50,000 for the first Chechen war and up to 20,000 for the second. According to official figures around 5,000 servicemen were killed during the first war and around the same number during the second. Dozens of servicemen and Moscow-controlled Chechen security forces die every month in rebel attacks. Unofficial estimates by experts and rights campaigners put Russian military losses in both campaigns anywhere between 20,000 and 40,000 people. -- Reuters.

SAUDI ARABIA

Riyadh, Aug 18 -- Four suspected militants were killed and several arrested in gunfights with Saudi security forces today, security sources said. Police surrounded a house in a district north of the capital Riyadh, killing two wanted gunmen inside and capturing another, sources said. Saudi forces also shot dead two suspects in the holy city of Medina to the west of the kingdom, and arrested several others. Saudi Interior Ministry spokesman General Mansour al-Turki confirmed security operations were taking place to capture members of a "deviant group," a term which officials use to describe al Qaeda supporters. He gave no further details. Authorities have killed or captured all but three men on a list of 26 most wanted suspects published in 2003. In June, officials listed another 36 wanted men they are still hunting. It is not clear if the men shot today were on the lists. -- Reuters.

SOMALIA

London, Aug 14 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Rival militias in arid southwestern Somalia battled today for control over a village with pastures and wells. Twelve combatants died, and hundreds of residents fled, according to those in the area. The two and half day clash began early today, when Yontar community fighters attacked the village of Idale in a bid to seize it from the Hubeyr

community. Hundreds of people fled their homes in the Bai region before the fighting ended at dawn, elder Salimow Sheikh said. Combatants used assault rifles and rocket-propelled grenades, Liban Mohamed Nageye, a nurse, said in a radio interview from a neighbouring village. He said 12 fighters died. Somalia has had no functioning central government since clan-based warlords overthrew dictator Mohamed Siad Barre in 1991.

SPAIN

London, Aug 15 -- A press report, dated Aug 14, states: Clashes have taken place between Basque separatists and riot police in San Sebastian, northern Spain, during a march banned by Basque authorities. Tourists looked on as riot police fired rubber pellets and charged the rally by banned nationalist party Batasuna. The Basque Interior Ministry said four people had been arrested, AP news agency reported. Batasuna was ruled illegal in 2003 for refusing to condemn violence by Eta, which has killed more than 800 people. Yesterday, a Spanish court upheld a ban on the demonstration issued by the Basque interior ministry on the grounds that Batasuna, which is allegedly linked to the armed group, is outlawed. The number of demonstrators is still unclear, with the ministry declining to make an estimate and Batasuna claiming as many as 5,000 took to the streets to join the rally. The planned itinerary was abandoned, and protesters gathered in a nearby square instead. The police charges reportedly took place to disperse protesters who stayed behind after most of the crowd had left.

SRI LANKA

Colombo, Aug 13 -- Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar, who campaigned to outlaw the Tamil Tigers internationally, was assassinated in an attack police blamed on the rebels. A government source said today President Chandrika Kumaratunga was considering declaring a state of emergency. A ceasefire deal was struck in 2002, and monitors, peace envoys and analysts say it should hold because neither side wants to resume a full-blown conflict. But high-profile killings raise the risk of an escalation in tensions and violence. Police sources said they suspected a sniper shot Kadirgamar, an ethnic Tamil high on the rebels' hit list, from an open window in a house opposite his residence yesterday. Two people had been arrested over the killing, said the sources. Police blamed the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) group, which fought for two decades for a separate homeland for ethnic Tamils in the island's north and east. Government officials declined to say who was behind the shooting. Kadirgamar was shot just before midnight yesterday while he was in his garden and was rushed to the National Hospital in Colombo where he died shortly afterwards. -- Reuters.

Colombo, Aug 13 -- Sri Lanka declared a state of emergency today after a sniper shot dead Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar, an attack police blamed on Tamil Tiger rebels and which raised the spectre of a return to civil war. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) refused comment on the attack but said that the state of emergency was endangering the ceasefire and that they would issue a statement later today. President Chandrika Kumaratunga said Kadirgamar was killed by "political foes" but stopped short of accusing the Tigers. No one has claimed responsibility. -- Reuters.

Colombo, Aug 14 -- Over 1,000 police and troops scoured the Sri Lankan capital today for one or more snipers, suspected to be Tamil Tiger rebels, who gunned down the island's foreign minister and rekindled fears of a return to civil war. Soldiers checked cars entering or leaving Colombo after the government declared a state of emergency as a precautionary measure to allow mass troop movements. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) denied involvement in the assassination of Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar and President Chandrika Kumaratunga's government said a ceasefire with the rebels would hold. "Twelve people have been arrested during yesterday's cordon and search operation and it is not specifically connected to this murder," said military spokesman Brig Daya Ratnayake, adding that the search was ongoing. "They were taken on suspicion." Investigators found spent ammunition from a sniper rifle and an abandoned grenade launcher near Kadirgamar's home in Colombo's diplomatic quarter yesterday. They say the gunmen hid upstairs in a house next door and shot the minister four times; twice in the head, once in the throat and once in chest. A Tamil couple who own the property are under house arrest for questioning, but have not been charged. Observers say there are no signs yet of a return to war but the killing has plunged the island's peace process into its worse crisis since the truce was agreed. -- Reuters.

London, Aug 17 -- A press report, dated today, states: Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga has recalled parliament from recess to endorse a state of emergency and to extend it further for a month. A state of emergency was declared on Saturday (Aug 13), following the assassination of foreign minister Lakshman Kadirgamar. The government claims its the work of the rebel Tamil Tigers...but the rebels have denied any involvement. The high profile killing has raised the spectre of renewed civil war and plunged a protracted peace process into its worst crisis since the ceasefire was agreed in 2002. The government says the truce would hold and there are no signs to show a return to a war that has already claimed 64,000 lives. Police meanwhile have detained 16 Tamils under the emergency, but the killers are still at large.

SUDAN

Khartoum, Aug 15 -- Sudanese authorities have lifted a curfew imposed two weeks ago to stop the capital's worst violence in decades, which killed at least 111 people, Interior Ministry officials said today. "We have lifted the curfew," the ministry official said. "There will be no checkpoints, but the forces will still be out on the streets." News of the sudden death of former southern rebel leader and newly sworn-in First Vice President John Garang two weeks ago sparked riots in Khartoum's central commercial streets and suburbs. Tit-for-tat violence followed, polarising the capital's northern and southern communities, but Khartoum has remained largely peaceful over the past week. -- Reuters.

THAILAND

Bangkok, Aug 11 -- Crude bombs went off in Thailand's largely Muslim south today, wounding six soldiers, two of them seriously, police said. The two badly wounded soldiers were hit by an improvised bomb triggered by mobile phone near a security post in front of a school in Narathiwat province, they said. Shrapnel from the bomb inflicted minor wounds on three other soldiers at the post in Su-ngai Golok near the Malaysian border. Less than an hour later, a soldier on patrol in the area was wounded by a time bomb. -- Reuters.

UGANDA

London, Aug 15 -- Uganda People's Defense Force (UPDF) has announced that a total of 15 rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army including a battalion commander were killed by the government troops. UPDF northern spokesman Capt. Paddy Ankunda was quoted by local press on Saturday (Aug 13) as saying that an rebel battalion commander, Lt. Col. Lobul was killed by the UPDF mobile troops in Okidi-Lamola area west of Kitgum town on Friday. Ankunda said that in the last five days the UPDF had killed about 15 rebels, adding that the 14 rebels were killed during various operations and pursuits in Pader and Kitgum districts in a new operation by the UPDF mobile troops.

UNITED KINGDOM

London, Aug 16 -- A father of three has been shot dead as he arrived for work near Belfast city centre, the fourth killing in a bloody feud between Protestant extremists in the British province. The shooting in the Protestant Sandy Row neighbourhood follows the killing of three men since the beginning of July in feuding between rival groups of "loyalists" - so called because of their fierce allegiance to British rule over Northern Ireland and hostility to a united Ireland. Police say Michael Green, a 42-year-old delivery driver from Ballysillan in north Belfast, died after at least two men shot him at close range as he arrived for work at a furniture shop. Sources from one Protestant extremist group, the

Loyalist Volunteer Force (LVF), say the rival Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) killed Mr Green but deny that he was an LVF member. The police have arrested 20 people and charged 10 in connection with the loyalist infighting. The UVF and the LVF turned on each other after their traditional enemy, the Irish Republican Army, declared a cease-fire in 1997 in its campaign to end British rule.

Kidnappings



AFGHANISTAN

See under "Political & Civil Unrest".

Labour Disputes



BANGLADESH

London, Aug 15 -- A press report, dated today, states: Much of Bangladesh came to a halt as the country's opposition enforced a half-day strike to demand that death sentences handed down for the murder of the country's founding leader be carried out. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who led Bangladesh to independence in 1971 as the leader of the now main opposition Awami League party was gunned down along with members of his family by a group of army officers on August 15, 1975. In April 2001, six months before the Awami League was ousted by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, the country's High Court upheld death sentences handed down to 12 former military officers in the case. Three others, sentenced to death by the trial court, had their convictions quashed. The trial took place only after the Awami League administration led by Sheikh Mujib's daughter Sheikh Hasina Wajed amended the constitution which had until then legally barred the court proceedings. The 12 convicts have lodged a further appeal with the Supreme Court but the cases have yet to be heard. Police say streets were free of cars and schools, shops and businesses closed as Awami League activists held protests marches in all the major cities and towns across the country. Some 9,000 police and paramilitary were on stand-by in the capital Dhaka, but there were no reports of violence, city police chief Mizanur Rahman said.

BRAZIL

London, Aug 12 -- Brazilian customs officers are continuing their fourth successive week of strike action and claim that the dispute is hurting container shipping lines. Customs officers' union Sindareceita says it will

continue the strike until at least Monday (Aug 15) unless the Brazilian government changes its mind over proposals in a plan to merge two tax collecting departments. Brasilia aims to turn the Receita Federal of the customs department and the Receita Previdenciaria, part of the department of social security, into one "Super-Receita". There has been about 90% adherence to the strike action, which started as a series of three-days-a-week go-slows. A Sindareceita spokesman said that he wants job and pension guarantees for his members before the union can agree to any reorganisation. Shipping lines, including Maersk Sealand, Hamburg S&D and P&O Nedlloyd, are now complaining that the delays at ports such as Sao Francisco do Sul, Santos and Itajai are deteriorating rapidly because of the continuation of the strike and general lack of capacity for containers at Brazil's leading ports. The ports have already been skipped and delays of up to 24 hours have been experienced as the strike bites. Dick Meurs, the general manager for P&O Nedlloyd in Brazil and the east coast of South America, said: "The customs strike is starting to hurt. Operations are getting painful already, and we have had to divert some vessels from Sao Francisco do Sul to Itajai to Paranagua. We hope the action ends soon."

BRITISH AIRWAYS GROUND STAFF

London, Aug 11 -- British Airways today cancelled all flights in and out of London Heathrow Airport until late tomorrow after a series of wildcat strikes stranded thousands of passengers during the peak holiday season. BA Chief Executive Rod Eddington said there would be no flights until 1700, UTC, tomorrow at the earliest after ground staff walked out, causing chaos at the world's busiest international airport. "This unprecedented move is a result of the crippling operational impact of unofficial industrial action," he said in a statement. At least 20,000 people were stranded today after some 120 BA flights at Heathrow were cancelled. Eddington said 100 aircraft and 1,000 pilots and cabin crew were stuck in the wrong places around the world after baggage handlers, loaders and bus drivers walked out in sympathy with workers at Heathrow caterer Gate Gourmet, which is caught up in a row with management. The airline said it had booked "a few thousand" hotel rooms for passengers but some faced the prospect of spending the night at the airport. Airport staff handed out free bottles of water and engineers erected large marquees on the forecourt so that people would have somewhere to shelter. Around 100,000 passengers fly daily with the airline during August. BA said it was contacting passengers to warn them about the situation before their flights. Hundreds of flights operated by British Airways left London earlier today without

meals on board for passengers due to the catering dispute. Passengers were provided with food bags or vouchers at the airport before boarding flights. The disruption at Heathrow intensified after BA suspended check-ins for its passengers at terminals one and four as a result of the dispute at Gate Gourmet. That dispute worsened yesterday when Gate Gourmet sacked around 350 workers who went on strike over the company's decision to hire seasonal workers, unions said. A Transport & General Workers' Union spokeswoman said the union was seeking further talks with Gate Gourmet and wanted to see the workers reinstated. However, a company statement yesterday said the strike action, following more than 30 meetings between management and the union, had put the jobs of 2,000 of its workers at Heathrow under threat. "These actions not only jeopardise the livelihoods of our entire workforce at Heathrow but also the services of major airlines and their customers," Managing Director Eric Born said in a statement. He added: "If we don't change, the company will not survive and there will be no future. We now have to take control of this situation swiftly, which may lead to restructuring to avoid the total collapse of the company." -- Reuters.

London, Aug 12 -- A press report, dated today, states: Hundreds of passengers flying into Australia have been affected by industrial action at London's Heathrow airport. About 1,000 British Airways staff members have stopped work out of sympathy for employees who were sacked by a US flight catering firm. The action comes a day after Gate Gourmet fired up to 800 employees amid a simmering row over a restructuring plan. Two Qantas flights that were due to leave London yesterday are waiting for BA staff to return to work before they can take off. Qantas says it is continuing its scheduled flights to Heathrow, even though the one currently in transit may tonight have to land elsewhere in Europe. The airline says it is waiting for advice from the British Airports Authority before making any changes to its timetable. British Airways has cancelled all flights from Heathrow, including two flights into Sydney and one flight into Melbourne. BA flights leaving Australia have not been affected.

London, Aug 12 -- A press report, dated today, states: About 70,000 passengers are braced for another day of chaos at Heathrow after British Airways cancelled all flights until Friday evening. The move was prompted after an unofficial strike by ground staff in support of sacked catering workers. Hundreds of flights were grounded on Thursday leaving 15,000 passengers stranded, 1,000 of whom spent the night sleeping in the airport. Inbound flights were diverted to other airports as far away as Newcastle. Finnair, GB Airways and Qantas, which are also serviced by BA ground staff, have also been affected by the strike. Managing director of

Heathrow Mick Temple said there would be "significant disruption today and probably for several days to come" for BA passengers. Earlier talks with the Transport and General Workers Union aimed at reinstating 600 sacked staff from the caterers that serve BA flights, Gate Gourmet, broke down without agreement. BA chief executive Rod Eddington apologised to passengers and called for more talks to begin urgently between the TGWU and Gate Gourmet. On Friday, the US-based catering firm said the door was open, but the union said it could not see a way forward. Gate Gourmet director Richard Wells denied being heavy-handed over the sacking of staff, saying they were spoken to and given written warnings before being dismissed. He said "What is happening here today is not about Gate Gourmet staff, it's the fact that BA staff are not working. They are taking unofficial action." He added he had offered to meet with unions for further talks on Friday. Sir Rod said BA was forced to cancel so many flights because it did not have "sufficient airport staff to operate flights into or out of Heathrow". Some 70,000 passengers are affected by cancellations. Nearly 100 BA aircraft and 1,000 pilots and cabin crew are in the wrong places around the world, he said. "We simply cannot mount a robust operation any earlier. "It is a matter of huge disappointment that we have become embroiled in an issue which is not a dispute with British Airways and disrupted thousands of people who were about to take their hard-earned summer holidays. He urged the TGWU to encourage its members "to put our customers first and go back to their work places". The dispute began when Gate Gourmet dismissed 600 staff after an unofficial strike on Wednesday over the company's restructuring plans. This led to a shortage of catering supplies on BA flights, and a decision to ground all Thursday's flights and divert 14 inward-bound flights followed. The dispute escalated when hundreds of BA baggage handlers, loaders and other ground staff represented by the TGWU staged an unofficial secondary walk-out. BA said there was little it could do as the walk-out was related to a dispute outside its control. He urged passengers due to travel on Friday not to turn up at the airport, but to contact the airline or their travel agent to arrange a refund or to rebook their travel plans. On Thursday, hundreds of confused passengers crammed on to floors inside the Terminal Four departure hall. Loudspeaker announcements asked anyone not flying to leave the building as staff closed the main doors to prevent overcrowding, leaving hundreds more waiting on the pavements outside. BBC correspondent Russell Hayes said the TGWU recognised the walk-out by BA staff was illegal "wildcat" action and was trying to persuade members to go back to work. Gate Gourmet has said it will not re-instate staff and said it

had told the TGWU it was facing a financial crisis. It said the actions of the staff had jeopardised the livelihoods of the entire 2,000-strong workforce. But the TGWU said managers had provoked the dispute and the union was taking legal advice. London, Aug 14 -- Chaos at Heathrow caused by a strike by British Airways staff has begun to ease, but BA has warned it may take days to clear the passenger backlog. The airline will continue catch-up operations today, after over 80% of its scheduled flights ran yesterday. Up to 100,000 travellers are thought to have been disrupted by the BA strike in sympathy with sacked catering workers. Talks between caterer Gate Gourmet and the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) will continue today. Hundreds of BA ground staff went on strike on Thursday (Aug 11) after Gate Gourmet, which supplies meals for BA flights, a day earlier sacked 670 staff. Gate Gourmet said it had sacked the staff for staging an unofficial walkout over the firm's restructuring plans - this has been disputed by TGWU. All-day talks between the company and union yesterday, overseen by conciliation service Acas, broke up without resolution but will continue from 1100, BST, today. The BA strike grounded flights for more than 24 hours - the cost to the airline in loss of revenues, refunds and the expense of accommodating passengers in hotels is estimated at up to £40m. Services began operating again at 2030, BST on Friday. The airline had hoped 85% of short-haul flights and 80% of long-haul flights would run as normal today.

London, Aug 15 -- AQ press report, dated today, states: British Airways says it is running nearly all - 95% - of its scheduled Heathrow flights, with only 200 passengers still waiting for flights. "We're returning to normal," said BA spokesman Tony Crane. Talks resumed today between union leaders and the caterer at the heart of a dispute that brought chaos to 70,000 Heathrow passengers over the weekend. The Transport and General Workers' Union wants the reinstatement of 670 sacked Gate Gourmet staff. Weekend talks between Gate Gourmet and the T&G failed to find a solution to the original dispute. It is understood that the catering firm does not want to re-employ all the sacked staff as it believes some are "troublemakers who would obstruct change". Gate Gourmet has denied a report that the sackings followed a blueprint drawn up months beforehand. According to a report in the Daily Mirror newspaper, a team from the caterer's US owners Texas Pacific Group drew up a plan to provoke workers into striking so that they could be dismissed and cost savings made. Gate Gourmet has denied the strike was deliberately provoked. Meanwhile, it has emerged that union officials had held a face-to-face meeting with BA workforce

representatives just hours before the unofficial solidarity action began. The T&G spokesman said: "There was a meeting before the strike was called. There wasn't any secrecy about it." However, the union has admitted the BA workers' strike was illegal, and called on members to return to work. A spokesman for Gate Gourmet said it was currently providing a basic catering service on all BA flights. BA says it is expecting all its short-haul flights and 95% of long-haul flights to run today. The cost of the strikes to BA in loss of revenues, refunds and the expense of accommodating passengers in hotels is estimated at up to £40m by airline industry analysts. The airline said it had flown 52,000 people out of Heathrow on Saturday (Aug 13), and figures were expected to show a similar volume for yesterday. A spokesman said: "Everybody who was on a cancelled flight now has a reconfirmed ticket."

CANADA

London, Aug 15 -- A press report, dated today, states: The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), Canada's largest broadcaster, locked out about 5,500 employees early today after failing to reach a deal over a labour dispute with its union. The workers have been without a contract for more than a year. In negotiating a new contract, the Toronto-based CBC said it needs more flexibility to hire new staff on a contract basis instead of full-time. But the Canadian Media Guild (CMG), which represents producers, newsroom staff and technicians, said 30 percent of the CBC's workforce is already non-permanent, giving the network all the flexibility it needs. Last month, CMG members voted 87.3 percent in favour of giving their negotiating team a strike mandate. The employees have been without a contract since the end of March 2004. Negotiations for a new contract began in May 2004. As a result of the lockout, programming on all CBC services -- radio, television and online -- will be scaled back. Management says some important football and hockey games will continue, but possibly without any play-by-play commentary. Local radio morning shows will be replaced by a single national broadcast. TV newscasts will be scaled down, and there will be more acquired programming and movies.

GREECE

London, Aug 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: A 24-hour bank workers' strike got off to a rocky start this morning, when strikers were violently pushed back from the entrance of Emporiki Bank on Sophocleous Street in Athens by police special forces (MAT). According to OTOE trade union President Dimitris Tsoukalas, MAT forces had been called in by the bank governor himself, George Provopoulos. Bank workers are striking in protest at the new pensions law, which OTOE claims will hurt

many of its members by raising the pensionable age and lowering supplementary pensions. Tsoukalas claimed that a large percentage of bank workers are participating in today's strike. Before the bill gained parliamentary approval, the union had sought a single supplementary pension system for the sector and opposed alignment of pensions with the main state fund. Strikers are scheduled to hold a demonstration outside the bank's offices at 1700 hrs, today, coinciding with the beginning of the bank's general shareholders meeting. Bank employees staged a series of weekly 24-hour strikes in January and February this year and again in the spring before the bill became law after rejecting proposals by the government and employers.

MALTA

London, Aug 18 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: The Union Haddiema Maghqudin ordered a two-hour strike for maritime pilots yesterday after it claimed that the Ports Directorate within the Malta Maritime Authority had failed to install safety equipment for the pilots. But in his comments to The Malta Independent, Director of Ports Charles Schembri said the industrial action was uncalled for, since the MMA had already installed most of the safety equipment requested by the pilots. Earlier this year, the maritime pilots asked the MMA to install safety equipment on the pilot boats. The issue was taken to arbitration and a judgement was handed down in April this year. The MMA was required to install 11 safety items, which ranged from flares to pilot ladders, to life jackets and a retrieval system. The arbitration decision did not specify a date by which the equipment had to be installed, but the pilots themselves set Aug 15 as the deadline, he said. Mr Schembri explained that all but two of the promised items of equipment had been installed. The only two items still outstanding were the retrieval system and the propeller guards. Difficulties are being encountered with the installation of these items, because it could affect the structure of the boats. He said that as soon as the arbitration decision was handed down, the pilots and the directorate immediately began discussions, through a technical committee, in order to establish how the safety equipment would be installed. Mr Schembri said the pilots know that discussions have been ongoing to install these last two items and also know of the difficulties which have been encountered. "The pilots only verbally approved the retrieval system of their choice early yesterday morning. It cannot be ordered from abroad before the technical problems are overcome. The pilots are constantly being kept informed of developments. They know the MMA is leaving no stone unturned to install the safety equipment, so the strike was uncalled for," he said. In a statement, UHM section secretary Joe Grillo said the strike was ordered

because safety equipment had not been installed on the pilot boats. He said the two-hour strike staged yesterday was just the beginning and warned that industrial action could escalate in due course. Another strike has been scheduled for between 0600 hrs and 1000, today.

SOUTH AFRICA

London, Aug 13 -- A press report, dated yesterday states: South African gold miners have ended the biggest strike to hit the sector in 18 years after unions accepted an improved pay offer from four mining houses. "We have settlement from both the unions and so they will start going back to work," said Frans Barker, chief negotiator of the Chamber of Mines, which represents employers. The leading National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and the smaller Solidarity union accepted a wage offer of between 6 per cent and 7 per cent. About 100,000 miners stopped work at the world's second gold producer AngloGold Ashanti, the fourth-ranked Gold Fields, the sixth-largest Harmony and South Deep, a smaller mine partly owned by Canada's Placer Dome. The Chamber of Mines estimated that the strike cost South Africa, the world's top gold producer, around 130 million rand (\$26 million) a day.

Johannesburg, Aug 17 The world's biggest ferrochrome producer Xstrata said today its South African workers had ended a strike, which they started in late July in a dispute over wages. Workers at Xstrata's Rustenburg ferrochrome plant agreed to return to work after the firm and the National Union of Metalworkers (NUM) union agreed a new wage package, the firm said in a statement. "Xstrata has agreed to restructure elements of the total package to accommodate particular requests from the union, including a rebalancing between basic remuneration, leave and attendance allowances and provident fund benefits," the firm said. Xstrata said the final agreement reflects the settlement already agreed at Xstrata's other operations and with non-striking workers. -- Reuters.

TONGA

London, Aug 12 -- A press report, dated today, states: The Tongan civil servants' strike committee will put another submission to the Government today setting out options as the basis for further negotiations to try to resolve the national public service pay strike that is entering its fourth week today. There is speculation in Tonga there may have been more to the King's reply to the striking civil servants petition than was contained in the Government news release on Wednesday (Aug 10). That release quoted the Prime Minister, the King's son, Prince Ulukalala Lavaka Ata, as saying the King's one-sentence reply was a directive to the Government to employ an independent auditor to check on the figures that both sides have been using in the dispute over

employment structures and pay levels. The King's nephew, Prince Tuitelehake, who is supporting the pay protest, told the striking civil servants at another rally yesterday that getting the figures was just the first stage and that the King would then make a final command including all the grievances contained in the petition. The strike committee intends to propose options to the Government on a way forward today.

Awards & Settlements



ABUSE OF CHILDREN, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 16 -- A press report, dated Aug 15, states: California's Orange County will pay \$2 million to settle a lawsuit alleging that the county placed twins with a foster parent who sexually abused them, kept them in filthy conditions and forced one child to relieve himself in cat litter. In making the settlement with the now 12-year-old brother and sister, the county's Department of Children and Family Services acknowledged it made a mistake. In 1999, the department had revoked the license of Sandra Spangler, who had cared for 80 foster children, including the twins, but she was allowed to keep the twins and two other children for another three years because she was their legal guardian. The department says it should have removed the children at once. Spangler pleaded guilty in March 2003 to four felony counts of endangering the children. In exchange, she had to serve no more than a year in jail.

MANIPULATION OF ELECTRICITY PRICES, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 16 -- A press report, dated Aug 15, states: The Houston energy company Reliant Energy Inc. agreed today to pay a total of \$445 million to Oregon, Washington and California, to settle charges that it manipulated prices during a regionwide energy crisis in 2000 and 2001. "California will receive the bulk of the money," said Kevin Neely, a spokesman for the Oregon Department of Justice. The state of Oregon will receive \$3.5 million. This is the sixth settlement to come out of a series of investigations by the attorneys general of the three western states. The agreement resolves claims that Reliant withheld power to its wholesale customers in order to keep supplies tight and prices relatively high.

PATENT INFRINGEMENT, UNITED STATES

Chicago, Aug 11 -- Amazon.com Inc. today said it will pay \$40 million in the third quarter to settle a patent infringement lawsuit with Soverain Software LLC. The settlement of the

lawsuit, which was originally filed in 2004 in Texas, was announced in a filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Amazon, the online retailer, said the settlement also includes the dismissal of all claims and counterclaims, mutual releases, and a nonexclusive license to Soverain's patent portfolio. Soverain had filed the suit against Amazon on Jan 12, 2004 in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas, Amazon said in the filing.

UNLAWFUL DEATH, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 16 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: A judge approved a \$16 million settlement of a lawsuit today that calls for Northwestern University to pay the family of a football player who collapsed and died during practice four years ago. Rashidi Wheeler's mother, Linda Will, who has objected to settling the case, filed an appeal to the order. In the court order, Circuit Judge Kathy M. Flanagan wrote that she approved the settlement to protect the interests of Wheeler's three half brothers, all of whom are minors. Flanagan wrote that if Will was the only plaintiff in the case, she would have the right to reject any settlement. Will said the settlement was unjust and she expected the ruling to be overturned. Wheeler, 22, collapsed in August 2001 after participating in a conditioning drill. His parents sued the school, claiming officials did not give their son, an asthmatic, timely or adequate medical treatment. Northwestern spokesman Alan Cabbage said in a statement that the school agreed to the settlement to end the legal battle.

Railway Accidents



ALREWAS, STAFFORDSHIRE, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Aug 11 -- A press report, dated today, states: An unmanned 120-ton locomotive careered for 10 miles down the tracks before it derailed in Staffordshire. Rail chiefs have begun an inquiry into how the driverless engine, being used by Network Rail, smashed through two level crossings near Lichfield. It also broke through two farm crossings, reaching speeds of 60mph during the incident on Sunday (Aug 7) morning. Network Rail investigators are looking into the possibility that the brake was left off by the driver. The locomotive, owned by freight company EWS, eventually reached a set of points and derailed at Alrewas, about five miles east of Lichfield. The incident happened at about 1015, BST, on Sunday on a line which was closed for track repair work. The Class 66 engine had been used to bring ballast to the site, although it is thought it was not

pulling any wagons at the time of the incident. A Network Rail spokesman said: "The points would have prevented the loco getting on to an in-operation part of the main line, but this was obviously a serious incident, particularly as the loco passed through a number of crossings. The loco was moving over track that was downhill all the way, so it would have quickly gathered speed. We are looking into the incident with the help of EWS." An EWS spokesperson said: "A locomotive was derailed at Alrewas following an unauthorised movement on Sunday, from an engineering site. No injuries occurred and a full investigation into the cause of the incident is under way."

AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS

London, Aug 15 -- A press report, dated today, states: A passenger train derailed today at Amsterdam's central station but there were no casualties, rail authorities said. "A passenger train derailed on the west side of the station," Fred Versfeld, said a spokesperson for the ProRail company that handles rail traffic in the country. "There were no victims." He said the train derailed as it was leaving the station heading for the western town of Haarlem, breaking high-tension cables and blocking another train. "There is major damage," the spokesperson said. He said some rail services would be suspended for the rest of the day, including the line between Amsterdam and Schipol airport. "Traffic has been totally immobilised from the derailment, but it will resume bit by bit on the lines where it is possible," said Versfeld.

BENTON HARBOR, MICHIGAN, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 11 -- A press report, dated Aug 10, states: CSX crews have been cleaning up a train derailment in downtown Benton Harbor. The accident happened yesterday north of a Whirlpool plant. Police said about ten of the CSX freight cars carrying gravel jumped off the track, but did not tip over completely. Railroad officials think the 90-degree temperatures may have caused a malfunction in the switch in that area. No one was hurt and little to no gravel was spilled from the freight cars.

BINH DINH PROVINCE, VIETNAM

London, Aug 15 -- A press report, dated yesterday states: A train crashed into a bus which failed to stop at a railway crossing in central Vietnam, killing 11 people and injuring 14 others, police said today. Six people were killed instantly and five others died in hospital after the accident yesterday in Binh Dinh province, said provincial traffic police chief Le Thanh Choi. All those killed or injured were in the bus, he said. Four of those injured were in a serious condition. Initial investigations showed that the bus driver, who was injured in the accident, failed to stop at a railway crossing which had no barriers, Mr Choi said.

BLOUNT COUNTY, TENNESSEE, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 16 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: A train derailed late this afternoon in the West Hunt and Louisville area of Blount County. There were no injuries when 52 of the train's 95 cars derailed. The CSX train was traveling from Etowah, TN to Corbin, KY. There is no word yet on what caused the derailment, and it is not believed to pose any environmental hazard. The train actually broke apart across West Hunt Road, with part of it ending up on the north side of the road. The other part ended up about 50 yards down the tracks.

CHEAKAMUS RIVER AREA, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA

London, Aug 11 -- A press report, dated Aug 10, states: Federal accident investigators probing the derailment of a CN train that spilled 41,000 litres of caustic soda into the Cheakamus River say the accident was not caused by a problem with the rail track. They are now concentrating their investigation on the way the train was handled and the equipment and makeup of the 144-car train. "We eliminated the track right away," Len Lewar, the Transportation Safety Board's senior accident investigator for the Pacific region said yesterday. "That leaves the handling, equipment and makeup of the train and we are now looking systematically at every one of those factors to determine what happened," Lewar said. "Right now we haven't reached a conclusion." Friday's (Aug 5) derailment, which wiped out salmon stocks in the river, was the second major derailment involving CN Rail within a week. Two days earlier, 45 cars of a 140-car train left the tracks and spilled thousands of litres of oil into Lake Wabamun, 65 km west of Edmonton. The derailments prompted unions representing thousands of CN Rail employees to send a letter to Transportation Minister Jean Lapierre urging him to order a comprehensive review of CN Rail's operating practices and its maintenance, repair and inspection protocols. The letter was sent by the Teamsters Canada Rail Conference, whose members operate the locomotives, and the Canadian Auto Workers, whose members are responsible for the maintenance of railway equipment. John Burns, vice president of CAW Local 100, said his union had been concerned about the maintenance, inspection and repair of equipment and tracks for years, since the company began laying off workers. The CAW has seen its membership halved in the past 10 years, and now represents about 2,500 workers, he said. "We're concerned that today's trains are heavier and longer than they were a few years ago. There seems to be more accidents since the trains got longer, heavier and had less people maintaining them." However, CN Rail official Graham Dallas said the company follows federal regulations and standard railway practice in sizing its trains.

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

LUCIO BLANCO AREA, MEXICO

See "Premises, Lucio Blanco Area, Mexico" under "Fires & Explosions".

POCATELLO, IDAHO, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 12 -- A press report, dated Aug 11, states: Officials with Union Pacific say ten train cars derailed in a Pocatello train yard in south-east Idaho. The derailment happened Tuesday (Aug 9) as crews used a remote-controlled locomotive to push freight cars together. Eight cars from the remote-controlled train derailed, knocking two more cars from a nearby train off the tracks.

PRETORIA AREA, SOUTH AFRICA

London, Aug 15 -- A press report, dated today, states: A train driver, his son and daughter were seriously burned when the train the man was driving derailed and caught fire west of Pretoria yesterday, emergency services said. "We received a call at about 1530 hrs, about the accident, which happened on the flyover bridge between DF Malan and Van Der Hoff roads," Tshwane emergency services spokesperson Johan Pieterse said today. "When the train derailed, diesel fuel spilled and caught fire as it leaked into the locomotive's cabin and down to the Apies river below," Pieterse said, adding that the fuel spill from the goods train was contained. The train's five wagons, carrying crushed stones for construction, also spilt their load into the river. The bridge itself was damaged by the impact of the crash and was to be closed today for assessment and for the locomotive and wagons to be lifted back onto the tracks by crane. Pieterse said the cause of the crash was unknown. Commuter train company Metrorail was to investigate.

THAMES TUNNELS AREA, LONDON

See "Trains, Thames Tunnels Area, London" under "Fires & Explosions."

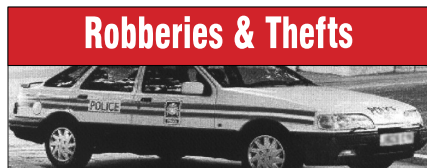
UST-KUT, IRKUTSK REGION, RUSSIA

London, Aug 13 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Five hundred kilograms of crude oil have spilled from a railroad tank-car in the town of Ust-Kut in the Irkutsk region, a spokesperson for the regional office of the Emergency Situations Ministry said today. According to the official, three 62-metric ton tank-cars carrying crude oil were derailed yesterday at the local branch of the Irkutsk oil refinery and about 500 kilograms of oil spilled from one of them. An emergency crew arrived at the site of the accident to put the tank-cars back on the tracks. Several fuel trucks were sent to transfer fuel from the tank-cars that had overturned. Damaged rail tracks are believed to have caused the accident.

WABAMUN, ALBERTA, CANADA

London, Aug 15 -- A press report, dated AUG 14, states: Canadian

National Railway Co. has until 1300 tomorrow to clean up any oil left on a lake near Edmonton, Alberta, from a spill caused by an Aug 3 train derailment. The company received a new "environmental protection order" on Aug 12 from provincial government with set guidelines for cleaning Wabamun Lake and its shoreline, Canadian National Railway spokesman Jim Feeny said in an interview today. The Canadian Broadcasting Corp. reported it was a 780,000-liter oil spill. "We're well along on the containment and the efforts now are on clean up and remediation," Feeny said. The railway and provincial environmental agency are co-ordinating the cleanup, which involved 400 people working at the site of the spill today, he said. The CBC reported the cleanup deadline earlier today. Canadian National President Hunter Harrison apologized to local residents yesterday in full-page newspaper advertisements and promised that the company "will do everything in its power to make this right."



ARTEFACTS, EGYPT

London, Aug 16 -- A press report, dated Aug 13, states: Three men have been jailed for life over a scam to smuggle artefacts worth more than \$50m out of Egypt. Those found guilty included the former head of Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities, Abdul Karim Abu Shanab. He was accused of giving smugglers certificates showing genuine artefacts were imitations, so they could be carried through customs. His lawyer said he would appeal. Four other defendants received sentences ranging from fines to 15 years in prison. They included a Swiss citizen and a German of Egyptian origin. Four of the seven, including the Swiss and German, were convicted in their absence. Another three were acquitted. Officials estimated the smuggling gang exported some 57,000 pieces worth about \$55m (£30m), including human and animal mummies, coins, statues and wooden sarcophagi. The authorities intercepted some of the antiquities at Cairo airport, but others were smuggled all over the world, including some that were found in Australia for sale on the internet. They have been returned to Egypt. Egyptian law says only reproductions of antiquities can be exported, so many of the items were given certificates to show they were fake.

CASH, BANK, FORTALEZA, BRAZIL

London, Aug 12 -- A press report, dated Aug 11, states: Some 1,240 miles from the site of the crime, Brazilian police said today they had recovered a

small percentage of the \$67.8 million in local currency stolen from the Central Bank in one of the world's biggest heists. However, authorities were suspicious that the discovery of reals one million, or roughly \$434,780, inside a Mitsubishi Pajero SUV that was on a transport truck may be a ruse to misdirect the investigation. "We were tipped off on Monday (Aug 8) by the owner of the car dealership who received cash for the vehicle, something almost no one ever does," federal police spokeswoman Sabrina Albuquerque said. Acting on the tip, police stopped the truck used to carry vehicles near the south-eastern city of Belo Horizonte. A search unveiled the money stashed in the SUV. The stacks of 50-real notes -- the same denomination stolen from the bank in the northeastern city of Fortaleza last weekend -- were tied with Central Bank wrappers, said Albuquerque. She said the SUV was bought on Saturday afternoon and, hours later, was loaded onto the truck headed for Sao Paulo. The truck's driver and his assistant were being questioned. Authorities suspect the purchase of the SUV and the truck to transport it could be "a ploy to point investigators in the wrong direction," said Albuquerque. She added that police also were investigating whether two different gangs teamed up to pull off the robbery in a "a kind of crime consortium." Authorities said yesterday they had identified some of the thieves and were looking into the possibility the heist was pulled off by the First Capital Command, one of Brazil's most notorious organised crime groups. No arrests have been made. "Several suspects have been identified and we are closing in on them," Albuquerque said without elaborating in order "to not jeopardise the investigations." Another \$2,325 in reals, also bound by Central Bank wrappers, was found in a white van parked near the scene of the crime earlier this week. The money was stolen over the weekend by about 10 men who spent three months digging a tunnel from a house they had rented near the bank in Fortaleza, 1,550 miles north-east of Sao Paulo. The money was not insured, and the Central Bank has said the funds will be replaced by the Treasury, meaning that Brazilian taxpayers will foot the bill. Central Bank spokeswoman Beatriz Dornelles said they do not insure the money in the vaults because the risks involved are too small to justify the insurance premiums. She said it was "too early to comment" on whether that policy would be changed. Authorities, meanwhile, continued examining fingerprints and scouring through evidence left behind by the thieves, including shovels, pickaxes, saws, drill and other tools they used to dig the tunnel and cut through the vault's steel-reinforced concrete floor. Inside the vault, they broke into containers filled with used 50-real notes which were apparently transported back through the tunnel by a pulley system

attached to a large plastic barrel cut in half. A forklift used to carry the container was accidentally left by a bank employee in front of the vault's security camera preventing it from recording the theft, Albuquerque said, adding that police were still investigating why the vault's motion detectors and alarms did not function.

Computer Systems



ZOTOB VIRUS

London, Aug 15 -- A press report, dated today, states: A new Internet virus has been detected that can infect Microsoft's Windows platforms faster than previous computer worms, said an anti-virus computer software maker. The ZOTOB virus appeared shortly after the world's largest software maker warned of three newly found "critical" security flaws in its software, including one that could allow attackers to take complete control of a computer. The latest worm exploits security holes in Microsoft's Windows 95, 98, ME, NE, 2000 and XP platforms and can give computer attackers remote access to affected systems, said Trend Micro Inc. "Hundreds of infection reports were sighted in the United States and Germany," Tokyo-based Trend Micro said in a statement released late last week. "Since most users may not be aware of this newly announced security hole so as to install the necessary patch during last weekend, we can foresee more infections from WORM_ZOTOB," it said. The latest virus drops a copy of itself into the Windows system folder as BOTZOR.EXE and modifies the system's host file in the infected user's computer to prevent the user getting online assistance from antivirus web sites, Trend Micro added. It can also connect to a specific Internet relay chat server and give hackers remote control over affected systems, which can be used to infect other unpatched machines in a network and slow down the network performance. Last Tuesday (Aug 9), Microsoft issued patches to fix its security flaws as part of its monthly security bulletin. The problems affect the Windows operating system and Microsoft's Internet Explorer Web browser. Microsoft has warned that an attacker could exploit a vulnerability in its Internet Explorer Web browser and lure users to malicious Web pages, and could run a software code on the user's PC giving the attacker control of the affected computer. Computer users should update their anti-virus pattern files and apply the latest Microsoft patches to protect their computer systems, Trend Micro said. More than 90% of the world's PCs run on the Windows operating system and Microsoft has been working to improve the security and reliability of its software.

London, Aug 17 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: At least one of several computer viruses that have been circulating the Internet in recent days hit high-profile media targets in the United States today. CNN reported on air that its computer network, running Windows 2000, had been hit, causing enough disruption that the cable network had to make some programming changes this evening. A worm also hit computers at the New York Times, but the impact there was limited, the company said. The reports come a week after Microsoft announced a new vulnerability in older versions of Windows as part of its monthly release of security patches. About 10 Internet worms are currently making their way around the Internet, targeting the new Microsoft vulnerability, said Mikko Hypponen, a spokesman for F-Secure. They have names like Zotob and RBot, though antivirus companies have yet to agree on their nomenclature. The worms attack computers quietly, in the background, similar to how the infamous Nimda and Code Red worms operated. There's no need to open an e-mail attachment. With so many variants making their way around the Internet, vulnerable computers are sure to be infected, Hypponen said.

Miscellaneous



COLLAPSE OF RAIL TUNNEL GERRARDS CROSS, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Aug 18 -- A press report, dated Aug 17, states: A busy commuter rail route is to reopen seven weeks after a tunnel collapse. The line through Gerrards Cross in Buckinghamshire was closed on Jun 30, when a tunnel collapsed next to where a new Tesco store was under construction. It is to reopen on Saturday (Aug 20) ready for commuter services to begin on Monday (Aug 22), Network Rail said. The line, which has now been declared safe, serves commuters into London from the Chilterns area and is also an inter-city link to the Midlands. Reconstruction work has been carried out over the past seven weeks and experts have investigated the construction site. Since the collapse, Tesco and its contractors have removed more than 25,000 tonnes of earth and some 60 metres of tunnel structure," a spokesman said. Independent engineering experts have reviewed the tunnel design, the building practices and the earth used as infill. They have agreed with Tesco and its consultants that the structure is safe for trains. Network Rail chief executive John Armitt said: "Now we are satisfied that the tunnel is safe, our engineers have moved in and will be working

night and day, rebuilding the track and signalling damaged in the tunnel collapse, to get trains moving once again."

DAMAGE TO UNDERSEA INTERNET CABLES, ARABIAN SEA

London, Aug 15 -- Internet services in the UAE are likely to remain slow for several more days at least because engineers do not have permits from the Indian government to repair two cables broken during monsoon weather. Officials at Etisalat say they are unsure when the vital underwater cables will be fixed so that internet services can return to normal. Internet connections in the UAE have been slow for two weeks following the damage, which knocked out eight of the UAE's 20 internet links to the outside world. Two extra links have been added since the initial incidents, resulting in a slight improvement in internet services. Engineers cannot start work to get them up and running fully until the Indian government issues them with permits to repair the cables. An Etisalat spokesman said the permits were taking several days to come since more than one government department was involved in issuing them. One ship has been at Cochin for several days awaiting permission to repair a cable that belongs to internet operator Sea-Me-We 3. A second ship recently arrived in the Mumbai area to fix the damage to the other cable, which is part of the Flag network. The cables, which connect to Etisalat's control centres in Abu Dhabi and Dubai, are thought to have been broken when "two" ships (? one, support Samudra Suraksha) sank separately during the recent stormy weather that hit the subcontinent. "Both Sea-Me-We 3 and Flag, which are the two cable operators whose cables have been severed, have approached the Indian government and are currently waiting for permits from the government of India to start the repair work. "To date, the permits have not been given. Until such time as the permits are granted, it is difficult to give a time-frame for the repair of the international links," an Etisalat spokesman said. Applications such as gaming are among those worst affected and many businesses have said they have lost money because of the problems. Etisalat, which has ruled out compensation, said it was spending hundreds of thousands of dollars per month on the extra links that have been added to improve the internet services. According to Etisalat, the UAE's internet services have not been as badly affected as those of other countries in the region, with users in Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, for example, being more severely affected and suffering a much bigger slowdown.

DRUGS FOUND ON CYPRUS VESSEL AT BRIDGETOWN, BARBADOS

London, Aug 14 -- A press report, dated Aug 13, states: Police have

seized nearly 100 pounds of marijuana on board general cargo EWL Trinidad (4180 gt, built 1997) at Bridgetown, Barbados. Personnel from the police, customs and drug squad carried out a "sting" operation at the port this morning. The operation lasted for four hours, during which 91 pounds of marijuana, worth \$364,000, were found in a metal container attached to the vessel. No arrests have been made but operations are continuing.

FLOODING IN COAL MINE, XINGNING, CHINA

London, Aug 12 -- A press report, dated Aug 11, states: Beijing today ordered an investigation into the cause of a flood at a coal shaft in southern China. Hopes of finding survivors among the 122 miners still trapped underground all but disappeared. Only four miners managed to escape alive after the tunnel 1,575 feet underground became inundated with water on Sunday (Aug 7). One body was recovered from the Daxing Coal Mine in Guangdong province yesterday. China's Cabinet has ordered Li Yizhong, the head of the country's safety watchdog, to set up a team to investigate the cause of the disaster, the official Xinhua News Agency said. The Daxing mine was operating without a license and despite a government ban on mining in the area following a flooding incident at another facility on Jul 14. Xinhua said authorities ordered a ban on mining across the province this week to facilitate safety inspections. Authorities have detained 11 officials in connection with the accident, including the owner, a manager, board chairman and chief technician of the mine. Two mayors who had jurisdiction over mines in the area have been suspended. Xinhua said efforts to rescue or recover the bodies of the 122 miners still trapped underground were set to continue today, but quoted officials as saying that it would be "almost impossible" for any of them to have survived this long. Rescue officials have been unable to explain what triggered the flood.

GRETA (ANTIGUA & BARBUDA)

Dublin, Aug 12 -- General cargo Greta: There was a dispute between cargo interests and dock workers. The issue went into the high court and an injunction was made against the party causing the disruption. The vessel loaded on Saturday Aug 6 and sailed on Sunday Aug 7. -- Lloyd's Agents.

META (Malta)

London, Aug 13 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Cape Town's deputy sheriff found himself on bulk Meta (11208 gt, built 1987) heading for Argentina after the master decided flee and refused to obey his order to return to port. Mark Withers, of the Cape Town sheriff's office, had boarded the vessel as it left Table Bay harbour because a court order had instructed him to seize its fuel in lieu of a payment on a debt owed by the charterer. But the vessel absconded

after slowing just long enough to allow Withers to climb down the side and leap to safety aboard a pursuing launch. The incident began late on Wednesday (Aug 10) when he was handed the court order. The vessel was already steaming out of the harbour. Withers boarded the National Ports Authority pilot boat that was heading out after the Meta to collect the pilot who had guided the vessel out of the harbour. The master was ordered to go to No 2 anchorage in the bay, as instructed by Port Control. But he flatly refused. A frantic series of cellphone calls and radio messages followed, with the Port Control tower also ordering the vessel back to the harbour. But the master steamed on past Robben Island and headed for the open sea. By that time maritime specialist attorney Janine Lee, of Sonnenberg, Hoffmann and Galombik, had dispatched a launch after the vessel in a bid to rescue Withers. Lee said: "We called Greece and asked our client to get in touch with the ship's owners to tell the master to act rationally. "Eventually, he was willing to slow down enough so our chartered launch could catch up and Withers could disembark down the pilot's ladder." Lee said the charterers and operators of the Meta, African Maritime Carriers of the British Virgin Isles, owed its clients charter rental fees on another vessel. "We are now weighing our options. We could have the master and the vessel arrested in Argentina or we could wait for their return to South African waters. "Logistically it is now not possible for the ship to be pursued. The police do not have the resources and we would not be able to get people on board the vessel."

OUTBREAK OF "BIRD FLU"

Paris, Aug 10 -- China has discovered a strain of bird flu, likely the one deadly to humans, at a farm in Tibet, making the western region the third to be hit in the country, the world animal health body OIE said today. "We just received the information that bird flu has been detected in Tibet," OIE director-general Bernard Vallat said. He said the virus found was likely to be the H5N1 strain that has swept large parts of Asia, killing more than 50 people in the region. The disease also led to the death of 140 million birds in Asia at a cost running to billions of dollars. "It's highly pathogenic so it will likely have the same aggressiveness as in the rest of Asia," Vallat said. The Chinese authorities informed the Paris-based OIE that 133 infected birds had died in a farm close to the capital Lhasa, which had prompted them to cull an additional 2,600 birds in the surrounding area. China did not say what type of bird had been infected but Vallat said it was likely to be chicken. The news comes on the same day as confirmation that a bird flu outbreak in Kazakhstan was the deadly H5N1 strain and news that the disease had extended its reach in Russian Siberia and spread to Mongolia. But Vallat said the Tibet outbreak probably came from another

part of China. The Asian country already reported bird flu outbreaks in its western provinces of Xinjiang and Qinghai, which are adjacent to Tibet. Some scientists have warned that avian flu, infectious in birds, does not spread easily among humans but it could mutate into a form better able to pass from animals to people, possibly triggering a global pandemic. They say such a pandemic would probably start in Asia and could kill millions and result in devastating economic losses. Vallat said the fact that bird flu had spread to Tibet was maybe because China had not applied bird vaccination in the entire country. "So we can hope that now they will extend vaccination and that the virus will be quickly contained," he said. -- Reuters.

Astrana, Aug 11 -- A deadly strain of avian influenza that can infect humans has spread to three more Kazakh villages, a senior official at the Central Asian state's Agriculture Ministry told Reuters today. The disclosure comes a day after Kazakh officials said the strain, H5N1, was detected in a village in the northern Pavlodar region that borders Russia, which has also reported a bird flu outbreak that continues to spread. Talgat Abulgazin, the head of the ministry's veterinary disease monitoring department, said he believed the virus's spread among poultry in Kazakhstan could be checked. "The epizootic situation for this disease is under control," he said in an interview, using the term for an outbreak of disease affecting many animals of the same kind at one time. "(But) I cannot guarantee that we will be able to eradicate this in Kazakhstan, although all efforts are being made to do so." Tests had shown that H5N1 was now present in three other villages outside the Pavlodar region: two in the Akmolinsk region to the west, and one in Karaganda region, in central Kazakhstan, Abulgazin said. There are concerns that migrating birds could spread the disease further to Europe and eventually the United States. Reflecting fears that bird flu's jump to humans could unleash a global pandemic, a dozen Asian nations today agreed to build a regional stockpile of anti-bird flu drugs. Russian Emergencies Ministry said in a statement the number of bird deaths rose to 10,170 today -- up from just over 8,300 yesterday. The ministry said most deaths occurred in the Novosibirsk, Tyumen, Kurgan and Altai regions of Siberia. -- Reuters.

Moscow, Aug 15 -- A bird flu outbreak in Russia appeared to be spreading westward today after officials confirmed the virus had broken out in a sixth region since the epidemic struck the country in mid-July. It was unclear whether the virus found in the Urals region of Chelyabinsk was the deadly H5N1 strain that has killed more than 50 people in Asia since 2003. It has been confirmed in a number of Siberian regions and neighbouring Kazakhstan. Interfax news agency quoted Andrei Gasilov, vice-governor of Chelyabinsk, as saying the virus had killed 60 birds in the village of Oktyabrskoye on the

Kazakh border since Saturday (Aug 13). Other Russian regions hit by the flu include Novosibirsk, Tyumen, Omsk, Kurgan and Altai. Chelyabinsk, which borders Kurgan on the east side of the Ural mountains dividing Europe and Asia, is the westmost region to have been struck so far. Interfax quoted Gasilov as saying domestic birds were being culled in the village to prevent the virus, which has killed more than 10,000 birds countrywide, from spreading further. Officials said wild birds, increasingly active in August as they prepare to migrate to warmer regions in Europe, Asia and America, were to blame. "Results of epizootic checks have shown that they (migrant birds) are the main source of infection," Ria-Novosti news agency quoted an official with the Novosibirsk state consumer rights watchdog as saying. -- Reuters.

London, Aug 17 -- Altai administration officials said the presence of bird flu virus had been officially confirmed in six districts. "The bird flu situation is very difficult; it requires tough preventive measures and the elimination of the nidus of the infection," acting Altai governor Mikhail Kozlov said at a meeting with regional administration officials yesterday. Laboratory tests confirmed bird flu in the villages of Glubokoye and Gonokhovo, Zavyalovsky district, the poultry farm in the Mamontovo district centre, the villages of Guselyotovo and the settlement of Rassvet, Romanovsky district, the Vtoroye Korosteli villages in the Rubtsovsky district, and the village of Proslaukha, Bayevsky district. On Monday (Aug 15), veterinary services detected the bird flu virus in the village of Titovka, Yegoryevsky district. All these settlements have been quarantined. Access to the 13 poultry farms in the Altai territory has been severely restricted. Due to the huge workload to cull the sick birds and implement preventive measures, Kozlov requested the regional veterinary service to enlist more technical personnel. Meanwhile, specialists said the bird flu virus had migrated together with waterfowl, such as wild ducks, pintails, and wild geese. These species contact the birds which fly over southern Russian regions for wintering in Europe.

Hanoi, Aug 17 -- Vietnam, the country worst hit by the deadly bird flu that now threatens Europe, plans to complete vaccinating all its poultry in November before periods of high demand for chicken early next year, state media reported. Deputy Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung told a mass vaccination meeting today the campaign should end by Nov 15, so poultry could be safely on sale for the Lunar New Year festival in early 2006, the VN Express online newspaper said. Vietnam requires farmers to keep vaccinated birds for 28 days before putting them on sale to make sure the injected birds are healthy. Bird flu has killed 43 people in Vietnam, with 22 of the victims dying since the H5N1 virus. It has also

killed 12 people in Thailand, four in Cambodia, three in Indonesia and spread to Kazakhstan and parts of Russia where health workers found mass bird deaths in what could become the first case of the deadly virus spreading to Europe. There have been no reports of human infection in Russia. Vietnam has been vaccinating poultry against bird flu since Jul 31 in one province in the southern Mekong Delta and another in the north. The Agriculture Ministry said poultry in the remaining 11 Mekong Delta provinces and birds in Ho Chi Minh City would be vaccinated from September. State media said 100 million batches of poultry vaccine were being imported from China and the Netherlands to ensure all birds in the regions with high risk of infection, such as the Mekong Delta, would be injected. Vietnam now has around 210 million poultry. -- Reuters.

London, Aug 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: Chickens at a farm in Konosu, Tokyo's neighbouring Saitama Prefecture in east Japan, have tested positive for bird flu virus, Kyodo News reported today. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries is expected to convene an emergency meeting in the evening to address the outbreak.

OUTBREAK OF BOVINE SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHY, WORLDWIDE

London, Aug 17 -- A press report, dated today, states: The U.S. Agriculture Department yesterday proposed easing a four-year import ban on Japanese beef because of mad cow disease. The United States banned Japanese beef imports in September 2001 following the discovery of the first case of mad cow disease, or bovine spongiform encephalopathy, in Japan. Japan imposed an import ban on U.S. beef in December 2003 when the United States discovered its first BSE case. The proposed resumption of Japanese beef imports is apparently intended to encourage Japan's Food Safety Commission to speed up steps to remove the import ban on U.S. beef.

POWER OUTAGE, AL QASSIMIYA, SHARJAH, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

London, Aug 10 -- A press report, dated today, states: The sprawling Al Qassimiya residential and commercial area in Sharjah experienced a power blackout last night. Residents and shopping centres were caught unawares as the power went off at about 2230 hrs. The cause of the disruption could not be immediately ascertained. There was no advance notice about a power switch-off, residents said. With lifts not working and lights off, people had a tough time. At the time of going to press, the blackout continued.

WINDWARD II (St. Vincent & Grenadines)

London, Aug 15 -- A press report, dated Aug 11, states: The managers of

passenger ro/ro Windward II (5739 gt, built 1964) are sending an SOS to regional investors and Governments to come together to raise US\$1 million to make it operational. Captain Tore Torfteinson, who has been operating the vessel since 2001, said it had been docked in the Gulf of Paria, Trinidad, for almost a year. The ferry, which was refurbished in Croatia, has major investors from Barbados, St Lucia, St Vincent, Trinidad, Venezuela, Norway and Holland. These investors have already put together US\$3 million, the cost of outfitting and transporting the vessel to Trinidad. Torfteinson said the investors, who included ships agents, manufacturers and electronics retailers, were not at all happy with the state of things. New and stringent regulations for ferry operations had left them on dry dock. "We need to have an independent satellite communication system with a panic button should pirates board us. There are also new roll-on/roll-off regulations for cargo. Every time a ferry has an accident these safety regulations become more stringent," he said. He added that with the ferry service running from Trinidad to the islands, it would be considered an international route and not domestic, and therefore all regulations would have to be met in order to be seaworthy. (Note -- Windward II released from arrest at Port of Spain previous Jun 9 2004.)

Fires & Explosions



CHEMICAL PLANT, TEXAS, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 12 -- A press report, dated today, states: Two rotating four-person crews late yesterday night continued to battle a small fire southeast of Alvin that erupted Wednesday night (Aug 10) from an injury-free explosion in a plastics manufacturing unit at BP's Chocolate Bayou plant. Wednesday's explosion occurred about 2140 in the plant's Olefin 2 unit, which produces plastic feed stock, including ethylene and polypropylene. The 2,400-acre plant site, which operates under the name of BP subsidiary Innovene, is in a largely isolated area off FM 2004, about 15 miles from Alvin in Brazoria County. Innovene spokesman Dan Cummings said none of the 10 people who were working in the unit at the time of the blast was injured. He said one firefighter, who suffered from a cardiac condition, was taken to an unnamed hospital after battling the blaze. His status was not known. "The fire size is about the size of a file cabinet," Cummings said. "It's basically a small fire that's contained." Cummings said the cause of the explosion remains unknown and that a five-member investigation team is at

the site. He said the probe cannot get under way until the fire is out. Because of that, Cummings said crews today are expected to use nitrogen to purge the remaining chemical components out of the unit so they can be burned off. He said he did not know when the fire would be extinguished. "We've been working with the (Texas Commission on Environmental Quality) and the (Environmental Protection Agency) and they're comfortable with the process that we're going to undertake to do this," Cummings said. Excluding the unit on fire and a polypropylene unit, which had been closed since the explosion, but is reopening today, Cummings said the rest of the plant was operational yesterday.

COAL MINE, SOUTH JEOLLA, SOUTH KOREA

London, Aug 18 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Six workers trapped after a fire caused by welding sparks broke out in a coal mine in the south-west of the country today have been rescued safely, a mine official said. The six were replacing a drain pump 475 metres below the surface at the mine in South Jeolla province when the fire broke out, said Moon Jae-dong, a mine official. The workers were unable to immediately evacuate the mine because of smoke that remained after the fire went out by itself. They workers were all in good condition, Mr Moon said. The mine is located about 350 kilometres south of the capital, Seoul.

COAL MINE, XIANGYUAN COUNTY, SHANXI PROVINCE, CHINA

London, Aug 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: Explosives blasted yesterday morning in a coal mine in north China's Shanxi Province, resulted in seven dead and 23 others injured as of this afternoon. A source with the provincial administration of coal mine safety supervision said the blast took place at 1000 hrs, in the Shiyu Coal Mine, located in the county of Xiangyuan, Changzhi City. A preliminary investigation shows that the explosives were illegally restored at the mine, and a further probe into the cause of the accident is underway.

DISTILLATION PLANT, BALASHIKHA, RUSSIA

London, Aug 16 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: One person died and four were injured as a result of a fire at a distillation plant in Balashikha, outside Moscow yesterday. The fire, followed by a tanker car explosion, broke out at 1726, GMT, yesterday on one of the access roads to the distillation plant three kilometers from Balashikha. "As a result of the explosion, one person died and four, including one fireman, received burns of various degrees," an Emergencies Ministry spokesman said today. The fire quickly spread to three other tanker cars. The fire, which measured three on a five-point scale, was extinguished at 2356, GMT, yesterday. Twenty fire crews from the nearest cities and towns took part in the

operation. The Moscow Railway provided three fire trains. Moscow region police said that, according to preliminary information, a violation of the cargo traffic rules caused the fire.

FACTORY, MELBOURNE, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA

London, Aug 15 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: It took fire crews about an hour to control a huge blaze at a computer parts factory in Melbourne's east this afternoon. More than 60 firemen were called to the blaze at Box Hill. Deputy chief fire officer Keith Adamson says it was a fierce fire. "It spread very rapidly and was threatening adjoining factories," he said. "Fortunately we were able to cut it off, but we've lost most of the interior of the factory involved. "The owners are on scene and they're helping our fire investigators try to work out what's happened."

FOREST, INDONESIA AND MALAYSIA

London, Aug 12 -- A press report, dated today, states: The Malaysian government declared a state of emergency yesterday as air pollution reached extremely hazardous levels on the country's west coast, the area worst hit by smoke from fires in Indonesia. "We are now in a state of emergency," a National Security Council official said after the environment department reported that the air pollution index reached 529 in Port Klang and 531 in the coastal town of Kuala Selangor -- the highest ever recorded. A measurement over 300 is considered hazardous. Indonesian Forestry Minister Malam Sambat Kaban and Malaysia's environment minister, Adenan Satem, agreed at a meeting in Medan to cooperate to stop people using fire to clear land and to carry out cloud-seeding to induce rain. Anger is mounting in Malaysia over the fires, an annual event at this time of year as farmers use the dry season to burn forest and clear land. Malaysian Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar said ministers from the two countries would also meet in Jakarta today to discuss how to cope with the haze and avoid any wider political crisis. Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono has called for "more serious" measures. "The president expressed his dissatisfaction over measures in handling the fires and he wished to see that forest fires are being handled more seriously," his spokesman Dino Pati Jalal said, according to the Antara news agency. Indonesian officials said hundreds of rangers had been deployed but were being hampered by the remote locations of the fires and a lack of water. Malaysia's National Security Council official said that, although only the two west coast locations had exceeded 500, the measures would extend to the whole of the Klang valley in which the capital Kuala Lumpur sits. Hundreds of schools in Kuala Lumpur and surrounding districts were ordered to close until

Monday (Aug 15) because of the worsening haze, which is causing an increase in asthma attacks and aggravating respiratory conditions. With visibility in places down to 200 metres or less, Kuala Lumpur's second airport was closed until further notice. The Malacca Strait, one of the world's busiest shipping lanes, has become hazardous.

London, Aug 12 -- A press report, dated Aug 11, states: Adding up the cost of closing offices and factories, sick days and medical bills, economists reckon a month of haze like today's could cost Malaysia hundreds of millions of ringgit. The prospect of another two months of suffocating haze has economists cutting back on their forecasts for economic growth. Some have cut their expectations for third-quarter Gross Domestic Product, a common measure of economic growth, said ECM Libra Securities Sdn Bhd chief economist Wong Chee Seng. "If the haze persists, it is possible for the third quarter real GDP to hit below four per cent, below our comfort zone." This could mean Malaysia's economic growth this year will not meet the official forecast of five to six per cent of GDP, he said. The air pollution may deter tourists, keep plantation workers away from oil palm estates and disrupt shipping activities, which would hurt the economy, they said.

London, Aug 13 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: The Government has declared emergency indefinitely for the entire Kuala Selangor and Port Klang areas with immediate effect after the air pollutant index (API) for the two areas breached the 500 mark. All school in areas which breach the API 300 mark has been close till further notice. As of today the port is not declared closed. However there are stoppage at interval when the situation get worse and they are monitoring the situation every few hours. All the vessels' movements until 1030, today are back to normal until further notice.

Kuala Lumpur, Aug 13 -- Malaysia lifted a state of emergency in two areas near the capital today after air pollution levels fell well below the danger mark, easing the country's worst pollution crisis in eight years. Officials said changing winds have helped lift the smog which has shrouded central Malaysia for a week, dispersing the haze into the northern part of the country. The sky over Kuala Lumpur was clear for the first time in days and the weather bureau predicted weekend rains to further wash away the haze that has threatened public health. "We expect rains and thunderstorms this afternoon and in the next few days in and around Kuala Lumpur," a weather official said. "This will help clear the haze." The National Security Council said pollution readings were well below the 500-level mark which had triggered the emergency on Thursday (Aug 11) in Kuala Selangor and Port Klang, following choking smoke from forest fires in Indonesia. Air pollution

readings improved further by midday today, the Department of Environment said. Only 12 places in the country registered a reading classed in the category of "unhealthy" and most of them were in the northern states of Penang and Perak, it said. A reading of 101-200 on the Air Pollutant Index (API) is classed as "unhealthy," 201-300 "very unhealthy" and 300 and above "hazardous." The latest reading put Kuala Lumpur at 103, Port Klang at 105 and Kuala Selangor at 117, it said. The haze moved toward northern Malaysia but levels were not as bad as they were earlier in the week. Visibility near an airport in Penang, a major tourist spot and a hub for electronics firms in Malaysia, dropped to 500 metres today from 2 km yesterday. An aviation official said the airport would be shut if visibility dropped to below 300 metres. Most of Penang's electronics exports are shipped by air to buyers, mainly in the United States, Japan and Taiwan. In the past week, the haze has sent asthma attacks soaring, forced hundreds of schools to close, grounded some flights and disrupted shipping. Malaysia's New Straits Times said today that as many as seven people might have died from haze-related illness, such as breathing difficulties. However, Malaysia's top health official Ismail Merican told the paper that it was too early to blame the deaths on the haze. -- Reuters.

Kuala Lumpur, Aug 14 -- A choking smog persisted over northern Malaysia today as Kuala Lumpur lashed out at Indonesia's handling of forest fires causing the haze. Environment officials said the northern states of Penang, Perlis, Kedah and Perak were still badly hit by the smoke blown in from forest fires in neighbouring Indonesia's Sumatera. Malaysia yesterday lifted a state of emergency in two areas near the capital after air pollution levels drifted below the danger mark, easing the nation's worst pollution crisis in eight years. Changing winds dispersed the smog to the northern states, forcing flag carrier Malaysian Airline System to cancel six flights to the northern cities yesterday. Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the government would remain on alert due to raging fires in Sumatera, separated from Malaysia by the narrow Malacca Strait. "With the unpredictable wind patterns and presence of fire, anything can happen," he said. However, the harshest word came from Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar, who said the health of Malaysians was at stake. "Indonesia must be made aware of the extent of our people's sufferings," he told the New Sunday Times in an interview. "They need to take quick action as Malaysians are actually dying because of the haze." -- Reuters.

London, Aug 15 -- A press report, dated today, states: Malaysia today deployed 125 firefighters to battle hundreds of blazes on Indonesia's Sumatra island which last week blanketed the country with choking

clouds of smoke and dust. Fire and rescue department assistant deputy-general Zurkarnian Mohamad Kasim said the contingent left for Riau province aboard three military aircraft. "They will be in Sumatra for at least a month. It is a tough mission. We will only be fighting the fire from the ground. But we hope Mother Nature will intervene with rain," he told AFP. Zurkarnian said the firefighters would be equipped with heavy-duty pumps and all-terrain vehicles, but that the task was made more complicated and dangerous by the lack of water in Sumatra. As frustration mounted last week over Indonesia's inability to douse the blazes, deputy premier Najib Razak urged Jakarta to clear bureaucratic hurdles delaying the dispatch of the firefighters "as soon as possible". A meteorological department official told AFP that overnight rain and shifting winds had further cleared the air over Kuala Lumpur and surrounding districts which were hit hard by haze last week. Over the weekend the shifting winds sent the smoke and dust towards northern Malaysia, including the resort islands of Penang and Langkawi, but they cleared today as changing conditions pushed the haze even further north. "We have a clear day in all the states in the peninsula except for Perlis," he said, referring to the northern state which borders Thailand. Perlis recorded an air pollution index (API) of 83 today, from 132 yesterday which put it into the "unhealthy" range of 100-200. A department of environment official in the northern resort island of Penang, which also houses most of Malaysia's IT industry, said that air quality there had improved sharply, with the API falling to below 100 from 126 yesterday. However, the situation worsened on Borneo island where fires are burning in Indonesia's Kalimantan province, affecting Malaysia's neighbouring Sarawak state. The API in the coastal town of Miri shot up to 116 today from 52 yesterday. Forecasters have warned that because hundreds of fires are still burning on Sumatra, another shift in the winds could bring the pollution right back to peninsular Malaysia. Indonesia's Forestry Minister Malam Sambat Kaban said yesterday that he would hold further talks with Malaysian Environment Minister Adenan Satem later this week, after a crisis meeting last Thursday (Aug 11) in North Sumatra. Kaban said the pair would discuss "further measures" needed to stop the blazes that have been lit to clear land and forest fires on Sumatra and Kalimantan. Economists say that the haze, which appeared in Malaysia two weeks ago, has already affected productivity and consumer spending and could also harm the tourism industry which is Malaysia's second-biggest foreign exchange earner.

London, Aug 16 -- A press report, dated Aug 15, states: Indonesia will prosecute 10 companies - eight of them Malaysian - for illegally lighting fires on Sumatra Island that have

enveloped much of Malaysia with smoke. "The Environment Ministry has investigated those companies involved in slash-and-burn activities and we will prosecute them," said Indonesia's Forestry Minister Malam Kaban. The minister released the list of Malaysian firms but refused to divulge the Indonesian ones. In Malaysia, authorities planned to crack down on local oil palm plantation owners who illegally burned agricultural waste.

London, Aug 15 -- C.c. CSCL Kobe which departed from Port Klang on Aug 10, subsequently arrived at Hong Kong at 1253 hrs, Aug 13, departing at 0124 hrs, Aug 14, bound for Lianyungang.

London, Aug 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: Rains have cleared the skies over Indonesia's Sumatra island, where raging fires caused a haze which also choked Malaysia and Thailand in recent weeks, officials and police said. "The sky is clear now, with visibility at around eight kilometres at 11:00 am," Sarman, from a meteorology office in Riau province, told AFP. He said rain had fallen for three days. Riau province has been one of the main sources of forest and bush fires responsible for a hazardous blanket of smoke that has smothered the region and sparked calls from Southeast Asian nations for tough action against culprits. Rain late yesterday also helped clear Labuhan Batu, a district in North Sumatra province bordering Riau and another source of the haze, Sergeant Master Damanik of the police headquarters said. "The haze was still there yesterday, but because of the rain last night, the sky is quite clear this morning," he told AFP. In Medan, the capital of North Sumatra, rains have fallen since Tuesday (Aug 16) and gradually cleared the sky there too, a local meteorology office worker who gave his name as Wahyu said. Hundreds of fires on Sumatra island last week smothered the Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur and surrounding districts as well as the west coast where pollution reached hazardous levels. Shifting winds brought relief to those areas over the weekend but pushed the problem north to regions along the Malaysia-Thailand border and onto the Thai resort island of Phuket. Officials from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations meeting in Malaysia yesterday called for the group's members to fight the fires because drier weather conditions with below average rainfall was expected until October in parts of Sumatra and Borneo island, where fires are also burning.

PREMISES AND EQUIPMENT, SANTA MONICA, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 11 -- A press report, dated today, states: A fire caused about \$1.5 million in damage at the Santa Monica City Yards, 2500 Michigan Ave., Santa Monica, Wednesday, Aug 3. Four city garbage

trucks were destroyed and several others were damaged, Santa Monica Fire Department officials said. No one was injured in the fire, which was reported to the Santa Monica Fire Department at 1953 hrs. Ten fire department vehicles, including fire engines and a hazardous materials vehicle, arrived at the City Yards slightly before 2000 hrs, said Carl Bjerke, city fire department battalion chief. When firefighters arrived at the scene, they determined that the fire was in an area where the trash vehicles were parked along the compressed natural gas (CNG) fueling station, he said. "There was a lot of fire involved in the trash trucks parked there," Bjerke said. "There were big flame-ups of 40 feet or so." It took firefighters less than a half-hour to contain the fire, and the flames were extinguished within about 45 minutes, Bjerke said. The fire burned four garbage trucks "beyond repair," he said. Some four trucks received marked damage to the body and three other trucks were slightly damaged in the blaze, he said. Santa Monica city officials informed residents that several city trash collection vehicles are out of service due to the City Yards fire, but replacement vehicles for trash collection were obtained by the city four days after the fire. City officials said the city collection service schedule has returned to normal. Santa Monica Fire Department officials said the cause of the fire is still under investigation.

PREMISES, LUCIO BLANCO, MEXICO

London, Aug 12 -- A press report, dated today, states: A tank truck laden with liquefied propane was hit by a freight train yesterday afternoon and exploded in the center of this agricultural town, killing at least two and injuring 44 residents who sprinted for safety as roaring flames shot down the main street. More than a dozen homes and businesses, along with 17 cars, were destroyed, police said. As darkness fell, the tops of the power poles in the town were still burning, along with trees and sections of several roofs, as firefighters were using the available water to dilute the spilled propane. Rolando Garcia Conte, director of civil protection in nearby Matamoros, said the two people confirmed dead were the engineer of the train and the truck driver. The majority of the injured were taken to Mexican hospitals while two American citizens were taken to the Harlingen Medical Center. Witnesses and local police said the driver of a tandem tanker truck attempted to beat a freight train at a crossing next to a gas station shortly after 1500 hrs. City officials identified the tanker as belonging to a Monterrey firm, Techno Gas. At the crossing, one of the charred propane tanks could be seen lying alongside a freight car, while the truck cab was on the other side of the tracks. The second propane tank was thrown hundreds of yards into the air, hit a

house and landed on top of a car, witnesses said. The explosion and resulting fires destroyed a two-storey seed store next to the crossing, along with four other businesses down the same side of the street. Across the street, all the homes and businesses for two blocks were destroyed. Firetrucks and emergency vehicles from Brownsville, Harlingen, San Benito, Los Fresnos and eight water tankers from Cameron County helped Mexican units battle the blaze.

SCHOOL, EXETER, DEVON, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 16 -- A press report, dated Aug 15, states: Firefighters spent much of this afternoon fighting a major blaze at a school in Exeter. At the height of the fire 10 engines and more than 50 firefighters were involved in the incident. Devon Fire and Rescue Service said they believed insulation material caught alight in wall cavities in the new sports hall at Priory High School. Firefighters were damping down this evening. The Arson Task Force is trying to ascertain the cause.

TRAINS, THAMES TUNNELS AREA, LONDON

London, Aug 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: Twenty fire engines have been called to a blaze involving two trains on a section of the high speed cross-Channel rail link which is under construction. Eurostar said the fire, in the Thames tunnels area, is on a stretch of line being built between Gravesend and St Pancras, London. One train was pushed from where the fire started in Swanscombe, Kent, along the track to West Thurrock, Essex. The fire is thought to involve two construction trains. Police and ambulance crews are at the scene but emergency teams were unable to say whether there were any people on board the train. A spokesman for Eurostar said the company was not due to use the line until 2007 and that Eurostar services would not be disrupted. Kent Fire and Rescue Service sent 10 pumps to the fire scene and 10 from Essex attended at about 1920, BST.

WILDFIRES, CANADA

London, Aug 11 -- A press report from LaSalle, dated today, states: A rash of forest fires across Northern Ontario has stretched the province's forest fire-fighting capacity to the limit, and the province has gone looking for all the help it can find elsewhere in Canada, the Ministry of Natural Resources said yesterday. "All available, qualified firefighting resources, and tankers and helicopters, available in both Canada and the United States are being utilized in Ontario," said spokeswoman Amanda Brosseau. She said the director of the ministry's aviation and forest fire management branch "is making personal contact with his provincial and territorial counterparts to detail Ontario's situation and to reiterate the urgent

need for additional resources." As of yesterday, Ontario was fighting 146 fires covering 27,500 hectares, including 50 that were not under control, triggered by an unprecedented spell of hot, dry weather that has produced near-drought conditions. Excessive dry lightning activity that has caused an estimated 200,000 strikes in the past week is also responsible for the new fires, she said. With no precipitation in sight for at least five days, the province expects the number of new fires, almost all from lightning strikes, could pass the 50 a day mark in the rest of the week. The two largest fires were in the north-west, a 6,000 hectare fire about 100 km north-west of Thunder Bay, and a 2,000 hectare fire about 200 km north of that.

WILDFIRES, PORTUGAL

London, Aug 15 --- A press report, dated yesterday, states: More than 800 firefighters in Portugal today battled wildfires which swept the parched centre and north of the country for the third consecutive day amid scorching temperatures, emergency services said. Eight fires were raging out of control, including one near the central town of Vila Nova de Paiva which has burned for over 24 hours, the civil protection agency said. The firefighters were backed by over 160 vehicles and 20 water-dropping aircraft in their battle against the flames which threatened built-up areas in some localities, it added. Blazes have erupted across the country, facing its worst drought since 1945.

London, Aug 17 -- More than 1400 firefighters were battling dozens of wildfires in parched Portugal yesterday, including eight major blazes which raged out of control and forced the evacuation of several mountain villages, officials said. The fire crews were backed by nearly 400 vehicles, 21 water-dropping aircraft and 176 soldiers as they tackled fires that have hit the centre and north of the country since Friday (Aug12) amid scorching temperatures, the civil protection agency said. Emergency services workers were evacuating residents from villages in the path of the largest fire near the central town of Pampilhosa da Serra which has raged since Saturday, a spokesman for the mayor's office of the town said. "The fire is completely uncontrollable," Jorge Custodio told Lisbon-based Radio Renascenca. "It covers such a large area and has such large fronts that even with more time and aircraft it is still really difficult to fight it," he said. The evacuated residents were being taken to Pampilhosa da Serra where psychologists were available to provide counselling, Mr Custodio said. Advertisement: Nearly 400 firefighters backed by over 100 vehicles and five water-dropping aircraft were at the scene of the blaze. About 60 children and elderly residents had already been evacuated overnight from one area village because of the threat from the advancing flames and thick smoke

from the fire, local officials said. Firefighters said strong winds and the steep inclines found in the region were making it difficult to tame the flames. Emergency workers meanwhile found the body of an elderly woman near her rural home late yesterday near the central town of Serta, apparently the victim of a wildfire which was sweeping the region, Portuguese media reported. That blaze has already destroyed six homes and charred 2500 hectares of forest and scrubland, the mayor of Serta, Jose Farinho, told reporters. Local firefighters said reinforcements from other parts of Portugal were being called in to battle the blaze, which was burning in a thickly-wooded area that was very difficult to access.

WILDFIRES, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 12 -- A press report, dated Aug 11, states: Three firefighters escaped yesterday after being overrun by a wildfire in western Montana. The firefighters were among those battling an 8,000-acre fire that made a run late yesterday, forcing crews to retreat and shutting down a major power line. Fire information officer Alan Barbian said the three firefighters "deployed their fire shelters as they were trained" when it was clear they were in danger. All three escaped without any injuries and returned to their camp last night. Barbian said high wind advanced the fire more than four miles and doubled its size. The fire started last week along Interstate 90. The fire shut down power circuits capable of carrying enough electricity for two Seattle-size cities, said Alan Hansen, a Bonneville Power Administration spokesman in Portland, Oregon. However, the lines were carrying only a fraction of their capacity and service was not interrupted. In Washington state, Governor Christine Gregoire was scheduled to sign an emergency declaration to help fight wildfires in that state, where at least half a dozen large fires were burning today. The governor's office gave no early details on the scope of the declaration. Such orders activate state resources, including potential use of the National Guard to help firefighting crews. Firefighters reported slow, steady progress on a 42,000-acre wildfire that has burned more than 100 cabins near Pomeroy, in the south-eastern part of the state. About 1,400 firefighters and support personnel were assigned to the fire and had it 40% contained, fire spokesman Greg Smith said. A new fire in Lincoln County prompted the evacuation of about 20 homes, said Andrew Stenbeck, a Department of Natural Resources spokesman. The fire was about 1,500 acres. The National Interagency Fire Centre said 33 large fires, totalling 222,510 acres, were burning, mostly in Western states. So far this year, wildfires have charred 5.5 million acres nationwide, compared with 5.6 million acres at the same time last year.

London, Aug 12 -- A press report, dated today, states: The governor of

Washington has declared a wildfire emergency, putting the National Guard on alert. Governor Christine Gregoire says her state's facing a siege of wildfires. The worst has blackened 42,000 acres in south-eastern Washington and is about 40% contained. It's burning toward cabins in the Umatilla National Forest. Dozens of homes and outbuildings have been burned. In western Montana, three firefighters who got caught in a fast moving blaze were saved by their emergency fire shelters. The fire information officer says the tents did what they're supposed to and there are three people alive because of it. The fire in western Montana more than doubled in size yesterday and is estimated at upward of 8,000 acres.

London, Aug 13 -- A 48,000-acre wildfire in south-eastern Washington has destroyed more than 100 homes, ranging from modest summer cabins to full-time residences, a spokeswoman said yesterday. The fire was about 40 percent contained, and firefighters were getting some relief as temperatures dropped and humidity rose in the region, said Barrie McVey, a spokeswoman for the fire effort. About 1,400 firefighters were assigned to the fire, which was burning south toward cabins in the Umatilla National Forest. It was the largest fire among the numerous blazes in eastern Washington that prompted Gov. Christine Gregoire to declare a state of emergency on Thursday (Aug 11). Crews gained ground yesterday on six wildfires burning in eastern Washington, including a 1,500-acre fire that had forced the evacuation of nearly three dozen homes for a time.

London, Aug 15 -- A press report, dated today, states: Crews yesterday strengthened lines around the perimeter of a 49,000-acre wildfire burning in south-eastern Washington while fire officials prepared for warmer, dryer weather. The fire was 65% contained yesterday. Crews focused efforts at the fire's south end, where thicker timber and heavier debris such as logs and fallen branches slowed mopup. Lori Hammer, a fire information officer, said fire crews were working yesterday to do controlled burns, find and put out hot spots and contain the south end of the fire. Nine-million dollars had been spent to fight the fire as of yesterday evening. About 100 residences remain evacuated. Hammer said people won't be allowed to go back to their residences until a 300-foot mopup around the structures is completed, any hazardous trees have been removed from along access roads and the re-burn potential in those areas is low.

London, Aug 16 -- A press report, dated Aug 15, states: The 49,000-acre School fire in south-eastern Washington was the only major fire in the state that remained uncontained today. The Harker Canyon fire west of Spokane was declared 100 percent contained this morning. The fire, about nine miles west of Davenport

and 150 miles north of the School fire, had burned 1,566 acres. About 300 firefighters were fortifying the fire lines and putting out hot spots. There were 1,360 people working on the School fire and that number was dropping. The fire was 75 percent contained as of late today, fire officials said. "We have two miles of line left to build but those are a couple of rugged miles," spokesman Julian Rhinehart said earlier in the day. More than 200 structures - 109 residences and 106 outbuildings - have been destroyed by the fire. Before people can return to their homes, hot spots and flames must be squelched; roads must be cleared of dangerously unstable trees and downed power lines; and there cannot be a high "reburn" potential, or likelihood of more burning in the area. A low-pressure weather system was expected Wednesday (Aug 17), bringing the possibility of both rain and lightning, Rhinehart said.



5B-DBY

Grammatiko, Greece, Aug 14 -- A Cypriot Boeing 737 carrying 121 people slammed into a mountainous area north of Athens today after apparently suffering a loss of cabin pressure or oxygen minutes before it was due to land. Greek TV station Alpha said the pilot had told air traffic controllers the aircraft was experiencing air conditioning problems. Moments later, communications with the aircraft, flying at 35,000 feet en route from Larnaca in Cyprus to Prague via Athens, were lost. Police and firefighters at the crash site said there were no immediate signs of survivors. A Greek police spokesman said there were 115 passengers and six crew members on board, of which 59 adults and eight children were heading to Athens, with 48 continuing on to Prague. Wreckage was scattered widely about the mountainous, uninhabited area, about 40 km north of Athens and dense black smoke billowed from several small fires. "I saw many bodies scattered around, all of them wearing (oxygen) masks. The tail was cut off and the remaining parts of the aircraft rolled down a hillside about 500 metres away from the tail," one witness said. Aircraft dropped water over the wreckage site as rescue workers fanned out searching for survivors. Two Greek F-16 fighter jets were scrambled after the Helios Airways jet lost contact with the control tower at Athens international airport. One of the F-16 pilots reported that he could not see the captain in the cockpit and his co-pilot appeared to be slumped in his seat, a Defence Ministry official said. The Defence Ministry said it suspected

the Boeing's oxygen supply or pressurisation system may have malfunctioned. A senior government official said there were no signs of foul play. "But we are still investigating all possible scenarios," he said. The crash was the worst airline disaster in Greek history. Cypriot airport officials said flight HCY522 left Larnaca at 0900 hrs and lost contact at 1030 hrs. The pilot appeared to have lost consciousness due to a loss in cabin pressure in the cockpit, Larnaca airport officials said on Cyprus state television CYBC. A spokesman of the European Aviation Safety Agency, Daniel Holtgen, based in Cologne, Germany, said: "It is highly unlikely that the loss of cabin pressure alone would cause such an incident. There would have to be other contributing factors." Flights at Athens International Airport were operating normally, airport police said. -- Reuters.

Athens, Aug 14 -- Greek police said they had no reports of any survivors after a Cypriot airliner carrying 121 police crashed outside Athens today. "There is no report of any single survivor," a Greek police spokeswoman said. The airliner slammed into a mountainous area north of Athens today after apparently suffering a loss of cabin pressure or oxygen minutes before it was due to land. Special rescue teams have begun to collect the bodies, which will be taken to a nearby site for examination by coroners already present, said Panagiotis Fourlas, head of the civil protection authority. -- Reuters.

London, Aug 15 -- Boeing 737-31S, 5B-DBY, operated by Helios Airways, departed Larnaca on a scheduled one hour and 23 minute flight to Athens, Greece. After an intermediate stop there, it was to have continued on to Prague. The flight, cleared for an en route altitude of FL340, reportedly notified Cypriot controllers that they had some problems with the air conditioning system. The 737 entered Greek air space about 1030, Aug 14, but efforts by air traffic controllers to contact the pilots were futile. Around 1100 hrs two Greek F-16 fighter planes were scrambled from the Nea Anghialos air base. About half an hour later the F-16's intercepted the airliner. The F-16 pilots reported that they were not able to observe the captain, while the first officer seemed to be unconscious. They continued to track the flight until it crashed in mountainous terrain some 40 km north of Athens.

Limassol, Aug 15 -- Helios Airways Boeing 737, on flight ZU 522 departing from Larnaca at 0900 hrs, to Prague via Athens, after entering the Greek airspace was observed to fly erratically and unable to be contacted by air traffic control. The plane crashed in a mountainous area and burst into flames north of Athens killing 115 passengers and six crew members. The cause of the accident is being investigated. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Athens/Nicosia, Aug 16 -- The first autopsies on the victims of a Cyprus

airliner crash suggest all on board, including the pilots, were at least unconscious when the plane plunged out of control. In a bid to solve a mystery that has baffled experts, Senior Greek officials still believed many on the plane were already dead, frozen to death by a failure of cabin pressure and lack of oxygen. The investigation's chief coroner said his first autopsies on six dead showed while they may have been unconscious and unaware of their doom, they were still medically alive when the plane went down. Initial investigations had suggested that when the plane crashed all on board were dead or unconscious from extreme cold and possible loss of oxygen and cabin pressure at 35,000 feet. In Cyprus, police searched the offices of Helios Airways for what Attorney-General Petros Clerides told Reuters was "evidence that might be useful in a possible criminal investigation." A Helios spokeswoman said police had collected only copies of documents in a "standard procedure." Helios, Cyprus's first private carrier established in 1999, flies mainly holidaymakers to Athens, Greek islands, Dublin, Sofia, Warsaw, Prague, Strasbourg and several British airports using a fleet of Boeing B737 aircraft. The airline is owned by Libra Holidays Group, one of Britain's leading independent holiday tour operators. Since Sunday's (Aug 14) crash into mountains near Athens, the airline has been under fire for reports of previous safety scares. Transport Minister Haris Thrassou said the search of Helios' offices was prompted by media interviews by Helios employees suggesting long standing safety concerns about the airline's planes. A passenger list showed the German chief pilot, a family of four Armenians living in Cyprus, 12 Greeks and 104 Cypriots were killed in the crash. There were 17 children under the age of 16 on board, the youngest aged four. Greek officials said only 45 of the victims could be identified by visual means. The rest would have to be identified by DNA testing, a process that could take up to 10 days. Questions still to be answered included how the plane flew for so long with the pilots unconscious or dead. Media speculated it was on autopilot and crashed when it ran out of fuel after being in the air for twice the scheduled flight time. -- Reuters.

London, Aug 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: The search for the causes of a Cypriot airline crash that left all 121 people aboard dead suffered a setback when an investigator said one of the two black boxes - the cockpit voice recorder - was found damaged. Akrivos Tsolakis, the head of the Greek airline safety committee, said the device was ejected from its cover when the plane crashed. "The only fortunate event in the investigation is that we have the flight data recorder that will be sent at all costs to France for decoding," Tsolakis said, adding that the box would be flown to Paris tomorrow.

9M-BCT

London, Aug 15 -- Bell 206 L4 helicopter 9M-BCT, registered to Hornbill Skyways, was destroyed when it crashed in mountainous terrain north of Balaga, Sarawak, Malaysia, at approximately 1045, local time, July 25. The pilot and one passenger were killed, a second passenger received serious injuries and a third passenger is missing. The flight originated from Long Singat at 1020 hrs.

AIRCRAFT IMPOUNDED AT GATWICK AIRPORT, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Aug 17 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Passengers on an Air Zimbabwe flight arriving at Gatwick Airport in the UK were stranded when the aircraft and its luggage was impounded over unpaid landing fees. Three hours after the flight arrived, passengers were still milling around the airport with many forced to book hotels nearby. Others with connecting flights were forced to cancel them. Sources close to the incident say the luggage was later released, presumably after behind the scenes negotiations were conducted. A crippling foreign currency shortage has affected most sectors of the economy and it is believed this has left the airline unable to meet its commitments. Concern is growing over the safety of most of the aircraft given the lack of foreign currency to purchase spares, and reports of several emergency landings that have been made.

AIRCRAFT PUT BACK TO FUKUOKA, JAPAN

London, Aug 13 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Japan Airlines flight 58 from Fukuoka to Honolulu sustained a No.1 engine failure some 22 seconds after take-off. Large flames were briefly spotted from the engine and parts from the DC-10's engine fell into a residential area, injuring one person. The flight returned to the airport where it landed safely around 2020 hrs, half an hour after the incident. None of the 229 crew and passenger on board the aircraft were injured.

London, Aug 15 -- A press report, dated Aug 14, states: Police said yesterday they have found about 600 metal fragments that dropped on residential areas of Fukuoka City from a JALways passenger airplane that returned to Fukuoka Airport the previous night shortly after take-off, due to engine trouble. The police said earlier that over 200 pieces were found in a sports field in the city's Higashi Ward, near the airport, where several elementary and junior high school students were injured when they were hit by fragments or burned by picking them up.

AIRCRAFT PUT BACK TO SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 17 -- A press report, dated yesterday states: United

Airlines 747 bound for Tokyo yesterday afternoon returned to San Francisco International Airport after experiencing hydraulic problems and then had its tail collapse while it was being serviced. According to SFO Duty Manager Lily Wong, the aircraft left the airport at 1421 hrs carrying 332 passengers, and was over Seattle when it experienced hydraulic problems in its number four engine and returned to San Francisco. Maintenance crews began to repair the hydraulic system when at approximately 0100, today the tail of the aircraft began collapsing for an unknown reason. The aircraft is now being drained of all its fuel so that an airbag can be placed underneath the tail for an investigation, Wong said.

London, Aug 17 -- A press report, dated Aug 16, states: A United Airlines plane parked at San Francisco International Airport suddenly shot nose-up off the ground early this morning after a hydraulic gear inside the tail of the jet gave way. The Tokyo-bound 747 previously had returned to SFO late yesterday after the pilot noticed an indicator light went on for the hydraulic system about two hours into the flight. The plane landed safely and passengers were taken off the plane. Around 0100 hrs, as mechanics were working on the plane, a hydraulic gear inside the tail of the jet collapsed. Mechanics are now working on stabilizing the jet in order to move it and make repairs. "They plan to bring some airbags in to lift up the rear of the plane," according to San Francisco Airport spokesperson Mike McCarron. There were no injuries.

C-FVSW

London, Aug 11 -- At 1230 hrs, Aug 6, the privately-registered Cessna 172H, CF-VSW, was taking off from a grid road near Canwood, Saskatchewan, to return to a farm strip. A wingtip struck willows along the side of the road and the aircraft veered into a ditch. The pilot was uninjured. The aircraft sustained substantial damage.

C-GIMY

London, Aug 16 -- Canadian Helicopters Sikorsky S-76A helicopter, C-GIMY, was taxiing from the hangar to the terminal at Cymo Moosonee, Ont, in preparation for a medevac flight when the port main landing gear collapsed at 1210, EDT, Aug 13. The flight crew shut down the engines immediately and no other damage was incurred.

CRASH INTO SEA OFF FORT LAUDERDALE, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 14 -- A press report, dated today, states: A twin engine Piper aircraft carrying seven people, including a toddler, crashed into the Atlantic Ocean yesterday, six miles south-east of Fort Lauderdale, where the waters can be as deep as 1,000 feet. No one was severely injured, and only one passenger was taken to the hospital with minor wounds, according to U.S. Coast Guard officials. Those on

the aircraft, a fixed-wing, multi-engine aircraft built in 1980, credit the pilot with saving their lives. "They just knew everything was going to be OK," said Tom Oster, who drove the survivors the Coast Guard station back to Fort Lauderdale/Hollywood International Airport, their intended destination. The aircraft, owned by Twin Air, was returning to Fort Lauderdale from North Eleuthera in the Bahamas when the airport received a mayday from the pilot. Coast Guard officials said they launched a helicopter, a cutter and two small boats to rescue them, and broadcasted a message to any nearby vessels to be on the lookout for survivors. A fisherman spotted the passengers, who had been in the water for at least 30 minutes, took them on board and dropped them off at the Coast Guard Station in Fort Lauderdale. Twin-Air charters flights out of Fort Lauderdale and is owned by Clayton Gamber, who could not be reached for comment.

CRASH INTO SEA, OFF CANTERBURY, NEW ZEALAND

See ZK-FGS.

CRASH, COUNTY DOWN, NORTHERN IRELAND

London, Aug 17 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: A man has escaped injury after the helicopter he was in crashed in County Down. The aircraft overturned as it was coming into land at an airfield on Portaferry Road in Newtownards this afternoon. The helicopter, which had been hired from a training centre at the airfield, was badly damaged. Emergency services were called to the scene, but no-one was injured in the crash.

CRASH, DENVER AREA, COLORADO, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 15 -- A press report, dated Aug 14, states: Four people died yesterday when a twin-engine airplane crashed in a field near Centennial Airport south of Denver. The Cessna 425 went down about a half-mile south of a residential subdivision and three miles from the airport as it made its landing approach. The plane, which had travelled from Sandpoint, Idaho, was registered to Sgavit Aviation of Littleton, owned by Stephen Gavitt of Littleton, Federal Aviation Administration spokesman Mike Fergus said. The crash touched off several small grass fires but they were all extinguished, said Andy Lyon, a spokesman for South Metro Fire Rescue. The wreckage, which was strewn over about 100 yards, was located near a large power line but the line isn't believed to have caused the crash, Lyon said.

CRASH, ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 15 -- A press report, dated Aug 14, states: Authorities say that two married couples from Delaware were aboard a small plane that crashed last night at Erie International Airport - killing the

pilot, his wife and brother-in-law and critically injuring the pilot's sister. The Erie county coroner said pilot James Conk, his wife, Susan, and Dale Lewis died instantly of massive trauma. All three were from Smyrna, Delaware. Lewis' wife and the pilot's sister, Terri, survived but is in critical condition at an Erie hospital. Authorities believe the single-engine Cherokee ran out of fuel after taking off from Jamestown, New York, where the pilot had unsuccessfully tried to refuel.

CRASH, FRANZ JOSEF GLACIER, NEW ZEALAND

London, Aug 17 -- A press report, dated today, states: All eight people on board a sightseeing helicopter, operated by The Helicopter Line, which crashed on Franz Josef Glacier today have escaped uninjured. The Christchurch Police Communications Centre received advice of the crash at 1224 hrs. St John Ambulance Communications Centre in Christchurch said the Franz Josef ambulance and the Solid Energy Rescue Helicopter from Greymouth were called to the scene but were not required. Sergeant Mark Berry of the Hokitika police said that another helicopter had ferried the passengers off the glacier. It had yet to be established how the helicopter had come to crash, he said. An investigation by the Civil Aviation Authority would probably establish that. "All I can say is, it can't have been much of a crash because everyone survived, and helicopter crashes usually have much more serious consequences."

CRASH, KURRAJONG, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

London, Aug 17 -- A helicopter has crashed and flipped west of Sydney but the two occupants have walked away unscathed. The helicopter with two men on board crash landed at Kurrajong, in the Blue Mountains, west of Sydney, about 1430, AEST, police said. Paramedics who arrived at the scene shortly after the accident said the pair refused medical treatment, a police spokesman said.

CRASH, NEFTEYUGANSK AREA, SIBERIA, RUSSIA

Moscow, Aug 18 -- Four people were killed and two others were injured when a helicopter crashed in Russia's oil heartland of Siberia today, the Emergencies Ministry said. A ministry spokesman said it was not immediately clear why the Mi-8 helicopter came down near Nefteyugansk, base of leading oil producer Yuganskneftegaz. "There were six people on board," the spokesman said. "Four of them were killed and two injured." The Interfax news agency said the Mi-8, with three technical experts and three crew members, was performing a routine inspection of oil pipelines when it crashed. It quoted Rostransnadzor, a civil aviation watchdog, as saying the Mi-8 may have become entangled with

a cargo load attached by a cable to another helicopter. -- Reuters.

CRASH, NEWTOWNARDS, COUNTY DOWN, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Aug 17 -- A press report, dated Aug 16, states: A man has escaped injury after the helicopter he was in crashed in County Down. The aircraft overturned as it was coming into land at an airfield on Portaferry Road in Newtownards this afternoon. The helicopter, which had been hired from a training centre at the airfield, was badly damaged. Emergency services were called to the scene, but no-one was injured in the crash.

CRASH, OTTAWA, MICHIGAN, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 15 -- A press report, dated Aug 13, states: A small plane crashed shortly after taking off from Ottawa Executive Airport this morning, injuring a husband and wife who were on board, authorities said. Lambert Damstra, 56, the pilot, and his wife, Cheryl, 52, were injured in the crash, which happened about 1105 hrs, in Ottawa County, after the plane apparently lost power, The Holland Sentinel reported.

CRASH, PRINEVILLE, OREGON, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 17 -- A press report, dated Aug 16, states: Two Redmond residents died in a small-plane crash in Central Oregon, a Jefferson County Sheriff's sergeant said today. Jefferson County sheriff's deputies located the wreckage near Grizzly Mountain, northeast of Prineville, at about 2045 hrs, yesterday. The pilot was Kevin Roberts, 25, and his passenger was Darren Sulka, 34, said Sgt. Jim Adkins. The two left the Redmond area in the two-seat Lancair Legacy airplane and apparently had no specific destination, Adkins said. Adkins said witnesses called 911 when they heard the plane idle and then crash at about 1900 hrs.

CRASH, RAKOVICA, CROATIA

Zagreb, Aug 13 -- A small Hungarian aircraft crashed in central Croatia overnight killing two people on board and a similar aircraft was missing, Croatian state radio reported today. It said those killed were both Hungarian citizens. The aircrafts were among eight Hungarian aircraft that flew from the Croatian capital Zagreb, the radio quoted police sources as saying. Six landed safely in southern Croatia. The radio, which said there had been heavy fog in central Croatia, described the aircraft as "sports planes" but did not elaborate. Witnesses near the town of Rakovica, some 140 km south of Zagreb, reported seeing an aircraft hit a television mast. The radio said police were searching for the missing aircraft. -- Reuters.

London, Aug 15 -- A press report, dated Aug 14, states: Rescuers have retrieved four bodies from the wreckage of two small planes which crashed late Friday (Aug 12) in central

Croatia. A Zlin 142 plane and the bodies of its two passengers were found this morning on Medvedak mountain, Croatia radio quoted head of the rescue operations Srđan Vrsalovic as saying. The plane was part of a group of eight small sport planes flying from Hungary to the southern Adriatic island of Brač. On Friday, another plane of the group was found crashed in the national park Plitvicka Jezera, with its two passengers killed. The planes encountered bad weather and intense fog in the central mountainous region, police said in a statement. According to a local newspaper, the pilot of one of the crashed planes communicated with Zagreb airport authorities before the crash, but was unable to get any help. All of the pilots were amateurs, mostly Hungarian businessmen. They were taking their families to the island of Brač for a weekend vacation, police said.

CRASH, SAN LORENZO BELLIZZI, ITALY

London, Aug 14 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: A small aircraft crashed today in southern Italy, killing the two people on board, authorities said today. The two-seater went down in a national park near San Lorenzo Bellizzi, about 275 kilometres south of Naples, said Fabrizio Palatucci, an officer with the Carabinieri paramilitary police in nearby Cerchiara di Calabria. He said officials had not yet identified the victims. "The bodies were charred, and everything that was on the plane was burned," Palatucci said, adding that the victims were probably a man and a woman, but it was too early to say with certainty. The aircraft had left from the nearby coastal town of Sibari, and it was unclear where it was headed. The crash happened shortly before 1500, GMT, and witnesses told authorities that the pilot had tried to make an emergency landing in a field, Palatucci said.

EMERGENCY LANDING, BUDAPEST, HUNGARY

London, Aug 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: A Brussels-bound plane was forced to make an emergency landing in Budapest in Hungary this morning. The plane was carrying 293 passengers and 11 crew. No one was injured in the incident, newspaper 'Het Nieuwsblad' reported. The charter flight of airline Fly Air was en route from Istanbul to Brussels when onboard instruments indicated one of the plane's two engines had cut out. The plane was inspected after arriving safely at the Budapest Airport. The passengers of all of them of Turkish ancestry but living in Belgium boarded another flight for Zaventem Airport.

EMERGENCY LANDING, HANCOCK INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, SYRACUSE, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 18 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: An

Independence Air Regional Jet came in for an emergency landing at Hancock International Airport in Syracuse late yesterday morning. Fire trucks and emergency personnel were standing by on the runway when an Independence Air Regional Jet came in for a landing. Forty-two people were on board the aircraft that actually left from Syracuse en route to Washington, D.C. The crew reported a problem with the front landing gear and decided to return to Syracuse. The aircraft landed without any problems.

EMERGENCY LANDING, MALPENSA AIRPORT, MILAN, ITALY

London, Aug 12 -- A press report, dated today, states: A Greek airliner carrying 166 passengers and crew made an emergency landing at Malpensa airport, Milan, yesterday after the pilot reported trouble with one of the engines, Italy's civil aviation authority said. The McDonnell Douglas MD-82, owned by the charter company Alexandair, was en route from Zakynthos to Manchester, England, when it encountered the problem, forcing the pilot to land at Milan's Malpensa airport, the authority said. Emergency services were put into operation at the airport but the aircraft landed without problems and those aboard were unhurt, it said. Flights were disrupted for around 30 minutes.

EMERGENCY LANDING, NEW DEHLI, INDIA

London, Aug 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: A Jet Airways aircraft with 101 passengers on board today made an emergency but safe landing at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International airport soon after its take-off from Bangalore. The flight 9W-815 took off from Delhi airport around 1015 hrs and soon after the pilot detected some technical fault and sought an emergency landing, police sources said. Full emergency was declared at the airport with fire tenders and ambulances being kept ready. The plane landed safely at around 1030 hrs, they said.

EMERGENCY LANDING, VENEZUELA

London, Aug 16 -- A press report, dated Aug 14, states: A woman died today when a light aircraft from Venezuela's Wayumi Enterprises ran into technical problems and had to perform an emergency landing. The National Institute of Civil Aviation (CANI) in Venezuela said the aircraft was flying from San Juan de Manapiere to Puerto Ayacucho of Amazonas state. CANI issued a statement saying that none of the flight's other passengers were injured, but did not reveal the victim's name. There was a total of 11 passengers on board the aircraft.

G-OMAC

London, Aug 18 -- Reims/Cessna FR.172E, G-OMAC, was substantially damaged under unknown

circumstances in West Sussex, at 1810, UTC, Aug 7. The pilot was fatally injured.

HK-4374X

London, Aug 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: A Colombian McDonnell Douglas MD-80 carrying 152 passengers has crashed in mountains in western Venezuela. Authorities started searching for the aircraft after it lost contact with air traffic control. Venezuelan spokesman Antonio Rivero there had been reports of an explosion in a remote area near the Colombian border. Interior Minister Jesse Chacon told state television: "According to our estimates, the plane crashed in Sierra de Perija between 0300 and 0345hrs." The West Caribbean Airways plane was flying from Panama to Martinique when the pilot reported engine trouble to the Caracas airport. Francisco Paz, president of the National Aviation Institute, said airport authorities lost radio contact with the plane in the area of Machiques, in the western state of Zulia. It is not yet known if there are any survivors.

London, Aug 17 -- McDonnell Douglas MD-82, HK-4374X, operated by West Caribbean Airways, crew reportedly contacted Caracas stating trouble with one engine. They intended to divert to Caracas. Later the remaining engine was also failed. Preliminary news reports suggest that the aircraft descended at 7000 ft/min, and finally crashing in mountainous terrain of the Sierra de Perija. All 160 passengers and crew were killed in the crash.

INCIDENT AT DELHI AIRPORT, INDIA

Karachi, Aug 12 -- An aircraft of Bangladesh national airlines Biman was grounded at Delhi airport, India, yesterday due to engine trouble. According to media report, the damage in one of the engines was detected during a routine check after offloading the passengers. It is said that the airbus of Dhaka-Delhi flight Number BG-097 landed safely at the Delhi airport. The flight took off from Dhaka airport at 1100 hrs with 143 passengers on board. After offloading the passengers, hangar staff detected the severe damage in the No.1 engine during a routine check. They found four plates of the engine broken, which might have happened due to bird hitting, Biman sources said. A five-member team of Biman has left Dhaka with spare parts to repair the damage. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

INCIDENT AT HANOVER AIRPORT, GERMANY

London, Aug 15 -- A press report, dated today, states: A British Airways aircraft slid 200 metres past the end of a slippery runway at Hanover airport yesterday but none of its 45 passengers or four crew members was injured in the incident. The runway was wet and slippery with rain that was falling as the aircraft came in to land, an airport spokesman said,

adding that an investigation had been opened into the exact cause of the incident. The aircraft came to a halt in a field adjoining the runway.

London, Aug 15 -- A press report, dated today, states: An investigation has been launched after a British Airways plane overshot a runway and ended up in a meadow. Flight BA1754 from Birmingham to Hanover stopped 150 metres past the German landing strip. The incident happened at 1705, UTC, yesterday. None of the 45 passengers and four crew were hurt. The airline said those on board were able to walk off the small Embraer 145 jet. BA and the Federal Office of Aviation in Germany are investigating. One factor being examined is whether a heavy downpour was responsible. The flight was operated by BA City Express Ltd, a Manchester-based wholly-owned subsidiary of BA. A spokeswoman said those on board were "generally OK in terms of the mood, although I am sure some of them would have been shocked". She added: "After the aircraft landed they carried out a number of checks, as is standard procedure, to check there was no damage to the aircraft, and to get an idea of what happened." The plane's landing gear sank into wet soil and the craft will be left in place as investigations continue.

INCIDENT AT ISLAMABAD AIRPORT, PAKISTAN

Karachi, Aug 16 -- A Saudi Airways Boeing 747, with 353 passengers on board, narrowly escaped a disaster when six of its tyres "deflated" while landing at Islamabad International Airport, on Saturday (Aug 13). A senior official of Saudi Airways told the local media that said six tyres of the flight SV-3722 deflated when the brakes were applied. "Usually, deflating of tyres happens due to overheating of wheel drums. However, the landing was smooth and nobody was hurt," the official said. He added that spare tyres were brought from Saudi Arabia through another flight on Sunday (Aug 14). The aircraft took off for its destination after the tyres were replaced. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

N1212V

London, Aug 11 -- A press report, dated Aug 10, states: Two days after a small plane disappeared in the north Georgia mountains, searchers discovered the aircraft and the body of the pilot on a wooded mountainside. Cpt. Paige Joyner of the Civil Air Patrol said Patrick Goudey of Sherrills Ford, N.C., was killed when his Beechcraft V-35 Bonanza crashed on Monday (Aug 9) near Springer Mountain. There was no else on board. Goudey's plane disappeared Monday afternoon during a non-stop flight from Lake Norman to Smyrna, Tennessee. When the plane did not arrive in Tennessee, searchers tracked radio signals to the north Georgia mountains. The crash site was discovered this morning by a

helicopter crew looking for the plane north of Dahlonega, Ga. It took hours to recover the victim and confirm it was the same plane because the area was densely wooded, requiring searchers to go on foot.

London, Aug 12 -- Beechcraft Bonanza V35B N1212V crashed near Ellijay, Georgia, at 1500, Aug 8. The aircraft sustained substantial damage. The one person on board was killed.

N177SJ

London, Aug 12 -- Bell OH-58A N177SJ crashed near Lancaster, California, at 1303, Aug 10, while on a local flight from Lancaster. The aircraft was destroyed. The one person on board was killed.

N4512Q

London, Aug 11 -- A press report, dated today, states: A 14-year-old aviation camp student, Peter Mueller, died in a plane crash in northern Indiana. The crash also killed his 21-year-old flight instructor. The single-engine Piper Warrior crashed yesterday afternoon into Lake Maxinkuckee near Culver Academies. A witness says the plane sank within two to three minutes in water eight to ten feet deep. Police say the Federal Aviation Administration removed the plane from the lake and took it to a hangar to investigate the cause of the crash. Culver Academies owns the plane. The school's spokesman says the plane was taking off from a grass airstrip at the school's airport when it crashed.

London, Aug 12 -- Piper PA-28-161 (Warrior II) N4512Q crashed near Culver, Indiana, at 1845, Aug 10. The two persons on board were killed.

N750F

London, Aug 12 -- On Aug 9, the Lancair IV-P, N750F, had departed Calgary, AB at 1904, hrs, on an IFR flight plan to Grand Prairie, AB. The aircraft levelled off at the flight planned altitude of FL200 at 1917 hrs. Approximately one minute later, radar data showed the aircraft entering at 900 fpm descent which increased to 14500 fpm by the time the aircraft reached an altitude of 14700 feet. The SSR radar return was lost at 1919 hrs, at approximately 14500 feet and only primary returns were recorded until 1920 hrs. The aircraft fuselage and left wing spar impacted the ground approximately 20 km south-east of Sundre, AB. The right wing, left wing skins, and pieces of the tail section were located over a 2.5 km area south-west of the main wreckage site. The pilot and passenger were fatally injured and there was no post impact fire.

OH-HCI

Helsinki, Aug 12 -- A local press report, dated today, states: The bodies of the passengers and one pilot have been removed from the sunken helicopter. The Home Secretary of Estonia advised that the other pilot's body remains missing. Estonian divers carry on searching for the body of the

Finnish pilot nearby the helicopter. At this point, the preparations for lifting the helicopter up are being made. Estonian authorities are leading the operation but the equipment is from Finland. Also a Norwegian shipping company will coordinate the operation. Fairway research/buou ship Seili will be used in the operation, and it is expected to arrive in Tallinn by this afternoon. According to The Border Guards it is most likely that the helicopter will not be lifted up during today because the operation will be very difficult. The victims will be identified and the cause of death will be established in Estonia. On Thursday night (Aug 11) it was discovered that all the passengers' seatbelts were fastened and their bodies had remained inside the helicopter. Estonia's police published a list of the victims names yesterday. "Although the identities will not be officially established until the identification of the bodies" said police commander Robert Andropov. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Gothenburg, Aug 14 -- The initial investigation after the wreck of the helicopter which crashed off Tallinn was salvaged revealed that the inflatable pontoons to keep the helicopter afloat had started to open up but were not properly filled with air. Apparently the pilots had started to prepare for an emergency and had lowered the speed before the helicopter hit the surface. One of the Finnish pilots remains missing. -- Westax Marine Services AB. (See issue of Aug 15.)

London, Aug 16 -- A rescue vessel recovered the crashed Sikorsky S-76 helicopter from the Baltic Sea off the Estonian coast at the weekend (Aug 13-14). The helicopter went down three minutes after takeoff on Wednesday on a commercial flight from Tallinn to Helsinki, killing its two Finnish pilots and 12 passengers from Finland, Estonia and the US.

ZK-FGS

London, Aug 12 -- Cessna 182R (Skylane) ZK-FGS, operated by Higher Planes Limited, crashed into the sea off north Canterbury Aug 7 while on a flight from Nelson to Christchurch. The two persons on board were killed.

Space Vehicles



DISCOVERY (Space Shuttle)

Los Angeles, Aug 10 -- The shuttle Discovery appears to have suffered very little damage on its latest mission, though a detailed analysis is yet to be completed, a NASA spokeswoman said today. "It's one of the cleanest vehicles they've ever seen," said Leslie Williams, a spokeswoman at NASA Dryden Flight Research Centre at Edwards Air Force Base in California. NASA diverted

Discovery to California after skipping four chances to land at its home port, the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida, because of menacing thunderstorms Monday (Aug 8) and yesterday. Because of the change in the landing site, about 170 NASA experts and contractors are now en route to Edwards to fully evaluate the shuttle's condition and prepare it to be sent back to Kennedy, Williams said. It will be between seven and 10 days before Discovery is flown back to Florida atop a modified Boeing 747 aircraft. -- Reuters.

Product Recalls



BICYCLE WHEELS, UNITED STATES

Washington, DC, Aug 11 -- The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission announces the recall of about 2,000 Ritchey WCS Protocol, Carbon, DS, DS Aero, Girder models, all rear wheels only, in voluntary co-operation with Ritchey Design, of San Carlos, Calif., manufactured under license from American Classic Inc., of Tampa, Fla. Consumers should stop using recalled products immediately unless otherwise instructed. The hub in the bicycle's rear wheel can fail to engage properly, causing no resistance when pedaling. The bicycle rider can lose balance, fall and suffer injuries. Ritchey Design has received one report of a bicycle rider who suffered minor bruises and abrasions after experiencing no pedal resistance and falling from the bike. The above wheels were sold by Ritchey as wheel sets and as rear wheel only and as original equipment on 2004 model year Fuji and Motobecane USA bicycles and the 2005 model year Prestige road bike from Raleigh. The recalled wheels have high flange hubs measuring 60-mm in diameter and the hub body is straight between the flanges. Sold at bicycle specialty stores nation-wide from January 2003 through July 2005. These wheels were sold separately for between \$350 and \$700. They were sold also as original equipment on 2004 model year Fuji and Motobecane USA bicycles and the 2005 model year Prestige road bike form Raleigh, for between \$2,100 and \$4,000. Manufactured in Taiwan. Inspect your hub to determine if the wheel is included in the recall and contact Ritchey to schedule a free repair. -- Consumer Product Safety Commission.

RENAULT MOTOR VEHICLES, SOUTH KOREA

London, Aug 17 -- A press report, dated Aug 15, states: Renault Samsung Motors Co., South Korea's smallest automobile producer, will recall its new SM5 passenger sedans due to a manufacturing defect, the country's transportation ministry said

today. The recall centers on a fault in which the smooth operation of the car's accelerator cable can be affected by electrical wiring under the dashboard, putting the safety of the vehicle's occupants at risk, according to the Ministry of Construction and Transportation. The recall affects 9,745 SM5s built between Apr 21 and Jun 29 this year. Owners of the recalled vehicles can have the faults repaired free of charge at Renault Samsung service centres.

TOWER HEATER FANS, UNITED STATES

Washington, DC, Aug 11 -- The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission announces the recall of about 180,000 Holmes and Bionaire Tower Heater Fans in voluntary co-operation with The Holmes Group Inc., of Milford, Mass. Consumers should stop using recalled products immediately unless otherwise instructed. The power cord on the units can fray or sever causing the fan to stop working and overheat. This could pose a fire hazard to consumers. The Holmes Group has received 98 reports of minor property damage to the surface under the heater. No injuries have been reported. The recall involves Holmes models HFH6498-U, HFH6500-U and HFH6500TG-U and Bionaire model BFH3530-U. The recalled heaters also have date codes beginning with 2604 through 3804 for all units, except for Holmes model 6500TG-U, which has date codes ranging from 2604 through 4704. The model and date code can be found on the silver label on the back of the unit. The heater fans are 26 inches tall; come in all gray, two-tone gray, or black and gray; and have either the word Holmes or Bionaire printed on the front of the base. Sold at Wal-Mart, Target, Linens N Things, Bed Bath & Beyond and additional department and specialty stores nation-wide from July 2004 through June 2005 for between \$40 and \$90. Manufactured in China. Consumers should immediately stop using the heaters and contact The Holmes Group for instructions on receiving a replacement unit. -- Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Port Conditions



INDIA

Mumbai, Aug 11 -- The Container Coordination Committee (CCC) have moved five barges (of 152-TEU capacity each) to Mumbai Port, thereby facilitating evacuation of 760 TEUs from JNP in an attempt to bring operations to normal and ease congestion at Jawaharlal Nehru Port (JNP). As per the CCC decision, import ICD containers have, with effect from Aug 5, been moving out of JNP through barges via Mumbai Port

for onward transportation to ICD-Delhi. According to a press release issued by JNPT's Operations department, efforts are being made to run barges on a regular basis from both the Port's terminals, JNPCT and NSICT, till normalcy is restored on the rail network. In addition, import ICD boxes are also being moved by road from JNP to Mulund, for onward transportation to ICD-Delhi. In all, 452 TEUs have so far been taken to Mulund. With the Railways restoring partial services from Aug 7, 11 rakes have been handled till now from both terminals, resulting in the evacuation of approximately 990 TEUs. The Railways expects to run a minimum

of 2 trains through Mumbai Port and 7 to 8 trains to JNP till the second line is restored, as against the normal movement of 12 trains per day. The local CFSs are also limping back to normalcy following respite from the rains. They have received approximately 6,000 TEUs in the last three days from both terminals, thereby contributing to decongesting the Port yards. -- Lloyd's Agents.

ITALY

Genoa, Aug 16 -- Port situation Aug 16: Genoa: One bulk carrier, one reefer, and one container vessel waiting for berth. Average number of days delay in berthing 24-48 hrs. La Spezia: No vessels waiting for berth.

Savona: One vessel waiting normal berth. Average number days delay in berthing 12 hrs. No vessel waiting for special berth. -- Lloyd's Agents.

PANAMA CANAL

London, Aug 14 -- Lane Outage scheduled to take place at 0001, Aug 17 through to 0001, Aug 20. Delays can be expected and full advantage of the booking system should be taken. Commencing Aug 17, the Transit Reservation System shall be in Condition 2 until further notice.

SYRIA

Lattakia, Aug 6 -- Waiting time is presently 24 hours at Lattakia and four days at Tartous. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Port Delays

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

Country/Port	Date of report	No. of vessels waiting and/or days delay
Australia		
Abbot Point	15-Aug-2005	Coal: 13 vessels due by 8/9; up to 2 days berthing delay expected.
Brisbane	15-Aug-2005	Coal: Fisherman Island coal berth: 3 vessels due by 5/9; up to 2 days delay expected at present. .
Dalrymple Bay	15-Aug-2005	Coal: 3 vessels berthed and loading, 8 anchored; 39 vessels due by 16/9; 5-25 days berthing delay subject to cargo availability and berth congestion; waiting times vary greatly due to different stem supply issues.
Dampier	15-Aug-2005	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, 3 anchored; 6 vessels due by 1/9; there will be a maintenance shutdown ca. 23/8; 1-6 days berthing delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; shippers cannot guarantee that vessel will be able to load up to max. sailing draft available; East Intercourse Island: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 4 anchored; 3 vessels due by 21/8; 1-5 days berthing delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; a shift to a lay-by berth for loaded vessels is always a possibility; shippers cannot guarantee that vessel will be able to load up to max. sailing draft available.
Gladstone	15-Aug-2005	Coal: R.G. Tanna coal terminal: 3 vessels berthed and loading, 2 off port; 33 vessels due by 14/9; up to 5 days berthing delay expected subject to port congestion and cargo availability; Barney Point: 3 vessels due by 15/9; no delays expected.
Hay Point	15-Aug-2005	Coal: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 3 anchored; 7 vessels due by 24/9; No. 1 berth closed for 1 month for maintenance from 8/8; vessels berthing in order of cargo availability.
Newcastle	15-Aug-2005	Coal: Kooragang 4, 5 and 6: 2 vessel berthed and loading, 1 berthed; 50 vessels due by 9/9; Dykes 4+5: 1 vessel loading; 24 vessels due by 10/9; 1-7 days berthing delay expected prior to berthing due to planned maintenance at Kooragang terminal, coal product problems with some shippers berthed congestion and cargo receipt.
Port Hedland	15-Aug-2005	Iron ore: BHP Iron Ore Pty. Ltd., Mt. Newman (Nelson Point), "A" berth: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 2 anchored; 7 vessels due by 25/8; "B" berth: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 3 anchored; 6 vessels due by 24/8; BHP Iron Ore Pty. Ltd., Goldsworthy (Finucane Island) "C" berth: 1 vessel berthed and loading; 2 vessels due by 18/8; "D" berth: 1 vessel berthed and loading; 5 vessels due by 21/8; a 96 hour maintenance shutdown will start ca. 16/8; up to 5 day's berthing delay expected.
Port Kembla	15-Aug-2005	Coal: 13 vessels due by 15/9; up to 2 days berthing delay expected due to port congestion and cargo availability; CB-1: 2 vessels due by 25/9; no delays expected.
Port Walcott	15-Aug-2005	Iron ore: 2 vessels berthed and loading, 7 anchored; 10 vessels due by 26/8; Line-up expected to change at short notice. Cargo grade shortages and stockpile problems may result in vessels berthing out of turn.
Brazil		
Paranagua	16-Aug-2005	Seventeen vessels berthed of which 1 reefer loader, 2 container dischargers, 6 fertiliser dischargers, 1 pellets loader, 1 sugar loader, 2 bulk soya loaders, 4 other loaders/dischargers; 20 vessels waiting in roads, of which 8 to load (1 pellets, 1 soya, 5 sugar, 1 other loader), 12 to discharge (9 fertiliser, 2 containers, 1 other discharger); 43 vessels due over the next 7 days.
Rio Grande	16-Aug-2005	Six vessels berthed of which 1 phosphate discharger, 1 wheat discharger, 2 urea dischargers, 1 soya oil loader, 1 soya meal loader; 3 vessels waiting in roads; 23 vessels due over the next 10 days.
Santos	16-Aug-2005	Twenty-three vessels berthed of which 11 sugar loaders, 1 wheat discharger, 2 fertiliser dischargers, 4 chemical products dischargers, 1 steel products loader, 1 bulk salt discharger, 1 pellets loader, 1 citrus juice loader, 1 full container loader/discharger, 1 other loader/discharger; 25 vessels waiting in roads; 30 vessels due over the next 7 days; Private terminals: Terminal 37: 1 full container loader/discharger; Tecondi: 1 full container loader/discharger; Termare: no vessels; Rodrimar: 1 full container loader/discharger; Cosipa: 1 fertiliser loader, 2 steel products loaders; Ultrafertil: no vessels; Cargill: 1 bulk sugar loader, 1 bulk soya loader; Santos Brasil: 2 full container loaders/dischargers; Cutrale: 1 pellets loader; Dow: 1 chemical products discharger.
Sao Sebastiao	16-Aug-2005	Five vessels berthed, 1 waiting in roads; 6 vessels due over the next 10 days.

Port Conditions

Vitoria	16-Aug-2005	One cellulose loader berthed; Terminal Vila Velha: 1 full container loader/discharger; Tubarao: 1 fertiliser discharger, 3 iron ore loaders; Praia Mole: 2 coal dischargers; Portocel: no vessels; Ubu: no vessels; 29 vessels due over the next 7 days.
Bulgaria		
Bourgas	15-Aug-2005	Ten vessels in port operating, of which 7 loading (1 paper, 3 coils, 1 wheat, 1 baryte concentrate, 1 reinforced concrete), 3 discharging (1 metals, 1 billets, 1 iron ore); 5 vessels waiting in roads, of which 2 to load (1 barley, 1 coils), 3 to discharge (1 zinc concentrate, 1 coal, 1 manganese ore); 9 vessels due, of which 3 to load (1 coils, 1 grain, 1 scrap), 4 to discharge (1 metals, 1 sulphate, 1 jet fuel, 1 zinc ash), 2 passenger vessels.
Varna	15-Aug-2005	Varna East, Varna West, Electrical Power Station, Balchik: Conditions 8-14 August: Thirty-six vessels in port operating of which 18 loading (4 bulk wheat, 5 soda, 1 sulphuric acid, 1 packed hardboard, 1 bulk clinker, 1 kaolin/soda/other, 1 soda/other, 1 bulk barley, 1 bulk maize, 2 silica sand), 11 discharging (1 raw phosphate, 5 bulk coal, 2 copper concentrate, 1 petcoke, 1 rice, 1 pipes/steel sheets), 7 discharging/loading (6 containers, 1 feldspar/kaolin/other); no vessels waiting in roads.
Chile		
Antofagasta	16-Aug-2005	Three vessels berthed, 4 berths vacant; 13 vessels due this week to load/discharge concentrates, bulk copper, containers and general cargo.
Arica	16-Aug-2005	Three vessels berthed, 4 berths vacant; 14 vessels due this week.
Iquique	16-Aug-2005	Four vessels berthed, 3 berths vacant; 11 vessels due this week.
Valparaiso	16-Aug-2005	One vessels berthed, 7 berths vacant; 3 vessels anchored; 10 vessels due this week.
Colombia		
Buenaventura	09-Aug-2005	Shore cranes operational. Nine vessels berthed (1 containers, 2 general cargo, 5 bulkers, 1 tanker), 2 vessels anchored (1 general cargo, 1 bulker); 35 vessels due (26 containers, 2 general cargo, 6 bulkers, 1 PCC), with 2 days delay expected for containers, 3 days for bulkers.
Egypt		
Adabiya	15-Aug-2005	Eleven vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 4 general cargo, 5 bulk carriers, 1 tanker, 1 containers..
Alexandria	15-Aug-2005	Thirty-five vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 32 general cargo, 1 bulk carrier, 2 container vessels; 15 vessels dry-docked; 13 vessels at inner anchorage, 4 at outer anchorage..
Damietta	15-Aug-2005	Eighteen vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 12 general cargo, 2 bulk carriers, 4 containers; 5 vessels at outer anchorage.
Dekheila	15-Aug-2005	Eleven vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 9 bulk carriers, 2 containers; 1 vessel at outer anchorage.
Port Said	15-Aug-2005	Seven vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 2 general cargo, 5 containers.
Suez Canal	15-Aug-2005	Twenty-four vessels transiting Northbound, 22 Southbound.
Estonia		
Tallinn	15-Aug-2005	Paljassaare (formerly Kopli): 1 soya bean vessel loading at berth; no vessels waiting at anchorage; 1 vessel due, with 8 days berthing delay expected.
India		
Kolkata	15-Aug-2005	3 vessels operating at berth of which 2 vessels loading (Containers, POL), 1 vessel waiting to load Containers; 1 vessel working at midstream to discharge Timber Logs; 1 vessel not ready to work and waiting at anchorage to discharge; 3 vessels under repair; 1 vessel under dry docked; 2 vessels waiting to sail; 2 vessels due (CPO, Passenger).
Haldia	15-Aug-2005	12 vessels operating at berth of which 5 loading (Iron ore-4, Thermal Coal), 5 vessels discharging (Crude, Met Coke, Coking Coal, Salt, Lime); 2 vessels loading and discharging Containers; 6 vessels awaiting berth (2 to discharge, 4 to load); 8 vessels waiting at anchorage (1 to discharge, 7 to load); 5 vessels due (Crude, LAMN, Iron ore, Containers-2).
Paradip	15-Aug-2005	8 vessels operating at berth of which 5 vessels loading (Thermal Coal-2, Iron ore, Chrome Concentrate, Magnesium Ore), 3 vessels discharging (Coking Coal NC Coal, Ammonia); 2 vessels awaiting berth to load; 1 vessel waiting at anchorage to discharge.
Visakhapatnam	15-Aug-2005	14 vessels operating at berth of which 6 loading (Iron ore-2, Soya, Thermal Coal, POL, Steel), 8 vessels discharging (Coking Coal-4, LPG, Sulphur, Timber, POL); 8 vessels not ready to work and waiting at anchorage (7 to discharge, 1 to load); 30 vessels due (Iron Ore-9, Steel-7, Alumina, Granite-2, POL, Coking Coal-3, Scrap, Timber, Caustic Soda, Containers-2, Pet Coke, POL)
Chennai	15-Aug-2005	14 vessels operating at berth of which 5 loading (Lubricant Oil, C.Stone, Granite Block, Project, IOL), 8 vessels discharging (Sulphur, Thermal Coal, Pet Coke, Furnace Oil, Crude Oil, Project Cargo, Logs, CPO), 1 vessel loading and discharging Granite Blocks/Jumbo Bags(Bauxite); 4 vessels not ready to work and waiting at anchorage (1 to discharge, 2 to load, 1 to load and discharge); 7 vessels due (S.Coil, Cars, IOL., Containers-2, Raw Sugar, Iron Ore).
Tuticorin	15-Aug-2005	12 vessels operating at berth of which 3 vessels loading (Maize, General Cargo, C.Sodalye), 9 vessels discharging (R.Cashew, Thermal Coal-2, Palm Oil, Logs, Rock Phosphate, Liquid Ammonia, Lime Stone, VCM); 2 vessels awaiting berth to discharge; 2 vessels not ready to work and waiting at anchorage to load;
Cochin	15-Aug-2005	4 vessels operating at berth of which 1 vessel loading Furnace Oil, 2 vessel discharging (Steel Pipes, CSL), 1 vessel loading and discharging Containers; 2 vessels awaiting berth (1 to discharge, 1 to load and discharge).
New Mangalore	15-Aug-2005	4 vessels operating at berth of which 1 vessel loading Iron Oare Fines, 3 vessels discharging (Urea, POL Product, POL Crude); 2 vessels waiting at anchorage (1 to discharge, 1 to load); 23 vessels due (Crude Palm Oil, Soya Bean Oil, Granite Stone-2, POL Product-5, Iron Ore Fines-5, LPG-2, POL Crude-2, Liquid Ammonia, MOP, Iron ore(P), Methenol, Containers).
Mormugao	15-Aug-2005	3 vessels operating at berth of which 2 vessels discharging (Furnace Oil/LDO, C.P.Coke), 1 vessel loading and discharging S.Coal; 2 vessels working at mid stream to load Iron Ore; 3 vessels awaiting berth (2 to discharge, 1 to load); 5 vessels under repair/dry docked; 5 vessels due (Containers, Coking Coal, S.Scrap, Iron Ore-2).

Port Conditions

Mumbai	15-Aug-2005	17 vessels operating at berth of which 8 discharging (General Cargo-6, Liquid Bulk, POL) 1 vessel loading and discharging General Cargo; 1 vessel not ready to work and waiting at anchorage to discharge; 2 vessels awaiting order to discharge; 15 vessels under repairs/dry docked, 11 vessels under arrest ; 22 vessels under laid up (Berths not required for cargo operations); 17 vessels due (Containers-3, Oil-3, General Cargo-11).
J.N.P.T.	15-Aug-2005	7 vessels operating at berth of which 2 vessels discharging (Cement, Edible Oil). 5 vessels loading and discharging Containers; 1 vessel (*) awaiting berth to discharge; 1 CBFS vessel due.
Ennore	15-Aug-2005	1 vessel operating at berth and discharging Thermal Coal; 1 vessel loading Iron ore at inner anchorage; 5 vessels due (MV Rani Padmini (Thermal Coal), MV Taiji Star (Stream Coal), MV Platanos (Stream Coal), MV Tamil Anna (Thermal Coal), MV APJ Sri Devi (Thermal Coal).
Kandla	15-Aug-2005	17 vessels operating at berth of which 11 discharging (Chemical-2, Scrap, MS-2, CPO, CDSBO, Timber Logs-2, Fertilizer-2), 4 vessels loading (M. Blocks, Rice, Salt, Cement), 2 vessels loading and discharging Containers; 2 vessels awaiting berth (1 to discharge, 1 to load); 4 vessels not ready to work (3 to discharge, 1 to load).
Kazakhstan		
Aktau	15-Aug-2005	Oil products: 1 vessel berthed, loading crude oil; 2 vessels in roads, both to load crude oil; 2 vessels due by 17/8, both to load crude oil..
Pakistan		
Karachi	15-Aug-2005	Two vessels loading at berth (1 rice, 1 cement), 9 discharging at berth (3 sugar, 2 scrap, 2 general cargo, 1 logs, 1 tallow); 1 container vessel waiting at anchorage to load, 5 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (1 containers, 1 crude oil, 1 fuel oil, 1 MEG, 1 DAP); no vessels bunkering, 1 under repairs/dry-docked, none awaiting orders; 5 vessels due (3 containers, 1 general cargo, 1 cement), with no berthing delays expected.
Port Qasim	15-Aug-2005	One rice vessel loading at berth, 3 vessels discharging at berth (1 palm oil, 1 rape seed, 1 iron ore), 1 container vessel loading/discharging at QICT berth; 1 container vessel waiting at anchorage to load, 2 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (1 containers, 1 palm oil).
Russia		
Novorossiysk	15-Aug-2005	Ten vessels in port operating, all loading, of which 1 cement, 1 DRI, 1 scrap, 2 steel billets, 1 copper, 1 bulk ammonium nitrate, 1 coils/steel sheets, 1 coils, 1 wheat; 5 vessels waiting in roads, all to load, of which 1 scrap, 1 bulk urea, 1 barley, 1 wheat, 1 steel sheets; 55 vessels due, all to load, of which 3 HBI, 1 slabs, 4 DRI, 1 steel billets/cars, 6 wheat, 4 bulk NPK, 1 coils/pipes/steel billets, 7 steel billets, 6 copper, 2 scrap, 3 coils, 1 non-ferrous metals, 3 bulk ammonium nitrate, 3 aluminium, 2 bulk cement, 1 tin plate/steel billets, 1 steel billets/paper, 1 cartons/paper, 1 UAN solution, 1 slabs, 1 packed fertiliser, 1 pig-iron, 1 diesel oil; Oil terminal: 1 tanker berthed, loading crude oil; 2 tankers in roads, both to load crude oil; 9 tankers due, all to load, of which 6 crude oil, 1 fuel oil, 2 diesel oil.
Slovenia		
Koper	16-Aug-2005	Port working normally. Seven vessels berthed of which 2 bulk carriers discharging coal/minerals, 1 bulk carrier loading grain, 1 barge loading coal, 2 vessels loading steel products/general cargo, 1 tanker discharging mineral oils; 15 vessels due over the next 2 days of which 3 vessels to discharge/load containers, 1 bulk carrier to discharge ore, 3 bulk carriers to load coal, 3 vessels to load steel products/sawn timber/general cargo, 1 Ro/Ro to load sawn timber, 3 car carriers to discharge/load vehicles, 1 passenger vessel.
Spain		
Bilbao	16-Aug-2005	Thirty-seven vessels operating (7 tankers, 30 others), of which 8 loading, 17 discharging, 12 loading/discharging.
Cadiz	16-Aug-2005	Nineteen vessels in port of which 10 operating (3 Ro/Ros, 2 containers, 1 sugar, 1 cement, 1 oil, 1 wheat, 1 coal), 9 vessels under repair; no delays.
Sagunto	16-Aug-2005	Nine in port operating of which 5 discharging (3 steel products, 1 machinery, 1 miscellaneous cargo), 4 discharging/loading general cargo; no vessels outside commercial wharf; no berthing delays at present.
Sri Lanka		
Colombo	15-Aug-2005	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. Five container/feeder vessels loading at berth, 16 vessels discharging at berth (12 containers/feeders, 1 bagged cement, 1 bagged maize, 1 Ro/Ro, 1 bagged fertiliser); 1 vessel waiting at anchorage to discharge; 4 vessels dry-docked, 1 at new tanker berth; 5 container/feeder vessels due, with no delays expected.
Turkmenistan		
Turkmenbashi	15-Aug-2005	Oil products: 3 vessels berthed, of which 2 loading (1 jet fuel, 1 gasoil), 1 discharging crude oil; 4 vessels in roads, all to load, of which 2 gasoil, 1 gasoline, 1 unknown cargo.
Ukraine		
Ilichevsk	15-Aug-2005	Eight vessels in port operating, of which 6 loading (2 steel products, 1 oil cake, 1 barley, 1 sulphur, 1 equipment), 2 discharging/loading (1 containers, 1 wagons); 1 vessel in roads to load containers; 21 vessels due, of which 10 to load (9 steel products, 1 barley), 2 to discharge iron ore/nickel ore, 9 to discharge/load containers.
Mariupol	15-Aug-2005	Thirteen vessels in port operating, all loading, of which 8 steel, 1 wheat, 1 fire-clay, 2 coal, 1 kaolin; 4 vessels in roads, all to load, of which 2 steel, 2 coal; 58 vessels due, of which 55 to load (22 steel, 12 coal, 13 fire-clay, 1 coke, 6 wheat, 1 barley), 1 to discharge heavy lift cargo, 2 to discharge/load (1 fire-clay/containers, 1 containers).
Odessa	15-Aug-2005	Thirteen vessels in port operating, of which 7 loading (6 metal, 1 wood), 2 discharging (1 luggage, 1 sugar), 2 discharging/loading containers, 2 passenger vessels; 3 vessels in roads, of which 1 to load ore, 2 to discharge sugar; 51 vessels due, of which 25 to load (19 metal, 4 pig-iron, 1 scrap, 1 wheat), 3 to discharge (1 barley, 1 oil, 1 citrus), 23 to discharge/load containers.

Port Conditions

United States

Beaumont	16-Aug-2005	No new restrictions in draft (normal 40 ft. 0 ins. f.w. max. deep draft enforced). Traffic schedule: 16/8: outbound traffic a.m., inbound traffic to follow; channel open under normal one-way traffic; Louis Dreyfus terminal: 2 days delay.
Galveston	16-Aug-2005	No new restriction in draft (normal 39 ft. 6 ins. b.w. max. deep draft enforced - 40 ft. with ideal conditions). Channel open under normal traffic; ADM-Farmland terminal: 1 day's delay. .
Houston	16-Aug-2005	Pilots report normal 43 ft. 0 ins. max. draft up to Shell terminal, 40 ft. 0 ins. max. draft after Shell terminal in Houston ship channel; Cargill terminal: 2 days delay; LDC Dreyfus terminal: 1-2 days delay.
Kalama, WA	16-Aug-2005	Kalama export terminal: 4 days delay; United Harvest terminal: no delays.
New Orleans	16-Aug-2005	Mississippi River terminal berthing delays: Cenex-Harstates/Myrtle Grove: 1-2 days delay expected; Cargill-Westwego: 2-3 days delay expected; ADM/Ama: 2-3 days delay expected; Bunge/Destrehan: 2 days delay expected; ADM/Destrehan: 2-3 days delay expected; ADM/Reserve: 2-3 days delay expected; Cargill/Reserve: no delays; Peavey/Paulina: closed; planned re-opening 5/9; Zen-Noh/Convent: no delays; Cargill/Baton Rouge: no delays; maintenance being carried out until 5/9; Mississippi River mid-stream buoys - estimated berthing delays based on new vessel presented as load-ready and weather permitting: Mile 121.5 ADM (Gemini) - Destrehan: no delays; Mile 158.0 Cargill (K2) - Convent: no delays; Mile 180.0 Cooper (America) - Darrow: no delays. Nine-day forecast for Carrolton Gauge/ New Orleans: expected to decrease to 2.3 ft. by 18/8. Mississippi River recommended draft restrictions: SW Pass to New Orleans (Mile 090.0) - 47 ft. for all vessels; New Orleans (Mile 090) to Baton Rouge (Mile 233.5) - 45 ft. for all vessels; vessels with drafts up to 47 ft. have been handled up to Mile 180 in the past, but are approved by pilots on a case by case basis, based on current river conditions; Mississippi River Gulf outlet: 34 ft. from Buoy 1 - Mile 28.3 and 36 ft. from Mile 28.3 - Mile 66.9.
Portland, Oreg	16-Aug-2005	Columbia Grain terminal: 2 days delay; CLD Irving terminal: 2 days delay; CLD, O Dock terminals: 2 days delay.
Seattle	16-Aug-2005	Louis Dreyfus (Pier 86) terminal: 2 days delay.
Tacoma	16-Aug-2005	Temco terminal: 2 days delay.

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