

Lloyd's

Lloyd's Casualty Week contains information from worldwide sources of Marine, Non-Marine and Aviation casualties together with other reports relevant to the shipping, transport and insurance communities

CasualtyWeek

October 28 2005

Blockades hit Spanish islands as fuel talks continue

Brian Reyes in Gibraltar — Thursday 27 October 2005

SPANISH fishermen protesting over high fuel costs continued to blockade the country's key ports throughout yesterday.

The protests, which initially focused on the Mediterranean seaboard, spread to the country's Atlantic ports as pressure mounted on the government to resolve the crisis.

The fishermen want Madrid to seek mechanisms to ease financial pressures that they say are crippling their industry.

But as the protests entered their second day, the total block on maritime trade was starting to take its toll, particularly on Spain's island communities, which rely on shipping as a vital link with the mainland.

Unsustainable

Anave, the Spanish shipowners' association, said the situation was "unsustainable" and called on Madrid to take whatever action was necessary urgently to lift the blockades.

Elena Espinosa, Spain's agriculture minister, met representatives of the sector yesterday afternoon, but as Lloyd's List went to press, the outcome of that meeting was still unclear and the blockades remained in place.

On the Mediterranean coast, the main ports affected by the protests were

Tarragona, Murcia, Castellón, Valencia, Almería, Alicante and Barcelona (pictured above). Key Atlantic ports, including Bilbao, were also hit by the action.

Numerous ships remained trapped, unable to leave their berths, while others — including three cruiseships due to call at Barcelona — had to divert elsewhere to avoid the blockades.

The fishermen's protests also led to serious congestion problems in terminals across the Spanish ports system.

Blockades

Anave said that more than 30 regular cabotage services linking the Spanish mainland with the country's island territories, as well as with other Mediterranean ports, had been hit by the blockades. International services were also severely disrupted.

"Clients are already seeking compensation from Spanish shipowners," the association said in a statement. "Our members are already receiving claims from their clients and are suffering numerous damages due to the direct costs generated by the impossibility of operating."

The shipowners, which are still calculating the extent of their financial

losses, said they would seek compensation from both the government and those responsible for the blockades.

Anave president Juan Riva maintained high-level contacts with government ministers yesterday to convey the shipowners' concerns and to insist that the situation at the country's ports be resolved.

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

Vessel	Type	Flag	Class	GT	DWT	Bit	Casualty
ASTERIX	lpg	JPN	NK	2,945	3,449	1983	Reported adrift in lat 33 14N, long 136 16E, Oct 18 due engine trouble. Tug unable to connect to vessel due to bad weather. Tug and vessel still drifting Oct 19. Under tow Oct 20.
FRONT RIDER	bulk/oil	SGP	LR	89,004	169,146	1992	Reported steering problems west of Cabo Silleiro Oct 19. Proceeding to Vigo Oct 20 under tug escort. Repairs to be carried out at Vigo.
KAPTAN RESAT AKBAS	general	KHM	—	498	1,219	1963	Reported Oct 17 aground in lat 36 55N, long 27 16E. Diver's survey being carried out. Refloated Oct 18 and anchored at Kos, awaiting Classification Society certificate.
LEONIDAS II	fishing	GRC	—	329	—	1981	Reported to have sunk at Conakry Aug 4.
LIDER AMIRAL	ro-ro	PAN	—	5,186	3,525	1975	Grounded off the southern tip of Salamis Island Oct 16. Still in same position Oct 17. Propeller/rudder damage reported. Refloated Oct 19 and anchored at Piraeus anchorage. Still at anchorage Oct 20. To be inspected by Coast Guard.
MAYA EXPRESS	ro-ro	PAN	—	9,588	3,911	1973	Dragged anchor and grounded in Santo Domingo harbour Oct 16 due to strong winds and rough seas. Refloated Oct 17. Towed to berth in Santo Domingo.
PACIFIC	ro-ro	MLT	LR	10,991	7,680	1984	Reported not under command in lat 33 55N, long 21 05E, Oct 15. Tug proceeding to tow vessel to Sicily. Under tow Oct 17. Due to berth at Siracusa Oct 20 for repairs, ETC four days.
PEARL OF JEBEL ALI	bulker	CYP	LR	39,709	75,157	2002	In collision with passenger ro/ro <i>Pride of Al Salam 95</i> at southern entrance to Suez Canal Oct 17. Severe damage to bulbous bow and anchor housing. At Suez pilot station Oct 18, awaiting completion of investigation.
PRIDE OF AL SALAM 95	passenger	PAN	RI	12,503	2,136	1972	In collision with bulk <i>Pearl of Jebel Ali</i> at southern entrance to Suez Canal Oct 17. Hole torn in side, engine-room flooded and vessel sank as a result.
RT. HON. PAUL J. MARTIN	bulker	CAN	LR	23,989	35,439	1973	Sheared to port and struck pier at Montreal Oct 16 after experiencing steering gear problems. Substantial bow damage, requiring drydocking for repairs. Repairs estimated at C\$500,000.
XXVI SYED KPSS	fishing	RUS	RS	4,347	1,815	1981	Had explosion and fire on board Oct 17 while alongside at Lenina Shipyard, Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy. Shell plating torn and oil spill occurred. Fire extinguished.
WILSON MAR	general	MLT	LR	6,483	9,655	1985	Reported Oct 16 under tow of a tug bound Hanoytangen, due to breakdown around Oct 11. Moored in lat 60 26N, long 05 06.125E, Oct 19.

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The following reports are reprinted from Lloyd's List



AASGARD B GAS PLATFORM

London, Oct 17 -- A press report, dated Oct 16, states: Statoil ASA said production was halted after a fire broke out on its Aasgard B gas platform in the Norwegian Sea around noon yesterday, adding that the blaze was brought under control about two hours later. "The situation has now been normalized," the company said. "Production is still down and we don't know yet when it will be up again, we hope within a few days," Statoil spokesman Harald Schjelderup told AgenceFrance-Presse. The fire, which began in the exhaust section of one of the main generators, led to an immediate shutdown of production, Statoil said in a statement. Most of the 118 people on board were temporarily evacuated onto lifeboats as water cannons and fire hoses were used to extinguish the fire, but all returned to the platform yesterday afternoon, according to the company.

ACOR B. (Portugal)

Oporto, Oct 19 -- C.c. Acor B. is still at the port of Viana do Castelo, berthed at the preparation harbour of the Shipyard of Viana do Castelo. It is anticipated that the vessel will sail during the second week of November. - Lloyd's Agents.

ACTIVE (U.S.A.)

London, Oct 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: The pungent smell of diesel fuel and ribbons of pink-stained beach marked the spread of a spill near the Hood Canal Bridge today. Tribal officials said the fuel hit two miles of shoreline that support a multimillion-dollar annual harvest of clams and oysters. The fuel escaped when tug Agate (189 gt, built 1946) sank overnight under mysterious circumstances that prompted its caretaker to suspect the vessel was purposely sent to the bottom of Port Gamble Bay. Agate sank near the old Port Gamble lumber mill. So did another tug, tug Legacy (46 gt, built 1945), which had been moored next to it. Both had been out of service for some time. "Someone messed with these lines," said Tom Lampman, who said he was the former skipper of Magic, Agate's previous name, and had been caring for the vessel after selling it. "Two tugs that had not had any problems with water in them or anything like that for a long period of time don't just all of a sudden decide to sink, one in front of the other," Lampman said. Across the bay at the reservation of the Port Gamble S'Klallam tribe, tribal leaders said they were worried about the effects on the shellfish harvest. Three other tribes also have harvesting rights in the area: the Jamestown S'Klallam,

Lower Elwha S'Klallam and Suquamish. "We have two miles of beachfront here on the reservation, and we harvest clams and oysters on those beaches, and these are all very productive beaches," tribal Chairman Ron Charles said. "It's really concerning to us." The tribe operates a salmon hatchery in the area, and the fish are being caught at this time of year, he said. Tribal members harvest clams, oysters and geoducks for food as well as income. "If it means you're not going to work for the foreseeable future, it's a pretty big deal to that individual," Charles said. "It's also more than an economic thing to our tribe, because we've been here so long and we've been dependent on (shellfish) for our subsistence, too." The spill was first reported at 0925 today. By late afternoon, Coast Guard and state Department of Ecology officials still offered only sketchy details, including a preliminary estimate that perhaps 100 gallons of the red-dyed diesel fuel escaped from Agate. Legacy contained no fuel oil. The fuel in Agate was dyed red because it is exempt from state gas taxes levied on fuels used on the road. The non-road use of fuel, including in boats, is not taxed. Disputing the official estimate, Lampman said Agate contained no more than five gallons of fuel. Lampman said the boat's name was changed from Magic to Agate after he sold it about 1 1/2 years ago to Passage Tug and Barge, a Washington corporation. Legacy belongs to Caicos Corp., a Bainbridge Island firm that builds bulkheads and does other marine construction. Luke Ivey, a Caicos official, said the vessel had been out of commission for some time and had no fuel onboard. Port Gamble S'Klallam tribal members noticed diesel odors as early as 0300 today and found spilled fuel on the beach later in the morning. The tide started to go out about 0600 hrs, spreading the fuel to the north. Some of it spread toward the Hood Canal Bridge as well. The leak of oil from AgateP. had dissipated by early this afternoon, Coast Guard officials said. Divers were summoned to inspect it and LegacyP.. Ecology spokesman Larry Altose said he did not know of any immediate reports that wildlife had been harmed. The state called in contractors to deploy protective booms to keep contaminated water from reaching environmentally sensitive areas. Although some high winds blew through the Puget Sound region in the early morning when the vessels apparently sank, gusts at Port Townsend and Bremerton hit only about 25 mph, said Dana Felton, a forecaster with the National Weather Service.

London, Oct 19 -- A press report, dated today, states: The amount of oil spilled when tug Active (130 gt, built 1923) sank near Port Gamble could be as much as 200 gallons, authorities said yesterday, doubling their previous estimate of the maximum amount spilled. Divers yesterday plugged a leaking vent in Active, previously

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identified as Agate. It had been moored at the old Port Gamble lumber mill alongside two other vessels. One of the other vessels, tug Legacy, also sank early Monday. The state Department of Ecology and the Coast Guard continued to investigate the cause. A Coast Guard spokesman would not discuss the investigation. Authorities expressed hope yesterday that the Port Gamble S'Klallam tribe, whose shoreline bore the brunt of the oiling, would soon be able to resume harvesting geoduck clams. Workers said the fuel did not hit the main geoduck-harvesting areas. Tribal Chairman Ron Charles said it remained unclear when shellfish harvesting could resume, but that the tribe would be conservative.

AEGAIO (Greece)

London, Oct 20 -- Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 1030, UTC: Research Aegaio (778 gt, built 1985), 22 persons on board, stranded Skyros Island at 0213, Oct 19. Vessel has been refloated and is being escorted to Kimi, Euboea Island, where ETA 1300, UTC. No injuries or pollution.

AFRICAN SKY (Panama)

Zeebrugge, Oct 16 -- General cargo African Sky (15893 gt, built 1986) sailed Antwerp 2010, local time, Oct 15, via Zandvlietlock, anchored in River Scheldt to take bunkers at 0050, Oct 16, heaved up anchor 0840 hrs and proceeded seaward and grounded at Everingen 0950 hrs. At 0820, UTC, vessel was still aground but tide is coming in and vessel hopes to refloat on rising tide. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents.

Zeebrugge, Oct 16 -- General cargo African Sky refloated at 1020, local time. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents.

Zeebrugge, Oct 19 -- The local agents of general cargo African Sky could not confirm if there was any real damage, nor if any repairs were planned. The vessel's first destination (after departure) is expected to be Takoradi. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents.

ALPENA (U.S.A.)

London, Oct 13 -- Following received from Coast Guard Cleveland, timed 1900, BST, today: Cement Alpena expected to complete repairs middle of next week. (See issue of Oct 14.)

ALTAIRE (U.K.)

See "Illegal fishing, Denmark" under "Awards & Settlements."

ASTERIX (Japan)

London, Oct 18 -- Following navigation warning issued at 1000, JST, today: Engine troubled tanker 2600 tons (Lpg Asterix, 2945 gt, built 1983) adrift in lat 33 14N, long 136 16E, at 1000, JST.

London, Oct 18 -- Following received from Japan Coast Guard, timed 0620, UTC: Lpg Asterix, JMSC, is now under tow of a tug bound Kushimoto.

London, Oct 18 -- Following received from Japan Coast Guard, timed 1500, UTC: Due to bad weather, the tug was not able to tow lpg Asterix. The vessel and tug are still adrift in lat 32 53.8N,

long 136 28.7E, at the present time. The Asterix is on voyage from Oita to Kawasaki, empty.

London, Oct 19 -- Following navigation warning issued at 1100, JST, today: Engine troubled vessel (lpg Asterix) adrift in lat 32 44.6N, long 136 37.1E, at 0900, JST, today.

London, Oct 19 -- Following navigation warning issued at 1550, JST, today: Engine troubled vessel (lpg Asterix) adrift in lat 32 38.9N, long 136 40.5E, at 1500, JST.

London, Oct 20 -- Following navigation warning issued at 2130, JST, Oct 19: Engine troubled vessel (lpg Asterix) under tow.

London, Oct 20 -- Following notice to mariner issued today: Engine troubled vessel (Asterix) removed.

CANADIAN LEADER (Canada)

Troy, Michigan, Oct 14 -- Bulk Canadian Leader remains in Port Weller Drydock. -- Great Lakes and Seaway Shipping News. (Note -- Canadian Leader left Hamilton, Oct 6.)

CAP SAINT JEAN (France)

London, Oct 20 -- Fishing Cap Saint Jean was reported passing Dover Strait eastbound on Oct 4.

CAST PROSPERITY (Germany)

Montreal, Oct 17 -- C.c. Cast Prosperity is still undergoing permanent repairs, which are expected to take until Oct 30. -- Lloyd's Agents.

COASTAL SURVEYOR (United Kingdom)

London, Oct 15 -- Following received from Coastguard Stornoway MRSC, timed 1940, UTC: Fishing Coastal Surveyor (54 gt, built 1969) with 200 gallons of diesel and 50 gallons of lube oil onboard is aground and on fire in lat 58 15.60N, long 006 48.60W at about 1600, UTC. All crew have been rescued and the coastguard helicopter has reported there was 100 metre sheen around the vessel of diesel oil and will over fly the scene tomorrow to obtain photographs and video footage of the extent of any pollution.

London, Oct 16 -- Following received from Coastguard Stornoway MRSC, timed 0942, UTC: Fishing Coastal Surveyor: Coastguard helicopter overflew the area this morning and reported a light sheen of diesel oil, two miles by 50 metres wide in places. Due to direction of slick, along with weather and tide, there is not a significant risk of pollution.

London, Oct 17 -- A Maritime & Coastguard Agency press release, timed 1347, UTC, Oct 16, states: Fishing Coastal Surveyor was found on fire and grounded, with two crew on board 100 yards offshore near Carloway, west coast of the Isle of Lewis, in the Outer Hebrides; yesterday afternoon. Stornoway Coastguard received a telephone call from the skipper of the fishing Jacomar II reporting Coastal Surveyor was aground and on fire at Loch Roag, Isle of Lewis and two persons could be seen on deck. Coastguard rescue

helicopter Mike Uniform from Stornoway was scrambled and Coastguard rescue teams from Breascleite, Ness and Bragar attended. Jackie MacKenzie, Stornoway Coastguard Watch Manager, says: "The two casualties were airlifted from the vessel and landed at Breascleite, safe and well. Due to the presence of gas cylinders on board the vessel, with the risk of explosion, the area was cordoned off from the public. The fire brigade and police were also on scene to assist. We believe the fishing vessel was on passage from Breascleite to Carloway where it was about to refuel. The fire is believed to have started in the engine-room. The vessel which was well aground has now burnt itself out." The weather on scene had been south east force 5 (fresh breeze) with good visibility and moderate seas.

Glasgow, Oct 19 -- Fishing Coastal Surveyor experienced an engine-room fire during the afternoon of Oct 15. The fire was reported to Stornoway Coastguard by fishing Jacomar II at 1600 hrs. The Coastal Surveyor subsequently grounded on rocks and two crewmen were later airlifted off the vessel by helicopter. Minor oil pollution resulting from the grounding was tackled by the local MCA and there is now no further risk of pollution. The vessel is said to be burnt out and remains aground on the rocks. Recovery or salvage of the vessel considered unlikely and it will probably be declared a total loss. -- Lloyd's Agents.

COMAR PRIMO (Italy)

Ancona, Oct 19 -- Floating crane Comar Primo has been lifted and stored aground, by the pier of local shipyard, Cantiere Ortona Navi, for repairs. On Monday, Oct 17, there was an inspection and a report on the matter is going to be issued. As concerning the cause, it is not well defined nor clear yet. The inspection only deals with the damage's nature and extent, but not its cause. The inspection was held with the aid of RINA, which has a double role, it acts as technical consultant of Harbour Office and it is correspondent for the vessel's register for inspection and repairs works, it advised that the vessel is under inspection for repairs to damaged parts. -- Lloyd's Agents.

DAVID V. (U.S.A.)

Alaska, Oct 13 -- Passenger vessel David V.: Coast Guard Investigator Lt. Waddington confirmed that there was a fire on the vessel and that the investigation is still on-going. He stated that the fire occurred at the North end of Berners Bay on Oct 6. The Coast Guard responded to the fire. Lt. Waddington stated that the vessel is effectively a constructive loss, it still floats but the stackhouse, machinery, living space, and galley were destroyed. He is unsure of repairs as that is left up to the owner. He stated that the vessel was used for hauling cargo and that it was listed as 75 gross tons. It is currently located near Auke Bay, an area the locals call

Smith Pond. There is a single dock in this area and the vessel has been beached near the dock while the cargo and equipment used to fight the fire is being offloaded. -- Lloyd's Agents.

DAYANA (Panama)

London, Oct 17 -- A press report, dated today, states: Ro/ro Dayana (? ex Maya Express, 9588 gt, built 1973), that was anchored in the outskirts of Santo Domingo harbour, ran aground yesterday in front of the hotel V Centenario, a short distance from the Malecon (George Washington avenue). The rough seas resulting from strong winds affecting the country for the last few days forced the boat to drag anchor and chain to be before breaking, running aground in the shallow waters. However, fishermen in the area said Dayana has stood in the same position for approximately two months. The locals are concerned about the effects that his situation may cause to the harbour. They also voiced apprehension regarding potential pollution from the ship's bilge.

London, Oct 18 -- Understand ro/ro Dayana was refloated by salvors yesterday morning.

London, Oct 19 -- A press report, dated Oct 18, states: Yesterday the Navy towed to safety Panamanian ro/ro Dayana which was anchored in the outskirts of Santo Domingo harbour and had ran aground a week ago after breaking the anchor chain. Dayana ran aground from the strong winds and the high seas in the last few days, which besides breaking the anchor chain was pushed onto the rocks near the Jaragua hotel. The Navy reported that it supervised the operation which a Dominican tug company conducted. "After being towed away from the place where it ran aground, the vessel was taken to pier No 2, Santo Domingo port," said Navy spokesman Benny Batista. The vessel's crew consisted of 15, six Asians and nine Hondurans, who did not sustain injuries.

Santo Domingo, Oct 18 -- On Oct 17 ro/ro Dayana was successfully refloated from where it lay aground off the city of Santo Domingo, by three tugs from the local fleet of Remolcadores Dominicanos SA, the 39-ton bollard pull ocean tug Tamayo and the 42-ton bollard pull Guarionex assisted by the linehandling tug Neyba. Dayana, registered in Panama, had been anchored at the roadstead off the port of Santo Domingo when it evidently dragged anchor in heavy weather associated with the system that later spawned tropical storm "Wilma," fetching up just off the city's hotel-studded waterfront drive. When salvors arrived on scene the vessel was lying in the surf zone, broadside to the beach, hard aground fore and aft on a rocky and sandy bottom. Owners originally insisted on hiring a single tug for the refloating effort, which proved unsuccessful, at which time the Navy, which in the Dominican Republic also acts as the Maritime Authority, mindful of the risk of an

oilspill, mandated the employment of whatever resources were available to avoid the wreck breaking up and causing damage to the environment. On the following day, Oct 16, with improved weather and high tide, the wreck was partially refloated and turned, and an anchor dragged and set seaward. The job was complicated by the fact that the vessel had no auxiliaries running, hence no electric power for deck equipment to handle towing gear, ground tackle etc. Yesterday morning it was finally freed and, with the assistance of tugs berthed in Santo Domingo harbour, with no spillage of oil resulting from this incident. -- Remolcadores Dominicanos SA.

DONGJIN PHOENIX (South Korea)

Busan, Oct 20 -- According to Dongjin Shipping Co, Busan, general cargo Dongjin Phoenix was refloated and towed to Aokata (lat 33 00N, long 129 05E), Japan, Oct 9 for discharging cargo. Vessel is presently discharging cargo at Aokata. It is understood that the vessel will be scrapped after the cargo is discharged. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents.

ELF (Cook Islands)

London, Oct 13 -- General cargo Elf arrived at Grimsby on Sep 21, under the new name of Calimax Enterprise, but still under Cook Islands flag. The vessel departed on Oct 12, bound for Inverness.

FLYING DOLPHIN XXIX (Greece)

London, Oct 20 -- Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: Hydrofoil Flying Dolphin XXIX (130 gt, built 1993) sustained damage to the starboard main engine when approaching Piraeus during the afternoon of Oct 19. At the time vessel was performing the schedule Poros-Hydra-Spetses-Piraeus with 32 passengers on board. Piraeus Port Authority prohibited departure pending inspection of the repairs.

Piraeus, Oct 20 -- Hydrofoil Flying Dolphin XXIX sustained starboard engine breakdown whilst approaching Piraeus port yesterday. The vessel was coming from the islands of Poros, Hydra and Spetses with 32 passengers on board. Its sailing from Piraeus has been prohibited until an inspection by a class surveyor. -- Lloyd's Agents.

FOWAIRET (Qatar)

London, Oct 19 -- Following received from Kiel, dated today: C.c. Fowairet is due to move to Wiltonhaven Dock 8, in Rotterdam, for structural repairs today.

FRESHWATER (Australia)

London, Oct 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: The crew of ferry Freshwater (1184 gt, built 1982) that ran into Manly wharf last night has been stood down from normal duties pending the outcome of drug tests, a Sydney Ferries spokesman says. Freshwater was travelling at a very

slow speed when it overshot its berth at the wharf and struck a backboard about 2200, AEST, yesterday, the spokesman said today. No passengers were injured and the ferry was not damaged. The crew of six was breath tested last night but the tests proved negative for alcohol. Sydney Ferries was now awaiting the outcome of drug tests on the crew, which could take several days to complete. "Those crew, as is normal procedure, don't go back to work until the results of those tests are returned," he said. In the meantime they will not be assigned to any work that is considered critical to safety, the spokesman said. Freshwater was back in service today. The wharf will be inspected to see if repairs were needed for minor damage.

FRONT RIDER (Singapore)

London, Oct 20 -- Following received from Madrid MRCC, timed 1050, UTC: Bulk/oil Front Rider (89004 gt, built 1992), Richards Bay for Hunterston, cargo coal, reported steering problems west of Cabo Silleiro (position of Cape Silleiro is lat 42 07N, long 08 54W) at 1605, UTC, Oct 19. Vessel is currently under tug escort to Vigo Roads, where repairs are planned. When it reaches a position 12 miles off port the tug will attach a towline; this is anticipated shortly.

GENERAL MEHMANDAROV (Azerbaijan)

Baku, Oct 14 -- Product tanker General Mehmandarov is still under repair. -- Lloyd's Agents.

GENMAR TRUST (Liberia)

Ponta Delgada, Oct 13 -- Bulk/oil GenMar Trust, under repair at Ponta Delgada outer anchorage alongside with tug Fotiy Krylov, because of its size and draught is unable to be berthed alongside the quay inner the port. Due to the present adverse weather conditions in Ponta Delgada area the convoy left the anchorage 1040, local time, today and proceeded to the northern part of the Island for sheltering. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Ponta Delgada, Oct 19 -- Following an improvement in weather conditions, bulk/oil GenMar Trust was towed back to its previous anchorage position, where repairs are continuing. Understand the vessel is now under detention as a result of reported deficiencies found by Port State Control. -- Lloyd's Agents.

GULLHOLM (Panama)

London, Oct 17 -- Information received from Sandnes, dated today, states: General cargo Gullholm (1954 gt, built 1975) grounded on Lyosna, Sognefjord area, at 0140, local time, today. No injuries to the crew of seven. Vessel refloated at the second attempt at 1100, local time, today by support Det Norske Veritas. Vessel is now at Floro, undergoing inspections. (Note -- Gullholm sailed Klaipeda Oct 13.)

London, Oct 18 -- Following received from Stavanger RCC, timed 1025, UTC: General cargo Gullholm remains at Floro.

HEGEMONICA (Norway)

London, Oct 18 -- Following received from Bodo RCC, timed 1045, UTC: Fishing Hegemonica, length 70 ft, had fire break out on board in lat 69 59.77N, long 23 18.18E, about 1200, local time, Oct 13. The vessel's crew of five persons was rescued by helicopter/rescue vessel and it subsequently sank.

HERDIS J. (Denmark)

Aarhus, Oct 18 -- Fishing Herdis J. was on a voyage from Norway to Denmark when it ran aground at 2000, Oct 2. The port authorities at Grenaa informed us that the vessel on Oct 4 has been scrapped/decommissioned. -- Lloyd's Agents.

ILONA-M (Germany)

London, Oct 16 -- At about 0100, local time, yesterday the River Ems was totally blocked by the German inland cargoship Ilona-M, ex Ilmenau at about 40 kilometres from its homeport Haren, River Ems. The ship was sailing in dense fog when its radar stopped and it then ran into the shore at the 220km mark between Papenburg and Herbrum. The skipper/owner tried to free the ship again and resume the voyage, but it got stuck and swung by the tide across the river with the aft of the ship on the other shore. The help of a tug from the Wasser und Schifffahrts Amt (WSA) was in vain, the strong tide held the vessel in its position across the river. When the tide fell Ilona-M broke in the middle, leaving only its bow and stern above the water. The northern route is totally blocked, while also the Dortmund-Emskanal has been obstructed by a break through in the wall. At first it was feared the this obstruction might take one and a half week, but at 1800 yesterday an announcement was made that already about 50% of the cargo of gravel of Ilona-M had been discharged, which work will continue during the night, weather permitting. Tomorrow they will try to refloat the ship with the help of a floating sheerleg crane and then transport the damaged vessel to Leer or Papenburg. A spokesman of the WSA expects that the River Ems will be blocked at least until Wednesday.

London, Oct 17 -- After the sinking of inland cargoship Ilona-M in the River Ems, the shipping traffic between Papenburg and the locks of Herbrum will be obstructed at least until till the middle of this week. The 80 metre long vessel with the homeport of Niederlangen, has a cargo of 1,200 tons of gravel and sand, which is now being discharged by two salvage vessels. The cause of the accident is not yet clear, it is believed that there was a technical defect, but the Wasser- und Schifffahrtsamtes Meppen is still investigating the stranding. After discharge of cargo the vessel will be patched and refloated. In the worst case if this ship breaks, it has to be salvaged in two parts. So far there has been no pollution of the environment by the ship's fuel.

London, Oct 18 -- A floating sheerleg crane arrived yesterday afternoon at the place of the broken and sunken inland cargoship Ilona-M. The ship's cargo has been discharged beside the vessel on the shore. During yesterday evening they were going to try to pull cables underneath the damaged vessel and this morning, at low tide, they will try to lift the ship so far that they can pump the water out of the holds. If they succeed the will bring the ship to leer. With no success today a bigger crane will be brought in and will arrive on Thursday (Oct 20). According WSA Meppen there were already about 140 inland cargo ships held up in Germany by this accident and also by the obstruction of the shipping traffic to the Ruhr region by the closing of the Dortmund - Ems - Kanal because of a break in the dike. Today it was reported that also in the ports of Groningen and Delfzijl a total of 120 inland cargo ships are held up and are waiting for re-opening of the River Ems. One of the most stricken objects is the Nordland Papier factory, where normally nine ships are delivering cellulose and liquid chalk for their production, which they try now to supply by road. Also other factories in the region are in need of raw materials and fuel.

Hamburg, Oct 20 -- The Port Authorities at Meppen have advised that the first attempt to refloat the damaged vessel Ilona-M met with no success. Subsequent attempts will be made tonight. In view of severe damages sustained, the vessel must be regarded as a total loss, with only scrap value. However, the actual value of vessel/extent of damage in euros could not be obtained. -- Lloyd's Agents.

INGRID GORTHON (Sweden)

London, Oct 19 -- General cargo Ingrid Gorthon (12750 gt, built 1977), while berthing at Point-au-Pic wharf, Quebec, in lat 47 37.21N, long 70 08.26W, struck the dock, at 2220 EDST, Oct 18, and caused minor damage to the vessel.

ISERAN (France)

Lorient, Oct 14 -- Fishing Iseran is still at Concarneau with shaft propeller problems. -- Lloyd's Agents.

JAMES PRIOR (U.K.)

London, Oct 19 -- Following received from Medway Ports Authority, dated today: General cargo James Prior is still at Acorn Shipyard, Rochester.

JANGHO YOUNG (South Korea)

London, Oct 19 -- Following navigation warning issued at 1700, JST, today: Stranded general cargo Jangho Young (298 gt, built 1988) exists in vicinity of lat 34 29.2N 134 06.4E. (Note -- Jangho Young sailed Ulsan Oct 15 for Aioi.)

London, Oct 20 -- Following navigation warning issued at 0030, JST, today: Stranded general cargo Jangho Young removed.

JOHN D.LEITCH (Canada)

London, Oct 14 -- Lightship, bulk John D.Leitch (20343 gt, built 1967), struck the corner of the Prescott elevator dock, lat 44 44N, long 75 28W, at 0415, Sep 29, strong southerly winds were reported at the time. Minor damage sustained at forward starboard shell plating.

London, Oct 19 -- Bulk John D.Leitch arrived Duluth Oct 11 and sailed same day.

KAPTAN RESAT AKBAS (Cambodia)

London, Oct 17 -- Following received from Piraeus MRCC, timed 0920, UTC: At 0830 hrs, today, general cargo Kaptan Resat Akbas (498 gt, built 1963), Izmir for Haifa, with sodium, was reported to be aground in lat 36 55N, long 27 16E. A diver survey is currently being conducted.

London, Oct 18 -- Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 0920, UTC: General cargo Kaptan Resat Akbas refloated at 0005, local time, today under its own power and is now anchored at Kos awaiting classification society certificate.

Piraeus, Oct 18 -- General cargo Kaptan Resat Akbas, Izmir for Haifa, stranded in shallow waters near Kos yesterday morning. All 10 crew members were reportedly healthy and secure. No pollution or ingress of water was reported. The vessel was refloated and remains at Kos port awaiting inspection. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Oct 18 -- Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: General cargo Kaptan Resat Akbas, Smyrna for Haifa, grounded in shallow waters off Ammoglossa, Kos island, during the morning of Oct 17. On board were 10 crew members who are in good health. Immediately the Kos port authority was put on alert and dispatched a patrol boat of the Coast Guard, a tug and a patrol vehicle. The master of the vessel reported that there was no ingress of water and additionally there was no pollution caused. The port authority of Kos has prohibited departure of the vessel pending issuance of a class maintain certificate.

KONA WIND (Ecuador)

London, Oct 13 -- Following navigation warning issued at 0815, UTC, today: Fishing Kona Wind (181 gt, built 1988), five persons on board, reported with flooded engine-room in lat 35 09S, long 176 25E. Vessels in vicinity are requested to keep a sharp look-out and report to New Zealand RCC.

KS GLORY (Panama)

London, Oct 14 -- Bulk KS Glory arrived at Singapore on Oct 11 and was today reported to be at the Pan United Floating Dock 3 West Quay.

London, Oct 19 -- Bulk KS Glory sailed Singapore 1650, Oct 14, for Ko Sichang.

LEGACY (U.S.A.)

See Active.

LEONIDAS II (Greece)

London, Oct 13 -- Following received from Piraeus MRCC, timed 1445, UTC: Fishing Leonidas II (329 gt, built 1981) is reported to have sunk at Conakry Aug 4.

LIDER AMIRAL (North Korea)

London, Oct 17 -- Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: Yesterday afternoon ro/ro Lider Amiral, which had discharged a cargo of cars at Drapetsona and had proceeded to Piraeus anchorage to await anchoring directives, grounded with the stern off the southern tip of Salamis island. Vessel has 11 crew on board and there were no reported injuries. Three Coast Guard patrol vessels, a Coast Guard vehicle and a tug immediately proceeded to the area. According to the master there was no ingress of water and no danger of sinking. Patrol boats in the area did not observe any pollution.

London, Oct 17 -- Following received from Piraeus MRCC, timed 1010, UTC: Ro/ro Lider Amiral is still in the same location. It is unclear whether the vessel is aground, but it has sustained propeller damage. It is understood that the vessel changed ownership yesterday and that the vessel is presently being manned by a new crew.

London, Oct 17 -- Following received from Environmental Protection Engineering SA, Piraeus, dated today: Ro/ro Lider Amiral is ex Blue Moon I, with Turkish crew on board. Vessel is aground at Kaki Vigla, Salamis, and has sustained rudder damage.

London, Oct 18 -- Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 0935, UTC: Ro/ro Lider Amiral remains aground at Salamis. It is hoped refloating attempts will commence soon.

London, Oct 19 -- Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 1008, UTC: Ro/ro Lider Amiral was refloated at 0700, local time, today and is presently at Piraeus anchorage.

London, Oct 20 -- Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 1040, UTC: Ro/ro Lider Amiral remains at Piraeus anchorage. It is being inspected today by a Coast Guard team and it is hoped vessel may be cleared to sail in the next few days.

LODBROK (Sweden)

London, Oct 15 -- A press report, dated Oct 14, states: Essingeleden, one of Stockholm's busiest motorway sections was closed this afternoon after a bridge between the islands Stora and Lilla Essingen was rammed by a crane barge (crane barge Lodbrok, displacement 815 tons, built 1956). According to witnesses the bridge has been damaged. Essingeleden was entirely shut off for over three hours, and experts will work overnight to determine what repair work is needed. "The worst scenario would be if the bridge has to be shut for a long time for rebuilding," said Björn Engström, press spokesman at Stockholm Police. During the afternoon the police questioned the crew on the barge. By 1500 hrs the

traffic problems were "very extensive". Half an hour after the accident, which occurred at 1300 hrs, the police slowly started to redirect the cars from the damaged bridge. A smaller parallel bridge between Stora and Lilla Essingen is, according to the police, undamaged, and that was used to channel traffic away from the scene. No injuries were reported. The crane which hit the bridge is the biggest pontoon crane in the country, according to the police. "It is very unclear what the consequences will be," said Björn Engström. According to witnesses the crane boat left the scene and continued its journey into Malaren after it came loose. At around 1400 hrs the police managed to stop the barge with the help of helicopters and the Coast Guard.

Gothenburg, Oct 15 -- Crane barge Lodbrok hit a bridge at Essingen, Stockholm, and caused traffic chaos since northbound traffic had to be stopped. Late pm yesterday one lane opened and this morning another lane was opened as damage to concrete bridge was not as bad as first expected, and mostly partly damage, no cracks total through the construction. A 53 year "barge-master" having worked with this crane for six years simply took the wrong bridge as having the intention to pass under another bridge, with full sailing height and noted this far too late and full astern, but crane/barge hit the bridge and later backed off and departed from the place. Police informed and boarded barge for investigation and also tested all concerned for possible alcohol, but all OK. A full investigation to be implemented at Monday if to be considered as "carelessness at sea" or gross same. Repair commenced and will last full weekend or more -- Westax Marine Services AB.

MADRUS (Estonia)

London, Oct 20 -- Trawler Madrus sailed St. John's (CAN) Sep 28.

MARTINA M (St. Vincent & Grenadines)

London, Oct 13 -- General cargo Martina M sailed from Bizerta on Oct 12, bound for Malta.

MATTERHORN (Liberia)

Gdynia, Oct 14 -- Ref Matterhorn sailed Gdansk Oct 13 for Aalesund. -- Correspondents.

MATTHEW B. (U.S.A.)

London, Oct 14 -- A T&T Marine press release, states: Tug Matthew B. sank in the Bolivar Roads anchorage of the Houston Ship Channel on the evening of May 8 during a fierce storm that swept across Galveston Island. All four crew members escaped without injury. Winds were clocked at 80 to 100 miles-per-hour and seas in the anchorage went 6 to 8 feet in a matter of minutes. The tug was tending a bunker barge next to a ship when the storm hit. Several ships drug their anchors during the storm. T&T Marine Salvage, Inc of Galveston was contracted by the owners to locate

and raise the vessel. The 350 ton derrick barge Josie T and the 150 ton crane barge George T were dispatched to the area of the casualty. The vessel was located in 39 ft of water sitting in an upright position. T&T Marine divers found extensive damage to the house of the vessel during the initial survey. T&T Marine's salvage crew pulled slings under the vessel, brought it to the surface, and pumped it out. The vessel was then towed to Bolivar Shipyard and set on the bank.

MAUMEE (U.S.A.)

Troy, Michigan, Oct 13 -- Bulk Maumee (8188 gt, built 1929) departed the Saginaw Rock Products dock late yesterday morning after an overnight unload. Once the vessel was ready to depart, it began having mechanical problems. The Maumee was able to back up to the International Materials Services dock where it pumped out all of the water in its ballast before it could dock in the shallow water at International Materials Services dock. Once docked crews began repairing the vessel. -- Great Lakes and Seaway Shipping News.

Troy, Mich., Oct 17 -- Bulk Maumee had arrived on Tuesday (Oct 11) to unload at the Saginaw Rock Products dock in Saginaw when mechanical problems caused it to spend a few extra days in Saginaw. Yesterday, with repairs complete, the Maumee finally departed the Saginaw River. -- Great Lakes and Seaway Shipping News.

MILTZOW (St. Vincent & Grenadines)

See "Somalia" under "Piracy."

MRS (U.S.A.)

London, Oct 15 -- Following received from Coast Guard Anchorage, dated Oct 14: The Coast Guard and the crew of fishing Lady May rescued three crewmen of 48-foot fishing MRS (40 gt, built 1950) from the water near Ketchikan today. The Coast Guard received a mayday call over VHF-FM channel 16 from the crew of MRS at about 1530 today. They stated the vessel was sinking near Grindall Island and they were abandoning ship. The Coast Guard launched an HH-60 helicopter and crew from Air Station Sitka and two 25-foot rescue boats with crews from Station Ketchikan to respond. They arrived on scene within an hour. The crew of Lady May had already rescued the three people from the water. They transferred the three MRS crewmen to one of the station's boats for transfer to Ketchikan. The rescue boat was met by Ketchikan emergency service personnel and Alaska State Troopers. One of the three MRS crewmen was pronounced dead upon arrival. The other two are in good condition. The vessel is mostly submerged, but not completely underwater. The cause of the sinking is unknown at this time. Personnel from Coast Guard Marine Safety Detachment Ketchikan are investigating the incident. The vessel is based out of Wrangell.

MURMAN 2 (Russia)

Bergen, Oct 20 -- Fishing Murman 2 will complete repairs at the end of December this year. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents.

NONA MARY (Greece)

Piraeus, Oct 14 -- Passenger ro/ro Nona Mary (2206 gt, built 1972) arrived at Alexandroupolis port yesterday, with mechanical failure in its port main engine. The vessel had sailed from Samothraki island with 171 passengers on board. The vessel remains in port awaiting inspection. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Oct 17 -- Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: While passenger ro/ro Nona Mary (2206 gt, built 1972) was preparing to depart from the port of Alexandroupolis yesterday afternoon, bound for Samothraki, vessel sustained port main engine damage. The Port Authority of Alexandroupolis prohibited departure pending inspection of the repairs and issuance of a class maintain certificate.

London, Oct 19 -- Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: Passenger ro/ro Nona Mary was permitted to sail from Alexandroupolis in the early hours of Oct 18 after successful port main engine repairs and issuance of a class maintain certificate from vessel's class.

NOTLAR (Russia)

See XXVI Syezd KPSS.

PACIFIC (Malta)

London, Oct 15 -- Following received from Malta Radio, timed 1245, UTC: Ro/ro Pacific, 9HIA8, (10991 gt, built 1984) is reported not under command in lat 33 55N, long 21 05E. Understand tug Agios Dimitrios is proceeding to assist the vessel and tow it to Italy. (Note -- Pacific, cargo marble and iron, sailed Alexandria Oct 8 for Messina.)

London, Oct 16 -- Following received from Malta Radio, timed 0815, UTC: Owners of ro/ro Pacific report a tug (Agios Dimitrios) is due on scene at 1500 hrs to tow vessel to Sicily.

London, Oct 17 -- Following received from Malta Radio, timed 1035, UTC: Ro/ro Pacific is now under tow of a tug bound Italy.

London, Oct 17 -- Following received from Malta Radio, timed 1350, UTC: At noon today ro/ro Pacific was in lat 33 59N, long 22 00 06E, in tow of tug Agios Dimitrios bound Pozzallo where eta 2300, Oct 19. (See issue of Oct 19.)

London, Oct 20 -- Following received from Rome MRCC, timed 0815, UTC: Ro/ro Pacific, in tow of tug Agios Dimitrios, is due to berth at Siracusa at 1200, today. Repairs will be carried out at Siracusa and vessel is booked to stay there for four days but could be less.

PEARL OF JEBEL ALI (Cyprus)

See Pride of Al Salam 95.

PELAYO (Liberia)

Limassol, Oct 13 -- C.c. Pelayo (14400 gt, built 1974), which was reported to

have sailed from Limassol on Oct 10 for Alexandria, remained at Limassol anchorage due to engine problems and sailed Oct 13 for same destination. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Oct 17 -- Following received from the managers of c.c. Pelayo, dated today: Reference is made to your listing the Pelayo as having been delayed for three days off Limassol due to engine problems. This is totally inaccurate as the vessel stopped due to commercial reasons unconnected to its owners or managers.

London, Oct 18 -- C.c. Pelayo: Lloyd's Casualty Department are satisfied that no casualty occurred involving this vessel. The vessel was not delayed as a result of any engine problems.

PRIDE OF AL SALAM 95 (Panama)

London, Oct 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: Two people died and at least 40 were injured after passenger ro/ro Pride of Al Salam 95 (12503 gt, built 1972) carrying more than 1,300 Muslim pilgrims collided with a cargo ship and sank in the Gulf of Suez last night. Early reports suggested that panicked passengers were injured as they rushed to escape. The accident happened at around 1930 hrs after the vessel was struck by a Cypriot cargo ship at the southern entrance to the Suez canal. At least 12 rescue boats rushed to the stricken ship to try to save the 1,350 passengers, Egypt's transport minister said. The passenger ship, which is owned by the Egyptian company el-Salam Maritime Transport, was en route from Jeddah and was carrying pilgrims returning from Mecca. "We concentrated on saving lives," said Essam Sharaf, Egypt's transport minister. "The boat that carried people has sunk now." Rescue operations had focused on the passenger ship and there were no details of the state of the Cypriot ship or its crew, the minister said. According to Egypt's Middle East News Agency, most of the pilgrims were Egyptian but at least five Palestinians were also on board. The agency said the Cypriot ship was entering the Red Sea after crossing the Suez canal from the Mediterranean when it crashed into the passenger ship, gouging a five-metre hole in its side, which allowed sea water to flood its engine room. The collision happened near Port Tewfik. Port officials estimated losses from the accident of around \$7m. The incident did not force the closure of the Suez canal.

London, Oct 18 -- Following received from Larnaca RCC, timed 0645, UTC: The vessel involved in the collision with passenger ro/ro Pride of Al Salam 95 was bulk Pearl of Jebel Ali (39709 gt, built 2002). Of the 1500 persons on board Pride of Al Salam 95, one person died, and 10 were injured. Further details of the collision are awaited from Cyprus vessel's owner.

Alexandria, Oct 18 -- Bulk Pearl of Jebel Ali was clearing the Suez Canal with the southbound convoy and was

in collision with passenger ro/ro Pride of Al Salam 95, which was waiting at the pilot station to berth at Suez port, at around 1908, yesterday. The incident resulted in a hole of about five metres at the midship of Pride of Al Salam 95. All authorities and others within the vicinity immediately proceeded to the incident to rescue all passengers and crew. At the time there were about 1,200 pilgrim passengers on board the Pride of Al Salam 95 on their way home from Jeddah to Egypt. At present there are two known deaths and about 38 injured passengers/crew. At around 2200, yesterday, Pride of Al Salam 95 sank at the Suez pilot station. Pearl of Jebel Ali sustained severe damages to its bulbous bow and anchor housing and is currently at the pilot station waiting for the authorities to complete their investigations. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Oct 19 -- A press report, dated today, states: The Cyprus Shipping department is sending a team to Cairo to work with Egyptian authorities after the sinking of passenger ro/ro Pride of Al Salam 95, which collided with a Cypriot-flagged cargo vessel (bulk Pearl of Jebel Ali) Monday (Oct 17), killing one person and injuring 40. The ferry, carrying some 1,400 Muslim pilgrims back from Mecca, collided with the Cyprus vessel at the entrance to the Suez Canal, causing a stampede among passengers, all but five of whom were Egyptians. The collision, which happened around 1930 Monday, caused a 16-ft hole in the side of the passenger vessel. Apart from the death of one elderly woman from shock, all the passengers were safely rescued before the ferry sank near the canal's southern entrance. Initial reports had spoken of two deaths but shipping official Nicos Economides said yesterday it had been only one. "One elderly person died in hospital as a result of a heart attack brought on by shock," he said. "A number of other people were injured but only one seriously," he added. Economides said that from the information he had, there was little damage to the Cyprus vessel. He said officials would be sent to Egypt to assist the investigation. "We are waiting to see exactly what happened," he said. Egypt's transport minister Essam Sharaf said Pride of Al Salam 95 had sunk after about 20 launches rescued the passengers. He said he had no details on the state of the Cyprus vessel or its crew as rescue operations had focused on the passenger vessel. The passenger vessel was carrying pilgrims from Jeddah. At least 12 boats were involved in the rescue, moving the passengers in the three hours before the boat sank.

PRIMA INDAH (Indonesia)

See "Indonesia" under "Piracy".

REITDIEP (Gibraltar)

Vigo, Oct 5 -- Local sources report that stevedores allegedly damaged with their grab some part of the hold bottom of general cargo Reitdiep (2901

gt, built 1995), causing possible small water entry. -- Lloyd's Agents. (Note -- Reitdiep sailed from Muuga on Sep 25 and passed Cape Finisterre on Oct 3 bound for Villagarcia.)

London, Oct 13 -- General cargo Reitdiep, Villagarcia for San Ciprian, passed Cape Finisterre Oct 6.

RT.HON.PAUL J.MARTIN (Canada)

Montreal, Oct 17 -- On Oct 16, bulk Rt.Hon.Paul J.Martin (23989 gt, built 1973) sheared to port while passing Section No. 77, port of Montreal, and hit the pier. There is substantial damage to her bow, requiring dry docking for repairs. Estimates are in the region of C\$500,000. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Oct 17 -- Bulk Rt.Hon.Paul J.Martin struck berth No.77 of the port of Montreal, Quebec, in lat 45 35.12N, long 73 30.14W, at 1045, EDST, Oct 16, after experiencing steering gear problems. A hole was observed in the forepeak. No injuries or pollution reported.

SAMHO BROTHER (South Korea)

Taipei, Oct 14 -- Chemical/oil carrier Samho Brother, collision with c.c. TS Hongkong: The TS Hongkong is currently moored at buoy No 5, Keelung, detained while the port authority investigates the responsibility for the accident. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Taipei, Oct 20 -- Chemical/oil carrier Samho Brother: Reportly the Taichung port authority has confirmed some leaking methylbenzene at the accident site but this does not appear to have affected Taiwan waters. The port authority has requested the shipowner to remove the vessel and has issued a Notice to Mariners warning the fishing vessels and merchant vessels to keep away from the accident site for about 2.5 nautical miles. The sinking position is lat 24 58N, long 120 48E. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Oct 19 -- C.c. TS Hongkong sailed Keelung Oct 17 and subsequently arrived Yiu Lian Wharf, Tsing Yi, Hong Kong, at 0755, local time, today.

SAMOS FLYING DOLPHIN III (Greece)

London, Oct 19 -- Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report : Hydrofoil Samos Flying Dolphin III (142 gt, built 1980) sustained engine damage shortly after departure from Aegina bound for Piraeus yesterday morning. Following the incident the vessel returned to Aegina where the 40 passengers were disembarked and proceeded to their destination on another vessel of the same line. The port authority of Aegina prohibited departure pending inspection of the repairs.

SAN CARLO (Malta)

See "Somalia" under "Piracy."

SHINSEI MARU NO.3 (Japan)

London, Oct 17 -- The master of c.c. Zim Asia expressed regret Sunday

over a fatal collision with a Japanese fishing boat off the coast of Nemuro, Hokkaido, last month. But Moshe Ben David, master of the 41,507-ton vessel, said in a phone interview that he cannot comment on details of the accident as Israeli authorities are investigating the case. His attorneys have said he was asleep at the time of the collision and thus unaware of it, denying the allegation that the containership knowingly left the scene of an accident. The Israeli Transport Ministry is planning to compile a report detailing the cause of the incident and preventive measures by Oct 26 following investigations. Fishing Shinsei Maru No.3 was found capsized on Sep 28 in open seas off Nemuro and the bodies of seven of the eight crew members on board were later found inside. The remaining crew member was rescued. On Oct 7, Doron Goder, president of the ship's owner, Zim Integrated Shipping Services Ltd., visited Nemuro to apologize to the relatives.

SLEIPNER A PLATFORM

London, Oct 17 -- A report, dated Oct 16, states: Production on the Statoil operated Sleipner East field in the North Sea was resumed yesterday afternoon. The field had been shut down following a gas leak on the Sleipner A platform on Oct 12. "We expect to have full production of gas and condensate in the course of tomorrow morning," said Kare S-vik, head of Sleipner operations. Production on the Sleipner West field was resumed 24 hours after the gas leak occurred. A routine inquiry is being held by Statoil to find the cause of the gas leak on Sleipner A.

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

London, Oct 19 -- A press report, dated today, states: A recurring fuel-line problem forced passenger ro/ro Spirit of Ontario I (6242 gt, built 2004) to turn back mid-voyage yesterday morning with 450 people on board. But she is expected to be back on schedule today. Officials are blaming rough waters and inclement weather for the mechanical problems and turnaround, leaving Mayor William A. Johnson Jr. skeptical of the current 10-month operating schedule. The fuel-line problem first developed during a Sunday (Oct 16) crossing and was blamed on high waves. It was repaired and the ferry sailed Monday without incident. "They did have the problem (Sunday), made a repair and apparently it didn't hold," said Ed Doherty, the city's commissioner for environmental services. "They are going to replace the line." The broken fuel line left the ship with three instead of four engines, which wouldn't normally be a problem. However, with the forecast for high winds around Toronto and into the afternoon, the captain thought "they wouldn't be able to return very comfortably," Doherty said. The ship was making a special crossing Tuesday. Half the group was with a

tour bus while others were regular passengers or people invited for a tourism promotion. The ferry was an hour and 15 minutes out when it turned around.

London, Oct 20 -- A press report, dated Oct 19, states: Passenger ro/ro Spirit of Ontario I sailed on time this morning after a problem with a fuel line force the vessel to return to port yesterday. After repairs were made, the ferry left for Toronto at its scheduled time of 0800 today.

STAR LADY (Isle of Man)

London, Oct 20 -- Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: Crude oil tanker Star Lady (56200 gt, built 2005) struck the jetty while manoeuvring to berth at the terminal at Kali Limenes yesterday morning. As a result the vessel sustained damage. The vessel, from Italy, called Kali Limenes to bunker. There were no injuries to the 22 crew members. The port authority prohibited departure pending issuance of a class maintain certificate.

Piraeus, Oct 20 -- Crude oil tanker Star Lady struck the pier and sustained damages during berthing maneuvers at Kali Limenes port, Crete, yesterday. The vessel had sailed from Italy and called at Kali Limenes for bunkering. There were no reported injuries to the 22 crew members. No pollution occurred. The local port authorities have prohibited the vessel's departure until it has been inspected by its class surveyor. -- Lloyd's Agents.

TASCO 1 (Thailand)

London, Oct 15 -- Following received from Beijing MRCC, timed 1238, UTC: Asphalt tanker Tasco 1 is still aground. The vessel's crew have left the vessel and are now on board a Chinese rescue vessel.

London, Oct 16 -- A press report, dated Oct 15, states A cargo ship (asphalt tanker Tasco 1) ran on reefs in the Luhuashan waters near the estuary of the Yangtze River and as of early today all the 21 crew members were rescued. The vessel, Ulsan for Ningbo, cargo 4,000 tons of pitch, struck the reefs near Shanghai at 0850 Wednesday (Oct 12). Receiving the request for help, the Shanghai Salvage Bureau of the Ministry of Communications immediately mobilised five rescue vessels to the site. The rescue efforts were seriously affected by the strong wind measuring eight (gale) on the Beaufort Scale and that some crew members refused to leave the ship also brought difficulties to rescue operation. The saving operation was not finished until early today and all the crew members will temporarily stay in Shengsi of Zhejiang Province.

London, Oct 17 -- A press report, dated today, states: Foreign crew members of a cargo vessel carrying asphalt (asphalt tanker Tasco 1) were rescued and the ship was stabilized after hitting rocks at the mouth of the Yangtze River. The Shanghai Salvage Bureau said yesterday that it had

successfully rescued all the 21 foreign sailors on board the vessel as of Saturday morning. The ship struck rocks at the Yangtze River mouth on Wednesday. It was caught by strong winds at sea and grounded after hitting rocks at about 0900 hrs, the bureau reported. Five rescue boats were dispatched, but bad weather and swamping of the vessel made the operation difficult. Rescue officials said there were rocks on both sides of the vessel and water kept flooding into the cabins. The crew refused to abandon the ship. At 0630 Thursday, a rescue vessel reached the wrecked vessel. Four pumps removed water from the vessel, and rescuers persuaded the sailors to leave. The last batch of nine crew members, including the master, finally decided to give up the flooded ship early Saturday morning.

London, Oct 18 -- Following received from the managers of asphalt tanker Tasco 1, dated today: A salvage operation on the Thai-flag asphalt tanker Tasco 1 continued on Tuesday (Oct 18) off the coast of China, about 60 nautical miles south east of Shanghai. As reported earlier, the crew from Tasco 1 were successfully evacuated from the vessel at 0630, local time, Saturday (Oct 15). All the crew members are safe and unharmed. The vessel grounded after hitting rocks south east of Shanghai, China in the early hours of Oct 12. The salvage team, together with the Owners and Managers, are currently working to re-float the vessel. There is no pollution or cargo spillage from the vessel and Tasco 1 is not a danger to shipping in the area. The vessel is located in lat 30 48N, long 122 45.32 E.

THIA CHRYSOULA (Cyprus)

London, Oct 17 -- Bulk Thia Chryssoula sailed Shanghai Sep 22.

TIGER III (New Zealand)

London, Oct 13 -- A press report, dated today, states: An inquiry into the cause of a Northland tourist ferry grounding has found bad weather and an engine malfunction were probably to blame for passenger Tiger III being blown onto rocks. The Transport Accident Investigation Commission report says the weather conditions were marginal for the boat to approach the landing, but it commends the way the crew handled the situation. The report says the Fullers Bay of Islands ferry-master could also have been distracted while giving a tour commentary. Marine accident investigator, Captain Doug Monks, says Fullers are making improvements to their systems.

TIMARU STAR (Hong Kong)

See under "Miscellaneous".

TORGELOW (St. Vincent & Grenadines)

See "Somalia" under "Piracy".

TORILL KNUITSEN (NIS)

London, Oct 17 -- Chemical/oil carrier Torill Knutsen, Vysotsk for Donges, passed Brunsbuttel Oct 14.

TOSCANA (Italy)

Naples, Oct 14 -- Passenger ro/ro Toscana arrived Naples Oct 13 from Cagliari and sailed same day to Cagliari. -- Lloyd's Agents.

TS HONGKONG (Liberia)

See Samho Brother.

UMFOLOZI (Cyprus)

Rotterdam, Oct 19 -- C.c. Umfolozi Patching work and cleaning operations, including removal of oil and skimming of oil from holds, is still under way. -- SMIT Salvage BV.

VIRTUSU (Isle of Man)

London, Oct 14 -- Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: General cargo Virtsu (2658 gt, built 1995) ran aground on the south side of the Kiel Canal, close to Fischerhuetten, at 0345, local time, today. The vessel is stuck fast in an angle of 45 degrees. Tug Kitzeberg from SFK, Kiel, is trying to get the vessel free. (Note -- Virtsu sailed Rotterdam Oct 13 for Helsinki.)

London, Oct 15 -- Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: General cargo Virtsu was freed yesterday afternoon and reached Kiel locks at about 1600 same day. (Note -- Virtsu was in lat 55 13 52.2N, long 14 12 47.4E, at 0338, today, speed 13.5 knots.)

London, Oct 19 -- General cargo Virtsu arrived Helsinki Oct 16, sailed same day, and arrived Muuga Oct 17 and sailed Oct 18 for Aarhus.

WILLOW (Bahamas)

Maassluis, Oct 18 -- General cargo Willow still in Ridderkerk "at Dockside" and should be ready by the end of the week. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents.

WILSON BRUGGE (Malta)

Trondheim, Oct 20 -- Repairs to general cargo Wilson Brugge are not yet completed, ETC Oct 24. -- Lloyd's Agents.

WILSON MAR (Malta)

London, Oct 16 -- Following received from Stavanger RCC, timed 1000, UTC: General cargo Wilson Mar (6483 gt, built 1985) is being towed to Hanoytangen by tug Bryteren, were eta later today. (Note -- Wilson Mar was reported to have brokdown near the Faroes around Oct 11. At 0925, UTC, today Wilson Mar was in lat 61 07 36.96N, long 04 00 12.42E, speed 8.9 knots.)

London, Oct 19 -- General cargo Wilson Mar is currently moored in lat 60 26.403N, long 05 06.125E.

WU SHAN (China)

London, Oct 13 -- General cargo Wu Shan was reported arriving at Ulsan on Oct 2 and sailing on Oct 5, bound for Ningbo.

XXVI SYEzd KPSS (Russia)

Vladivostok, Oct 17 -- Fish factory XXVI Syezd KPSS (4347 gt, built 1981) had a fire on board, due to explosion in No.1 diesel oil tank, while alongside at Im.Lenina Shipyard, port

of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy, at 0900, local time, today for reasons unknown at the moment. It has resulted in tearing out of a shell plate sized 1500 by 700 mm. Consequential oil spillage was occurred and eliminated successfully. The fire was extinguished by four tugs and few fire-engines at about 1500, local time. The part of burning diesel oil following the explosion reached the deck of fish factory Notlar (5638 gt, built 1981) berthed close to XXVI Syezd KPSS. It was extinguished immediately. As a result of above six persons were injured, three of them were injured severely. The exact scope of damage to XXVI Syezd KPSS is unknown yet. -- Lloyd's Agents.

YVONNE DENISE (U.S.A.)

London, Oct 13 -- A press report, dated Oct 12, states: A Coast Guard helicopter crew rescued three fishermen from a beach near Point Alava on Revillagiged Island yesterday afternoon after they were forced to abandon fishing Yvonne Denise which was disabled and adrift. The three abandoned the ship wearing their survival suits. The Coast Guard reported they received the call at 1149 yesterday morning requesting assistance. A Coast Guard Air Station Sitka helicopter crew arrived on the scene and airlifted the fishermen safely to Ketchikan. No injuries were reported. Yvonne Denise went down off of Hog Rocks yesterday afternoon.

London, Oct 14 -- Following received from Coast Guard Juneau, timed 2132, BST: Hope to refloat fishing Yvonne Denise middle of next week.



INDONESIA

Jakarta, Oct 19 -- The current position/whereabouts of general cargo Prima Indah is still unknown. The crew of the vessel were transferred to a fishing vessel after the hijackers took control of the vessel. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Singapore, Oct 20 -- Indonesian navy divers have discovered a shipload of refined tin worth \$4.7 million that was hijacked by pirates late last month, and the owner — PT Koba Tin — is salvaging the cargo, officials said today. General cargo Prima Indah, which was carrying 660 tonnes of tin produced by Koba when it was attacked en route to Singapore, was spotted last week on the sea bed off Bangka, the Indonesian island where it began its journey. Crew members were unharmed but the incident was the second tin seizure in Indonesian waters this year. On the same route in April, pirates hijacked a cargo of at least 575 tonnes, estimated to be worth about \$4.6 million and since retrieved by its owner. "We don't

understand why the pirates sank the ship. There are a lot of questions but we cannot speculate," said Noel Choong, who manages the International Maritime Bureau's South-east Asian piracy reporting centre in Malaysia. A Koba Tin official on Bangka, where most of Indonesia's tin is mined and smelted, confirmed the cargo had been discovered but declined to give more details. Koba Tin is owned by Malaysia Smelting Corp Bhd and is Indonesia's second-largest producer of the metal used in electronics and as a lead-free substitute in solder. State-run PT Timah, the country's top producer, has a 25% stake in Koba. "The company is now in the process of salvaging the ship and the cargo," said Choong, adding it was unclear whether the cargo was damaged. The amount is equivalent to about a third of Koba's monthly output. Indonesian waters are seen as a growing security risk, with the International Maritime Bureau saying nearly a third of 325 reported cases of piracy in 2004 took place there. Metal dealers said the motives behind this hijacking were unclear, as it happened when the price of tin was suffering from slow demand, an increase in supply from Indonesia and a sell-off by investment funds. Tin was trading at \$6,350-\$6,425 a tonne for delivery in three months on the London Metal Exchange after falling yesterday to a 10-month low of \$6,100 a tonne. "Those pirates may have a buyer or they may have a way to sell the tin. This is the second attempt after the first one failed, but there must be a reason why they sank the ship," said one industry source in Malaysia. "It's not so easy to sink a ship," he added. The stolen tin would probably have been destined for consumers in East Asia or Europe, dealers said. "I don't think the pirates aimed to sell the tin to Malaysia, because people here will easily recognise the cargo. They may want to sell it to China or elsewhere," said another trader in Malaysia. Dealers added the hijacked ship was discovered about 35 metres below sea level. -- Reuters.

SOMALIA

London, Oct 14 -- A press report, dated Oct 12, states: World Food Programme (WFP) today strongly condemned the hijacking of general cargo Miltzow (992 gt, built 1971) this afternoon by unidentified gunmen at the port of Merca, 100 kilometres south-west of Mogadishu. The vessel was in the process of being offloaded, when, at approximately 1530, local time, six gunmen stormed the vessel and forced it to leave the port. An estimated 400 tons of the total cargo of 850 tons of WFP food aid remained on board at the time of the hijacking. The cargo - consisting of 703 tons of maize, 108 tons of beans and 39 tons of vegetable oil - was destined for the Lower Juba Valley, which is home to some of the most vulnerable people in Somalia, people who have repeatedly been affected by droughts and floods.

The Miltzow arrived in the port of Merca Oct 10, after leaving Mombasa Oct 7. The ten-member crew on board include a Kenyan captain, a Ugandan engineer and eight Kenyan crew members.

Nairobi, Oct 14 -- Somali pirates freed general cargo Miltzow early today, two days after seizing it, the United Nations said. The distributor hired by U.N. World Food Programme to deliver the food and a local official from Barawa, 160 km south-west of the capital Mogadishu, secured the release of the vessel, its cargo and eight crew members. "The ship has been released and they started negotiating yesterday," WFP spokeswoman Anja du Toit said. "The only thing we know that the hijackers demanded a ransom of \$20,000, but we don't know if that has been paid." WFP did not and would not pay the ransom, she said. -- Reuters.

London, Oct 19 -- A press report, dated Oct 18, states: The whereabouts of general cargo Torgelow, a Kenyan merchant ship hijacked by Somali pirates are unknown, its owner said yesterday. The managing director of Motaku Shipping Agencies, Mr Karim Kudrati, said they had lost contact with the vessel. "There is no contact at all between us and the master of the vessel or the hijackers," he said yesterday. However Government spokesman Dr Alfred Mutua said the State was in the process of establishing contact with the vessel. "We are in contact with the Somalia government and are trying to establish lines of communication that will help secure the release of the vessel and the 10 crew members," said Dr Mutua. The last time contact was made with the vessel, it was supposedly headed to Hardhere, said Mr Kudrati. "We do not know where the vessel and crew are right now," he said. He added: "With Semlow and Miltzow we had constant contact. We do not know what is happening with Torgelow." He said, however, that he expected negotiations to be going on between the owners of the cargo on the vessel and the hijackers. Torgelow was delivering supplies to Semlow, which was hijacked in June and later released, but had been grounded at El-Maan port due to failure of its generators. Mr Kudrati confirmed yesterday that Miltzow, the third Kenyan vessel to fall into the hands of Somali pirates, was released on Thursday and it delivered supplies to Semlow. It had also started offloading the 850 tonnes of relief rice from the World Food Programme at the port of El-Maan. "It is too early however to say when the offloading would be completed," he said. The crew on the Torgelow includes a Sri Lankan master and nine Kenyans, who include an engineer, a chief officer, seamen and a cook. Dr Mutua asked the families of the vessel's crew to be patient as the Government works to secure their release.

London, Oct 20 -- Following received from Stavanger RCC, timed 0955,

UTC: Product tanker San Carlo (17672 gt, built 1977) is reported adrift 160 miles off Mogadishu, in lat 02 13N, long 49 44E, at 0747, UTC, after sending a distress signal out to report it was under attack by pirates. Currently unable to contact vessel, telephone on board not being answered.

Port State Control



PORTUGAL

See GenMar Trust under "Marine."

Seizures & Arrests



CHANGXIANG (Panama)

London, Oct 14 -- Bulk Changxiang departed from Hong Kong at 2056 hrs, Oct 13.

GEPARD (Cyprus)

Maassluis, Oct 18 -- Tug Gepard is still at Flushing. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents.

MAJU JAYA (Malaysia)

London, Oct 13 -- General cargo Maju Jaya was reported to have sailed from Port Klang on Oct 11.

NIRIA (Panama)

Jakarta, Oct 20 -- Crude oil tanker Niria (37391 gt, built 1983) was seized off Karimun by the Indonesian Navy. No other details are currently available. -- Lloyd's Agents. (Note -- Niria was reported to have been the subject of a detention off Karimun sometime between May 22 and Jun 20, 2005 and subsequently reported arriving at Laem Chabang on Aug 27 and sailing on Aug 29.)

SEA SERENADE (Cyprus)

Koper, Oct 14 -- Ro/ro Sea Serenade, now renamed Chang Po Po, is still in port at Izola. -- Lloyd's Agents.

SENTINEL (Comoros)

Genoa, Oct 19 -- General cargo Sentinel is still at Genoa, reportedly under court arrest. No information is available regarding its future/release. -- Lloyd's Agents.

YM XINGANG I (Germany)

Manila, Oct 17 -- A Manila court has issued warrant of seizure and detention against c.c. YM Xingang I today allowing authorities to hold the vessel indefinitely. YM Xingang I was arrested Tuesday (Oct 12) after Philippine authorities discovered a large cache of dried marijuana leaves onboard the vessel. The vessel is being detained at Pier 3, Port of Manila's South Harbour terminal. Three crewmen have been arrested while the master and the rest of the

crew are being investigated for possible involvement in the shipment of illegal drugs. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Pollution



BRITTANY, FRANCE

London, Oct 20 -- The Norwegian government looks to have succeeded in setting a precedent in pollution cases off the French coast after claiming right over the French courts for the trial of the master of a Norwegian flag vessel. The case against the Seatrans chemical oil carrier Trans Arctic, had been due to open before a court in Brest on Tuesday but the hearing was postponed after the prosecutor revealed Norwegian authorities had indicated they wanted to deal with the case. The court in Brest has postponed the hearing until Apr 5 to give the Norwegian authorities time to demonstrate their intention to prosecute the master of the vessel. But French environmental organisations have already claimed that the Norwegian intervention is the result of shipowner pressure to prevent France from exercising its jurisdiction in dealing with pollution cases in France's exclusive economic zone. According to a local report, Norway has already given notice of its intention to prosecute only the master of the vessel, not the owner, whereas, in France, courts have been ordering owners to pay 90% of fines for pollution, which have gone up to €500,000 (\$599,000) in some recent cases. The Norwegian embassy in Paris declined to comment on the reasons for the government's intervention in the case. It said it had not yet had official notification of the results of Tuesday's proceedings. Norway has invoked the UN law of the sea convention to justify its claim to first right of trial of masters involved in pollution cases. It claimed the same right in the case of a collision between a French trawler and another Norwegian chemicals carrier, the Bow Eagle, in which four French fishermen lost their lives in August 2002. In that case, the vessel's Filipino watch officer was jailed for five years for having failed to lend assistance to the trawler's crew but the judgment was criticised by some in France, who claimed that the officer had been made a scapegoat and that others should also have been prosecuted. Trans Arctic was spotted from the air off the French Atlantic coast last Mar 17 at the head of a 38 km long trail of discoloured water. Certain judgments rendered in French courts in pollution cases have provoked strong criticism, particularly those in which masters' claims that the pollution was accidental have been dismissed peremptorily.

Weather & Navigation



AUSTRALIA

London, Oct 13 -- A press report, dated today, states: Southern Queensland was again hit by severe storms only a day after the Gold Coast was battered by hail. Large hailstones fell in the Laidley area, west of Brisbane, today while there were extensive black-outs in Warwick and Stanthorpe. About 3,000 homes in Toowoomba also lost power. Ergon Energy said crews were working to restore supplies and they were hopeful most consumers would have power by the morning. Yesterday, hundreds of homes and cars on the Gold Coast were damaged by a severe hail and thunderstorm. The storm swept through northern parts of the region yesterday afternoon, leaving a trail of destruction. More than 300 State Emergency Service crews were called out to hundreds of calls for assistance.

London, Oct 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: A hail storm which struck the Gold Coast last week has caused a potential A\$50 million damage bill, insurers said today. The Gold Coast last Wednesday (Oct 12) was lashed by a furious storm which dumped hailstones the size of tennis balls and caused widespread damage, mostly to cars and roofs. Insurance Disaster Response Organisation Queensland co-ordinator Graham Jones said today the insured damage from the storm "could reach A\$50 million." Advertisement: Mr Jones said there could be another A\$10 million damage to uninsured property.

AZORES

London, Oct 14 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Portuguese airline SATA cancelled several flights today within Portugal's mid-Atlantic Azores archipelago, leaving some 250 people stranded, because strong winds and heavy rain were lashing the islands, an airline spokesman said. Throughout the day the airline was only able to carry out flights between Sao Miguel, Terceira and Pico, three of the nine volcanic islands that make up the archipelago located some 1,500 kilometres off the coast of Portugal, he added. Further flight cancellations were possible as the local weather office forecast the rough weather would continue overnight.

HURRICANE "RITA"

London, Oct 19 -- A press report, dated Oct 18, states: Hurricane "Rita" caused an estimated \$195 million in crop and livestock losses in Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas with rice and sugarcane hit the hardest, the US Agriculture Department said today. The US Agriculture Department said US rice and sugar production sustained the most damage from "Rita." The storm's path took it

through Texas, Louisiana and Mississippi counties that together account for about 11 percent of US rice production and eight percent of the sugarcane crop. The USDA estimated production losses from "Rita" at \$42 million for sugarcane, \$24 million for rice and \$20 million for upland cotton. The rice figure also included \$22 million in estimated losses due to heavy rain and wind in neighbouring Arkansas. Producers of fish and shellfish products in Louisiana estimated their losses from the hurricane at about \$80 million, the USDA said. "Estimates are for current production losses and exclude quality and future production losses that may be incurred by perennial crops or livestock and losses to infrastructure and increased marketing costs," the USDA said in a preliminary report on damage to US agriculture from "Rita". Damage to most other crops and livestock was much less severe. Rita affected less than one percent of the US inventory of cattle, milk cows and hogs and less than one percent of the nation's corn, sorghum, cotton and soybean production. The storm also increased gasoline and diesel costs and closed shipping channels for many farmers. "In addition, the loss of electricity, and damage to roads and port facilities interrupted the movement and processing of milk and other agricultural products," USDA said. US farm losses from "Rita" were far lower than from Hurricane "Katrina", which caused an estimated \$900 million in crop and livestock losses in Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana, according to an initial estimate released in September by USDA.

HURRICANE "WILMA"

London, Oct 19 -- A press report, dated today, states: Hurricane "Wilma" triggered mudslides that killed up to 10 people in Haiti as the season's record-tying 21st storm strengthened rapidly on Tuesday and headed for the Gulf of Mexico on a path toward storm-weary Florida. Fueled by the warm waters of the north-west Caribbean Sea, "Wilma" grew from a tropical storm to a Category 2 hurricane with 110 mph winds in less than a day. The U.S. National Hurricane Centre expected it to strengthen at least into a powerful Category four storm on the five-step scale of hurricane intensity, with winds of over 130 mph on Wednesday, then cross into the Gulf of Mexico on Friday and plough across southern Florida on Saturday. Days of steady rain from "Wilma" caused mudslides that killed at least seven people and as many as 10 in mountainous Haiti, government officials said. "Wilma" was not expected to threaten New Orleans or Mississippi, where Hurricane "Katrina" killed more than 1,200 people and caused more than \$30 billion of insured damage in August. "Katrina" was followed in September by Hurricane "Rita". "Wilma" was also expected to miss the Gulf of Mexico oil and gas facilities that are still reeling

from "Katrina" and "Rita". But frozen orange juice futures closed at a six-year high on Tuesday amid fears "Wilma" could ravage Florida groves that had just begun to rebound from the hurricanes that destroyed 40 percent of last year's crop. "We have not really begun harvesting, so much of the crop is still on the trees, which obviously is a concern for growers," said Casey Pace, spokeswoman for the Florida Citrus Mutual growers' association. At 2300, local time, Oct 18, "Wilma" was about 185 miles south-south-west of Grand Cayman. "Wilma" was moving west-north-west at eight miles per hour and was expected to turn north-west today. The U.S. National Hurricane Centre predicted "Wilma" would skirt western Cuba on Friday and curve east toward Florida's southern Gulf coast. Storm alerts were in effect for the Cayman Islands, parts of Cuba, Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula and coastal Honduras. "Wilma" was expected to deluge the Caymans, Jamaica, Haiti, Cuba, Honduras and Nicaragua, with isolated rainfall amounts of up to 15 inches possible. Emergency crews in Honduras prepared to evacuate 10,000 people, including tourists drawn to the Bay Islands of Roatan, Utila and Guanaja to scuba dive the pristine coral reefs. Cuba's western tobacco-growing province of Pinar del Rio braced for heavy rain and flooding. More than 5,000 people were evacuated from eastern Cuba, where two days of rainfall caused floods and mudslides in the provinces of Guantanamo, Santiago and Granma. The Florida Keys, a chain of islands connected to mainland Florida by a single road, planned to order visitors to leave on Thursday and to evacuate 80,000 residents on Friday. "This is our fourth storm but this one is really aggressive. This one we are taking seriously. The damage is going to be substantial," Irene Toner, director of emergency management for the county that encompasses the islands, told local radio.

London, Oct 19 -- A press report, dated today, states: Hurricane "Wilma" strengthened into a Category 5 hurricane early today packing 175 mph winds, and forecasters said a key reading of the storm's pressure showed it to be the most powerful of the year. "Wilma" was dumping rain on Central America and Mexico, and forecasters warned of a "significant threat" to Florida by the weekend. The storm's power multiplied greatly over the last day. It was only yesterday morning that "Wilma" grew from a tropical storm into a weak hurricane with 80 mph winds. "Wilma"'s pressure readings this morning indicated that it was the strongest hurricane of the season, said Trisha Wallace, a meteorologist at the National Hurricane Centre in Miami. "Wilma" had a reading of 892 millibars, the same reading as a devastating unnamed hurricane that hit the Florida Keys in 1935. "We do not know how long it will maintain this Category 5 state," Wallace said.

Jamaica, Cuba, Nicaragua and Honduras were getting heavy rain from the storm, though it wasn't likely to make landfall in any of those countries, she said. Forecasts showed it would likely turn toward the narrow Yucatan Channel between Cuba and Mexico's Cancun region -- then move into the storm-weary Gulf. By 0200 hrs, the hurricane was centred about 170 miles southwest of Grand Cayman Island and about 400 miles southeast of Cozumel, Mexico. It was moving toward the west-northwest at nearly eight mph, according to the Hurricane Centre. "It does look like it poses a significant threat to Florida by the weekend. Of course, these are four- and five-day forecasts, so things can change," said Dan Brown, a meteorologist at the National Hurricane Centre. "Wilma" has already had been blamed for one death in Jamaica as a tropical depression Sunday (Oct 16). It has flooded several low-lying communities and triggered mudslides that blocked roads and damaged several homes, said Barbara Carby, head of Jamaica's emergency management office. She said that some 250 people were in shelters throughout the island. The government of flood-prone Honduras warned that Hurricane "Wilma" posed "an imminent threat to life and property of the people of the Atlantic coast." Neighbouring Nicaragua also declared an alert. Honduran President Ricardo Maduro declared "a maximum alert" along the northern coast and his office said emergency personnel and resources had been sent to the area, where evacuations were possible. In Nicaragua, national disaster prevention chief Geronimo Giusto said the army, police and rescue workers were being mobilised and evacuation points readied. Authorities in the Cayman Islands earlier called an alert.

London, Oct 19 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: Hurricane "Wilma": A hurricane watch is in effect for the east coast of the Yucatan Peninsula from Cabo Catoche to Punta Guesa. A hurricane watch remains in effect in Cuba for the provinces of Matanzas, westward through Pinar del Rio and for the Isle of Youth. A tropical storm warning remains in effect for Honduras from the Honduras/Nicaragua border westward to Cabo Camaron. A tropical storm warning and a hurricane watch remain in effect for the Cayman Islands. All interests in the Florida Keys and the Florida Peninsula should closely monitor the progress of extremely dangerous hurricane "Wilma". At 0900, UTC, today, the centre of hurricane "Wilma" was located near lat 17.2N, long 82.5W. The position is accurate to within 15 nautical miles. The present movement is toward the west-northwest, or 295 degs, at seven knots. The estimated minimum central pressure is 884 mb. The eye diameter is five nautical miles. The maximum sustained winds are 150 knots, with gusts to 185 knots. The radius of 60 knot winds is 15

nautical miles in all four quadrants. The radius of 34 knot winds: 140 nautical miles in the north-east and north-west quadrants and 90 nautical miles in the south-east and south-west quadrants. At 0600, UTC, Oct 20, the centre is predicted to be near lat 18.5N, long 84.7W, with maximum sustained winds of 145 knots and gusts to 175 knots.

London, Oct 20 -- A press report, dated Oct 19, states: All of the major weather models on Wednesday predicted that hurricane "Wilma", the strongest Atlantic hurricane in terms of barometric pressure ever recorded, would strike Florida later this week. The weather models show the storm moving northwest across the Caribbean Sea to the waters between Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula and western Cuba, where it is projected to enter the Gulf of Mexico and turn north-east toward the south-central Gulf Coast of Florida. "Wilma" will probably spare the US oil and natural gas rigs and refineries on the Gulf of Mexico which had been badly battered by hurricanes "Katrina" and "Rita" in late August and September. Earlier Wednesday, the US National Hurricane Centre said that "Wilma's" barometric pressure of 882 millibars was the lowest ever recorded in the Atlantic. That is the lowest since hurricane "Gilbert" registered an 888-millibar reading in 1988. The lower the barometric pressure, the more powerful the storm. In an advisory at 1100, EDT, the NHC said the storm's maximum sustained winds were near 175 mph, with higher gusts, making "Wilma" a potentially catastrophic Category 5 storm (winds above 155 mph) on the Saffir-Simpson scale. The NHC expects the storm to weaken to a Category 4 (winds 131-155 mph) or Category 3 (winds 111-130 mph) storm once it enters the Gulf of Mexico over the next 48 to 72 hours. The NHC said the centre of the storm was located about 325 miles south-east of Cozumel, Mexico. It is moving toward the west-north-west near 7 mph with a turn toward the north-west expected during the next 24 hours, the NHC said.

London, Oct 20 -- A press report, dated today, states: Officials in Mexico, Cuba and Florida have started evacuating thousands of people from areas threatened by the strongest hurricane ever recorded. Hurricane "Wilma", which has weakened to a Category-Four storm, is packing winds of about 155 mph, its heavy rains already lashing outlying areas. At least 11 people have been killed in Haiti by floods and landslides. The storm's barometric pressure -- a measure of its strength -- reached the lowest on record in the Atlantic basin. As of 0300, UTC, today, the centre of the hurricane was about 235 miles south-east of Cozumel, Mexico. "Wilma" is moving at a speed of eight mph towards Mexico's Yucatan peninsula, but is expected to turn north-west today, said the US National Hurricane Centre. It said the "potentially catastrophic" storm was

expected to dump up to 63cm of rain in mountainous areas of Cuba until tomorrow, and up to up to 38 cm in the Caymans and Jamaica until today. The Mexican authorities have told tourists to evacuate high-risk areas along the coast near the holiday resort of Cancun. Forecasters say the hurricane presents a "significant threat." The strong winds have forced music television station, MTV, to postpone its Video Music Awards Latin America, which had been scheduled to take place in the resort of Playa del Carmen. The Central American states of Honduras and Nicaragua have also issued alerts, and are expecting tropical storm conditions within the next 36 hours. Cuba began evacuating coastal residents and suspended school in the western province of Pinar del Rio. Forecasters say the hurricane presents a "significant threat" to Florida, which it is expected to hit this weekend. "Wilma" could "cause tremendous damage and loss of life if we're not careful," said Hurricane Centre director Max Mayfield. "The storm surge and the wave action will be tremendous with this hurricane, given the intensity and the size." Officials in the vulnerable Florida Keys island chain have ordered visitors and non-residents to leave immediately. About 80,000 residents were expected to be asked to leave the area today.

London, Oct 20 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: Hurricane "Wilma": A hurricane warning is in effect from San Felipe to Punta Allen on the Yucatan peninsula, including Cozumel and the nearby islands. A hurricane warning is in effect for Swan Island. At 0900, UTC, today, the government of Mexico issued a tropical storm warning for the northern and western coasts of the Yucatan peninsula west of San Felipe to Celestun. A tropical storm warning and a hurricane watch are now in effect for the northern and western coasts of the Yucatan peninsula west of San Felipe to Celestun. A hurricane watch remains in effect for the east coast of the Yucatan peninsula from south of Punta Allen to Punta Gruesa. A tropical storm warning remains in effect from south of Punta Allen to Chetumal, Mexico and for Belize from the border with Mexico southward to Belize City. A tropical storm warning is in effect for the provinces of La Habana, Ciudad de la Habana, Pinar del Rio and the Isle of Youth. A hurricane watch remains in effect in Cuba for the provinces of Matanzas westward through Pinar del Rio...and for the Isle of Youth. A tropical storm warning remains in effect for Honduras from the Honduras/Nicaragua border westward to Cabo Camaron. All interests in the Florida Keys and the Florida peninsula should closely monitor the progress of extremely dangerous hurricane "Wilma". At 0900, UTC, today, the centre of hurricane "Wilma" was located near lat 18.3N, long 85.0W. The position is accurate to within 15 nautical miles. The present

movement is toward the west-northwest, or 295 degs, at seven knots. The estimated minimum central pressure is 900 mb. The eye diameter is five nautical miles. The maximum sustained winds are 130 knots, with gusts to 160 knots. The radius of 60 knot winds is 60 nautical miles in the north-east and north-west quadrants and 40 nautical miles in the south-east and south-west quadrants.. The radius of 34 knot winds: 200 nautical miles in the north-east and south-east quadrants, 110 nautical miles in the south-west quadrant and 150 nautical miles in the north-west quadrant. At 0600, UTC, Oct 21, the centre is predicted to be near lat 20.0N, long 86.5W, with maximum sustained winds of 145 knots and gusts to 175 knots.

NEW ZEALAND

London, Oct 20 -- General cargo Spirit of Resolution arrived and sailed Lyttelton Oct 11, subsequently arriving and sailing Nelson Oct 12 and arriving Onehunga Oct 13 and sailing Oct 15.

PERU

London, Oct 14 -- A press report, dated today, states: Mudslides caused by heavy rains in Peru's southern Andes stranded 3200 tourists at the Machu Picchu Inca citadel today as mud and rocks blocked the railway in and out of the site, train operators said. The nationalities of the tourists were not immediately known, but no one was thought to be injured, Peru Rail spokeswoman Joanna Boyen said. Peru Rail said it was working to clear the railway line and planned to return tourists to the nearby city of Cuzco via a minor road today.

SOUTH AFRICA

Durban, Oct 19 -- Only departing vessels today, the harbour was closed until 0730, no incoming vessels due to wind. -- Lloyd's Agents.

SPAIN

London, Oct 14 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: One woman has been killed in flooding which has engulfed many parts of Spain. The worst hit area were Catalonia, in north-east Spain, and other regions were Asturias, Castilla y Leon and Galicia. Many roads were closed, schools closed and emergency services at full stretch to deal with the heavy rain and floods. Fire fighters in Catalonia alone have been on 150 calls to deal since last night. Trees fell on cars and buildings, water filled streets people were stranded on higher land as the water rose. Parts of the Barcelona metro were closed by two metres of water which have flooded tunnels. The worst affected areas were in La Selva and Baix Empord., of Catalonia where numerous cars were left unusable in the rain. Walls collapsed in the holiday resort of Lloret de Mar. An elderly woman was dragged away by the force of the flooding in Sant Antoni de Calonge, near Gerona. Many schools and

colleges were closed and roads were inaccessible due to the heavy rain.

TROPICAL STORM "WILMA"

London, Oct 17 -- A press report, dated today, states: A tropical storm warning was in effect for the Cayman Islands as a tropical depression moved through the Atlantic on a path that could threaten the U.S. Gulf Coast later this week as a hurricane, forecasters said. The system was expected to become Tropical Storm "Wilma" later today, which would make it the 21st named storm of the season, tying the record for the most storms in an Atlantic season, the National Hurricane Centre in Miami said. The only other time so many storms have formed since record keeping began 154 years ago was in 1933. At 0200 hrs, the depression was centered about 170 miles southeast of Grand Cayman, forecasters said. Forecasters said weak steering currents left the depression meandering over the same patch of waters, but it was expected to slowly drift west. Its sustained winds were near 35 mph; depressions become tropical storms when their winds reach 39 mph. Long-term forecasts show the storm would likely move west and north, putting the storm in the Gulf of Mexico on Thursday (Oct 20) or Friday (Oct 21). Forecasters said water temperature and other conditions were favorable for it to become a significant hurricane. "Once storms get into the Gulf of Mexico, I'm aware of only one storm on record that dissipated," hurricane specialist James Franklin said in Miami. "As it enters the Gulf of Mexico, the northwest Caribbean has some of the deepest warm water in the Atlantic basin and that's fuel for tropical cyclones." The system had yet to form the well-defined core needed for significant strengthening yesterday afternoon. Dry air also appeared to be stopping the rise of warm, moist air needed for development, he said. A hurricane watch was issued for the Cayman Islands yesterday, meaning hurricane conditions could be felt there within 36 hours. A tropical storm warning, meaning tropical storm conditions within 24 hours, also was posted. The depression is expected to bring four to six inches of rain in the Cayman Islands and Jamaica, with as much as 12 inches possible in some areas, forecasters said. In Jamaica, officials issued a flash flood warning for northwestern parts of the island.

London, Oct 17 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office: Tropical storm "Wilma": A tropical storm warning and a hurricane watch are in effect for the Cayman Islands. Storm centre located near lat 17.2N, long 79.7W, at 0900, UTC, Oct 17. Position accurate to within 20 nautical miles. Present movement towards the south-west, or 235 deg, at three knots. Maximum sustained winds 35 knots with gusts to 45 knots. Radius of 34-knot winds and 12-foot seas 40 nautical miles south-west quadrant,

nil elsewhere. Forecast for 0600, UTC, Oct 18: Position lat 17.2N, long 81.1W. Maximum sustained winds 50 knots with gusts to 60 knots. Radius of 50-knot winds 30 nautical miles. Radius of 34-knot winds 60 nautical miles.

London, Oct 18 -- A press report, dated Oct 17, states: "Wilma" formed in the Caribbean today, and forecasters warned it could become a powerful hurricane and hit somewhere along the U.S. Gulf Coast as early as the weekend. "I think the message is that the season is certainly not over. People in the Gulf Coast are going to have to watch 'Wilma'," said National Hurricane Center Director Max Mayfield. "Wilma" reached tropical-storm strength before dawn. By tomorrow, it could become the season's 12th hurricane, which would match the record 12 hurricanes in 1969, the highest number since Atlantic record-keeping started in 1851. At 2300 hrs, "Wilma" had top sustained winds of about 65 mph, up 25 mph from earlier in the day. It was centred about 250 miles south-southeast of Grand Cayman and was drifting westward at two mph. A hurricane watch was issued for the Cayman Islands, meaning hurricane conditions could be felt there within 36 hours. The storm was expected to bring two to six inches of rain in the Caymans, Cuba, Haiti, Honduras and Jamaica, with as much as 12 inches possible in some areas. The hurricane center said "Wilma" could strengthen into a major hurricane, with winds over 110 mph.

London, Oct 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: Tropical Storm "Wilma" stalled over the warm waters of the northwestern Caribbean early today, where forecasters said it would strengthen into an intense hurricane before potentially menacing the US Gulf Coast this weekend (Oct 22/23). "Wilma" entered the history books yesterday, becoming the Atlantic hurricane season's 21st named storm before dawn, tying the record set in 1933 and exhausting the list of storm names. Forecasters said it could strengthen into the year's 12th hurricane by today. At 0500, EDT, "Wilma's" top sustained winds increased to about 70 mph. If its winds reach 74 mph, "Wilma" will be upgraded to a Category 1 hurricane. "Wilma" is expected to become an intense hurricane in the northwestern Caribbean Sea, where conditions such as warm water and favourable atmospheric winds indicate strengthening, said Lixion Avila, a hurricane specialist at the hurricane centre. Forecasters said "Wilma" remained nearly stationary over the northwest Caribbean Sea about 260 miles south-southeast of Grand Cayman, but it was eventually expected to gradually turn to the west and northwest. New forecast models placed the storm closer to western Cuba than Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula by Friday. The storm was forecast to then turn sharply in the Gulf of Mexico toward Florida over the weekend. "There's no scenario now that takes it toward Louisiana or

Mississippi, but that could change," Mayfield said. New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin warned residents yesterday to prepare for another evacuation if "Wilma" strengthened and moved toward the city. Conditions such as warm water and favourable atmospheric winds are in place for "Wilma" to strengthen, possibly into a major hurricane with winds above 110 mph. "If it goes through the Yucatan Channel, there won't be much to weaken it," Mayfield said. The Cayman Islands were under a hurricane watch, meaning those conditions could be felt within 36 hours. A tropical storm warning was posted there and for the Honduran coast, meaning those conditions were expected within 24 hours. The storm is expected to bring 2 to 6 inches of rain in the Caymans, southeastern Cuba, Haiti, Honduras and Jamaica, with as much as 12 inches possible in some areas, forecasters said.

TYPHOON "KIROGI"

London, Oct 14 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0600, UTC, today, the centre of typhoon "Kirogi" was located near lat 22.9N, long 131.2E, approximately 275 nautical miles south-east of Okinawa, and has tracked north-northwestward, or 335 degs, at four knots over the past six hours. The position is accurate to within 60 nautical miles and based on the on eye being fixed by satellite. Present wind distribution: maximum sustained winds: 90 knots, with gusts to 110 knots. Radius of 64-knot winds: 25 nautical miles in the north-east and south-east quadrants, 30 nautical miles in the south-west quadrant and 35 nautical miles in the north-west quadrant. Radius of 34-knot winds: 100 nautical miles in the north-east and south-east quadrants, 110 nautical miles in the south-west quadrant and 120 nautical miles in the north-west quadrant. The maximum significant wave height is 44 feet. At 0600, UTC, Oct 15, the centre is predicted to be near lat 24.7N, long 131.6E, with maximum sustained winds of 85 knots and gusts to 105 knots.

London, Oct 17 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office: Typhoon "Kirogi" near lat 27.7N, long 135.0E, at 0600, UTC, Oct 17. Movement past six hours 015 deg at 13 knots. Position accurate to within 40 nautical miles, based on centre located by satellite. Maximum sustained winds 110 knots with gusts to 135 knots. Radius of 64-knot winds 20 nautical miles south-west quadrant, 25 nautical miles north-west quadrant, 30 nautical miles elsewhere. Radius of 50-knot winds 40 nautical miles south-west quadrant, 45 nautical miles north-west quadrant, 50 nautical miles elsewhere. Radius of 34-knot winds 100 nautical miles south-west quadrant, 110 nautical miles north-west quadrant, 115 nautical miles south-east quadrant and 120 nautical miles

north-east quadrant. Forecast for 0600, UTC, Oct 18: Position lat 31.2N, long 137.2E. Maximum sustained winds 75 knots with gusts to 90 knots. Radius of 64-knot winds 10 nautical miles. Radius of 50-knot winds 45 nautical miles north-east and south-west quadrants, 40 nautical miles elsewhere. Radius of 34-knot winds 100 nautical miles north-east and south-west quadrants, 95 nautical miles elsewhere.

London, Oct 19 -- A press report, dated today, states: Typhoon "Kirogi" was moving eastward off Hachijo Island in the Pacific this morning and losing power, but high waves are still expected in areas in its path, the Japan Meteorological Agency said. The typhoon was about 150 kilometres south-east of the island and heading east at 25 km per hour as of 0700 hrs., according to the agency. "Kirogi", with a barometric pressure of 990 hectopascals and winds of up to 90 kph near its centre, is expected to be moving northeastward off the coast of eastern Japan at around 0600 hrs, tomorrow, with winds of up to 64.8 kph near its centre.

UNITED STATES

London, Oct 17 -- A press report, dated today, states: Emergency and utility crews across the Northeast worked yesterday to repair the damage caused by several days of rain and floods, but strong winds continued to cause problems. In a signal to storm-weary residents that the worst was over, Gov. Mitt Romney lifted a state of emergency declaration. New Jersey's emergency declaration was lifted Saturday night (Oct 15). Parts of the Northeast had received more than a foot of rain since Oct 7, according to the National Weather Service. The storm system killed at least 12 people from Pennsylvania to Maine. The latest death was discovered yesterday in Connecticut, where authorities said 54-year-old Elizabeth Cunningham fell into the rapids of the Natchaug River. Only scattered showers were reported in the region yesterday, but wind gusts topping 40 mph brought down trees and knocked out power. Most electricity was restored before midnight, but the wind was blamed for at least 11,500 power outages during the day in Connecticut, 10,000 in Massachusetts, 7,300 Rhode Island and 6,500 in New Jersey. Flood advisories also remained in effect for many areas, as officials in Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island and New Hampshire continued to monitor swollen rivers and streams. Hundreds of people in the region were evacuated during the heavy rain, but many had returned home yesterday morning. The Red Cross said others had found shelter with friends or family. Emergency shelters in New Hampshire, where 1,300 residents in Keene spent part of the previous weekend because of flooding, were closed yesterday.

London, Oct 17 -- A press report, dated Oct 15, states: The tornado that

Earthquakes



blew through southern Dane County Aug 18 caused about \$11 million less in damage than originally thought, according to new estimates submitted this week by county emergency management officials to the state. The new tally puts the damage at just under \$33.7 million. The new figures will be used by Wisconsin Emergency Management in its appeal to the Federal Emergency Management Agency in an attempt to get federal disaster aid, as local communities and residents try to recoup their losses following the devastating twister. The early damage estimates from the Aug 18 storms made by Wisconsin Emergency Management came in at \$47 million for Dane, Richland and Vernon counties, as more than two dozen twisters were reported across the state. Dane County's early damage estimates comprised about \$45 million of the \$47 million statewide total.

London, Oct 18 -- A press report, dated Oct 17, states: Thunderstorms pounded Southern California with lightning-streaked downpours of rain and hail today, knocking out power to some 140,000 customers and snarling traffic as mudslides forced closure of the state's main north-south interstate. Interstate 5 was shut down in both directions in the mountains about 65 miles north of Los Angeles because of the mud and up to four feet of standing water on parts of the road, said California Highway Patrol spokesman Johnny Fisher. "We don't know when it will be reopened or whether people were caught in the mudslides," Fisher said. In the Los Angeles area, mud and debris flowed off a burned mountainside in suburban Burbank, and hail nearly 1.5 inches in diameter hit to the east in Arcadia. Hollywood Hills neighbourhoods were freckled with pea-size hail. Traffic accidents tied up freeways, including an apparently weather-related gasoline tanker crash and fire on Interstate 5 that killed the driver shortly before 0200 hrs. Flash flooding was a concern in areas denuded by big wildfires earlier this fall. The National Weather Service issued a flash flood warning for northern Los Angeles County, and warned of possible overflow in streams and other bodies of water in San Bernardino and Riverside counties. About 123,000 Southern California Edison customers had outages, mostly lasting from seconds to minutes, between late yesterday and this afternoon, when about 9,000 remained without electricity. Most of the outages were in Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino and Riverside counties, a utility spokesman said. In the city of Los Angeles, some 17,000 electricity customers experienced outages, the Department of Water and Power said. About 2,400 were still without power in the late afternoon.

BOLIVIA

London, Oct 18 -- A report, dated Oct 17, states: A moderate earthquake occurred at 1922, UTC, today. The magnitude 5.6 event has been located in La Paz, Bolivia, in lat 17.72S, long 69.34W. The hypocentral depth was estimated to be 95 km.

JAPAN

London, Oct 19 -- A report, dated today, states: A strong earthquake occurred at 1144, UTC, today. The magnitude 6.5 event has been located near the east coast of Honshu, Japan, lat 36.40N, long 140.85E, depth 37 km.

London, Oct 19 -- A magnitude 6.2 earthquake has rocked eastern Japan, shaking buildings in the capital Tokyo. There were no immediate reports of damage and Japan's Meteorological Agency said there was no risk of a tsunami. The earthquake was centred off the country's eastern coast, the agency said. The focus of the tremor was 40 km below the sea, off Ibaraki Prefecture, north-east of Tokyo, the agency said. According to Kyodo news agency, runways at Tokyo's Narita airport were temporarily shut but have now reopened. Some high-speed train services were also temporarily suspended.

NICARAGUA

London, Oct 18 -- A report, dated Oct 17, states: A moderate earthquake occurred at 2159, UTC, today. The magnitude 5.7 event has been located in Nicaragua in lat 11.63N, long 85.93W.

PAKISTAN

Karachi, Oct 14 -- Local press reports state that the earthquake which struck northern Pakistan and Azad Kashmir on Saturday (Oct 9) was a bigger catastrophe than last year's tsunami in terms of the number of people made homeless and the extent of destruction to infrastructure, a World Health Organisation official said yesterday. Hussein A. Gezairy, the organization's regional director, said the quake rendered 2.5 million people homeless as against 1.5 million displaced by the tsunami. Besides, another million people are in extreme grief, needing immediate help. Although relief efforts in the earthquake-stricken areas of Azad Kashmir and the NWFP gained pace, the government said yesterday it would not be possible to provide shelter to all survivors before winter sets in. The government updated death toll to 25,000 from 23,000 cited a day earlier, but said the figure was bound to rise after facts were known about the extent of damage in the Neelum and Jhelum valleys that had not been reached by authorities yet.

Tents and tarpaulin have disappeared from the market in the aftermath of the earthquake. Market sources in Peshawar said there was extreme shortage of tents, tarpaulin and other shelter items across the country. Even buyers and relief workers from Rawalpindi and other areas rushed to Peshawar to purchase tents for the survivors of the quake. Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz said yesterday his government planned to set up tented cities with all essential civic amenities to be followed up by model cities in areas devastated by the earthquake. The prime minister said at a press conference here soon after attending a meeting of the NWFP government to assess the damage caused by the natural calamity and take stock of the relief and rescue operations in the province. The United Nations is convening an emergency donors conference in Geneva next Thursday (Oct 20) to solicit more funds, citing lack of adequate response to its "flash appeal" from the international community. So far only \$5 million have been contributed to the appeal and another \$6 million committed, which is not enough said the Chief of Staff to the Undersecretary-General of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Hamsjoerg Strohmeier. An Indian relief train was due to cross the Wagah-Attari border yesterday night with a consignment of blankets, medicines and tents for the Azad Kashmir earthquake victims, official sources said. The Supreme Court yesterday ordered a halt to the construction activity of a luxury housing scheme near Islamabad and asked the government to consider revising the capital's construction regulations in the wake of Saturday's massive earthquake. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Oct 15 -- A press report, dated today, states: Pakistan's government has said it now believes more than 38,000 people were killed by the South Asian earthquake a week ago. That is an increase of more than 13,000 on its former estimate. At least 1,400 died in Indian-administered Kashmir. In some of the areas worst affected, heavy rain and strong winds temporarily grounded helicopter flights. Relief agencies expressed concern about the weather's effects on the homeless with children especially vulnerable. Pakistan military spokesman, Maj Gen Shaukat Sultan, said the death toll had been increased after confirmation of more fatalities in remote valleys and the badly-hit town of Balakot. President Pervez Musharraf said today the situation would worsen. "I think it will keep rising when we go into the valleys," he said. Pakistan has put the number of injured at more than 60,000. Interior Minister Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao said the number of homeless had now risen to around 3.3m. He said the quake had cost Pakistan \$5bn in infrastructure losses. Exactly one week after the 7.6 magnitude quake struck, 3,000 Muslim worshippers gathered in the country's largest

mosque, in Islamabad, for special prayers. "Oh Allah, give courage to those who survived this disaster to endure this hardship," the cleric read.

Karachi, Oct 15 -- Pakistan's northern areas are still receiving severe shocks after the mega earthquake on Oct 8. A moderate intensity earthquake was felt in the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad, and Peshawar, Abbotabad and Mansehra in northern area at 0038 today. According to Met Office, the tremor was of 5.1 on the Richter scale with its epicentre located 200 kilometres north of Peshawar in Hazara division. No loss of life or property was reported. Earlier, a minor jolt of 3.2 magnitudes on Richter scale was felt at 1026 yesterday night. Met office said such after shocks will continue for few more days. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent

Karachi, Oct 17 -- Saturday's earthquake in northern Pakistan has shocked the nation; 30,000 people have been killed, 43,000 have been injured, almost 2.5 million are in need of shelter and thousands more are still trapped under the rubble. President Gen Pervez Musharraf said on Saturday that he doubted that more survivors could be found from the devastating earthquake, adding the death toll was likely to rise beyond 38,000. There are still rescue operations going on, but they say technically after eight days, the chance of saving anybody is slim. Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz on Saturday said that the biggest challenge the government was facing one week after the devastating earthquake was providing shelter to millions of victims. The number one priority is shelter and tents, tents, he emphasized while briefing journalists on relief efforts at the PM House. He said shelter was a major concern, particularly in the wake of the snowfall received by the northern areas in the past 48 hours. An Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (Erra) has been established to rebuild infrastructure in the quake-affected areas. Lt-Gen Muhammad Zubair, engineer-in-chief of Pakistan Army, has been appointed chairman of Erra. Federal Minister for Education Lt-Gen (ret'd) Javed Ashraf Qazi has said that Pakistan Army has sufficient number of helicopters but not all of them can be utilized in the ongoing rescue and relief operations in the earthquake-stricken areas. Saudi Arabia on Saturday announced a \$133 million emergency aid package for rebuilding infrastructural projects in northern areas of Pakistan. King Abdullah gave orders for a grant worth 500 million riyals (\$133 million) to rebuild basic infrastructure installations, including schools, buildings, roads and hospitals, in the brother Islamic Republic of Pakistan, said a statement from the royal court. The federal government has approved a grand scheme of raising around 10,000 new houses in areas stricken by devastating earthquake for early rehabilitation of survivors. The project will be

completed in active collaboration with the UAE government, which has provided a sum of Rs500 million for this purpose. International and domestic entities have been pledging more assistance for the victims of October 8 victims in cash and kind. The Emirates Airlines joined in the relief efforts and transported more than 110 tonnes of cargo supplies from relief agencies to the affected areas by a special charter flight to Islamabad. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Oct 17 -- A press report, dated Oct 16, states: Air relief operations have been severely limited for Pakistan's earthquake survivors after heavy rains brought further misery to millions in desperate need of aid, officials and witnesses said. Helicopter and aircraft flights were held up from morning after the downpour. Balakot, which has been reduced to little more than a tent city, was turned into a bog with hundreds of items of donated clothes strewn on the ground. The rain stopped by late morning in northern Pakistan but the weather remained cloudy. A small number of helicopters were heard resuming in Balakot but only two helicopters operated in Muzaffarabad, capital of Pakistan-administered Kashmir where half of the victims died, an official said. Major Fayaz Ali said one helicopter, from the Aga Khan Foundation charity, dropped relief goods in villages. A German military chopper also managed to take engineers to the ravaged Neelum Valley to unblock a road and brought back injured people. In the capital Islamabad, an air force official said two C-130 transport aircraft with supplies were being sent to Muzaffarabad after the weather cleared. The almost completely cancellation of flights also came after Pakistan lost its first helicopter in the operation, an Mi-17 which crashed, killing six military personnel on Saturday (Oct 15). Maj Gen Sultan said it was not immediately clear whether the helicopter crashed because of bad weather or some technical fault. Flights were severely disrupted on Saturday by heavy rains and clouded weather. The cloudy skies are expected to clear up by tomorrow, said Arshad Mahmood, an official at the meteorological department in the northwest city of Peshawar. President Pervez Musharraf said that Pakistan remained in dire need of tents and blankets for the more than three million people made homeless by the Oct 8 earthquake. The earthquake killed 39,422 people and injured 65,038 others, national disaster response chief Major General Farooq Javed said, raising the confirmed death toll by nearly 1,500 people.

London, Oct 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: More than 1 million people may have lost their jobs in Pakistan as a result of the devastating earthquake there, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) says. The ILO says the October 8 disaster has compounded the grinding poverty that was already the daily lot

of many people in Pakistani Kashmir and North-West Frontier province. It says prior to the earthquake, each employed person in the region also supported at least two additional dependants, leaving more than 2 million affected by the economic impact of the disaster. The UN labour agency notes that an initial assessment conducted in the wake of the earthquake shows it had destroyed most infrastructure and shops in affected towns in the region. The earthquake has also caused heavy loss of livestock and agricultural implements, which are the mainstay in many rural areas. The ILO says the hardest hit areas are among the poorest in Pakistan, with millions of people living on less than \$2 a day even before the disaster. "By losing their employment, even for a short period of time, workers in the affected districts have likely already fallen into extreme poverty," ILO chief Juan Somavia said. Pakistan says 41,000 people are confirmed dead and another 67,000 injured in the disaster. About 2.5 million are left homeless. India has said more than 1,300 people died in its part of divided Kashmir.

London, Oct 19 -- A press report, dated Oct 18, states: Aid agencies expressed concern today at the slow international response to appeals for money to help victims of the Pakistan earthquake in which the United Nations says more than 32,000 children may have died. The Office for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), which co-ordinates U.N. relief work, said it had received only 5% of the \$272 million for which it appealed last week. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies - the world's largest disaster relief network -- said it had only 25% of the 73 million Swiss francs (\$56.72 million) sought. "We are worried that this trend will not allow us to fully support the Pakistan Red Crescent's ongoing relief operation to initially assist tens of thousands of families over the next four months," said Susan Johnson, director of operations at the Geneva-based Federation. The Federation usually receives pledges from donors for "more funds more quickly" for disasters of this magnitude, it said in a statement. The quake 10 days ago killed at least 41,000 people in Pakistan and injured more than 60,000. However, the UN Children's Fund, which was estimating 50-60% of the dead were children, said it feared more than 32,000 young people had died. Another 42,000 were injured. "People are coming down from the mountains saying villages and schools have been wiped out. It is more than 60%," said UNICEF spokesman Damien Personaz, although UNICEF had no overall death toll. "And this figure is going to rise. It is clear that children were the main victims." Besides the \$15 million received in cash, OCHA spokeswoman Elizabeth Byrs said the UN had some \$45 million in pledges. "We need this money as soon as possible in cash," she said. The lack of

money had not yet hurt the relief effort because international agencies were drawing on reserves to finance their operations, she added. Byrs said the UN appeal was only part of the international response and that some \$165 million had been raised elsewhere, including through direct bilateral donations from other states. Aid-in-kind -- donations of food, material and medicines -- were also not included in the UN figures, she added. The top priority was tents for the hundreds of thousands of people left without shelter as winter approaches in the mountainous region of northern Pakistan where the quake struck on Oct 8, Byrs said. Thousands of survivors were still living in the open in cold night temperatures, "some with open or gangrened injuries and with little access to clean water", the Federation said. Jan Egeland, U.N. Emergency Relief Co-ordinator, will chair a ministerial meeting in Geneva on Oct 26 to review relief aid to survivors in all stricken South Asian communities, OCHA said. The International Committee of the Red Cross increased its appeal ten-fold to 62 million Swiss francs (\$47.66 million), to help 150,000 victims survive the winter, a statement said. "This is a race against time," warned Antonella Notari, ICRC spokeswoman, noting that winter weather would soon make it impossible even for helicopters to reach some mountain valleys.

Muzaffarabad, Oct 19 -- Strong aftershocks rocked earthquake-shattered northern Pakistan this morning, but there were no immediate reports of more deaths or injuries. A 5.8 magnitude quake at 0733 hrs, the strongest of dozens of aftershocks since an Oct 8 earthquake devastated Pakistani Kashmir and adjoining North West Frontier Province, caused landslides and sent people into the streets. A second aftershock nearly as strong at 5.6 magnitude followed at 0816 hrs. The tremors were also felt across the frontier in Indian Kashmir. Landslides are what army engineers fear most, especially in Pakistani Kashmir's Neelum and Jhelum valleys where countless people remain cut off from help because roads were destroyed in one of the worst natural disasters Pakistan has suffered. Officers in charge of efforts to cut through the landslides say it will take weeks to reach the upper Neelum valley, in desperate need of aid in large quantities which helicopters cannot deliver. The new landslides could delay this further. Earthquake survivors in Pakistan were hopeful today that the old enemy, India, would let their kinfolk cross a ceasefire line to help them after President Pervez Musharraf made a surprise offer to allow free relief movement across the border for Kashmiris. India agreed promptly, but there was no immediate word on when the two sides would sit down to work how it could be implemented. "We will allow every Kashmiri to come across the Line of Control and assist in the reconstruction effort," Musharraf said

as Pakistan's toll rose to 42,000 from a quake which left more than a million homeless and 67,000 injured. India itself also suffered in the quake, with at least 1,300 confirmed dead on the Indian side of the border. But roads are badly damaged and so is a bridge at the solitary border crossing, so it was not immediately clear how long it would take to set up any movement across the frontier. Since the earthquake, both governments have been criticised for letting ingrained distrust get in the way of opening up new routes to get relief supplies to beleaguered communities cut off in the Neelum and Jhelum valleys near the Line of Control. Pakistan, while accepting other aid from India, refuses to let Indian troops join in the rescue work on Pakistani soil, even though its own soldiers struggle to clear the way into the valleys and areas too narrow for helicopters to fly into safely. Pakistan still needs more helicopters to drop supplies and bring out casualties, but it asked India for helicopters without crews, as it meant flying over a region at the center of two of three wars India and Pakistan have fought. New Delhi refused to accept the precondition. "We have accepted all assistance except military men coming across and one should not grudge that," Musharraf said. "Other than that we have accepted everything. They want to give us financial aid, they want to give us medicines, they want to give us relief goods," he said. "Already we have accepted," he added. Major-General Farooq Ahmed Khan, federal relief commissioner and Musharraf's point man in the crisis, said that aside from the need for winter-proof tents, Pakistan desperately needed at least 100,000 anti-tetanus shots. Thousands of survivors were still living in the open in cold night temperatures, "some with open or gangrenous injuries and with little access to clean water", the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies said. -- Reuters.

London, Oct 20 -- A press report, dated Oct 19, states: Pakistan today raised its confirmed death toll in the Oct 8 earthquake by around 6,000 to nearly 48,000. Major-General Farooq Ahmed Khan, the federal relief commissioner who is in overall charge of the relief effort, said 47,723 people were known to have died in Pakistan. Another 1,300 were killed in Indian Kashmir.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

London, Oct 14 -- A magnitude-5.8 earthquake occurred in New Ireland region, Papua New Guinea at 2204, UTC, Oct 13.

TAIWAN

London, Oct 17 -- A press report, dated Oct 16, states: A large earthquake struck offshore northeast of Taiwan this morning but no injuries or damage were immediately reported on the island. The 7.0-magnitude quake, with an undersea depth of 118 miles, hit at 2351, local time, in the

East China Sea. No Tsunami occurred due to the strong quake but buildings and homes were reported to sway back and forth for a few minutes during the peak of the quake. No other reports are currently available from the region on the damage.

TURKEY

London, Oct 17 -- A press report, dated today, states: Two strong undersea earthquakes shook a major port city in western Turkey today, damaging buildings and injuring at least six people, officials and news reports said. The earthquakes, which registered preliminary magnitudes of 5.7 and 5.9, struck at 0845 hrs and 1247 hrs, said Gulay Barbarasoglu, head of the Istanbul-based Kandilli Observatory. Both were centred in the bay of Sigacik, about 30 miles southwest of Izmir, Turkey's third-largest city with a population of about three million. Three people were injured in Izmir when they jumped from windows or balconies in panic, local officials said. Another three people were injured in nearby Urla, the Anatolia news agency reported. There were no immediate reports of damage in the ancient city of Ephesus, about 60 miles south of Izmir. The first quake caused the walls of some houses to collapse and shattered windows in Urla, west of Izmir, private NTV television said. Mayor Selcuk Karaosmanoglu told Anatolia the quake toppled some chimneys in the village of Bademler and cracked some buildings in the town centre. The second quake caused further damage, smashing windows, witnesses said. Authorities evacuated schools and in some areas broadcast music through loudspeakers to calm panicking students. Authorities later decided to close schools for two days. Scientists warned there could be more quakes and aftershocks during the next few days and urged residents to stay away from damaged buildings. The quakes also shook the Greek islands of Chios, Samos and Icaria, but no damages or injuries were reported. The Athens Geodynamic Institute gave a different measurement of the first quake's strength, saying it had a magnitude of 6.

Political & Civil Unrest



AFGHANISTAN

Kabul, Oct 12 -- A rocket exploded outside the residence of the Canadian ambassador in the Afghan capital early today, wounding a guard, while a second damaged a government building, police said. The pre-dawn attacks came hours before a visit by U.S. Secretary for State Condoleezza Rice to the capital for talks with President Hamid Karzai and other Afghan officials. The residence is

tucked away behind a heavily fortified street of the diplomatic enclave, about one km from the presidential palace, the U.S. embassy and headquarters for the NATO-led peacekeeping mission. The second rocket landed inside an intelligence department office not far from the palace, police said, adding no one was wounded but that it had caused some damage. Residents said another rocket had hit elsewhere in the city, but this could not be immediately confirmed. -- Reuters.

London, Oct 14 -- A press report, dated today, states: A bomb ripped through eight fuel tankers parked outside a US-led coalition base in southern Afghanistan today and injured two drivers, officials and eyewitnesses said. All the tankers were destroyed and clouds of black smoke poured over the Kandahar Airfield, the main base for the US-led coalition in southern Afghanistan, before the fires were extinguished. Afghan army commander Gen. Mohammed Sarwar said a bomb was believed to have been hidden in one of the tankers. US military spokeswoman Sgt. Marina Evans confirmed that some fuel tankers had been hit by a blast and had caught fire, but said the tankers belonged to the Afghan army and had been driving passed the base when one hit a land mine.

Kandahar, Oct 17 -- Taliban guerrillas shot dead a pro-government cleric in southern Afghanistan, a government official said today, the second killing of a religious figure in three days. Hours before gunning down Mohammad Gul yesterday, the Taliban shot dead Mohammad Dawood, a provincial intelligence chief, officials said. Dawood's body guard was also killed and two other officials were wounded, they added. Gul, a member of 'Shuraye Ulema', or clerics' council, was killed as he walked home after prayers at a mosque in Lashkargah, the provincial capital of Helmand province, the official said. Gul's killing came after a bomb exploded in a mosque in the eastern Khost province on Friday (Oct 14), killing Mullah Ahmad Khan, another pro-government cleric. Officials blamed the bombing on the Taliban. Qari Mohammad Yousuf, a spokesman for the Taliban confirmed that the guerrillas had killed Dawood, but said he had no information about Gul's murder. -- Reuters.

London, Oct 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: US-led coalition forces killed four police officers after mistaking them for militants during an operation in southern Afghanistan, a provincial spokesman said today. The coalition said it could not confirm the incident and was investigating. Coalition troops opened fire at the police in Kandahar province's Maywand district late yesterday after spotting the officers firing their weapons into the air and mistaking them for Taliban rebels, Kandahar Gov. Asadullah Khalid said. He said the shooting occurred while the coalition forces were hunting for

militants thought to be in the area. A fifth officer was injured in the shooting, and five police fled the area but were later found, he said. It was not immediately clear why the police were firing into the air. A district government chief had earlier said that Taliban rebels attacked the police, but Khalid said this was not true. US military spokeswoman Sgt. Marina Evans said investigators were looking into the shooting but that she could not confirm it involved coalition forces. If confirmed, it would be the second such case in recent weeks. US forces mistakenly killed four police during an operation in neighbouring Helmand province earlier this month. Meanwhile, a roadside bomb exploded today on the main road linking Kandahar to the western city of Herat, wounding three Afghan guards working for an American security company, Khalid said. In violence elsewhere, militants shot dead a police intelligence officer as he was walking in Zabul province, while separately police arrested six suspected Taliban insurgents in a raid on a house in the region, officials said.

Kabul, Oct 19 -- Taliban insurgents in Afghanistan killed a district chief and a school headmaster in the volatile southern province of Kandahar, a government spokesman said today. The head of Arghandab district was gunned down in a mosque late yesterday evening and Haji Abdul Lalai, a headmaster in another district, was shot dead earlier in the day, said interior ministry spokesman Yousuf Stanezai. They were the latest in a series of attacks blamed on the Taliban. The killings came hours after a roadside bomb in Kandahar killed two Afghans and wounded three others who worked for a US security firm called USPI. Taliban militants have increased attacks this month, killing over 20 Afghan troops, several US soldiers, five local aid workers and three pro-government clerics.

ALGERIA

Algiers, Oct 18 -- Algerian Islamic militants shot dead two policemen and wounded a third, stepping up attacks during the holy month of Ramadan despite a government offer of amnesty for hundreds of rebels, newspapers reported today. Two rebels armed with Kalashnikov assault rifles opened fire on the policemen on Sunday night (Oct 16) near a mosque in the Bouira province, some 110 km east of Algiers, national dailies "Le Soir d'Algerie" and "El Khabar" said. In a referendum on Sep 29, Algerians backed a government offer of partial amnesty for rebels fighting for a purist Islamic state, in a drive to end more than a decade of civil war that has killed more than 150,000 people. The Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), Algeria's largest outlawed militant movement, has rejected the offer, according to an Internet statement. -- Reuters.

COLOMBIA

Bogota, Oct 11 -- Colombian police dismantled grenade launchers pointed at the presidential palace late today that they said rebels had placed there, a day after one of the president's top congressional allies survived a car bombing. Tipped off by neighbours, police found eight grenades and launchers in a working class area of central Bogota from which the rebels fired similar explosives at President Alvaro Uribe's inauguration in 2002 that killed 21 people. "The launchers were pointed north and that's where the presidential palace is," said Metropolitan Police Commander Luis Gomez Heredia. Yesterday's car bomb and today's seizure came days before the Constitutional Court was expected to decide whether to allow Uribe, popular among most Colombians but detested by the country's Marxist insurgents, to run for re-election. The constitution bars re-election for presidents but congress approved an amendment last year allowing re-election. It must be now approved by the constitutional court. Analysts say the rebels are out to show Uribe's tough security policies are not paying off ahead of May's presidential election. -- Reuters.

Bogota, Oct 16 -- Seven Colombian soldiers and seven rebels were killed in combat near the Panama border, the army said today, part of a pre-election wave of violence that last week put the military on high alert. More than 60 hours of combat in northwest Colombia, during which Marxist guerrillas tried to capture about 200 soldiers, ended today when the insurgents were chased away by helicopter gunships. "Unfortunately, we lost men but we did a lot of damage to the bandits and, most importantly, we were able to protect the civilian population," armed forces commander Carlos Alberto Ospina told reporters. The army went on alert on Wednesday (Oct 12) against rebel attacks after soldiers seized 155 pounds of explosives near the capital, Bogota, a day after mortars were found pointed at the presidential palace and two days after a key Senate ally of President Alvaro Uribe survived a car bomb. -- Reuters.

London, Oct 19 -- A press report, dated Oct 18, states: Fearful drivers stayed off roads and highways today in north-east Colombia due to an armed blockade -- now in its third week -- imposed by rebels who have set fire to buses, blown up bridges, and killed police officers. The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, on Oct 3 used flyers and clandestine radio stations to warn drivers to stay off roads in the oil-rich state of Arauca. During the first week, rebels torched at least four vehicles that defied the travel ban. Government forces have brought in reinforcements but so far the state's roads have been mostly devoid of traffic, police said. "There is fear, and so transportation is paralyzed between towns even though the army and police are offering complete guarantees (of safety)," state police

chief Col Rodrigo Palacio said. Suspected FARC fighters yesterday also shot and killed a town hall official in Arauquita, 240 miles north-east of Bogota, said Arauca state Gov Luis Enrique Acosta. There have been several firefights in recent days in Arauca as government forces try to push the rebels away from populated areas. Two police officers were killed last week. Despite the announced blockade, Los Angeles-based Occidental Petroleum has continued to operate normally at its army-protected oil field in Arauca, officials said.

London, Oct 20 -- A press report, dated Oct 19, states: Colombia's Constitutional Court has ruled that President Alvaro Uribe can stand for re-election next year, overturning a single-term limit. Opinion polls currently make the right-wing Mr Uribe a clear favourite. Mr Uribe had argued for a change in the law, saying he needs four more years to implement his tough policies against Colombia's left-wing guerrilla groups. Opponents of the move said allowing re-election in Colombia would give presidents too much power. Judges took almost a month to reach the decision, after examining 18 challenges to the amendment. "The court decided to declare as reasonable within the Constitution the legislative act allowing the re-election of the president of the republic," Constitutional Court President Manuel Jose Cepeda said. There are, however, fears that leftist guerrillas, who are desperate to avert another four years of Mr Uribe, will escalate a campaign of violence. The president now has to wait for the court to approve a second law which will set out rules for sitting presidents running for re-election. The decision is expected sometime in November.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

London, Oct 11 -- A press report, dated today, states: Suspected rebels from Rwanda have massacred 25 people and wounded several others with machetes during a night raid on their village in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Sud-Kivu acting governor Didace Kaningini says "we don't know exactly how many deaths there were but the people say they have already picked up 25 bodies" in Kaniola village after the attack late in the night on Sunday (Oct 9). But the UN mission in DRC, which is known as MONUC, puts the confirmed number of people killed in two hamlets in the Kaniola area of south Kivu at 15. Officials say 12 have been wounded. (See issue of Oct 7.)

Bunia, Oct 12 -- The Congolese army will crush militia in the lawless eastern Ituri region before the end of the year, allowing thousands of displaced civilians to return home, the general in charge of operations said today. General Bob Ngoie said he received a third brigade of 3,000 troops in recent weeks and the army was fanning out from Ituri's major towns into the countryside of the war-

racked country. Aid workers say tens of thousands of displaced people are already trickling home. Some 100,000 civilians fled to cholera-stricken camps when fighting flared earlier this year. "By the end of December, we will have put an end to the militia," Ngoie told Reuters. "We are carrying out operations sometimes with U.N. troops, other times by ourselves, in order to recuperate the whole of Ituri." During the past six years, over 60,000 civilians have been killed in Ituri. Clashes between ethnic groups and fighting between militias over mining and taxation have continued despite a vast U.N. peacekeeping operation. Although the Democratic Republic of Congo's war ended two years ago, Kinshasa has struggled to stamp its authority on the remote mineral-rich district. Neighbouring Uganda is accused of supporting gunmen there. Over 15,000 militiamen have joined a U.N. disarmament programme but Ngoie said an estimated 3,500 gunmen remained and had abandoned ethnic rivalries to protect their common interests of mining and taxing civilians. A group uniting these fighters was established in Uganda in June. While analysts and diplomats believe it receives supplies and advice from Kampala, the U.N. and the Congolese army have not found concrete evidence of this. "For now, we will try to control the interior and let people go home. Then we will move into controlling the borders," Ngoie said, referring to the region's frontier with Uganda and Rwanda. During recent months, aid workers say over 20,000 civilians have gone back to their fields or returned to fish on Lake Albert, a stretch of water that separates Congo and Uganda. "The deployment of the army has helped improve the situation and encouraged people to start going home," Modibo Traore, the head of the U.N.'s office for the coordination of humanitarian affairs in Ituri, told Reuters. Traore said that as security returned, civilians worked in their fields during the day but returned to the camps to sleep and collect food handed out by aid workers. "So, after August, we also decided to stop food distributions so as to not create a dependence on aid. Instead, we are trying to get activities going in the areas that people are going back to," he added. As well as trying to pacify Congo's lawless east, the government and nearly 17,000 U.N. peacekeepers are also charged with organising elections by the end of June next year. -- Reuters.

ETHIOPIA-ERITREA

Asmara, Oct 18 -- The United Nations will not end its peacekeeping mission on the Eritrean-Ethiopian border despite the Eritrean ban on its use of helicopters, the UN chief's special representative in the area said today. In remarks that appeared to back down from UN Secretary General Kofi Annan's threat yesterday to pull out if the ban continued, Legwaila Joseph Legwaila said: "We are going to stay here and do what we can with the

little we have remaining in terms of our resources. "We are not about to withdraw from the mission." Annan warned yesterday the UN might end its peacekeeping mission if Eritrea continued this month's ban on helicopter flights, which reduces the UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE)'s ability to monitor military movements. UN officials have received no explanation from Eritrea for the helicopter restrictions. UNMEE officials say they have seen no significant military changes on the ground, but that helicopter restrictions prevent monitoring of more than 55% of the border region. -- Reuters.

INDIA

Srinagar, Oct 18 -- Indian Kashmir's junior education minister, Ghulam Nabi Lone, was shot and killed in a raid on his home by Muslim militants today in the region's main city of Srinagar, police said. Police said an unspecified number of militants scaled the wall of the 53-year-old minister's house from an adjoining house belonging to a communist lawmaker in the Kashmir assembly and one of them shot Lone. After shooting Lone, the militants threw grenades at police guards, killing two policemen and wounding a civilian, they added. One militant was killed when police returned fire. A police officer said shots were still being exchanged in the area near Srinagar's main civil secretariat. Scores of policemen have surrounded the high-security area where lawmakers, bureaucrats and ministers live. -- Reuters.

INDONESIA

Jakarta, Oct 14 -- Former rebels in Indonesia's Aceh province handed over their weapons to foreign monitors today as the second stage of arms decommissioning began under a landmark truce aimed at ending one of Asia's longest conflicts. Members of the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) plan to lay down over 100 weapons, including grenade launchers and semi-automatic rifles, at several locations in North Aceh regency where foreign monitors are ready to destroy them with heavy-duty automatic saws. The first round of decommissioning of GAM weapons in September exceeded the target, yielding some 240 arms, while Indonesia pulled out 1,500 policemen and around 6,500 soldiers. Under the Finnish-mediated peace agreement, GAM needs to surrender 840 weapons to the peace observers by year-end. Indonesia, which had more than 30,000 soldiers and 15,000 policemen in Aceh before the truce, is required to trim its Aceh forces to no more than 14,700 soldiers and 9,100 police. In the second stage of decommissioning, which may take four days, GAM must surrender around 210 weapons. "According to (the truce), we have to lay down 25 percent ... 210 weapons. Around 120 weapons will be handed over in several spots in North Aceh today. We are preparing other locations for the coming days,"

GAM military spokesman Sofyan Dawood told Jakarta-based Radio Elshinta. Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM) chief Pieter Feith has said that in return Indonesia plans to withdraw 1,300 policemen and 6,500 soldiers from October 14 to 24. Among those going will be units from the army's feared Kopassus special forces, he said. The 226-strong unarmed AMM mission comprising European and Southeast Asian monitors has the task of ensuring parties stick to the August 15 peace agreement signed in Helsinki. -- Reuters.

Jakarta, Oct 17 -- Indonesia's military will begin withdrawing 6,000 more soldiers from Aceh this week under the second phase of a landmark peace pact ending one of Asia's longest conflicts, a spokesman said today. Aceh military spokesman Erie Soetiko said 650 troops would leave the province tomorrow, the same day the armed forces expect former rebels of the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) to complete the second phase of its weapons handover. Troops tomorrow would leave from the port town of Lhokseumawe and the second phase should be finished by October 24, he said. Among those going will be units from the army's feared Kopassus special forces. Former rebels began handing over weapons to foreign monitors on Friday (Oct 14) under the second stage of arms decommissioning. Faye Belnis, a spokeswoman for the Aceh Monitoring Mission, said the second phase would be finished this week, although she did not say when. She said while GAM had handed in 235 weapons, some 50 had been disqualified for not meeting agreed criteria. "We are hoping to do another session this week," she said. -- Reuters. (See issue of Oct 17.)

Lhokseumawe, Indonesia, Oct 18 -- Indonesia's military began pulling more soldiers from Aceh Province today as former rebels completed a handover of weapons under the second phase of a landmark peace pact. Four battalions, or 2,163 troops, began leaving today. The pullout coincided with former rebels of the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) meeting their quota of weapons to be given to foreign peace monitors as part of the Aug 15 peace deal that ended one of Asia's longest running conflicts. A military spokesman had earlier said only 650 troops would leave Aceh today, the first batch of 6,000 soldiers to withdraw over the coming week. However, officials said the number of troops leaving today had been increased. One vessel carrying two battalions left for the region of Sulawesi where some reinforcements had come from. Another was expected to leave soon, the military said. The second phase of the troop pullout should be finished by Oct 24, the military has said. -- Reuters.

London, Oct 20 -- A press report, dated today, states: Indonesian police say they have arrested two more men in connection with their probe into the Oct 1 suicide bombings on the resort island of Bali. The pair was arrested

on Tuesday in the town of Tomohon in North Sulawesi province after a tip-off from local residents, police spokesman Sunarko Danu Ardanto said. He said the unnamed suspects, aged 24 and 27, had been taken to the provincial police headquarters in the capital Manado for up to seven days of questioning to determine if they played a role in the bombings. At least 23 people, including four Australians and three suicide bombers, were killed in the attacks on restaurants in Kuta and at Jimbaran Beach. Officials suspect the masterminds are Malaysians Noordin Mohammad Top and Azahari bin Husin, leading members of the Islamic group Jemaah Islamiah (JI). Noordin and Azahari are also believed to have played key roles in the first Bali blasts which killed 202 people, including 88 Australians, and in deadly suicide attacks at a Jakarta hotel and the Australian embassy. Experts have suggested they could be creating their own force after splitting from JI's mainstream command structure, which is concerned about heavy Muslim casualties from the bombings.

IRAQ

London, Oct 12 -- A press report, dated today, states: One of Iraq's main Sunni Arab parties will endorse the country's new constitution in Saturday's (Oct 15) crucial referendum, a spokesman has said. The Iraqi Islamic party's Ayad Sammarai said Shia and Kurd leaders would review the charter after December's elections, but a spokesman for the main Shia alliance denied that a deal had been struck and said parliament would meet today to discuss the proposals. Mr Sammarai told AFP news agency: "There was an agreement and we are calling for a 'yes' vote." But a spokesman for the United Iraqi Alliance - a Shia grouping which is the largest bloc in the parliament - said that the National Assembly would meet at 1900 hrs (1600 UTC) to discuss a possible deal, which had not yet been agreed. Shia and Kurdish negotiators have endorsed the document, but negotiators from the Sunni minority have so far refused to put their names to it. If voters in just three of Iraq's 18 provinces muster a two-thirds majority against the constitution, it will fail. The Sunnis are dominant in four provinces and so therefore effectively hold a power of veto. However, correspondents say it will be difficult to attain such a vote and it is likely the constitution will be approved. In other developments, yesterday, the UK Government said it is willing to pay compensation for the casualties and damage caused in Iraq when two British undercover soldiers were freed. During clashes on Sep 19, the Army stormed a Basra police station. The British consulate and a committee of Basra's council issued a statement announcing the offer and expressing regret at the casualties. British opposition MPs voiced concern at the move, stressing support for the actions

of UK troops. Several Iraqis were killed or wounded when the police station walls were knocked down, and in a demonstration in Basra. The joint statement said: "We regret the incidents that took place in Basra on Sep 19 at the Serious Crimes Unit. "We also regret the casualties on both sides and the material damage to public facilities. The British government is prepared to pay valid claims for compensation for casualties and material damage in the well-established manner." The local council in Basra had demanded compensation and an apology before it would agree to resume co-operation with British forces. Joint patrols between the British Army and local police have since been curtailed. In another incident, a group of unidentified gunmen opened fire at a convoy of a Sunni minister in western Baghdad today, wounding seven people, police said. "Unknown armed men ambushed the convoy of Saad al-Hardan, minister of state for provinces affairs, in the morning in the district of Yarmouk, near Um al-Tubol mosque," Captain Ahmed Abdullah from Baghdad police told Xinhua. Seven people were wounded in the attack, including four Hardan's bodyguards, Abdullah said. Hardan, a cabinet member, comes from Dulaim tribe, the largest tribe in the vast western Anbar province.

London, Oct 12 -- A press report, dated today, states: An explosion shut down an oil pipeline near the northern Iraqi city of Beiji today, a police official said. The pipeline transports oil from the northern oil center of Kirkuk to refineries in Beiji, from where it is pumped via the country's export pipeline to the port of Ceyhan in Turkey. The blast occurred early today at Fatiha, 10 miles northeast of the Beiji refinery, said Mattshar Abdullah, who works on a special Iraqi police force set up to guard oil pipelines and refineries. The Kirkuk-Beiji pipeline is critical to Iraq's oil export operations. Once Beiji refinery's crude oil needs are met, excess amounts are pumped through a separate export pipeline to Turkey. That line is only intermittently open, however, since incessant insurgent sabotage has shuttered it regularly since the U.S.-led invasion in 2003. Today's explosion is the third suspected sabotage attack against a northern pipeline in the past week, Dow Jones Newswires reported. Similar blasts have damaged pipelines in Ishaqi, near Samarra, and Debbs, near Kirkuk.

London, Oct 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: Five US soldiers have been killed by a roadside bomb in Ramadi, west of Baghdad, the US military said in a statement. The statement gave no details beyond saying the soldiers were assigned to the 2nd Marine Division. The soldiers' deaths came as some 10 million Iraqis headed to the polls to vote on a referendum on a draft constitution. Although there were reports of heavy fighting in Ramadi, the capital

Baghdad witnessed the lowest level of violence in months. Today, Ramadi residents reported that heavy fighting continued in the city with US warplanes bombing areas in the east. Doctor Bassem al-Dulaimi at Ramadi hospital said he had received 25 dead and eight wounded and said relatives had told him the victims had been hit in aerial bombardments. Residents reported heavy gunfire and clashes in central and eastern parts of the city. The US military said it had no immediate information on any operations or clashes in the area. In Falluja 50km west of Baghdad, two Iraqi soldiers were killed and three wounded when armed men hurled grenades in a market area, police officer Sami Muhammed said today. US forces killed 10 fighters in Karabila, 300km west of Baghdad, the US military said.

Baghdad, Oct 17 -- U.S. fighter jets and attack helicopters killed around 70 suspected militants in a series of air strikes in and near the western Iraqi city of Ramadi yesterday, a military statement said today. The military said 20 men were killed when a U.S. warplane dropped a precision-guided bomb on a group of militants who were attempting to place a roadside bomb east of Ramadi. About 50 other suspected insurgents were killed in a series of other clashes around the city that involved U.S. helicopter gunships, F-18 fighters and ground troops. The U.S. statement said there were no reports of any U.S. or civilian casualties in the operation, but a local doctor said yesterday that more than two dozen local residents had died. Residents reported heavy gunfire and clashes in central and eastern parts of the city throughout yesterday. Separately, the U.S. military said five U.S. soldiers had been killed by a roadside bomb in Ramadi on Saturday (Oct 15). -- Reuters.

Baghdad, Oct 18 -- Iraqi officials checking results from some regions in Saturday's (Oct 15) constitutional referendum said today the audit did not imply fraud in the voting. Iraq's Electoral Commission said yesterday it would follow international practice by examining "unusually high" results from provinces which recorded margins of 90 percent or more in favour or against the new draft constitution. The statement fuelled debate over the bitterly fought referendum, with some Sunni Arab leaders suggesting the Shi'ite- and Kurdish-led government had fiddled with numbers to ensure passage of the U.S.-backed charter. But Commission member Farid Ayar said today that lopsided turnouts were not unexpected in Iraq, where historic sectarian divisions have been exacerbated by months of bloody ethnic and communal violence, polarising local results. "It's not surprising where you have 95 percent, for example, in Najaf ... but we have to check," Ayar told Reuters, referring a mainly Shi'ite southern province. "If there is any result over 90 percent it is better to

investigate those again." Partial results indicate a solid win for the constitution, despite fierce opposition among minority Sunni Arabs who fear it will seal their political eclipse in a country they once dominated under Saddam Hussein. A two-thirds "No" vote in three of Iraq's 18 provinces would block the charter. But it appeared that only two provinces had voted "No" by that margin, making the chances of a veto remote. Election officials say the final tally may be days away, but privately say the constitution probably passed in a referendum that was largely peaceful despite widespread fears of violence. Early results showed big regional splits. Shi'ite-dominated southern provinces, including Najaf and Kerbala, saw support for the constitution at 85-95 percent, while the heavily Kurdish province of Sulaimaniya reported a 98-percent "Yes" vote. Provinces in the Sunni heartlands of central Iraq rejected the charter, with Salahaddin -- Saddam's home province -- returning a 70-percent "No" vote and the restive city of Falluja in Anbar province reporting 99 percent of voters voting "No". But the northern province of Nineveh around the city of Mosul, seen as the Sunnis' best hope for a third "No", fell well short of the required two-thirds majority, a senior Iraqi official said. Iraqi non-governmental groups who monitored the vote said they had observed some violations at polls in Shi'ite, Sunni and Kurdish areas but nothing that would affect the overall result. Maad al-Jibouri of the Iraqi Organisation for Free Elections, said the results in Nineveh, under scrutiny amid Sunni charges, denied by Kurds, that Kurds packed the province with voters to defeat the "No" vote, were also problematic. Referendum observers also reported some problems in Baghdad, where the volatile communal mix made results hard to predict. Abdul Rahman al-Mashhadani, head of the Hamourabi Human Rights Organisation, said the recent agreement by Shi'ite and Kurdish leaders to consider amendments to the constitution to appease Sunni groups may have helped reduce the "No" vote. The Electoral Commission said it was examining all alleged irregularities and would not rush to declare the final tally. "We are reviewing all of the numbers that we have received which are statistically unusual. We will investigate all complaints fully. This is a normal procedure for ensuring a fair and transparent election," a Commission statement said. -- Reuters.

London, Oct 19 -- A British soldier was killed by a roadside bomb in Iraq late yesterday night, the Ministry of Defense said. A ministry spokesman told Reuters the soldier had died in Basra "as a result of injuries sustained from a roadside bomb at 2323 hrs. We will be revealing more details once next of kin have been informed." "This brings the (British military) death toll in Iraq to 97. Of

those, 64 died as result of hostile action," he said. Britain currently has more than 8,000 troops in southern Iraq. -- Reuters. (See issue of Oct 19.)

Baghdad, Oct 19 -- Two Iraqi police commandos were killed and three wounded when security forces clashed with insurgents in western Baghdad today, police said. The fighting broke out in Baghdad's Gazaliya district which is known as a bastion of the Sunni insurgency. In Falluja, in the Sunni province of Anbar west of the capital, two Iraqi soldiers were killed and two wounded by a roadside bomb, an army officer said. -- Reuters.

London, Oct 20 -- A press report, dated today, states: Three US Army soldiers were killed and one was wounded by a roadside bomb in northern Iraq, the military said today. The blast hit the Task Force Liberty 42nd Infantry Division combat patrol about 1945 yesterday near Balad, 50 miles north of Baghdad, the military said.

London, Oct 20 -- A press report, dated today, states: Suspected insurgents using explosives set fire to the main oil pipeline in northern Iraq today, officials said. The pipeline links an oil field in the northern city of Kirkuk to Iraq's largest oil refinery in Beiji, 155 miles north of Baghdad. The explosion occurred about 0500 hrs, setting fire to the pipeline and several oil valves about 35 miles west of Kirkuk, said firefighter Adil Mohammed. "The damage is 100% and we've haven't been able to control the fire yet," he said. An official with the Northern Oil Co, which operates the pipeline and the refinery, confirmed the attack.

ISRAEL

Gaza, Oct 10 -- Israeli soldiers shot dead three Palestinians near the Israel-Gaza frontier today, Palestinian medics said, while internal violence in Gaza intensified as militants and policemen engaged in a gunfight. The Israeli army said troops spotted three Palestinians crawling near the Gaza border fence, with one carrying a bag. Suspecting it contained explosives, the soldiers shot at the Palestinians after they failed to heed calls to stop. It was unclear whether the men were armed at the time of the shooting. Palestinians later found and brought their bodies to a Palestinian hospital, medics said. Elsewhere in Gaza, two militants and a Palestinian security officer were wounded in a gunfight in Gaza City in the latest internal Palestinian violence that has increased in Gaza since Israel's pullout last month. Witnesses said the clash erupted when bodyguards of a Palestinian security official tried to stop a car carrying militants from the Popular Resistance Committees. When they refused to pull over, the men opened fire at the gunmen, sparking a gunfight, which intensified when militants from the group and more security forces came to reinforce their comrades. One militant was arrested, a security source said. -- Reuters.

Gaza, Oct 12 -- Palestinian gunmen

briefly kidnapped an American reporter and a British photographer in Gaza today in the latest sign of growing lawlessness in the coastal strip following Israel's pullout last month. The two men working for Knight Ridder newspapers were seized by assailants who stopped their car near the town of Khan Younis and took them away at gunpoint. Seven hours later, Jerusalem-based American correspondent Dion Nissenbaum and British photographer Adam Pletts were freed after Palestinian officials made contact with the kidnappers and security forces mounted a search, officials said. The gunmen belonged to a little-known group calling itself the Black Panther, an armed, breakaway faction of President Mahmoud Abbas's mainstream Fatah movement, militant sources said. Mystery surrounded the motive behind the abduction. Palestinian Police Chief Ala Hosni described the kidnappers as a "gang" representing local clans and said they made "silly demands not worth mentioning". But the abduction in broad daylight was another reflection of the challenge Abbas faces in ending armed disorder on the streets of Gaza. A number of foreign journalists and aid workers have been abducted in Gaza in recent months by militants pressing demands for jobs, the release of arrested comrades or an end to official corruption. All have been freed, usually within hours. Abbas, under pressure from Israel and Washington to do more to disarm militants, has tried to persuade gunmen to give up their weapons, but has made little progress. -- Reuters.

Jerusalem, Oct 17 -- Israel is suspending security contacts with the Palestinian Authority after Palestinian gunmen killed three Jewish settlers in a drive-by shooting in the West Bank, an Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman said today. Israeli officials are demanding that a Palestinian crackdown on militants after yesterday's attack. "As a result of yesterday's attacks we are taking defensive action on the ground to prevent future occurrences," Foreign Ministry spokesman Mark Regev said. "There is also a temporary suspension of contacts between the Defense Ministry and military personnel and Palestinian counterparts." Israeli officials said yesterday night that the army would re-impose some restrictions on Palestinian movement in the West Bank that had been lifted as part of rapprochement efforts in recent months. A Defense Ministry source said troops would encircle major West Bank cities and require that Palestinians travel between them by public transportation only, rather than private cars. Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, an armed wing of President Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah faction, claimed responsibility for the shootings outside Gush Etzion settlement bloc and Eli settlement, the bloodiest of their kind in four months. Three settlers died in the Gush Etzion attack and four other Israelis were hurt, medics said. Minutes later,

Palestinian gunmen fired on a junction outside Eli, wounding two settlers. In the far north of the West Bank yesterday, troops shot dead an Islamic Jihad militant commander after he opened fire on them, Palestinian witnesses and Israeli military sources said. -- Reuters.

ITALY

London, Oct 15 -- Masked gunmen believed to be Mafiosi shot dead a senior southern Italian politician as he was leaving a polling station today in the worst killing of its kind in the region in 16 years. Police said two gunmen shot Francesco Fortugno, 54-year-old vice president of the regional government of the southern Calabria region, just minutes after he had voted in a national primary. The killing cast a pall over the primaries, called to choose who will lead the center left in the contest against Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's government in next year's general election. The gunmen shot Fortugno, a member of a center-left party, five times as he left the polling station in the town of Locri. Police and politicians said the shooting bore the hallmarks of the 'Ndrangheta, the Calabrian version of the Sicilian Mafia. They did not yet know the motive. "He should not have died like this. He was a meek person, a Catholic who led his political life with great human gentleness," Calabria region President Agazio Loiero said. The killing sent shockwaves though Italy and was condemned by leaders from President Carlo Azeglio Ciampi on down. Interior Minister Giuseppe Pisanu said he would fly to Calabria on Monday morning to assess the law and order situation. Alfonso Pecoraro Scanio, head of the Greens party, condemned the killing as "barbarous" and called for stepped-up measures against organized crime. He was the most senior public figure killed in the Calabria region since 1989, when gunmen shot dead the former president of the state railway, Ludovico Ligato. In recent years, investigators say the 'Ndrangheta has evolved to overtake the Sicilian Mafia to become the most dangerous crime organization in southern Italy, making much of its money from drugs trafficking. Petty killings are not uncommon among Italy's three main organized crime groups, but high-profile political assassinations have become increasingly rare. -- Reuters.

IVORY COAST

United Nations, Oct 14 -- The U.N. Security Council today endorsed an African Union plan to extend the Ivory Coast peace process for another year so the West African nation can have more time to hold long-delayed elections. The council's unanimous decision clears the way for a visit to Ivory Coast this weekend by Nigerian President and AU Chairman Olusegun Obasanjo, and South African President and AU mediator Thabo Mbeki, where they hope to get the government and rebels to sign on to

the AU plan. Some international diplomats had expressed fears the council would withhold its endorsement due to AU appeal for a big increase in the size of the U.N. peacekeeping mission in the former French colony, a proposal questioned by several council members. In a compromise, a statement approved unanimously by the 15-nation Security Council "endorses the decision of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union" but makes clear the U.N. body is keeping its options open on future troop levels. The African plan, approved by the AU Peace and Security Council October 6 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, lets President Laurent Gbagbo remain in office for up to a year past the current October 30 deadline for electing a new government. That deadline, which all sides now agree cannot be met, was set in a 2003 peace deal ending a civil war that has cut the country in two. Key elements of the deal have never been implemented because the rebels and the government have repeatedly fallen short of fulfilling their commitments. To encourage rebels -- who want Gbagbo to leave office on October 30 -- to remain engaged in the peace process, the AU plan also calls for a new prime minister to lead a new government acceptable to all Ivorian parties until elections are held. The current prime minister, businessman Seydou Diarra, has kept a low profile since his appointment as part of the peace accord. But critics say that is because Gbagbo has been reluctant to cede any power to him. Concerning the AU plea for more peacekeepers, the statement said the council would consider reinforcements "based on a careful study of conditions in the country and of evidence of meaningful progress toward implementation of long-standing commitments" under the 2003 peace deal. The U.N. mission now numbers more than 6,600 troops and international police and works with a French peacekeeping force to enforce a U.N. arms embargo and monitor a buffer zone between the rebel-held north and the government-held south. -- Reuters.

RUSSIA

Moscow, Oct 13 -- Twenty people believed to be Russian security forces were killed in today's rebel attack on the southern town of Nalchik, Moscow radio quoted a hospital source as saying. "They are all people in uniform," the source in Nalchik's Republican Hospital told Ekho Moskyv radio station. There were also 40 injured people in the hospital with more arriving all the time, the source added. Local officials said earlier that 10 of the attackers had been killed in gunbattles. -- Reuters.

Nalchik, Oct 14 -- Russian security forces said today they had saved a group of hostages and killed their Chechen captors who held them overnight in a town in the Caucasus following a huge rebel raid that killed dozens. Justice officials said eight rebels were killed and their five

captives freed after they tried to drive away in a mini-bus from the police station in the southern town of Nalchik where they had been holed up overnight. "All the militants were killed and all the hostages freed. There are some things still left to be done but practically speaking the operation is over," police spokeswoman Marina Kyasova told Reuters. News agencies reported other rebels hiding in a city centre shop in Nalchik had also been killed, and their hostages freed by police using heavy weapons. Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered his security forces to cordon off Nalchik after yesterday's attack and kill any gunmen who resisted. The authorities' rapid response to the crisis was in contrast to last year's deadly attack by Chechen militants on a school in the town of Beslan, when the Russian leader was widely criticized for staying silent for too long. But it remained unclear whether it would deflect public criticism over another failure by security services to prevent a rebel assault in the turbulent region. The death toll of the brazen daylight attack remained unclear. RIA Novosti news agency reported that a total of 24 servicemen and police had died, and other reports said between 14 and 24 civilians had died. The closely co-ordinated attack on police, army and Federal Security Service (FSB) points in the garrison town marked the first major rebel operation since Abdul-Khalid Sadulayev took over as leader of the Chechen separatists in March. In an operation that challenged Kremlin assertions it had the Caucasus under control, at least 100 rebels attacked key security points in the town yesterday morning. Police said 61 rebels had died in the raid, in the main city of the Muslim Kabardino-Balkaria region near rebel Chechnya, while 17 had been captured. Rebel Web sites put their losses at 11 dead and four missing. -- Reuters.

Moscow, Oct 18 -- Russian police today shot dead one insurgent in a brief gunbattle as they combed the southern town of Nalchik for the remnants of a force that attacked last week, local media reported. The man was killed early today when he and three others opened fire on a police patrol that stopped them to check their documents, Itar-Tass news agency quoted police as saying. The two men with him escaped, said the agency. -- Reuters.

London, Oct 19 -- A press report, dated Oct 18, states: The top security official of rebel Chechnya, which has been plagued by a wave of kidnappings, ordered his men on Tuesday to shoot and kill any masked person who appeared on the streets, Interfax news agency reported. But in Moscow interior ministry officials condemned the move as "ill considered" and said it could put at risk their operations there. "I ordered today that (police) shoot anyone who dares to go out masked on the streets, whoever they are and whoever they represent," Interfax quoted Ruslan

Alkhanov as saying. "Those who are too scared to show their faces are bandits," he added. Hundreds of civilians have been kidnapped in Chechnya by masked gunmen since Moscow restored its control over the region in a military operation launched in 1999. Rights groups say that rebels' relatives are often being kidnapped during raids by masked special forces' fighters to put pressure on the separatists to lay down their arms. Russian officials have denied such charges saying rebels and criminals trying to extort ransoms are to blame. But last month President Vladimir Putin acknowledged that kidnapping was one of the most serious issues in Chechnya today -- and left open the possibility that law enforcement officials could be behind some abductions. Russian interior ministry officials however objected. "This arbitrary decision should have been considered from a legal point of view," a high-ranking ministry source told Interfax. "One should also have thought about its consequences." A spokesman for the Interior ministry forces told Interfax that officers and soldiers had a right under law to wear masks during security operations. "There is a category of law-enforcement officers who should conceal their faces due to the specific nature of their work," Colonel Vasili Panchenkov said. "This right is protected by ... federal laws." "A ban on masks could harm officers who are fighting crime on the front line," he added.

SRI LANKA

Colombo, Oct 18 -- Sri Lanka today extended a state of emergency imposed in the wake of the August assassination of its foreign minister, a murder the government blames on Tamil Tiger rebels but has yet to prove. The state of emergency gives government and police special powers to detain suspects and deploy troops en-masse if need be. The second extension of the measures comes as ties between the state and the Tigers are at their lowest ebb since a 2002 ceasefire halted two decades of civil war. "We want to extend these emergency regulations because we have still not finished the inquiry into the assassination of Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar," Deputy Defence Minister Ratnasiri Wickremanayake said as parliament voted to extend the state of emergency for another month. Dozens of people have been detained and later released in connection with the assassination probe, and three people -- including a Sri Lankan businessman who also holds an Australian passport -- are in custody for questioning. However, the three are not suspected of direct involvement in the murder, police say. Kadirgamar's killers are still at large. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) deny any involvement -- a denial analysts and diplomats dismiss as a stock disclaimer. The European Union last month condemned Kadirgamar's murder and barred the

Tigers from visiting its member states amid escalating violence in the island's restive east, saying it was considering listing the group as a terrorist organisation. How to forge peace with the Tigers is a central issue in a looming November presidential election that is overshadowing efforts to jumpstart stalled efforts to convert the 2002 truce into permanent peace. However, observers expect the ceasefire to hold, saying any return to a full-scale war that killed more than 64,000 people and displaced hundreds of thousands more from their homes is unlikely. -- Reuters.

SUDAN

London, Oct 18 -- A press report, dated Oct 17, states: Rebels and Sudanese forces have clashed in North Darfur with artillery fire killing a number of civilians, the Sudanese government said today. The African Union, which is monitoring a shaky cease-fire deal between rebels and the government in the Darfur region, said rebels attacked an army outpost early yesterday, which was followed by "heavy bombardment" apparently from Sudanese soldiers. The fighting took place south-east of the town of Kutum before Sudanese soldiers chased the rebel fighters from the Sudan Liberation Army into the nearby villages of Kenin and Nadi, the AU said in a statement. But the Sudanese government accused "a group of armed movements in Darfur (of launching) waves of indiscriminate shelling" on Kutum, which resulted in "human and material damage" yesterday and on Saturday (Oct 15). "The outcome was the death and injury of a group of children, women and elderly citizens," said a statement issued by a Sudanese government delegation at Darfur peace talks in the Nigerian capital, Abuja. No casualty figures were provided. The delegation said the rebel attack breached all peace agreements aimed at curbing the Darfur conflict. The United Nations estimates the fighting has resulted in the deaths of more than 180,000 people through violence, disease or malnutrition. The AU also condemned the violence and urged restraint and cooperation from the warring sides to help it investigate the incident. The United Nations, also concerned about the worsening violence, last week ordered all non-essential staff out of West Darfur following a spike in attacks and kidnappings.

THAILAND

London, Oct 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: Thailand has extended emergency rule in its three mainly Muslim southern provinces by another three months, as the death toll nears 1,000 in nearly 22 months of unrest. Cabinet approval of the extension is widely seen as a formality, as the Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra had already publicly announced his intention to continue with the measures. Under emergency rule, authorities can detain

suspects for up to 30 days without charge, search and arrest without warrants, and tap phones, among other actions aimed at quelling an Islamic insurgency and other unrest. The measures also give security forces broad immunity from prosecution. Deputy Prime Minister Chidchai Vanasathidya, who is charged with security concerns, insists that despite a spate of high-profile attacks against security forces in the last month, the overall level of violence has dropped under emergency rule.

TURKEY

London, Oct 12 -- A press report, dated today, states: Five Turkish soldiers were killed and one wounded in a clash with the outlawed Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) members in eastern Turkey, an official statement said today. The statement issued by Tunceli Governor's Office said the clash between the Turkish security forces and a group of PKK members took place in Cirali village this morning. Supported by helicopters, the security forces have launched a large-scale operation in the region in pursuit of the PKK members who ran away after the clash, the statement added. The PKK has intensified landmine and remote-controlled bombing attacks in Turkey over the past few months. At least 200 Turkish soldiers have been reportedly killed in clashes with PKK since this year.

UGANDA

London, Oct 11 -- A press report, dated today, states: The Uganda People's Defense Force (UPDF) said today that it has killed 22 Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels in the war-ravaged northern districts of Pader and Kitgum. Tabaro Kiconco, an army spokesman in the region, said that in the last 11 days the UPDF killed 22 rebels of the LRA, rescued four abductees and captured four rebels while another five rebels surrendered together with one of their commanders, Sam Okot. He said that the army recovered four sub-machine guns, 333 rounds of ammunition and arrested three thugs pretending to be LRA rebels. During the operations, two UPDF soldiers were injured, while one Local Defense Unit personnel and four civilians were killed in an ambush, he said. Kiconco described the operations as "quick combat operations" coupled with search and cordon off operations aimed at rooting out the remnants of the LRA rebels in the region.

Labour Disputes



AUSTRALIA

Sydney, Oct 14 -- Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) members have downed tools at Glebe Island in protest over the pending closure of its

car terminal. The MUA's Sydney branch assistant secretary Warren Smith told Lloyd's List DCN that workers had stopped at 0500, today. "The lads turned up and we had a meeting, and there was a unanimous decision to stop work in response to this terrible decision by the New South Wales Government," Mr Smith said. The decision would "rip the heart out of Sydney harbour", he said. An Industrial Relations Commission of NSW hearing later today would probably go some way to determining how long the strike action lasted, Mr Smith said. The MUA has pledged further efforts using "a range of techniques and methods" to maintain Sydney's wharf space and role as a working harbour, he said. There was huge support in the community for trying to maintain Port Jackson as a working harbour, Mr Smith said. -- Lloyd's List Daily Commercial News.

BANGLADESH

Karachi, Oct 14 -- Understand the owners and workers of lighter vessels under the umbrella of three associations of Bangladesh-Coastal Ship Owners Association of Bangladesh, Bangladesh Cargo Vessel Owners Association, and Inland Vessel Owners Association of Chittagong has gone on an indefinite strike at Chittagong Port in the early hours today, demanding release of 24 vessels 'detained' at the outer anchorage. Workers of the associations stopped transportation of goods, loading and unloading at 0001 today at the port and outer anchorage to press home their demand. It is feared that the cement sector and agriculture sector would suffer as lighter vessels carry the bulk of clinker and fertilisers to different cement factories and parts of the country respectively. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Karachi, Oct 15 -- Cargo handling partially suffered at Chittagong port yesterday following the suspension of lighterage of cargo from mother vessels at Chittagong port. However, operations in other vessels like container ships and other mother vessels that need no lighterage of cargo are going on normally. According to industry sources, the owners of lighter vessels under the umbrella of three organizations, went to an indefinite strike to press port authority and government to allow offloading of disputed wheat laden on them for the last number of months. It is reported that about 10 mother cargo vessels at the outer anchorage and two ships at the CPA jetties remained stranded due to the strike. It may be mentioned that a total of 24 lighter vessels loaded with alleged rotten wheat have been waiting at the outer anchorage of the Chittagong port for seven months for a decision of the customs department. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Karachi, Oct 16 -- Understand form Chittagong Chamber of Commerce & Industry (CCCI) that the owners of lighter vessels called off their strike at Chittagong Port late last night

following successful talks between all stakeholders including the business bodies as well as the government at a meeting convened by the CCCI. It is said that the leaders of trade union, business bodies and the government reached in agreement at 2310 hrs and decided to withdraw the strike and the lighter vessels resumed activities soon after the agreement. It was signed by Convener of Water Transport Coordination Cell MA Latif, Acting president of CCCI Mr. S.M Nurul Huq, Chittagong Customs Commissioner Fariduddin, Director (Traffic) of Chittagong Port Authority Ahsanul Kabir, Chairman of Coastal Ship Owners Association Md Tajul Islam, general secretary of Cargo Vessel Owners Association Belayet Hussain and president of Inland Vessel Owners Association Shaffique Ahmed on behalf of their respective organisations. An official of Chittagong Chamber said that it was possible after a day long marathon negotiations and finally 10-point recommendation was adopted in order to resolve the deadlock created in the Chittagong Port. The recommendations include; the entire imported wheat from India should be properly fumigated, stevedores appointed by the shipping agent or having CPA Licence will work as shore handling contractor, the shipping agent/stevedore will conduct bagging of all cargo, cargo may be stored in CPA godown or CSD godown or any other private godowns, the cargo will remain under the custody of CPA and Customs department, at selected the private godowns, Customs authority will test the sample of cargo, the Customs authority will take measure as per existing Customs Act. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

CANADA

London, Oct 13 -- A press report, dated today, states: British Columbia teachers will find out today what price they will pay for staging an illegal strike that has shut schools for almost a week. A provincial Supreme Court judge who already found the B.C. Teachers' Federation in contempt of court for ignoring a government back-to-work order will announce penalties for the union at 1000, local time, 1300, ET. Those could include heavy fines for each day of the strike and even jail time for union leaders. Some teachers don't support strike. Some teachers are speaking out against their union's illegal strike, and some even crossed the picket line in various parts of the province yesterday.

London, Oct 18 -- A press report, dated Oct 17, states: There were some heated words on the picket line at the Liard ferry crossing over the weekend. Union and non-union ferry workers shouted at each other after replacement workers arrived Friday (Oct 15) to take over the ferry's operation. The ferry's six employees went on strike last Wednesday, shutting down the service and cutting off 1,500 people in Wrigley and Fort Simpson from the territory's road

system. Fort Simpson Mayor Raymond Michaud was on the picket line over the weekend. The ferry service stopped briefly over the weekend, when one replacement worker walked off the job.

London, Oct 18 -- A press report, dated Oct 17, states: Transit workers joined protests in support of 38,000 illegally striking public school teachers in British Columbia today, bringing transportation services in at least two Vancouver Island cities to a halt. Pickets appeared before dawn at bus yards in Greater Victoria and Nanaimo, preventing drivers from reporting to work. The transit shutdown came hours before a scheduled rally involving thousands of public and private-sector union members in front of the British Columbia legislature. The teachers walked off the job Oct 7 in defiance of a court order. British Columbia Supreme Court Justice Brenda Brown found the teachers in contempt of court Oct 9 and later froze the union's assets so it could not pay teachers \$42 a day in strike pay. Public education is deemed an essential service under British Columbia law, and teachers are not allowed to strike. The British Columbia Federation of Labor asked members of public and private sector unions to join a march in Victoria and a rally today at the legislature, which is in session for the first time since the teacher strike began. Thousands of Vancouver Island members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees joined the protest. They were expected to be followed tomorrow by 4,000 protesting members in northern British Columbia. The union represents workers in schools, health care, municipal operations, social services and post-secondary education.

London, Oct 19 -- A press report, dated Oct 18, states: An increasingly bitter battle between striking teachers and the government got a positive boost today as veteran mediator Vince Ready began work as a facilitator. Ready, one of the country's best-known mediators, was to begin to talk to both sides immediately to try to find a solution to the impasse. Jinny Sims, president of the B.C. Teachers Federation, said she was pleased to receive a call from Ready inviting the federation and the government bargaining agent to talks. In Victoria, Labour Minister Mike de Jong surprised reporters when he told them Ready "was appointed facilitator over a week and half ago."

FRANCE

London, Oct 19 -- A press report, dated Oct 18, states: The strike at Total SA's 343,000-b/cd Gonfreville L'Orcher refinery in northern France has shut down the entire facility following the decision of the 70 strikers on October 17 to extend the strike until October 21. The strikers are seeking a euros200/month wage increase. The strike is costing Total some euros2 million/day. Total spokeswoman Bertille Aron said that a negotiation schedule is being

discussed between the strikers and the refinery's local authority involving salary adjustments, on a job classification basis.

INDIA

London, Oct 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: Thousands of passengers were stranded at bus stations across Andhra Pradesh today as more than 100,000 employees of the state-owned transport body began an indefinite strike. This followed a failure of talks between the state government and Joint Action Committee (JAC) of employees unions that are demanding a pay hike and measures to "protect" the Andhra Pradesh State Transport Corporation (APSRTC). The employees are concerned that the corporation may be privatised, even though the government has been denying any such plan. While JAC said 95 per cent of the 19,500 buses were off the roads as 119,000 employees had joined the strike, the transport department claimed they were running 45 per cent of services by recruiting temporary drivers and conductors and operating private buses, seven-seater auto-rickshaws and other vehicles. APSRTC has temporarily recruited 6,000 drivers and conductors and offered Rs 1,000 each to employees who have not joined the strike. The state government has invoked the Essential Services Maintenance Act (ESMA) and prohibitory orders and employees could be arrested if they try to disrupt services. The government also decided to transfer supervisory staff, which joined the strike at the last minute. About 600 supervisors may be transferred in the first phase. More than 12 million people travel daily by APSRTC buses within Andhra Pradesh and to neighbouring states. APSRTC had entered into the Guinness Book of World Records in 1999 for owning the largest fleet of buses. The strike almost paralysed services in the state capital, where APSRTC buses carry three million passengers daily. Students, workers and office-goers were the worst hit by the strike. This is the second strike in five months. In July the unions had called off their strike after three days following the intervention of the high court. Transport Minister Kanna Lakshminarayana said the loss on account of the strike would be Rs 100 million per day calculated at 66 per cent occupancy rate. APSRTC employees, who had initially put forth 14 demands, later reduced the list to six. These include pay revision and 8.33 per cent interim relief till pay revision and a cut in Motor Vehicle Tax on RTC buses. They are also demanding that the government give Rs 5 billion financial assistance to RTC to buy new buses. The South Central Railway (SCR) has decided to run special trains between Hyderabad and Visakhapatnam, and other important cities and towns within and outside the state in view of the strike.

ITALY

Savona, Oct 17 -- The tug strike was called off on October 11 and normal service was resumed. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Oct 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: Italian state airline Alitalia scrapped 102 flights and other carriers operating in Italy were expected to make cancellations ahead of a four-hour strike tomorrow by air traffic controllers. Controllers are set to walk off their jobs at noon tomorrow, forcing the carrier to scrap 62 domestic and 40 international flights, Alitalia said. A complete list of cancellations was not yet available, ENAC, Italy's civil aviation authority, said Tuesday. Air-traffic controller unions called the strike to campaign for improved training, said Stefano Francucci of the ATM union. They also contend that control towers throughout Italy are understaffed and controllers are forced to work too many extra shifts.

SPAIN

London, Oct 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: Spanish truck drivers staged a nation-wide strike for a second day today to protest against rising fuel costs and unfair competition from illegal and unregulated drivers. Some retailers expressed fear of shortages. The open-ended strike, which began yesterday, has hit food and fuel transport across the country, with the northwestern region of Galicia particularly hard hit, news reports said. Talks aimed at ending the strike continued today, officials said. The dispute centers on a regional fuel tax that the government introduced a year ago. It doubled the tax last month to help make up shortfalls in government-financed health care, which are expected to reach euro2.5 billion (US\$3 billion) nation-wide for 2005, according to government estimates. The truckers say the tax on fuel targets them unfairly because they are among the country's biggest consumers of fuel.

London, Oct 19 -- A press report, dated Oct 18, states: Spanish truck drivers ended a nationwide strike to protest high fuel costs and illegal drivers on its second day after the labour action raised fears of food and gasoline shortages. A Development Ministry spokeswoman said the truckers would return to the job immediately. There were no immediate details of what the government offered to end the strike after two days of talks between ministry officials and truck drivers. The open-ended strike began yesterday and hit the northwestern region of Galicia particularly hard hit, news reports said.

UNITED KINGDOM

London, Oct 17 -- A press report, dated today, states: A full service is running on the Northern Line but with severe delays, London Underground (LU) has said. Trains were suspended last Wednesday (Oct 12) night after drivers walked out in a row over emergency brakes. A LU

spokesman said services were restored ahead of schedule after modifications to the 106-strong fleet were made more quickly than expected, but passengers are still being advised to avoid using the line and replacement bus services remain in place. Originally bosses had said the line - the busiest on the network - would not be fully restored until Wednesday (Oct 19). LU said it hoped the situation would improve during the course of the day and that it would be able to run a "good service" tomorrow. A spokesman for LU said: "We have been working 24 hours a day to get services restored on the Northern line and were determined to do so as quickly as we could. He also said sufficient numbers of drivers had been briefed on modification procedures to allow services to operate on the entire line.

Awards & Settlements



ACCIDENTAL DEATH, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 14 -- A press report, dated today, states: A Columbus law firm helped win a \$12 million settlement for the family of two men who were killed in 2002 when a 35,000-pound billboard fell on them in Snellville, Ga. James E. Butler Jr., of Butler, Wooten, Fryhofer, Daughtery and Crawford, a law firm with offices in Columbus and Atlanta, and two attorneys from Duluth, Ga., represented Rick and Juanita Fowler, whose sons Joshua Fowler, 23, and Anthony Fowler, 21, were killed Aug 1, 2002, while working on the billboard. Lance Stofiel was also killed and Clyde Elrod was injured; both of their cases were previously settled by other attorneys. The brothers' parents sued the billboard's owner, Trinity Outdoor of Buford, Ga., Phoenix Structures and Services of Athens, Tenn., and Sun Capital Partners of Boca Raton, Fla. The sides mediated for two days and the settlement was reached at 2300, Tuesday (Oct 11). The Fowler brothers were working for Fowler Sign Group installing the panels on the billboard for Trinity when the sign suddenly collapsed. They fell 40 ft to the ground and the billboard's steel beams fell on top of them. The city of Snellville, which is about 25 miles north-west of Atlanta, launched an investigation and determined that the billboard collapsed because of faulty welds and substandard steel. Joshua Fowler left two children, who were adopted by his parents, who live in Lawrenceville, Ga. The trial was set to begin Oct 24 in Gwinnett County State Court.

BREACH OF FIDUCIARY DUTY AND THEFT OF TRADE SECRETS, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 17 -- A press report, dated Oct 14, states: California's Superior Court today affirmed the

\$465 million jury verdict delivered in March, entering final judgment in the Lexar Media Inc. versus against Toshiba Corp. and Toshiba America Electronic Components Inc. The trial court jury awarded Fremont-based Lexar over \$465 million in damages based on Toshiba Corp. and Toshiba America Electronics Components' breach of fiduciary duty and theft of trade secrets from Lexar. Eric Whitaker, Lexar's executive vice president and general counsel, said the company was pleased the Court had rejected multiple challenges to the verdict. "The jury's verdict was based on a mountain of evidence, mostly from Toshiba's own files, establishing that Toshiba deliberately violated its duties to Lexar and that a large number of the products currently manufactured and sold by Toshiba contain Lexar's trade secrets. We are confident that Toshiba's remaining efforts to challenge the verdict, including its inevitable appeal, will fare no better than Toshiba's earlier attempts," Whitaker said. The \$465 million award is the third largest intellectual property verdict in U.S. history. Toshiba has filed numerous motions challenging the verdict. As late as this week, Toshiba filed an emergency appeal asking the court of appeals to review the case and to delay the entry of judgment. That request was immediately denied. "The importance of this judgment is underscored by Toshiba's multiple emergency filings to delay it over the past several days," Whitaker said.

CLASS-ACTION SETTLEMENT, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 13 -- A press report, dated today, states: A French insurance company has agreed to pay \$17 million to settle a class-action lawsuit filed by descendants of Armenians killed in the early 20th century in what is now Turkey. French insurance giant AXA also agreed to call the killings genocide, an important term to Armenians trying to call attention to what they say were organised murders of more than a million people between 1915 and the early 1920s. "Anytime we're able to bring attention to the genocide is significant," said Brian Kabateck, one of the plaintiff's attorneys. "Because the rest of the world needs to understand what happened and the rest of the world needs to focus on an ultimate resolution of the genocide, which is recognition by the United States government and the Turkish government." Between 2,000 and 5,000 policies are believed to be covered by the settlement, including many in Southern California's large Armenian community, although the final number has yet to be determined. AXA was sued because it bought L'Union Des Assurances de Paris, the company that sold policies to Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire. The \$17 million AXA settlement will be presented to a federal judge in Los Angeles next month for final approval. It is similar to one reached last year in which New

York Life agreed to pay \$20 million to resolve litigation arising from its failure to pay Armenian policyholders' relatives. One key difference is that in its settlement AXA would follow the French government's lead in describing the events of 1915 to the early 1920s as genocide. Armenians estimate that 1.5 million died when Armenian civilians living in the Ottoman Empire were forced from their homes or otherwise killed during and after World War I. The United States government and Turkey have not officially called the event a genocide, and Turkey argues that the number is exaggerated. "I am not belittling their ordeal during that relocation: many perished, many terrible things happened, that's true," said Engin Ansay, the Turkish consul general in Los Angeles. "But it was not a government decision or any decision on the part of the authorities to annihilate one whole nation." The case against AXA was brought on behalf of several lead plaintiffs living in the San Fernando Valley. One was Anik Arabian, who brought her uncle's life insurance policy with her to America, but who died after the lawsuit was filed in 2002. Arabian was born in Greece, where her parents had landed after being driven into the desert. Many of her family died in what is now Syria, then a part of the Ottoman Empire. Under the AXA settlement, money from an \$11 million fund will be paid to the closest relative of a policyholder on the company's list. Another \$3 million will go to Armenian charitable organizations in France, and another \$3 million for administrative and legal fees. "We believe that this settlement is in the best interest of AXA Group and all of its stakeholders, and we are pleased to put this matter behind us," said AXA spokeswoman Joann Tizzano. The plaintiffs' lawyers were Kabateck, Mark Geragos and Vartkes Yeghiayan, who are all of Armenian descent and also brought the case against New York Life. The AXA settlement sets aside the same amount for claims payment and charity as the New York Life settlement. The only difference is the amount earmarked for legal and administrative fees was halved in the AXA case. The deadline to file a claim in the New York Life settlement passed on Mar 16, and the claims are being analyzed. The company had agreed to pay on 2,400 policies, but claims were filed on 1,600 of them, which means the amount that would have been paid on the remaining claims will be added to the charity fund. Some policies might have gone unclaimed because their holders were unaware of the settlement, or because all the potential claimants died.

CLASS-ACTION SETTLEMENT, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: Humana Inc. today announced it has reached an agreement with representatives of more than 700,000 physicians to settle a nation-wide class-action suit that

has been pending in U.S. District Court in Miami for more than six years. The agreement must be approved by U.S. District Judge Federico Moreno. Pursuant to the settlement, Humana has agreed to pay \$40 million to physicians. In addition, Humana has agreed to pay up to \$18 million in legal fees to be determined by the court. In connection with the settlement and other related litigation costs, Humana will record pretax expenses of approximately \$72 million, approximately \$45 million after taxes or \$0.27 per diluted common share, during the third quarter 2005. "Humana is pleased that we have been able to reach an agreement to settle this litigation," said Michael B. McCallister, Humana's president and chief executive officer. "We have devoted significant time and resources to improving the quality and timeliness of our transactions with physicians who care for our health plan members. Humana has undertaken systems and infrastructure improvements in connection with how the company relates to providers, enhancing, among other things, the speed and accuracy of claims reimbursement to providers, setting the stage for real-time adjudication of claims filed electronically. This has all been part of Humana's ongoing efforts to strengthen its collaborative relationships with providers." The settlement recognizes that Humana has spent in excess of \$75 million on these types of initiatives.

CLASS-ACTION SETTLEMENTS, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 19 -- A press report, dated Oct 18, states: New York City's five public pension funds said today that they had reached a \$78.9 million settlement of a securities fraud lawsuit filed against a group of banks and other defendants stemming from the collapse of WorldCom Inc. The agreement comes after the funds, betting they could win a better recovery by pursuing their own legal action, last year pulled out of wider settlement negotiations that resulted in a \$6.1 billion total recovery for other WorldCom stock and bond holders. The pension funds said the settlement agreed today is about three times bigger than what they would they would have gotten as part of the wider class-action case. "This settlement fully validates the decision of the funds' trustees to opt out of the class action to pursue an individual case," Michael Cardozo, the city's corporation counsel, said in a statement. The funds, which represent more than 600,000 active and retired city teachers, police, firefighters and other public employees, lost more than \$100 million when WorldCom filed for bankruptcy in 2002 after an \$11 billion accounting fraud. The pension funds said that the settling defendants include Citigroup, JP Morgan Chase & Co, Bank of America Corp, Deutsche Bank AG, ABN AMRO and Lehman Brothers Holdings Inc, which all underwrote WorldCom bond offerings. Others involved in the settlement include Jack Grubman, a former Wall

Street analyst; ex-directors at WorldCom; and the company's former auditors, Arthur Andersen LLP. The broader class-action case that resulted in the \$6.1 billion settlement was brought by New York State Comptroller Alan Hevesi on behalf of WorldCom investors who lost billions. That settlement was approved by a Manhattan federal judge last month. Unlike that settlement, the city pension funds' agreement does not require court approval. The funds said they expect to receive payment within the next few weeks. The five pension funds involved in the case are the New York City Employees' Retirement System, New York City Teachers' Retirement System, New York City Police Pension Fund, New York City Fire Department Pension Fund and the New York City Board of Education Retirement System.

DEATH DUE TO RAILWAY ACCIDENT, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 18 -- A press report, dated Oct 17, states: A settlement has been reached in a lawsuit filed by the widow of a man who died while trying to escape an anhydrous ammonia cloud after a 2002 derailment near Minot. The wrongful death lawsuit was filed against the Canadian Pacific Railway by John Grabinger's widow, MeLea. Details of the settlement were not released. It was announced today, a day before jurors were to be chosen for the trial in the Grabinger case and another case, the first of hundreds of lawsuits stemming from the derailment. "I'm happy for the Grabingers. A settlement is usually preferable as long as it's a reasonable one," said Mike Miller, a Fargo attorney handling 20 separate states cases against the railroad as well as a class action lawsuit involving nearly 1,000 people. "I don't know what effect it's going to have on the other cases," Miller said. The Grabinger case was the second case to be settled out of court as attorneys prepared for trial this week. Claims filed by Henry and Linda Juntunen and their son, Joey, of Minot, against Canadian Pacific were settled last Tuesday. Details of that settlement also were not released. A third lawsuit, filed by Warren Howell and grouped with the Grabinger and Juntunen cases, was moving forward today, Miller said. Individual lawsuits against the railroad have been filed in state court in Minnesota, where the Calgary, Alberta-based railroad has its U.S. headquarters. Others are represented in a separate federal court action in North Dakota. Miller said the railroad has admitted liability in the first three cases. He said lawyers for the defendants plan to argue that the admission should carry over to the other cases.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SETTLEMENT, SAN DIEGO, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 13 -- A press report, dated today, states: Shell Oil Co. will pay \$10.75 million to settle an environmental health suit alleging violations involving underground

sensors at 62 gas stations in San Diego County. "This is the largest environmental health settlement ever recorded in San Diego County," said District Attorney Bonnie Dumanis. The settlement stems from a lawsuit filed last Thursday in San Diego Superior Court, alleging Shell, Shell Oil Products Co. LLC, Equilon Enterprises LLC and TMR Co., formerly Texaco Marketing and Refining Inc., failed to properly maintain and operate underground storage tanks and related leak detection equipment. The companies were accused of failing to test and monitor stored substances and failing to repair or upgrade facilities and equipment as required by law. The county Department of Environmental Health began issuing notices of violation in 1999, addressing alleged violations of underground storage tank requirements, hazardous waste laws and state unfair business practices, Dumanis said. About 2,200 violations were noted on county inspection reports during a five-year period through mid-2004, the county's top prosecutor said. Under the settlement, the 62 Shell gas stations county-wide must install new tamper-resistant underground sensors, increase maintenance and create new management systems and conduct employee training to help prevent future problems.

ILLEGAL FISHING, DENMARK

London, Oct 17 -- A press report, dated today, states: Two of the owners of the UK's largest fishing vessel have been ordered to pay back almost £1m after pleading guilty to illegally landing fish. Shetland skipper John Duncan and mate Jerry Ramsay landed more than 7,000 tonnes of illegally caught "black fish" in Denmark. They then hid the true quantity by altering their log books. Each was ordered to pay £495,000 at the High Court in Edinburgh. Sentence was deferred until Nov 14. At an earlier hearing, Duncan, 57, and 51-year-old Ramsay, of the Shetland-based trawler Altaire, had admitted flouting European Union fishing regulations by exceeding their North Sea herring and mackerel quota. They landed illegally-caught fish in Denmark and hid their actions from Fishery Protection Agency officials by faking log sheets. The men caught 17,085 tonnes of mackerel between 2000 and 2002 but claimed the total was only 10,031. They also caught 1,012 tonnes of herring but only 469 tonnes was declared. The black fish operation was thought to have earned them about £3.4m over two years and was believed to have been the most lucrative ever recorded in Scotland. A high court judge heard that after taxes and costs were deducted the benefit to the pair was £990,000. Alongside that bill, the men, from Ollaberry in Shetland, also face the possibility of fines on their return to court. Under the law, the men could not be sentenced until the question of confiscating the illegal proceeds had been settled. Prosecuting advocate depute, Barry Divers, told judge Lord Kingarth that agreement had been reached. The court

was told that £3.4m was the amount received by the fishing company in which Duncan and Ramsay each held 14.29% stakes. Mr Divers said £1.6m of the £3.4m had been used up in operating costs and a further £776,000 had been paid in taxes.

ILLEGAL MARKETING, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 18 -- A press report, dated Oct 17, states: A Swiss biotechnology company agreed today to pay more than \$700 million to settle federal charges that it illegally marketed an AIDS drug by concocting a dubious medical test for those with the disease and offering doctors an all-expenses-paid trip to France to prescribe the drug. The agreement between the Justice Department and the company, Serono, is the third-largest settlement recovered by the federal government in a health care fraud case, officials said. Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales said the company "put its desire to sell more drugs above the interest of patients." Serono Labs, the company's Massachusetts-based American arm, received a patent in 1996 to market a drug called Serostim, aimed at reversing the effects of AIDS wasting, or profound weight loss. But that same year, federal officials said, the rapid development of AIDS cocktails caused a sharp decline in AIDS wasting and in the demand for Serostim, which prompted the company to develop a much more aggressive marketing strategy for its product. As a result, prosecutors said in a criminal filing as part of the settlement, Serono sought to "redefine AIDS wasting" beginning in the late 1990's and developed a computerized medical test that ostensibly would determine "body cell mass." The test results signaled that patients had lost body cell mass and "were wasting, even if they had lost no weight or had actually gained weight," prosecutors said in the filing. With the test results in hand, doctors would then prescribe Serostim to treat the supposed problem at a cost of more than \$21,000 a treatment. But Michael J. Sullivan, the United States attorney in Boston whose office handled the investigation, said today that 85% of the prescriptions were unnecessary. He told reporters that the medical testing procedure was "almost voodoo-like" and that he suspected some patients may have also suffered unnecessary side effects as a result of taking the AIDS drug. Thomas Gunning, general counsel for the company's American division, disputed that assertion in an interview. Serono agreed to plead guilty to two criminal counts, admitting that it had violated federal law by conspiring to provide fraudulent medical devices without proper approval from the Food and Drug Administration. "We acknowledge that this device was not approved for the purposes of diagnosing AIDS wasting," Mr. Gunning said, "but it's important to

understand that we stopped distributing those testing machines more than three years ago." The company also admitted that it provided what amounted to illegal remuneration to a group of AIDS doctors by paying for them to attend a medical "conference" in Cannes, France, in 1999 in exchange for the doctors' writing more prescriptions for Serostim. The conference grew out of a plan, conceived by Serono executives in Massachusetts in 1999 and called the "\$6m-6 Day Plan," to increase lagging sales by \$6 million in six days. Prosecutors said select physicians who treated AIDS patients, including several unnamed doctors in New York City, were given all-expenses-paid trips to France, "in return for the physicians' writing additional prescriptions of Serostim for patients." Mr. Sullivan refused to say whether any physicians who attended the conference were targets of the federal inquiry. Two people who worked on the sales and manufacturing of the company's products have already pleaded guilty to criminal charges in connection with the scheme, and four other former executives at Serono have also been indicted. As part of its settlement with the Justice Department, Serono agreed to pay \$704 million in penalties, including \$136.9 million in criminal fines and \$567 million in civil penalties. State Medicaid agencies that paid for Serostim from 1996 to 2004 will be reimbursed under the terms of the settlement, and the company's lab will also be banned from taking part in federal health care programs for five years, officials said. But the company stressed that the ban would not prevent patients who currently take Serostim or the company's other drugs from being reimbursed under Medicaid and Medicare programs, and it said all its products would remain available to the public. The federal investigation, lasting four years, began after a company lab employee in Massachusetts came forward in 2000 to accuse the company of filing false claims. Four other company whistleblowers in Maryland and Connecticut later brought similar claims; all five now stand to divide \$51 million from the settlement under federal whistleblower or qui tam law.

MEDICAL MALPRACTICE, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Oct 19 -- A press report, dated Oct 18, states: A mother who has looked after her brain-damaged son for more than 40 years is to share in a £1.5m payout over injuries he suffered at birth. Beatrice Turner, 76, of Sheffield, only recently discovered she could claim compensation on behalf of her son Roy. The High Court heard Mr Turner suffered asphyxia when he was born at the Jessop Hospital for Women in Sheffield in 1964 and was left severely disabled. The South Yorkshire strategic health authority has agreed to pay £1,575,000. From that, Mrs Turner

has been told she will personally receive £100,000. The court heard Mr Turner's asphyxia left him with paralysis in all four limbs. He is also unable to speak and is intellectually impaired. Unaware that she could claim compensation, the mother-of-eight brought him up single-handedly in a council house so small Mr Turner's wheelchair could not fit through the doorways. After discovering that she could sue, she launched an action on her son's behalf against the South Yorkshire strategic health authority, alleging negligence during his birth. Yesterday, the authority agreed to pay the damages without making any admission of negligence. Mr Justice Jack approved an immediate payment of £500,000 to enable Mrs Turner and her son to move into a specially adapted bungalow.

PATENT INFRINGEMENT, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 19 -- A press report, dated Oct 18, states: Wyeth and Teva Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd. today announced that they have reached agreement on the principal terms of a settlement of the US patent infringement litigation pertaining to Teva's generic version of Wyeth's Effexor XR(R) anti-depressant pending in the United States District Court for the District of New Jersey. The parties are currently drafting definitive agreements and intend to submit the settlement agreements to the Federal Trade Commission. The terms of the settlement are confidential and are subject to a number of conditions, including review of the settlement by the FTC and the approval of the District Court.

London, Oct 20 -- A press report, dated Oct 19, states: Shares of Wyeth and Israel's Teva Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd. rose today after the drug makers said they resolved patent-infringement litigation involving Wyeth's blockbuster antidepressant, Effexor XR. Analysts said the settlement, announced late yesterday, seemed to allow Wyeth to extend its exclusive grip on Effexor, its biggest-selling franchise with \$3.3 billion in sales last year. Terms were undisclosed. Investors bought up shares of Wyeth, which rose 3.5%, or \$1.57, to \$46.69 in afternoon trading on the New York Stock Exchange. Teva's shares climbed \$1.37, or almost 4%, to \$36.30 on the Nasdaq. Greene had assumed Teva would win the case and Wyeth would face generic competition in mid-2008. Greene said he now assumes Effexor XR will retain patent protection through at least 2013. For Teva, Ryan said, a settlement may guarantee a launch of generic Effexor well before 2017, when patents expire. The deal is subject to review by U.S. antitrust regulators. Analysts speculated the deal would be finalized in about six weeks, after which terms might be made public.

POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER, NORTH DAKOTA,

UNITED STATES

London, Oct 20 -- A press report, dated today, states: Another civil lawsuit stemming from a Minot, N.D., train derailment was settled yesterday, marking a legal resolution to all three cases scheduled for trial this week. Warren and Rebecca Howell agreed to undisclosed terms with Canadian Pacific Railway for the 2002 wreck that spilled more than 250,000 gallons of anhydrous ammonia near their home. A toxic vapor cloud blanketed their rural neighborhood, trapping the Howells inside their home for more than four hours. The Howells agreed to a deal with Canadian Pacific just before jury selection in the trial. Their claims focused on symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder. MeLea Grabinger, whose husband died from anhydrous ammonia exposure, settled her lawsuit against the railroad Monday (Oct 17). Henry and Linda Juntunen, along with their son Joey, settled their case last week. Terms of those deals also weren't disclosed. The three cases were grouped together for a trial before Judge Tony Leung in Minneapolis. Nearly 400 other lawsuits are pending against Canadian Pacific in Minnesota state court and North Dakota federal court. The next trial for lawsuits related to the derailment is scheduled for Jan 16 in Minneapolis. Lawsuits have been grouped together to help move them through the courts. The upcoming trial consists of four cases selected by plaintiffs' attorneys and two cases picked by Canadian Pacific. Hunegs, who represents a client in the January trial, declined to discuss details of the Howells' agreement with the railroad. He also declined to comment on whether recent settlements will affect future lawsuits.

PRICE-FIXING, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 13 -- A press report, dated today, states: Samsung will plead guilty to price fixing and pay a \$300 million fine, federal officials announced today. The penalty is the second-largest criminal antitrust fine in history and caps a three-year investigation of the largest makers of "dynamic random access memory" chips, a \$7.7 billion market in the United States. The guilty plea by South Korea-based Samsung Electronics Co. Ltd. and its US subsidiary, Samsung Semiconductor Inc., was to be entered today in US District Court in San Francisco. The Justice Department already has secured guilty pleas from two other companies and collected more than \$345 million in fines. "Price-fixing threatens our free market system, stifles innovation and robs American consumers of the benefit of competitive prices," Attorney General Alberto Gonzales said. Samsung received grand jury subpoenas in connection with the investigation during 2002, and put aside \$100 million late last year to pay potential criminal penalties. Samsung's top competitor, Seoul-based Hynix, agreed

earlier this year to plead guilty to price fixing and pay a \$185 million fine. Last September, rival Infineon Technologies AG of Germany agreed to a \$160 million fine. The government accused the companies of conspiring in e-mails, telephone calls and face-to-face meetings to fix prices of memory chips between April 1999 and June 2002. The chips are used in digital recorders, personal computers, printers, video recorders, mobile phones and many other electronics. The government said the victims of the alleged price-fixing were Dell Inc., Compaq Computer Corp., Hewlett-Packard Co., Apple Computer Inc., International Business Machines Corp., and Gateway Inc. The investigation started in 2002, a year after memory chip prices began to climb even though the high-tech industry was in a tailspin. At the time, the hikes were attributed to tight supplies, although then-Dell Computer CEO Michael Dell blamed them on cartel-like behavior by chip makers.

PRICE-FIXING, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 14 -- A press report, dated today, states: Samsung Electronics Co. has agreed to pay \$300 million for its role in an international plot that artificially raised prices for a technology essential to computers and electronics devices, the Justice Department said yesterday. Samsung confirmed that it had reached a settlement with the Justice Department yesterday. Spokeswoman Chris Goodhart said, in a statement, that the fine "will in no way affect Samsung's day-to-day operations." The Justice Department investigation covers a period from April 1999 to June 2002. More recently, Kumar said, Samsung has been accused by competitors of underpricing a different memory chip in an aggressive effort to win a potentially lucrative contract to supply that component for the Apple iPod.

ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENT, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Oct 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: A 21-year-old man awarded more than £5m after a car crash left him paralysed has expressed relief his battle for compensation is over. The £5.2m insurance payout last week to Ben Royce, of Ashcroft Road, Paddock Wood Kent, is among the highest ever ordered by the High Court. The accident happened when a BMW driven by his half-brother crashed on the A21 near Tonbridge in August 2002. The former fence erector was a front seat passenger in the car, which span out of control after hitting a puddle of water. He now has only limited movement in his fingers and legs and relies on his electric wheelchair for mobility. The award, which will be paid by the driver's insurance company, is made up of £3m for Mr Royce's future care and £2.2m for loss of earnings and pain and suffering. Mr Royce said he is pleased his 24-hour care is now guaranteed.

The award will also allow Mr Royce to carry out further modifications to his home, for example by installing voice-activated controls to open and close doors and operate a computer.

SETTLEMENT FOLLOWING ELECTRICAL BLACKOUT, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 19 -- A press report, dated today, states: Nearly two years after the electrical outage that blacked out Union Square days before Christmas, costing businesses and The City millions of dollars in holiday sales and taxes, San Francisco officials approved a \$6.5 million settlement with Pacific Gas & Electric Company. The settlement, brokered by City Attorney Dennis Herrera, brings PG&E's payouts from the blackout to \$9 million. The settlement is in lieu of possible fines the state could levy against the utility giant, which would go directly to the California Public Utilities Commission. Instead, in the deal brokered among The City, CPUC and PG&E, San Francisco will get \$5.5 million of the total settlement for particular improvements to PG&E infrastructure, and the state will receive the other \$1 million. The state cannot slap PG&E with any violations under the terms of the settlement, and the total \$6.5 million payment must be made from shareholder funds, not passed on to ratepayers. "Because we became a party in the action we had a seat at the table, and we were able to lead negotiations," Herrera explained. "We're incredibly gratified to be able to bring \$5.5 million in benefits back to The City." The money will be spent to upgrade PG&E infrastructure in The City, improve local emergency-response capabilities, make visual improvements to the Hunters Point substation and hire an independent consultant to perform a study of PG&E's system in San Francisco. PG&E spokesman Paul Moreno said the utility has also paid out about \$2.5 million to about 2,400 San Francisco customers for business lost and other damage caused by the outage, which occurred about 1800, Dec 20, 2003. The blackout shut down Union Square, the center of San Francisco's downtown shopping and restaurant area, after the utility was slow to respond to a fire caused by equipment failure at its Mission Substation. While PG&E still insists that the equipment failure was unavoidable, Moreno noted that the company has voluntarily instated many changes at the substation that have improved response time. Those include smoke detectors and a requirement that the facility be manned 24 hours a day. Additionally, PG&E and The City reached a separate agreement under which the utility will pay approximately \$615,000 for direct damages caused by the 2003 blackout. The Board of Supervisors will consider that settlement later this month.

TRADE PACT VIOLATION, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 19 -- A press report, dated Oct 18, states: Staples Inc recently paid \$7.4 million to settle allegations it submitted false claims to the U.S. government, said the Justice Department, Bloomberg News reported today. The Justice Department said the Framingham, Mass., office supplier was accused of selling products to the U.S. government from countries such as China and Taiwan that don't have reciprocal trade agreements with the U.S. According to the Justice Department, Staples is supposed to decline those sales. Staples spokesman Own Davis said Staples reached a settlement to resolve allegations and avoid potential litigation. "The decision to resolve the matter allows Staples to avoid distractions and maintain focus on advancing our business," said Davis. "Staples is not acknowledging any wrongdoing." "Federal contractors will be held accountable for their violations of procurement regulations," said Peter Keisler, chief of the Justice Department's civil division, in a statement for the Bloomberg report.

VIOLATION OF CLEAN AIR ACT, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 19 -- A press report, dated Oct 18, states: A Memphis acrylics factory has settled a multi-million dollar pollution case in federal court. Lucite International Incorporated agreed to improve air quality. The company settled its \$19 million case with the Justice Department and Environmental Protection Agency, which alleged the company had violated the Clean Air Act. The United Kingdom-based company makes acrylic-based products. Materials produced at the Fite Road plant on the north side of Memphis go into products such as bathtubs, acrylic sheeting and massive, clear viewing panels such as those found in aquariums. The settlement covers pollutants sulfur dioxide, sulfuric acid mist, carbon monoxide and volatile organic compounds. Those pollutants contribute to acid rain, severe respiratory problems and childhood asthma.

WRONGFUL DEATH, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 17 -- A press report, dated today, states: The parents of a 26-year-old woman who died after a scuba-diving accident have settled a wrongful death lawsuit against the ambulance company that responded to the incident. The lawsuit, which also named Monterey County, claimed there was negligence, including drug use by two paramedics, which contributed to the 2002 death of Mollie Suh Yaley. The scuba-diving instructor was found unconscious in about 15 ft of water at the popular Cannery Row dive spot. She lingered in a coma for

four days before dying. Her parents, William and Arlene Yaley, sued American Medical Response and county government, saying the ambulance took 12 minutes to reach the beach from nearby Pacific Grove and paramedics ceased resuscitation efforts after only 22 minutes. One of two paramedics, Alfonso Martorella, later told The Monterey County Herald that he and his partner, Bruce Faucett, had used heroin earlier that day. Faucett denied the allegations, but court documents showed he took a leave of absence eight months after Yaley's death to receive treatment for alcohol and drug abuse. Terms of the settlement were confidential. American Medical Response admitted no liability or wrongdoing, which is standard practice in such settlements. The Yaleys are satisfied with the settlement, which came just before the trial was scheduled to begin today, said their attorney, Brian Evans. Monterey County also is close to finalizing a settlement with the Yaleys, said County Counsel Charles McKee, who added that part of the agreement would involve the county improving its emergency response procedures.

Railway Accidents



BARNWOOD, GLOUCESTERSHIRE, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Oct 19 -- A press report, dated Oct 18, states: Rail services into and out of Cheltenham have been severely disrupted after a freight wagon left the tracks. It happened early today as the train was hauling a consignment of mixed industrial materials along a line at Barnwood, north of Gloucester. Central Trains, First Great Western, Wessex Trains and Virgin Trains are all operating replacement road transport. Network Rail was hoping to reopen one line by noon, but warned the service would still be very restricted. Spokeswoman Kirsty Anderson said: "The train, which was pulling 19 wagons, had travelled some miles along the track with the derailed wagon and caused some damage." She added engineers were assessing the damage and rail accident investigators were at the scene. Services are likely to be disrupted until the weekend, First added. A spokesman for the freight company, EWS, said the driver was not injured and the consignment was not harmful to the environment.

NORTH DAKOTA, UNITED STATES

See "Death Due to Railway Accident, United States" under "Awards & Settlements."

TEXARKANA, ARKANSAS, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 16 -- A press report, dated Oct 15, states: Seven empty train cars and a tanker containing a flammable gas derailed today in a switchyard at Texarkana, exploding in a ball of fire that killed one person and forced the evacuation of hundreds of homes. A plume of smoke covered the south end of the city, and at least seven people went to hospital emergency rooms with complaints of respiratory problems. At least two homes were destroyed, including one where the victim died, and several vehicles were totaled in the quarter-mile area surrounding the accident, police spokesman Chris Rankin said. At midday, the propylene tank was still burning, but the fire was under control and the smoke had thinned out, Rankin said. Police recommended that residents stay away from their homes. Initially, police thought the chemical involved was vinyl acetate, which releases poisonous fumes. Officers went door to door, urging thousands of people in a 2-by-5 mile area to move to the north side of town. Propylene is less dangerous. A Union Pacific train coming from Chicago hit the back of another freight train in the rail yard, causing the eight cars to derail, said Union Pacific spokesman Mark Davis. He said his initial report involving "a small LPG tank" was wrong. The train was headed for Laredo, Texas, when it hit the back of the other Union Pacific freight train, which was coming from Pine Bluff and headed for Harlingen, Texas, Davis said. None of the railroad crews were injured, he said. Rankin said the switching yard is behind the police station, about a quarter mile from the Texas border and also serves Kansas City Southern and Amtrak. Wadley Regional Medical Center was in the evacuation area, and several patients and nurses also complained of nose and eye irritation, spokeswoman Shelby Brown said.

London, Oct 17 -- A press report, dated Oct 16, states: An Arkansas woman is dead following a fiery railyard accident that also destroyed her home. Meanwhile, hundreds of others have been allowed back in their homes after a train derailment that released toxic chemicals into the air. Authorities said a tanker car loaded with flammable gas derailed and exploded before dawn yesterday. Firefighters are allowing the fire to burn itself out. They said it should be out by sometime today.

London, Oct 19 -- A press report, dated Oct 17, states: Railroad repair crews built a temporary route to replace a trestle and track destroyed by fire after a railroad tanker car filled with a volatile chemical exploded. The explosion killed one person in a nearby home, authorities said. Flames from Saturday's explosion did not completely burn out until about 22 hours later, officials said. A permanent bridge and track should be completed by midweek, said Mark Davis, a spokesman for Union Pacific. The blast happened after two

Miscellaneous



trains crashed in a switch yard, investigators said. One of the trains was carrying propylene, a byproduct produced in petroleum refining and used in plastics. The train with a car carrying the chemical was stopped on the southbound tracks, and another train hit it from behind, said Ted Turpin, an investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board. Four of the stopped cars were knocked off the track, and an accordion effect caused the propylene car to leak and explode. The chemical leaked into a creek that feeds the Texarkana drinking water system. Because the chemical is lighter than water and the surface of the creek burned after the blast, officials didn't believe it was contaminated. "Most of the material actually burned up. Propylene will burn fairly quickly, without a lot of residue," said Texarkana emergency director Dave Hall.

WABAMUN, ALBERTA, CANADA

London, Oct 19 -- A press report, dated today: The oil spill and cleanup caused by a train derailment at Wabamun Lake this summer cost Canadian National Railway \$28 million in its third quarter, the company announced yesterday. CN spokesperson Mark Hallman said \$25 million went to pay the company's deductible with its insurers, while the other \$3 million covered uninsured costs. The company would not reveal the total cost of the 45-car derailment on Aug 3 that spilled more than 700,000 litres of bunker fuel oil and pole treating oil into and around the lake. Hallman said insurance is expected to cover the remaining expenses. "That sounds about right," Doug Goss, chairman of the Lake Wabamun Residents' Committee, said of the figures. However, through discussions with CN lawyer Sean Finn since the spill, Goss suggested the final number could be higher. "I think the total cost right now is in the 40 millions," he said. CN said its liabilities at Wabamun Lake are mainly short-term, including the cost of cleaning up the shoreline, lakeside homes and First Nations land. Although CN wouldn't release projections of the final costs, Alberta Environment said it will likely be difficult to estimate a complete tally. "I think it's pretty tough to compare this to anything else because there hasn't been anything like this that's happened before in Alberta," said ministry spokesman Robert Moyles. "I'm sure a lot of the bills haven't even been paid yet for some of the actual cleanup activities." Moyles said the cleanup schedule is going according to plan, and CN met its Oct 3 deadline for submitting a plan, which is under review by the provincial ministry. The cleanup will continue until freeze-up. Next spring, Moyles expects, CN will face more costs to assess the environmental conditions in the area.

INDONESIAN FISHING VESSEL FIRED ON BY AUSTRALIA

London, Oct 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: Warning shots fired by a navy patrol boat and customs vessel have been ignored by an Indonesian fishing boat suspected of illegally fishing in Australian waters. The fishing boat was boarded yesterday by navy and customs personnel after a chase of several hours. "The customs vessel first spotted the vessel," a Customs spokesman said. "It then began pursuing the vessel, which refused to stop. There were warning shots fired by both the customs vessel and navy patrol boat HMAS Armidale, which the ice boat ignored." The Customs patrol boat spotted the Indonesian Type 111 ice boat yesterday afternoon in the Australian fishing zone near the Wessel Islands in the Arafura Sea. Customs officers and navy personnel found a large quantity of shark fin on board, the customs spokesman said. The boat, with nine Indonesian crew on board, is being towed back to Darwin where the Australian Fisheries Management Authority will conduct an investigation into its involvement in possible illegal fishing. It is due to arrive Darwin on Thursday (Oct 20).

London, Oct 19 -- A press report, dated today, states: Customs say its officers have had to brave knives and burning missiles to board an Indonesian fishing boat north of the Wessel Islands off the Northern Territory. The Federal Government says Navy and Customs boats fired warning shots and launched a pursuit when an Indonesian-flagged ice boat failed to stop inside Australia's fishing zone on Monday (Oct 17) night. When Customs officers tried to board the boat, the crew allegedly used burning anti-boarding poles, as well as knives and machetes, to try to stop them. Customs Minister Chris Ellison says when officers took control of the boat several hours later, they found two holds full of dried shark fin and the carcasses of more than 50 whole sharks. Senator Ellison says the ice boat had a global positioning system on board, as well as a depth sounder and a satellite phone. HMAS Armidale is towing the vessel with its nine crew to Darwin.

OUTBREAK OF "BIRD FLU"

Bucharest, Oct 17 -- Romania recorded no new cases of bird flu after a mass cull of poultry today, but its neighbours and European countries on migratory routes stepped up testing of birds to prevent the disease's spread. British tests showed on Saturday (Oct 15) the H5N1 strain of the disease, which has killed more than 60 people and millions of birds in Asia since 2003, had reached mainland Europe,

identifying it in three ducks found dead in a Romanian village. Romania said it had finished culling poultry in the Danube delta on the Black Sea, a destination for migratory wild birds heading toward warmer climes in North Africa, and had found no new cases after the virus was found in Ceamurlia de Jos. The bird flu outbreak was limited to Ceamurlia de Jos and Maliuc, 40 km north. All 18,000 domestic birds in Ceamurlia were killed and culling of Maliuc's less than 3,000 poultry was finished earlier today, Chirica Leter, the government's representative in the delta, said. Romanian Agriculture Minister Gheorghe Flutur told reporters none of the 424 samples taken in the delta indicate flu. He said 20-day-old virus-free chickens would be sent to the two quarantined villages within a week to see whether the virus is still present there. Flutur said his government had asked the U.S. embassy in Bucharest to give local veterinarians a mobile laboratory to speed and extend testing to migratory birds coming from Asia. Despite Romania's assurances, neighbouring Bulgaria was preparing a national crisis headquarters after stepping up border controls and surveillance of poultry farms and wetlands near its Danube river boundary. -- Reuters.

London, Oct 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: An additional 12 birds have tested positive in Romania for the deadly strain of bird flu that has already killed at least 60 people in Asia, Minister of Agriculture Gheorghe Flutur said today. The H5N1 strain of the virus was found in a dozen dead swans near the Ukrainian border. Earlier Romania cases were discovered in the counties of Tuleca and Constanza, near the Black Sea. Authorities have killed thousands of birds, including ducks and swans, in an attempt to stop the spread of the disease. In the villages of Ceamurlia and Maliuc, in Tuleca County, almost 60 birds have died from avian flu, authorities said. Live birds are no longer available for sale in markets, and approval from a veterinarian is needed to sell even slaughtered chickens. Officials said they had vaccinated 100,000 Romanians against garden-variety strains of influenza in an attempt to limit the possibility that the virus that causes bird flu might, through "reassortment" with the more common form, gain the ability to spread easily from person to person. European Union officials said Monday that bird flu had been found on one of the Greek isles and tests were being conducted to determine if it is the deadly H5N1 strain. The European Commission said Greek veterinary authorities had informed it of a suspected case of avian influenza on the island of Inousses, based on a serological test that proved positive for the presence of avian influenza H5 antibodies. The samples were in the process of being sent for confirmation and virus isolation tests at the Greek national

reference laboratory in Thessaloniki, and the European Commission said it had requested that samples also be sent immediately to the Community Reference Laboratory in Weybridge, England, where sample from Turkey was tested and confirmed. The commission said it is preparing to ban the movement of live poultry and poultry products from the infected area in the Chios region. The EU said its ban would be adopted as soon as the Greek national reference laboratory confirmed the results, expected today. The EU said following consultations between the commission and the Greek Ministry of Agriculture, Greek authorities had agreed to restrict the dispatch of live poultry and poultry products as a precautionary measure. Yesterday afternoon the mayor of the island of Chios said a farmer on nearby Inousses who raises turkeys and chickens noted on Thursday (Oct13) that some of his birds had died. Two state veterinarians were sent in to look at nine turkeys. They also took blood samples from some chickens. The mayor said a state lab in Athens confirmed yesterday afternoon that one of the nine samples proved positive for an H5-type virus.

London, Oct 19 -- A press report, dated Oct 18, states: EU foreign ministers urged global co-operation today to tackle the threat of avian flu, as Greece investigated what could prove the first appearance of the deadly H5N1 strain in an EU member country. Swiss drugmaker Roche, under pressure to raise output of antiviral flu drug Tamiflu, said it might let rival firms and governments produce it under licence for emergency pandemic use. A Dutch company said it was working on a vaccine. British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, chairing an emergency meeting of European Union foreign ministers in Luxembourg, said the discovery of the deadly H5N1 strain of bird flu in Turkey and Romania was no cause for panic. "So far there is no evidence of any transfer of the virus to human beings. Let us hope that remains the situation," Straw told a news conference after the meeting. Straw said people were bound to be concerned and the European Union needed to show it was doing all it could. Scientists fear if the H5N1 virus, which has killed more than 60 people in Asia since it first appeared there in 1997, passes from birds to humans on a large scale it could mutate into a variety that could spread easily between humans. In a virulent form, they say, this could kill millions worldwide. EU health commissioner Markos Kyprianou, co-ordinating the 25-nation bloc's response to avian flu, said Brussels did not yet know whether the virus detected in a bird on the Aegean island of Chios was the deadly strain. Tests were proceeding. Greece took precautionary measures, banning exports of living poultry, meat and other poultry products from the island to EU member states and third

countries. The foreign ministers said in a statement the EU could not act effectively on its own in tackling a threat that could move so quickly across countries and continents. "The Council (of ministers) recognised that avian and pandemic influenza are global threats and called for an international coordinated response," the statement said. Roche Holding AG said it would be willing to discuss giving a production licence for Tamiflu to rival firms including Indian generic drug maker Cipla. Executive David Reddy said however the firm had not yet been approached by Cipla, which has said it could make a copy-cat version to help governments build stocks. Dutch company Akzo Nobel NV said it was working on a human vaccine and would begin clinical trials next year. But scientists say development is difficult before the exact architecture of a mutated virus is known. Kyprianou said after briefing EU foreign ministers more than half of EU states had placed orders for anti-viral flu drugs. Spain said it was planning to treat between 15 and 25% of the population, mostly old people and the very young. The Health Ministry said it had previously bought Tamiflu but was also considering GlaxoSmithKline's Relenza medicine. The World Health Organisation has expressed fears that alarm in Europe could distract attention from what is the real seat of the danger in southeast Asia. More than 60 people have died of the disease in Asia where, by contrast to Europe, people often live close to poultry and are exposed to a greater threat. Macedonia said one dead chicken found among hundreds in a village north of the Greek border had raised suspicions and samples were being sent to Britain for tests. The former Yugoslav republic is also awaiting the results of local tests on chickens that died near Kumanovo, on the country's northern border with Serbia. Turkish authorities were examining the remains of some 500 quails found in the west of the country and Romania said it had testing for possible new cases in the Danube delta, one of them close to the border with Ukraine, whose agriculture minister said farmers in the area were being told to keep birds indoors. In East Africa, which lies on a major migration route for some of the virus-affected wild species, a UN representative said officials from the region planned to meet in Rwanda later this month to work out a strategy. Greece, however, was the focus of attention today. The farmer who alerted authorities after seeing turkeys fall ill said he feared for his island. "Yes I am concerned, but not just for me but for all the people here," Dimitris Komninaris said. "But everyone on the island is keeping calm." Besides the human danger, countries visited by bird flu can face grave economic losses. The milder H5N7 strain struck the Netherlands in 2003, prompting the slaughter of 30 million birds and losses estimated at

500 million euros.

London, Oct 20 -- A press report, dated Oct 19, states: Countries should appoint a government minister to co-ordinate their response to the avian flu threat, a senior UN official said in comments published on Wednesday. David Nabarro, the UN co-ordinator for global readiness for an outbreak, said close government co-operation would be crucial in overcoming any outbreak. "I would like to see a person in each government given authority to bring all parts of government together for pandemic preparedness and quickly," he told Britain's Times newspaper. "The key to combating this threat is joined-up government. It was the same with SARS and it will be the same with regards to influenza." Scientists fear if the deadly H5N1 strain of bird flu passes from birds to humans on a large scale it could mutate into a variety that could spread easily between humans. The virus has killed more than 60 people in Asia since it first appeared there in 1997. H5N1 has now been detected in Romania and Turkey and Greece is testing a turkey to see if it has that strain. Nabarro urged countries, companies and scientists to work together to find a vaccine. "It is tempting for individual groups to withhold information for economic reasons," he said. "In the end, if there is not complete sharing of information we will count the costs." He said rich countries had a duty to help poorer nations in the fight against a virus which can easily cross borders. "The preparedness of the world depends not so much on who is strong, but on who is weak," Nabarro said. "We cannot hang around too long because a pandemic could be imminent."

London, Oct 20 -- A press report, dated today, states: The bird flu virus has been detected in poultry in the Russian province of Tula, apparently borne by wild ducks, Russia's Agriculture Ministry said yesterday. "Some 3000 fowl have been slaughtered in the village of Yandovka (about 300 kilometres east of Moscow) after the discovery of bird flu in seven private farms," said Nikolai Vlasov, deputy head of the ministry's veterinary control department. "We are practically sure that it is the same type as that diagnosed in Siberia," the H5N1 strain of bird flu that can be deadly to humans, Mr Vlasov said. Yesterday's announcement was the first time the ministry had confirmed the spread of the virus west of the Ural mountains. China has also announced its first reported outbreak in more than two months, saying 2600 birds had died from bird flu on a farm in northern Inner Mongolia. The most recent confirmed case before this was near the Tibetan capital of Lhasa in August, in which 133 birds died and another 2475 were slaughtered. Currently, the outbreak has been brought efficiently under control," the Agriculture Ministry said. "No new outbreaks have been discovered." As countries spend billions of dollars to buy medicines and vaccines under

development to prepare for a possible pandemic, too little planning has gone into how to use the accumulating arsenal of medical weapons, experts warn. Most of the drugs have never been used to control outbreaks, and it is not even clear how well they would work against H5N1 should it jump from birds to humans. Scientists fear that if the virus, which has killed more than 60 people in Asia since it first appeared in 1997, passes from birds to humans on a large scale it could then mutate and spread easily between humans. In a virulent form, they say, this could kill millions worldwide. European Union foreign ministers urged global co-operation on Tuesday to tackle the threat of avian flu, as Greece investigated what could be the first appearance of the strain in an EU member country. Brussels did not yet know if the virus detected in a bird on the Aegean island of Inousses was the deadly strain, the EU's Health Commissioner, Markos Kyprianou, said. Greece has taken precautionary measures, banning exports of poultry products from Inousses and nearby islands.

London, Oct 20 -- A press report, dated today, states: A man has died of bird flu in Thailand, raising the country's death toll from the virus to 13, Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra has said. Mr Thaksin said the man was a farmer who had cooked and eaten infected chicken. His seven-year-old son is in hospital with flu-like symptoms. Mr Thaksin said the victim, a 48-year-old from Kanchanaburi province west of Bangkok, had contracted the disease when he slaughtered and ate chicken. The man had initially tested negative, but Mr Thaksin said new tests confirmed that the man had bird flu. It was the first human victim in Thailand in over a year, and comes amid mounting concern that the virus will reappear as Asia heads towards its winter, when the virus appears to thrive. Vietnam, the worst-hit country in terms of human deaths, this week saw its first outbreak in poultry since June. China said yesterday it had lost some 2,600 fowl to the killer virus, at a farm in Inner Mongolia.

OUTBREAK OF FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE, BRAZIL

London, Oct 12 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Brazil's Agriculture Ministry said on its website yesterday an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease has been registered in the center-west state of Mato Grosso do Sul, near the border with Paraguay. The national agricultural laboratory also confirmed that the disease was detected in samples taken from cows of the Vezozzo rural estate in Mato Grosso do Sul. "Following the confirmation of the infection of 140 animals, all the recommended emergency procedures were adopted, including the isolation of the ranch and the collection of sample, which resulted in the identification of type-O virus," said the laboratory. The government has ordered the inspection

of rural properties within a 25-km radius of the ranch and a research into the origin of the outbreak, and 582 animals will be slaughtered. Check points will also be set up to control the spread of the disease in Mato Grosso do Sul, one of the country's most important ranching regions. No foot-and-mouth case had been reported since 1999 in Mato Grosso do Sul, which had been declared free of the epizootic through vaccination in 2001. The ministry said it has reported the outbreak to the International Epizootic Organization, the Pan-American Foot-and-Mouth Disease Center, Brazil's neighbouring countries and its trading partners. Neighboring Paraguay has adopted an alert plan along the Brazilian border following the outbreak. The case could also lead to the suspension of Brazilian and Paraguayan beef imports by Russia, one of Brazil's main markets for the product. Brazil is the world's largest beef exporter, with exports amounting to US\$1.459 billion per month in the first half of 2005.

London, Oct 13 -- A press report, dated Oct 12, states: Several governments have announced restrictions on imports of beef from Brazil following an outbreak of foot and mouth disease. Brazil's agriculture ministry said that dozens of cattle were infected on a farm in the southern state of Mato Grosso Do Sul. The area has been sealed off and hundreds of animals are being slaughtered. Barely 24 hours after the foot and mouth outbreak was confirmed, the economic effects are being widely felt. Yesterday, the agriculture ministry said the European Union was suspending beef imports from three states, including Mato Grosso Do Sul, where the disease was identified. Other countries introducing restrictions included Paraguay, South Africa, Israel and Russia. The disease has been identified in 153 animals. Other herds, within a 25-km radius of the farm, are also being inspected.

London, Oct 14 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Brazil, the world's top beef exporter, today scrambled to launch a fight against foot-and-mouth disease after an outbreak prompted at least 31 countries to ban imports of Brazilian beef, heralding a possible billion-dollar loss. Agriculture Minister Roberto Rodrigues announced an emergency team to counter the problem and identify the origin of the one outbreak confirmed Monday (Oct 10) in Mato Grosso do Sul state in the south-west. "Every measure has been taken to isolate the outbreak," Rodrigues stressed. "There is absolutely no margin for errors that hurt exports of a product as important as this to our country," President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, said during a visit to Portugal. National Farm Federation foreign trade chief Antonio Donizeti warned the outbreak would cost Brazil from 500 million to one billion dollars this year. "This is extremely serious, the industry

considers it a tsunami for the Brazilian beef industry," Donizeti said, predicting it could take as long as two years to bring the industry back to where it was prior to the outbreak. Brazil became the world's largest beef exporter last year and has one of the largest herds in the world, with 195 million cattle. The South American country exported 1.9 million tonnes of beef in 2004, worth 2.5 billion dollars. At least 582 cattle were destroyed in Mato Grosso do Sul after some 140 cows were diagnosed with the illness. A second suspected outbreak was under investigation, officials said.

TIMARU STAR (Hong Kong)

London, Oct 14 -- A press report, dated today, states: The Maritime Union of Australia says its members will refuse to let bulk Timaru Star (19779 gt, built 200) leave the Fremantle Port tomorrow because of safety concerns. The Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) in Canberra has approved the vessel travelling to Bunbury, despite claims by the union that the vessel's cargo of tree logs is not secured properly. AMSA says it has inspected the vessel along with an independent assessor and both have determined it is seaworthy. The union's state secretary, Chris Cain, says that if the vessel is moved there is a danger the logs may roll off the vessel, causing problems for other water users. "The stanchions are hanging over the bow of the ship," he said. "There are no hand rails. There are logs that if they move that ship at this moment, even in port, I would suggest a number of them would fall into the ocean."

Fires & Explosions



AASGARD B GAS PLATFORM, NORWEGIAN SEA

See "Aasgard B Gas Platform" under "Marine."

CHEMICAL WAREHOUSE, KARACHI, PAKISTAN

Karachi, Oct 17 -- According to central fire brigade sources, a fire broke out in a privately owned chemical warehouse-Zamzma Warehouse in Site industrial area, Karachi, at 1130 yesterday. Eight vehicles of different fire stations of city extinguished the fire after nine hours operations. No casualty was reported. However, 500 imported chemical storage cans were gutted. The warehouse contained 60,000 chemical storage cans at the time of the incident. The cause of fire could not be ascertained immediately. The warehouse owners are trying to estimate the losses, which may run into millions of rupees. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent

DISTILLERY, WARRINGTON, CHESHIRE, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Oct 17 -- A press report, dated today, states: Investigators are trying to discover the cause of a large fire at a Cheshire distillery on Saturday (Oct 15) that forced the evacuation of nearby houses. Residents close to G & J Greenall's in Warrington were allowed back into their homes late yesterday night. A safety cordon had been set up around the factory, which used to brew beer but is now a major gin and vodka distillery. Firefighters are expected to remain at the scene for the next two days.

London, Oct 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: A distillery hit by a major fire at the weekend is looking at ways to maintain supplies of brands including Vladivar Vodka and Bombay Sapphire. G&J Greenall, which is owned by the hotels group De Vere, said the warehouse and bottling part of its facility in Warrington had been severely damaged. It said it was considering using a third party to bottle products unaffected by the fire, which took place on Saturday evening and required more than 100 firefighters to bring under control. The site was still being tended by officers earlier today.

FOREST, CHINA

London, Oct 14 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: A forest fire broke out in a mountain area of north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region last night, so far no casualties have been reported, local government said today. The fire occurred in the Gaojishan mountain area located in the Wunu'er Township of Yakeshi, a county-level city in the Hulun Buir City. So far, eight sources of fire have been found, which covered an area of 15 square kilometres. "The situation is severe," a local official said. Local government has sent approximately 1,000 forest police officers to put down the fire. However, due to strong wind in the daytime, fire fighting was very difficult, the local official said, adding that they will use the opportunity of weakened wind after 1900, this evening.

London, Oct 17 -- A press report, dated today, states: The forest fire that broke out in a mountain area of north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region is under control, local government said this afternoon. A total of 1,387 fire fighters and forest police officers were mobilised yesterday evening to put out the forest fire in the Gaojishan forestry located in the Uynur Township of the Hulun Buir City. By the early morning of today, most of the fires had been quenched. There was no strong wind in the afternoon in the forestry, so the fire did not recover and was "basically brought under control," according to local officials. Forest police officers and staff members of the forestry are still stationed there to clear the scenes and guard against more fires.

FURNITURE STORE, KILLEEN, TEXAS, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 20 -- A press report, dated Oct 19, states: A fire has destroyed a new furniture store in downtown Killeen. Firefighters worked overnight, pouring water on the 11,000- square foot structure of Furniture Max at 304 W. Veteran's Memorial Blvd. Investigators believe the fire may have started in the ceiling. The owners had just opened the store last Friday (Oct 14). They were working on inventory when they smelled smoke. No one was hurt. A damage estimate has not been prepared, but the building is classified as a total loss.

GODOWN, CHITTAGONG, BANGLADESH

Karachi, Oct 14 -- A huge fire broke out at 10-godown in Chittagong port Oct 12/13. A large volume of stocked electronic goods, shoes, cosmetics of the importers and four factories of shoes at Masum Ali Lane at Madarbari in Chittagong were gutted. Besides, three persons including a woman and a child were killed and eight others including two fire fighters injured, according to police and fire service sources. It is said that the fire originated from electric short circuit at 2200, Oct 12 and continued yesterday until extinguished by 15 fire fighting vehicles. According to the sources, a total of 14 business enterprises named Tawkkul Enterprise, Victory Trading Agency, RNNR Trading, Ajmir Trading, Jahan Trading, Nahar Associate, Seraj Store Limited, Kaderia Trading, Tea Ford Associate, Eximco Limited, Mukul Trading, Farook Brothers Limited, Noor International Limited lost their stocks in the fire. Besides, four shoe factories were also gutted in the fire. - Lloyd's List Correspondent.

PIER, SOUTH END ON SEA, ESSEX, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Oct 18 -- A press report, dated Oct 17, states: Southend pier, where fire damage is going to cost millions to repair, may not be open in time for next year's summer season. Southend Pier is one of the town's biggest draws for visitors and delays in its restoration could have an effect on the Essex town's tourist industry. But during a visit on Monday local MP James Dudderidge said there was no point simply patching things up. Investigating authorities said it seemed likely the fire was an accident. For miles, the tide-line along the county's coast is black with charred wreckage and debris is still being washed up along the shore.

PIER, SOUTHEND ON SEA, ESSEX, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Oct 14 -- A press report, dated Oct 13, states: Engineers are building a temporary bridge to link the gutted part of Southend Pier to the undamaged end. It will allow access to the New Pier Head for lifeboat crews and help investigations into the cause of Sunday's (Oct 9) fire. There are also plans to create a viewing area to allow the public to see the damage and

watch repair work. Civic authorities have said that the damaged part of the world's longest pleasure pier would be rebuilt. Council officers will meet pier traders next week to discuss how it can help them with relocation.

PORK PROCESSING PLANT, ST. JOSEPH, MISSOURI, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 20 -- A press report, dated Oct 19, states: Damage from the deadly explosion at a new pork processing plant last week is estimated at around \$5 million, a police spokesman said today. Cmdr. Jim Connors of the St. Joseph Police Department said officials from several agencies had concluded the first phase of their joint investigation of the October 14 blast at Triumph Foods, whose new \$130 million plant was nearing completion. The explosion killed one person and injured 14 others. Connors said investigators agreed that the blast originated in a kitchen area on the first floor and determined there had been an open gas valve in the area. He said they identified several possible sources for igniting the gas but had not determined which one was responsible for it. He said the possibilities included incandescent and halogen lighting, electric fans and air-handling units, and a propane torch. Connors said the investigating agencies included St. Joseph police and fire departments, the State Fire Marshal's Office and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). He said the agencies would prepare separate reports, expected to be available in two weeks to a month, while the OSHA report will take longer. OSHA officials have said their investigation could take up to six months. The plant, expected to employ up to 1,000 people, was turned back over to Triumph yesterday, with crews resuming work on areas of the building that hadn't been damaged. Repairs to the affected areas won't be done until engineers and contractors finish assessing the damage, Triumph Chief Executive Officer Rick Hoffman said. "Obviously, the safety of the inspectors and workers is our first priority," Hoffman said in a written statement released yesterday. "Once we evaluate the extent of the repairs needed, we will resume construction and complete the facility as quickly and as safely as possible."

POWER PLANT, RATCHABARI, BANGKOK AREA, THAILAND

London, Oct 13 -- A press report, dated today, states: A major fire broke out at one of the two electricity generating units of the 3,200-megawatt Ratchaburi power plant last night, leading to its shutdown. Around 50 fire engines were sent from Ratchaburi provincial town and nearby provinces to help battle the blaze which started at around 8.40pm at the plant's power generation unit 1. At press time last night, firemen said they had been able to keep the fire under control but power plant officials

said it was too early to tell how much damage the fire had caused to the facility. They said they have not yet investigated whether there were any casualties because of thick smoke from the blaze. Energy Minister Viset Choopiban and a top power executive were quick to reassure after reports of the fire that the abrupt closure of the power plant would not affect national power supplies. Power reserves in the country are maintained at 20% of total production capacity. The shortfall caused by the shutdown of the Ratchaburi power plant will be compensated by supply from other power generation plants on the national power grid, said Kraisi Kanasuta, chief executive of Egat Plc, the major shareholder of Ratchaburi Electricity Generating Holding Co, and which owns 45% of the plant. Mr Viset said the Ratchaburi power plant's power generation unit 1 had been closed for regular maintenance when the fire started. The blaze was believed to have been caused by welding sparks at the unit's gas desulphurisation equipment. The sparks caused an explosion and it took firemen more than an hour to fight the ensuing blaze before bringing it under control. The Ratchaburi power plant is Egat's largest single investment. It consists of two separate power generation units. One of the two has three power generators, each with production capacity of 600MW while the second unit has two power generators, each with 700MW of production capacity. The plant is located on a 2,000-rai land plot and uses natural gas and bunker oil as fuel. The dual fuel option was chosen to avoid dependence solely on gas imported from Burma. Mr Kraisi said he suspected the gas supply to unit 1 had leaked and caught fire due to sparks from the welding work. "We ordered the shutdown of the second unit immediately after the fire for safety reasons," he said. Local people said yesterday they were concerned for their safety because an oil depot storing diesel and bunker oil as well as natural gas from Burma is located only about 300-400 metres away.

PREMISES, BROWN FIELD AREA, SAN DIEGO, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 20 -- A press report, dated Oct 19, states: Fire broke out today at a pallet company just south of Brown Field in southern San Diego County, throwing a giant plume of smoke into the sky. The San Diego Fire Department responded to the fire at Atlas Pallets. The blaze began at about 1645 hrs and began to quickly spread through the yard, burning pallets, vehicles and igniting at least one propane tank. Atlas Pallets makes and stores the wooden pallets on which equipment and supplies are distributed. Fire crews surrounded the fire to keep it from spreading, and a firefighting helicopter was called in to make water drops. By 1800 hrs, it appeared that their strategy had worked and that they were gaining

control of the blaze.

PREMISES, CARNEGIE, PENNSYLVANIA, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 17 -- A press report, dated Oct 16, states: Investigators say yesterday's fire in downtown Carnegie has caused more than \$1million in damages. The fire began early yesterday in the Red Onion restaurant, which had just opened this summer after suffering heavy damage during the flood from the remnant of Hurricane Ivan last year. The fire toppled the whole building and also swept through two banks on either side and crossed into the second floor of the Historical Society of Carnegie.

PREMISES, CHARLESTON, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 19 -- A press report, from Charleston, dated Oct 18, states: A faulty ceiling fan sparked a fire that killed 73 greyhound racing dogs at a private kennel, the state fire marshal's office said today. Losses from the blaze Sunday (Oct 16) at ZEZ Kennels were estimated at \$1 million, said Kim O'Brien, a secretary for the office's arson and explosives division. The dogs, which had multiple owners, were kept in cages inside a 60-by-14-foot trailer, officials said. Brooke County Sheriff Richard Ferguson said a building housing 70 more dogs on the property was not damaged in the fire.

RECYCLING PLANT, DORAL, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 18 -- A press report, dated Oct 17, states: Miami-Dade Fire Rescue crews and industrial firefighters battled a blaze at a county recycling plant in Doral for more than three hours early today, extinguishing the flames at about 0430 hrs. No one was hurt in the blaze at the Miami-Dade County Resource Recovery Center at NW 58th Street and 97th Avenue, fire officials said. The cause of the fire was unknown. The plant is managed for the county Department of Solid Waste Management by the ONYX Montenay Power Corporation, which runs 10 plants that convert waste to energy in the United States and Canada. Fire Rescue personnel were using wide "potato" rakes and a thermal imaging camera to help find hotspots beneath the trash and target water there, officials said. It's not unusual for small fires to break out at recycling dumps, as sunlight passing through broken glass can ignite flames on paper and trash buried below. "The gases gather under the surface as the stuff is decomposing. It's like spontaneous combustion," said Miami-Dade firefighter Joyce Simpson.

REFINERY, HOUSTON, TEXAS, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 17 -- A press report, dated Oct 16, states: One person suffered minor burns after an explosion at a Houston refinery this afternoon. The blast happened around 1215 at the Lyondell-Citgo plant, in southeastern Houston, said Jack

Williams, a district chief with the Houston Fire Department. "The fire was contained by the time we got there. We just assisted Lyondell," he said. "There is still a lot of heat in the plant. We're putting water on the plant itself to get it cooled down." A contract worker injured in the blaze was taken to Memorial Hermann Hospital, said David Harpole, a spokesman for Lyondell-Citgo. The worker suffered minor burns to his hands and arms but the injuries were not believed to be severe, he said. The blaze, which was extinguished within an hour by firefighters with Lyondell-Citgo, started as workers were trying to restart a fluid catalytic cracking unit, which converts a diesel-like product into gasoline. It sent heavy plumes of smoke billowing into the sky that could be seen as far away as downtown Houston. No detectable concentration of anything harmful was found in the air from the blaze, Harpole said. The unit had been off since the refinery was shut down last month when Hurricane "Rita" threatened the Houston-area, Harpole said. "When we started it up after the hurricane, we found some mechanical issues," he said. "We had been conducting maintenance. Noon was the scheduled restart time." Other units at the refinery have been restarted since the hurricane and the facility remains at 50 percent capacity. At full strength, the refinery produces 268,000 barrels a day of crude oil. This would have been a major step to returning the refinery to pre-hurricane operating conditions," Harpole said. Harpole said a Lyondell-Citgo team probably won't be able to go into the unit until tomorrow to begin determining what caused the fire. It could take several days before company officials know the extent of the damage. The refinery covers around 700 acres along the Houston Ship Channel and has about 875 employees. It manufactures such petroleum products as gasoline, diesel, heating oil, jet fuel and lubricants. The plant is a joint venture between Lyondell Chemical Co. and Citgo Petroleum Corp., both headquartered in Houston.

WAREHOUSE, DETROIT, MICHIGAN, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 17 -- A press report, dated today, states: Firefighters continue to extinguish hot spots this morning after battling a five-alarm blaze that swept through a warehouse on Detroit's west side. The fire broke out in a warehouse at Wesson and Buchanan roads at about 1600 hrs, yesterday and burned for several hours. The building was abandoned but there were some plastics materials and automobiles being stored inside the structure, the station reported. No widespread evacuations were reported, but residents living near the east side of the building were told by authorities to leave their homes, but firefighters were able to prevent the flames from spreading to neighbouring homes. A hazmat team monitoring the

air said there did not appear to be any hazardous materials burning, but authorities advised residents in the area to keep their windows closed yesterday night as a precaution. The cause of the blaze was under investigation.

WAREHOUSE, OAKLAND, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 13 -- A press report, dated Oakland, today, states: A massive warehouse fire engulfed an entire block of Hegenberger Road south of the coliseum late yesterday. The fire, which began about 2130 hrs, quickly became a six-alarm blaze requiring assistance from Alameda County Fire and other agencies. The huge structure, formerly the Whitefront Store and more recently a Homebase store, was believed to be empty, said Oakland fire Lt. Melinda Dreyton. Council member Larry Reid arrived on the scene of the fire last night and was in contact with the property owners. Reid said he has been working with the owners of the property to get a demolition permit so they could build 187,000 square feet of retail space on the site. The property has been vacant for about four years and has been known for ongoing problems with vagrants. About a year ago the site was fenced in to discourage side show activity in the parking area, Reid said. As of late last night the cause of the blaze was still unknown.

WINE WAREHOUSE, VALLEJO, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 14 -- A press report, dated Oct 13, states: Tens of millions of dollars of wine have been lost following a fire at an old Navy warehouse that was converted into a wine warehouse. The Vallejo Fire Department says damages could reach into the hundred-million dollar range. Yesterday's fire roared through the wooden palettes and casks and cardboard boxes inside the warehouse. The heat blew at least one door out, with pieces of it landed across the parking lot. Bill Tweedy with the Vallejo Fire Department says it was a highly destructive blaze. The fire was so big that Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms has been called in to help, since Vallejo just does not have the equipment to do this kind of massive fire investigation. The building is shut down until tomorrow afternoon when the ATF experts begin arriving from around the country. "We have cause and origin specialists," said Nina Delgadillo with the ATF, "(and) dogs that are specially trained to seek and determine if there was an accelerant used as well as schematic artists." The building had an alarm system, but not a sprinkler system, and Vallejo Fire said building codes did not require the facility to have one. Warehouse owner Jack Krystal said the fire came at a particularly bad time. "No time is a good time for an event like this, but this is a time where all the wine would start going out for the holidays coming up." Most

of the wines that are likely lost came from smaller boutique wineries, such as BV, Nils Venge, Von Strasser, Bell, Livingston Moffett, Marilyn, and Domaine La Du. "Our concern is that the wine doesn't end up being bought by salvage and then out on the market again," said vintner Doug Due, because it will be sold for less than what our current vintage is sold for and two, if the wine is cooked it's not going to show well and it's still your wine on the label." Due says he lost about \$300,000 worth of wines alone. Most vintners insure their wines, so they'll probably recoup their money. But they won't be able to make up for not having their product for sale until next year's harvest. Overall, though winemakers say the effect on the average wine drinker will be minimal.

London, Oct 17 -- A press report, dated Oct 16, states: Vallejo Fire Department and U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives officials were busy Saturday trying to discover the cause of a Mare Island warehouse fire that destroyed millions of dollars of wine. Meanwhile, local vintners are doing their best to recover their losses and get back on their feet. To help them weed out a cause for the fire, Vallejo Fire Department enlisted the help of an ATF National Response Team consisting of forensic chemical and cause and origin specialists, schematic artists and fire engineers, ATF special agent Nina Delgadillo said. On Saturday, the team scoured the building for clues of a cause. The fire began on Wednesday at 1540, local time, inside a 240,000 square-foot warehouse operated by Wine Central Services that was used to store many Napa, Sonoma, North Coast, Monterey and Central Valley wines. Fire investigators have called the fire suspicious until proven otherwise, according to Vallejo Fire spokesman Bill Tweedy. "All fires are suspicious until proven otherwise," he said. As part of the fire investigation, officials plan to interview everyone who had visited the building on the day of the fire. Among those who visited the building was Mark Anderson, owner of Sausalito Cellars wine storage company. Anderson is facing embezzlement charges in Marin County, stemming from complaints that he stole 7,600 bottles of rare wine from his customers. Tweedy said Anderson visited the warehouse on the day of the fire. He also said that warehouse staff, including its general manager and two forklift operators were also in the building on the day of the fire. The warehouse itself was once used to house atom bomb parts, as well as torpedoes and other ordnance, Tweedy said. When asked if the fire could have been caused naturally Tweedy said, "No." "Spontaneous combustion occurs, but only on certain situations," he said. "(Here) it's not likely." Some vintners lost all of their inventory such as Bill Frazier, co-founder of Napa-based Frazier Family Estate Winery. Frazier said he hopes to be back in business in nine months.

"We lost all of our wine, about \$3.5 million worth," he said. "I'm still wondering what we're going to do" Frazier has been making wine in Napa for 10 years, and now has no wine library, a cherished collection of wines made through the years that's used for everything from making better vintages, donating to charitable events and telling the history of a winery. Like Frazier Family Estate Winery, Saintsbury Vineyard lost its library as well, said Richard Ward, co-founder. About 2,100 cases of pinot noir and chardonnay were lost in the fire. "We had vintages going back to the '80s and a lot of special bottling that we gave out through our wine clubs or used for special tastings," he said. "It was worth a significant amount of money, but most of it is hard to grasp because it represented the history of what we've done for the last 25 years. We are not hopeful that anything is salvageable." Ward said that his losses were insured, but the impact on his winery has yet to be measured. "Virtually all of our bottled inventory was in the warehouse," said Ted Hall, co-owner of Long Meadow Ranch winery. "Based on what we know now, we have to assume that it is a total loss." In a press release prepared by Long Meadow Ranch, co-owner Laddie Hall said: "While this is a tough blow, we will continue with our many initiatives. We are looking forward to an excellent olive harvest later this fall and we plan a grand opening of our Rutherford Gardens property on March 8, 2006. We also hope to expand our wine club to a broader 'ranch' club in the spring. So, we will continue to demonstrate the power of our diversified approach to agriculture." "We aren't as bad off as some (vintners) because we didn't have all (our bottles there)," said Mike McLoughlin, general manager at Whitehall Lane Winery. "At full retail price, it would be about a \$2.4 million loss. We do have insurance. It would be nice to have that wine (lost in the fire), but what it probably means is that we move into the next vintage sooner than we had anticipated." Investigators will continue to probe the cause of the fire today.

London, Oct 17 -- A press report, dated today, states: Fire officials say they completed their scene investigation today of a huge warehouse fire that destroyed up to 100 million dollars worth of vintage wine. Authorities have said Wednesday's (Oct 12) fire was suspicious, but they still have not confirmed if it was arson. They say they have been questioning everyone who had access to the building. No suspects have been named. About 70 wineries leased space in the concrete building on Mare Island.

London, Oct 19 -- A press report, dated today, states: Investigators looking into the Mare Island warehouse fire that destroyed up to \$100 million of vintage wine said yesterday that last week's blaze was deliberately set. Police and arson investigators said during a news

conference in Vallejo that they have interviewed about two dozen people in their preliminary investigation of the fire, and they expect to question many others associated with the Wines Central storage facility. No suspects have been named, and police would not say how the fire was started, nor would they speculate on a motive. Senior special agent Nina Delgadillo of the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives said a team of forensic chemists and cause-and-origin specialists have found "sufficient (physical) evidence to tell us that this was an intentionally set fire ... we are vigorously pursuing the person or persons who caused this." Bill Tweedy, an investigator and spokesman for the Vallejo Fire Department, said the fire caused an estimated \$10 million in structural damage to the warehouse, causing the building's concrete roof to sag. He said the building, which had 3-foot-thick concrete walls, was equipped with a fire-detection system, but was not required by law to have sprinklers. As investigators announced their preliminary findings, new information surfaced about the economic turmoil of Wines Central, which rented the warehouse. Court records indicate that the wine storage firm was embroiled in an internal partnership dispute. Its partners had invested and loaned more than \$2.5 million to the business, which continued to sustain large operating losses. Wines Central's four original partners have been vying for three and a half years over control of the potentially lucrative business. Two partners claim they were swindled by the other two partners, who in turn say that they were misled and defrauded of their financial stake. (See issue of Oct 18.)

Oakland, Calif, Oct 19 -- According to the ATF National Response Team an on-scene forensic chemist has established that the wine warehouse fire in Vallejo was intentional. Entry to the warehouse has not been permitted and therefore the extent of damage cannot yet be established by warehouse owners and the various wineries and private wine collectors. Fire officials, however, seem to believe that structural damages are \$10 million while property damages may total \$100 million. -- Nauticus Surveyors.



ACCIDENT, OTTUMWA INDUSTRIAL AIRPORT, IOWA, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 14 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: An aircraft on its way to Ft. Dodge, Iowa from St. Louis made a rough, unscheduled landing in Ottumwa early this morning, sending two of its passengers to the hospital. The twin-engine,

piston-powered aircraft was carrying five passengers when it landed at Ottumwa Industrial Airport around 0730 hrs. The Cessna 310 made the unscheduled landing after one of its passengers suddenly became sick. Airport officials say the I.L.S. (Instrumental Landing System) that the airport has to guide aircrafts onto the runway during foggy conditions didn't help the aircraft much. The rough landing destroyed the aircraft's engine and badly bent one of its wings. Officials shut down the airport until workers were able to haul the aircraft off the runway. According to airport officials, two of the passengers were sent to Ottumwa Regional Health Centre. They were complaining of back pain.

AIR SCOTLAND FLIGHTS GROUNDED DUE UNPAID FUEL BILLS

London, Oct 17 -- A press report, dated today, states: Troubled Air Scotland's abandoned passengers planned a whipround for jet fuel to end their Spanish airport hell. One of the Scots stranded at Alicante Airport revealed their plan yesterday. The flight had been grounded because of unpaid fuel bills. Last night, the Alicante group finally made it home. But the 17-hour delay had a knock-on effect on other travellers. About 200 Scots were stuck at Malaga Airport last night.

London, Oct 17 -- A press report, dated Oct 15, states: Hundreds of airline passengers were delayed at a Scottish airport yesterday after a second day of stand-offs over a disputed fuel bill. Sources said an unpaid bill of several hundred thousand pounds led to an Air Scotland aircraft being impounded at Glasgow airport yesterday morning. On Thursday (Oct 13) more than 200 Air Scotland passengers faced an anxious wait of more than eight hours when BP refused to fill up the fuel tank of a Boeing 757 at Edinburgh Airport. The pilot apparently tried to pay for the fuel with his company credit card but was told the transaction would not be allowed. Yesterday, 221 passengers who were due to catch the 0600 hrs flight from Glasgow to Athens were delayed for five and a half hours. Air Scotland issued a statement saying the problems had arisen because of a change of ownership in the company, which was founded by Iraqi-born Glasgow businessman Mr Dhia Al-Ani.

London, Oct 19 -- A press report, dated Oct 18, states: Hundreds of holidaymakers have continued to face long delays amid the cash crisis at troubled budget airline Air Scotland. Flights from Glasgow to Alicante and from the Spanish city back to Edinburgh were experiencing delays of up to 12 hours. The fiasco began last week when the carrier had its only plane grounded in a row over unpaid fuel bills. An extra aircraft was reportedly brought in to try to ease the situation. Air Scotland chartered the extra plane from a Polish company

to take more than 200 passengers from Glasgow to Alicante, but the pilot refused to depart until the bill for chartering his aircraft was settled by Air Scotland. It is understood it was then flown back to Warsaw empty without having taken the passengers to Alicante.

AIRCRAFT PUT BACK TO LARNACA, CYPRUS

London, Oct 20 -- A press report, dated Oct 19, states: An aircraft carrying nearly 200 passengers bound for Birmingham had to land in Greece after technical problems. It is thought a problem with the de-icing system on the Helios Airways Boeing 737-800 forced the aircraft to return to Larnaca Airport, Cyprus. The flight had been airborne for 40 minutes. Helios Airways said passengers were never in danger. This incident is the third unscheduled Helios landing in Larnaca in a month caused by suspected technical problems. Helios Airways commercial manager Vicky Xitas said: "These incidents are coincidences. "Aeroplanes are machines like cars and they are very complex ones at that. It is natural some parts may not function as they should all the time. Helios Airways is maintaining its aeroplanes according to all the international and civil aviation standards. It has never deviated from this and never will." The company said it has chartered a 757 from another company, which was set to take off for Birmingham at 1630, BST, to fly the stranded 189 passengers home.

CRASH, LA BELLE, HENDRY COUNTY, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 17 -- A press report, dated Oct 16, states: Authorities say the pilot of a single engine aircraft died today after crashing on takeoff in Hendry County. A Federal Aviation Administration spokeswoman says the four-seat Cessna 172 crashed this afternoon at the airport in La Belle. The FAA spokeswoman says the pilot was the only person on board. Federal air records show the plane is registered to Christiansen Aviation in Wilmington, Delaware. Owner William Christiansen says the company is based in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He says he leases the aircraft to a flight school in Fort Pierce, Florida. Christiansen says he does not know who was piloting the aircraft and has not been contacted by Aviator flight school about the crash. The FAA is investigating the cause of the crash.

CRASH, MAHALE NATIONAL PARK AREA, TANZANIA

London, Oct 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: Four British tourists and their Canadian pilot have been killed in an aircraft crash in Tanzania. The aircraft had been missing since Sunday (Oct 16) afternoon. At least two bodies have been recovered from the remote crash site and police were helping in efforts to retrieve the remains near the

Mahale National Park in western Tanzania, said police spokesman Mohamed Mhina. The Cessna C206 flew from the national park, on the eastern shores of Lake Tanganyika, on Sunday afternoon. "But contact was lost soon after takeoff and the aircraft failed to arrive at its destination," said Mark Holdsworth, managing director of the Nomad tourism company. Four aircraft were sent to search for the aircraft and a crash site was identified from the air, he said. "The site is remote and the terrain very rugged....a ground team finally reached the site at first light this morning and has confirmed the plane crashed with no survivors," Mr Holdsworth said.

CRASH, MOTUTERE, NEAR LAKE TAUPO, NEW ZEALAND

London, Oct 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: Two occupants of a light aircraft escaped with moderate burns when the plane crashed and burst into flames on State Highway 1 near Taupo at about 1545, local time, today, police say. Both occupants were flown to Waikato Hospital, Inspector Barry Smalley of police central communications said. The highway was open southbound, while shortly before 1700 hrs northbound traffic was being diverted. The crash happened at Motutere on the eastern shoreline of Lake Taupo, about 30km south-west of Taupo. Senior Sergeant Tony Jeurissen of Taupo police said he understood the plane may have been flying in a southerly direction and may have clipped some wires either side of the highway while descending to the road. "Then it's bounced off the road, back up onto the wires, and then off to the side of the road," he told National Radio. It was hard to tell what kind of plane was involved as it had "disintegrated". Mr Jeurissen agreed it was "amazing" no one else had been hit on the busy stretch of road, with school buses among the traffic using it at the time. He had arrived at the scene at about 1600 and there had been a strong smell of fumes, burning, and toxic gases.

CRASH, NEWBERG AIRPORT, OREGON, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 17 -- A press report, dated Oct 16, states: A small aircraft crashed 100 yards east of the Newberg airport, Oregon. Two people were seriously injured. Newberg Fire Division Chief Frank Douglas says the pilot and co-pilot removed from the aircraft and flown to the hospital via Life Flight helicopter. It took less than 45 minutes for them to be removed from the wrecked aircraft, and flown to Emanuel Hospital. The aircraft was a light, single-engine aircraft owned by the Sportsmen's Air Park, a small Newberg area airstrip. The aircraft hit the ground hard, and its wings were ripped off as the fuselage scraped across a parking lot, hitting two trees and coming to rest in a grassy area near highway 219. The Federal Aviation Administration has been

called to the scene and is investigating.

CRASH, PINEVILLE AREA, KENTUCKY, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 14 -- A press report, dated today, states: A South Carolina man is dead after crashing his aircraft in south-eastern Kentucky yesterday. Bell County Sheriff Bruce Bennett says the single-engine Cessna took off from Henry County, Kentucky around 1330 yesterday bound for South Carolina with a planned stop in North Carolina. Some friends of the sheriff stumbled upon the crash about 1730 hrs near Pineville, Kentucky. The pilot was dead, he was the only person on board. The aircraft is registered to a man from Pineville, South Carolina.

CRASH, PORT ST.LUCIE AREA, FLORIDA, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 20 -- A press report, dated Port St.Lucie, Florida, Oct 19, states: A Cessna 337 crashed into a home today, engulfing the home in flames. The pilot had not been found. It was unknown if anyone else was on board the Cessna 337. The aircraft flew out of the Boca Raton Airport, about 65 miles to the south, and was en route to Myrtle Beach, S.C., when it crashed about 1500 hrs, according to the Federal Aviation Administration. It is registered to River Aviation Inc. in Kingston, NY. The impact of the aircraft was so great that furniture in neighboring homes toppled over. Those homes were not affected by the fire and were not damaged. Fire fighters brought the blaze under control in 15 minutes, but the house on S.E. Walters Terrace appeared destroyed. The National Transportation Safety Board is investigating.

CRASH, WESTERN SPRINGS AREA, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 20 -- A press report, dated Oct 19, states: A search crew looking for a private aircraft that vanished during a flight from El Cajon to Arizona found its wreckage and the bodies of its occupants in remote North County terrain today. The Air Force Auxiliary team located the aircraft debris in the late morning north of Warner Springs, in Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, authorities reported. The downed aircraft proved to be the single-engine Lancair LC41 that went missing shortly after taking off from Gillespie Field in rainy weather Monday (Oct 17) morning with three people and a dog aboard, according to the FAA. Sheriff's investigators found human bodies and a set of canine remains at the crash site, a sheriff's dispatcher said. The Federal Aviation Administration's last contact with the pilot occurred about five minutes into the ill-fated flight, said Donn Walker, a public information officer for the federal agency. The aircraft was headed to Scottsdale. Relatives of those on board, who had attended last weekend's air show Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, contacted authorities when it didn't arrive as

expected, officials reported. A USAF Civil Air Patrol crew aboard a Cessna 182 came across the wreckage on the side of a steep, brush-covered mountain a few miles off Chihuahua Valley Road about 1000 hrs, the dispatcher said.

EMERGENCY LANDING, KOLKATA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

London, Oct 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: An Australian airliner caught fire mid-air and made an emergency landing at the international airport in Kolkata, India, today. All passengers and crew were safe. The Qantas Airways flight was on its way from Singapore to London when the pilot noticed smoke billowing out of the aircraft's engine, Rediff news service said. The aircraft made an emergency landing at Kolkata and all passengers were evacuated. All 576 passengers, including crew members, on board the aircraft were safe, Rediff said.

EMERGENCY LANDING, KOLKATA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, INDIA

London, Oct 19 -- A press report, dated Oct 18, states: A London-Singapore (before reported as Singapore-London) Qantas flight, made an emergency landing at NSC Bose Airport this afternoon after a smoke alarm lit up on its cockpit panel. The flight had 389 passengers and crew on board. The Boeing-747-400 was flying over Nagpur and Vizag, towards Singapore. After crossing Vizag, the pilot, Captain Cairns, contacted the air traffic control officials of NSC Bose Airport around 1210 hrs, and reported that he had noticed a smoke-warning alarm glowing on the cockpit consoles. The pilot told the ATC officials that he wanted to land in Kolkata. The aircraft was flying about 670 km south-south-west of Kolkata at that time and started flying towards the city at nearly 900 km an hour. The point where the pilot sought help, was part of the area controlled by the Kolkata ATC. The ATC officials immediately alerted their counterparts in the Airports Authority of India (International Airport Division) who declared a full emergency at NSC Bose Airport and made all arrangements for facilitating an emergency landing. The airport director, Mr VK Monga, said: "We got the information that there was some problem on the flight and the pilot wanted to make an emergency landing. We extended all help." The flight's descent was treated as a "priority landing." It touched down normally and everybody on board was safe. After landing, the pilot taxied to the bay. The passengers remained inside the aircraft indicating there was neither a fire nor smoke inside the cabin. There was also no indication of any danger. Engineers of British Airways inspected the aircraft. Apparently, they detected a snag in the cockpit panel which was subsequently set right. The aircraft re-fuelled and took off for Singapore

around 1700 hrs. The emergency was enforced at a time when there was a lull in air traffic.

INCIDENT AT SAHAR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, INDIA

London, Oct 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: Nearly 350 passengers aboard a Cathay Pacific flight were stranded at the international airport at Sahar after their flight was delayed for over 25 hours. "Cathay Pacific flight CX 750 to Mumbai from Dubai had developed a crack in the windshield mid-air and had to be fixed at Mumbai. So the aircraft's onward leg to Hong Kong was delayed," said an airport official. The aircraft landed in Mumbai at 0300 yesterday and the pilot realised that the windshield had cracked. The flight, originally parked at bay no 45 at the airport, was then taken to a remote bay for repairs, said the official. It is now scheduled for take-off at 0800 today. Air India was called for technical help, as Cathay does not have technical staff in Mumbai. Technicians said the Boeing 777 had a huge crack on the windshield and a replacement from Hong Kong had been summoned. "Air India technicians got working on the aircraft and hope to fix it by today," said the official. Confirming the windshield crack, Jason Philip, marketing and sales manager for India, Nepal and Bangladesh, Cathay Pacific said that the aircraft would leave from Mumbai for Hong Kong via Bangkok at 0800 today. "Passengers have been offered hotel accommodation or a choice of continuing their journey through other airlines," he said.

MIDDLE EAST AIRLINES AIRCRAFT IMPOUNDED IN ISTANBUL, TURKEY

London, Oct 19 -- A press report, dated today, states: Turkish Ambassador to Lebanon Arfan Jalal Akar was summoned by the Lebanese Foreign Ministry to discuss the status of the Middle East Airlines aircraft that has been impounded in Istanbul since last Friday (Oct 14). Last week, a Turkish court order banned a MEA aircraft, flight ME266 carrying 124 passengers, from leaving Istanbul as a bid to pressure Lebanon to pay \$7 million to the German company Velter-Bau as part of an international arbitration decision. Foreign Ministry official Mustafa Mustafa, who met with the Turkish ambassador said: "Middle East Airlines is not owned by the Lebanese state and the aircraft impounded in Turkey is leased from Air France that operates flights jointly with MEA. The decision to impound the aircraft is illegal," calling for its release to be made soon. The aircraft is still in Turkey, even though, last week, a spokesperson from the Council of Development and Reconstruction had said the money was ready with the Shura Council to be collected by Velter-Bau. Mustafa informed Akar that the Cabinet had previously

approved to pay the German company the due sum according to the decision made by the international arbitration committee. For his part, the Turkish ambassador asserted the Turkish Foreign Ministry had no involvement in the decision as it was purely the decision of the court, saying the Turkish judiciary is an "independent authority." Akar updated Mustafa about his efforts deployed with officials in Ankara to speed up the process for releasing the aircraft, expecting the problem "to end during the day." MEA chairman Mohammad Hout and attorney Michel Tueini are following up the case with judicial authorities in Turkey. They also have documents that prove the aircraft leased from the French airline is not owned by the Lebanese state.

N2698Z

London, Oct 17 -- Bellanca 7GCBC, N2698Z, operated by Matthew L.Knochenmus, with two persons on board, crashed at 2130, UTC, Oct 15, at Lake of the Woods, Baudette, Minnesota. The aircraft was destroyed and both persons on board were seriously injured.

N494S

London, Oct 17 -- North American AT-6D, N494S, operated by Fred A.Smith, while on a flight from a private strip at Mocksville, North Carolina, with two persons on board, crashed at Mocksville at 2230, UTC, Oct 15. The aircraft was destroyed. One person on board died and the other was seriously injured.

N53795

London, Oct 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: A single-engine aircraft crash-landed near a private airstrip in Hitchcock yesterday afternoon. A female passenger on board suffered what investigators on scene described as a "bump on the head," but other than that all four people aboard the aircraft were all right. The pilot, his wife and their two children had taken off from an airport in La Porte for a sightseeing flight when the aircraft lost power, said Department of Public Safety Trooper Todd Phillips. The pilot told investigators that he heard the engine on the single-engine Cessna pop, said Phillips. He attempted to bring the aircraft down at a private airstrip located in Hitchcock near FM 519. Phillips said the initial investigation indicated that the aircraft touched down briefly, but then went airborne again. The pilot tried to bring the powerless aircraft back around for another landing attempt but came down in a nearby field. The impact knocked one of the aircraft's wheels off and damaged a wing.

London, Oct 18 -- Cessna 172P (Skyhawk), N53795, operated by King Flight Service LLC, with four persons on board, crashed at Hitchcock, Texas, on Oct 17.

N5FN

London, Oct 17 -- A press report,

dated Oct 16, states: Two ninth-grade girls from the Highline School District and a volunteer pilot died when the single-engine aircraft they were in crashed shortly after taking off from Paine Field in Everett yesterday morning. The Piper PA-28 failed to gain altitude and crashed at an undeveloped construction site in a residential area, according to Kierstin Smith, who witnessed the accident. The aircraft went down at 0945, just southwest of the airport, said Karen Byrd, operations officer at the Federal Aviation Administration's regional operations centre. According to the FAA Web site, the aircraft is owned by a Mercer Island businessman. Smith said the aircraft climbed to only 150 feet. "He flew just over the trees and started to turn to his left and lost altitude, then disappeared behind the trees," he said. "I heard him hit a group of trees and saw smoke come up." Smith said the plane was a "big ball of fire" by the time he arrived at the scene. The cause of the crash in the 2600 block of Alexander Road is under investigation by the National Transportation Safety Board. The names of the people who died were not released. The two high-school students were participating in the Young Eagles program, which gives students their first light-aircraft ride with volunteer pilots from the Experimental Aircraft Association.

London, Oct 17 -- Piper PA-28-140 (Cherokee Cruiser), N5FN, operated by Eugene D.Hokanson, while on a local flight from Everett, Washington, with two persons on board, reported loss of power shortly after departure, clipped a tree and cartwheeled to the ground, at 1645, Oct 15, at Everett. The aircraft was destroyed and both persons on board died.

N7196J

London, Oct 17 -- Robinson R-22 Beta, N7196J, operated by Jerry Mayer, while on a flight from Springerville, Arizona, to Chandler, Arizona, with two persons on board, crashed at Eagar, Arizona, on Oct 14. The helicopter was destroyed and both persons on board died.

N7768G

London, Oct 17 -- Cessna 172L (Skyhawk), N7768G, operated by Hobart Aviation Inc, with two persons on board, collided in mid-air, at 1435, UTC, Oct 14, with Lancair LNC2, N235U, operated and built by John P Plavcan, with two persons on board, near Rootstown, Ohio. Both aircraft were destroyed and all four persons on board died.

N978FE

London, Oct 20 -- A press report, dated Oct 19, states: A FedEx-contracted cargo aircraft (Cessna 208B N978FE) lost power after taking off from Austin and crash-landed, coming to rest upside down on a house, authorities said. The pilot was treated for minor injuries and released from a hospital. No one inside the home was hurt in the crash yesterday

night. The Cessna had just departed Austin Bergstrom International Airport and was flying at 7,000 feet when it lost power, according to the Texas Department of Public Safety. Pilot Michael F. McKenna, 61, tried to make an emergency landing at Georgetown Municipal Airport. Instead, the plane struck a utility pole 20 miles north of Austin, then crashed with its nose on the home's sidewalk and most of the fuselage and tail jutting along the roof. The plane was headed to Alliance Airport in Fort Worth. FedEx had contracted with Baron Aviation, which operated the plane, said FedEx spokesman Jim McCluskey.

Product Recalls



AUDI MOTOR VEHICLES, SOUTH KOREA

London, Oct 14 - A press report, dated yesterday, states: Audi Korea Ltd., the local importer and distributor of Audi, said today it will recall more than 700 A6 sedans in South Korea due to a faulty airbag sensor. The recall, effective from Oct 21 to April 20, 2007, affects 728 units of Audi's 2005 A6 sedans produced between August 2004 and March 2005, the company said. The sensors are slow in detecting speed, which could cause an airbag malfunction, it said. The affected cars will be fitted with upgraded sensors.

BACKPACK BLOWERS, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 19 -- A press release, dated Oct 18, states: The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in co-operation with Stihl Inc. of Virginia Beach, Va., today announced a voluntary recall of approximately 6,230 BR 500 and BR 550 Backpack Blowers. The fan wheel on these backpack blowers could break, resulting in pieces of plastic flying out of the blower housing. This poses a risk of injury to the user or a bystander. Stihl has received five reports of the fan wheel breaking. No injuries have been reported. These backpack blowers have serial numbers ranging from 264264925 through 264740832 which are located on top of the engine's cylinder on the fin. The spark plug boot can be removed to view the serial number from the exterior of the blower. Manufactured in the United States, they were sold at authorised Stihl dealers nation-wide from January 2005 through to May 2005 for about \$450 each.

LAPTOP BATTERY PACKS, WORLD-WIDE

London, Oct 14 -- A press report, dated Oct 13, states: The US Consumer Product Safety Commission, in co-operation with the Hewlett-Packard Company, of Palo Alto, Calif.,

today announced a voluntary recall of approximately 135,000 HP and Compaq Notebook Computer Battery Packs world-wide, including about 85,000 in the US. An internal short can cause the battery cells to overheat and melt or char the plastic case, posing a burn and fire hazard. HP has received 16 reports of batteries overheating, including four in the US. No injuries have been reported. Four cases of minor property damage were reported, including one in the US. The recalled lithium ion rechargeable battery packs are used with various HP and Compaq notebook computers. The recalled battery packs are a subset of those manufactured from March 2004 through to September 2004, and will have a bar code label starting with GC, IA, L0 or L1. The battery packs were sold in the US by national and regional computer and electronics stores, online stores, hp.com and hpshopping.com from March 2004 through to May 2005 for between \$1,000 and \$3,000. The battery packs also were sold separately for between \$100 and \$130.

NISSAN MINIVANS, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 18 -- A press report, dated Oct 17, states: Nissan said today that it will recall 109,000 minivans because of problems with a seat adjustment mechanism that could cause a finger injury. The automaker said the recall affects Quest minivans from the 2004 through 2006 model years. Nissan said that someone adjusting the second row seat could have a finger pinched when moving the metal mechanism. A Nissan spokeswoman said the company knows of 10 injuries. The recall is expected to begin on Dec 15. Dealers will fix the problem at no expense to owners.

SNOWMOBILES, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 17 -- A press release, dated Oct 14, states: The following product safety recall was conducted voluntarily by Polaris Industries Inc., of Medina, Minn., in co-operation with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), of approximately 16,640 Polaris Snowmobiles. The fuel tank filler neck on these snowmobiles can crack. A crack in the filler neck area may cause the filler neck to separate from the fuel tank. A crack or filler neck separation may allow fuel or fuel vapors to escape from the fuel tank, posing a fire hazard. No incidents or injuries have been reported. The recall involves all model year 2005 900 Fusion, 900 RMK, 900 Switchback snowmobiles, and select model year 2006 600HO Fusion / RMK / Switchback, 900 Fusion / RMK / Switchback, FS Classic / Touring, and FST Classic / Touring / Switchback snowmobiles. The model and serial number (VIN) identification decal is located on the right-side of the tunnel underneath the seat. Manufactured in the United States the snowmobiles were sold by Polaris dealers nationwide from August 2004 through to

September 2005 for between \$7,899 and \$11,599.

TOYOTA MOTOR VEHICLES, WORLDWIDE

London, Oct 14 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Toyota Motor Corp. said today it is recalling 75,000 Prius gas-electric hybrid cars because their engines can stall due to an electrical problem. Involved in the recall are some 2004 and early 2005 model year Prius cars. The cars have a gas engine as well as a battery-powered electric motor that can run separately or together to save fuel. In affected vehicles, dashboard warning lights may come on and the gasoline engine shuts down. The vehicle's electric motor will continue operating in a limited capacity, so drivers can steer to the side of the road. The gasoline engine may start working again if the driver restarts the vehicle. Toyota spokesman Xavier Dominicus said the automaker began investigating the problem after the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration received 68 reports of Prius engines stalling. No one has been injured by the defect, and it hasn't caused any reported accidents, Dominicus said. NHTSA closed its investigation after Toyota said it would voluntarily recall the vehicles. Owners will be notified starting this month. Toyota dealers will repair affected vehicles for free. The vehicles may need to have their software reprogrammed. Dealers may also apply a waterproof grease that will prevent water from getting into the electrical system. Dominicus stressed that the defect isn't related to the Prius's gas-electric hybrid system and could happen in any vehicle. US sales of the Prius more than doubled in the first nine months of this year to 81,042, according to Autodata Corp.

Tokyo, Oct 18 -- Toyota Motor Corp., Japan's biggest auto maker, said today it would recall about 1.41 million cars globally -- its biggest ever -- including the Corolla and 15 other models due to trouble with their headlight switching systems. The recall, filed with the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport, was the biggest for a Japanese auto maker and beat Toyota's previous record recall of 797,707 vehicles in 1999, a spokesman said. Toyota played down the recall's impact on its earnings, while declining to disclose the specific recall cost. "The part to be replaced, the headlight switch, is not that expensive," the spokesman said. "So we don't expect any major impact on our earnings." Toyota said it would recall about 1.27 million vehicles in Japan in addition to another roughly 140,000 vehicles exported overseas, including about 70,000 cars in Australia, 19,000 cars in Singapore and 17,000 cars in Thailand. Toyota said the vehicles to be recalled were manufactured between May 2000 and August 2002. -- Reuters.

Port Conditions

**AUSTRALIA**

London, Oct 20 -- A press report, dated today, states: Glitches in a new computer system have caused a massive container backlog at New South Wales' largest port and threaten to bring it to a standstill, the State Government said. NSW Ports Minister Eric Roozendaal today said Port Botany was at 90% capacity and space was "rapidly diminishing". The Federal Government agency Australian Customs installed a new integrated customs management system last week but it was unable to clear containers quickly enough. The industry estimates cargo clearance rates at Port Botany and Melbourne -- two of the nation's most important ports -- are down to 30% of normal levels because of the new system. "Almost two months before Christmas, Port Botany is almost full and delays are at critical levels for products coming into NSW busiest port," Mr Roozendaal said in a statement. "There couldn't be a worse time to introduce a new computer system." More than 2,000 containers are unloaded at the port daily, but it only has capacity for 20,000 at a time. The new system replaced one that had been operating for more than 20 years and its proponents, including the Federal Government, claimed imports and exports would be cleared faster. The Commonwealth has since conceded the \$250 million system was banking up containers, but it has been under pressure from shippers and customs brokers to push ahead with the plan. Mr Roozendaal said more than \$100 million of trade moved through Port Botany every day, and called on the Federal Government to fix the problem immediately. "Whether we go back to the old system or prioritise the clearing of containers under the new one, it's too serious to let the bungling continue," Mr Roozendaal said. "I am advised stevedores could soon start looking for storage facilities off site but this will also fill up quickly."

London, Oct 20 -- A press report, dated today, states: The Customs Minister, Chris Ellison, has denied that any vessels will be turned away from Australia despite a backlog of

container ships at Sydney's Port Botany terminal. The New South Wales Government says an automated system that has been introduced to Customs services nationally is causing delays in processing containers. The New South Wales Ports Minister, Eric Roozendaal, told Parliament the situation is critical. "It means that we will have to turn ships away by the end of the weekend if Customs doesn't fix this problem," he said. Senator Ellison says the Integrated Cargo System is a new automated system for importers to log and process goods through Customs services. Senator Ellison has met industry representatives today to sort out the problems, but he says P&O has put out a statement saying that containers are moving. "There is no question of any vessel being turned back," he said. "We are working overtime to make sure that this works. We have put some 200 Customs staff on the help desk, we've got Customs help teams down at the wharves working with brokers and forwarders and stevedores."

ITALY

Genoa, Oct 17 -- Port situation as of Oct 17: Genoa: No vessels waiting for berth. La Spezia: No vessels waiting for berth. Savona: One vessel waiting for normal berth. Average delay in berthing 12 hours. No vessels waiting for special berth. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Oct 19 -- An overtime ban by customs officers in the port of Genoa has created a mounting backlog of unprocessed containers and prompted warnings of cargo diversions to rival ports from an increasingly angry port community. This latest challenge for the perennially troubled port stems from a police anti-fraud investigation in which local forwarders and customs officers have been implicated. A number of customs officials have been transferred to other ports and replaced by officers from outside Genoa. In response, customs unions have called an overtime ban, effectively restricting operations to the morning and creating in the process an increasing backlog of uninspected boxes, much to the consternation of the port community. In a letter sent on Monday to Genoa's prefect, Giuseppe Romano, port authority president Giovanni Novi and regional customs director Alberto Libeccio, six leading organisations in the port expressed their grave concern. The letter, sent jointly by organisations representing

truckers and forwarders, terminal operators and exporters, agents and forwarders, noted that on Saturday in the Voltri terminal alone: "1,600 customs forms were waiting to be processed; there was a backlog of more than 650 boxes to be inspected; more than 400 boxes were yet to be loaded on board ship and several ships had been forced to put off their departure until Monday." The port organisations also expressed "shock at the suggestion that the situation could be resolved by shipping the boxes to other ports". "Such a solution would establish a very dangerous precedent for the port of Genoa," they wrote, "as well as giving the impression that the port is incapable of responding to the situation." Rather, they said, the port community had agreed to go to a 24-hour work schedule in a bid to shift the backlog as speedily as possible. By the same token, they called on the customs service to provide the necessary resources to bear its share of the burden. They also urged the port authority to set up a permanent crisis unit to co-ordinate the response. Commenting on the latest problem, Filippo Gallo, president of the agents' and brokers' association, said: "We have no problem with the people at the top of the customs service in Liguria. They have been very co-operative in trying to improve the efficiency of the port. But we do have a problem with the leadership in Rome, who do not appear to consider Genoa a major port and so do not seem prepared to give us the resources we need." Genoa's latest difficulty follows a long summer of discontent, with disagreements over the concession at the main Voltri terminal and plans for the expansion and modernisation of the port followed by less-than-civil warfare over the performance of the port authority leadership. By the close of last month, a number of contentious issues appeared to have been resolved and, with the arrival of the Grand Alliance at Voltri, the port seemed ready to move forward. This latest contretemps sets it back on its heels once again.

SYRIA

Lattakia, Oct 1 -- Waiting time presently 24 hours at Lattakia and six days at Tartous. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Lattakia, Oct 8 -- Waiting time 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	17-Oct-2005	Coal: One vessel at berth, 1 arrived; 8 vessels due by 2/11; up to 1 day's delay expected.
Brisbane	17-Oct-2005	Coal: Fisherman Island coal berth; Six vessels due by 30/10; up to 4 days expected.
Dalrymple Bay	17-Oct-2005	Coal: Two vessels loading at berth; 25 vessels due by 28/10; up to 28 days delay expected.
Dampier	17-Oct-2005	Iron ore: Parker Point: 24-hr maintenance shutdown 19-20/10; Four vessels due by 31/10; up to 4 days delay expected; East Intercourse Island; One vessel due 27/10; no delays expected.
Gladstone	17-Oct-2005	Coal: R.G. Tanna coal terminal: One vessel at berth; 44 vessels due by 28/11; up to 3 days delay expected; Barney Point: 3 vessels due by 20/12.
Hay Point	17-Oct-2005	Coal: Two vessels loading at berth, 13 vessels due by 27/10; up to 5 days delay expected.
Newcastle	17-Oct-2005	Coal: Kooragang 4, 5 and 6: Three vessels loading at berth; 41 vessels due by 8/11; Dykes 4+5: 2 vessels loading at berth; 18 vessels due by 5/11; Kooragang and Dyke terminals: 4-9 days delay expected.
Port Hedland	17-Oct-2005	Iron ore: BHP Iron Ore Pty. Ltd., Mt. Newman (Nelson Point), "A" berth: One vessel loading at berth, 5 vessels due by 22/10; up to 1 day's delay expected; "B" berth: 1 vessel loading at berth, 1 arrived; 5 vessels due by 23/10; up to 6 days delay expected; 6 other vessels due by 29/10, with no delays expected; BHP Iron Ore Pty. Ltd., Goldsworthy (Finucane Island "C" berth): 5 vessels due by 27/11; no delays expected; "D" berth: 1 vessel loading at berth, 1 arrived; 5 vessels due by 20/10; up to 2 days delay expected.
Port Latta	17-Oct-2005	Iron ore: One vessel at berth; 2 vessels due by 25/10; up to 1 day's delay expected.
Port Walcott	17-Oct-2005	Iron ore: One vessel loading at berth, 2 arrived; 4 vessels due by 26/10; up to 8 days delay expected.
Azerbaijan		
Baku	14-Oct-2005	Oil products: Bay of Baku: No information; Azerteftag terminal: no information; Azertrans terminal: Nobel Avenue: 1 vessel discharging crude oil at berth; 1 vessel due 14/10 to discharge crude oil; Sangachal District: no vessels.
Brazil		
Rio Grande	18-Oct-2005	Two vessels berthed of which 1 potassium chloride discharger, 1 rice loader; 1 vessel waiting in roads; 27 vessels due over the next 10 days.
Rio de Janeiro	18-Oct-2005	Porto do Rio: 3 steel products loaders, 2 wheat dischargers, 1 other vessel; Tecon: 1 full container loader/discharger; Porto de Sepetiba: 2 iron ore loaders, 1 steel products loader, 4 other loaders/dischargers; 15 vessels due over the next 7 days.
Santos	18-Oct-2005	Eighteen vessels berthed of which 7 sugar loaders, 1 bulk salt discharger, 3 fertiliser dischargers, 1 chemical products discharger, 2 bulk oil loaders, 1 pellets loader, 2 Ro/Ro loaders, 1 full container loader/discharger; 26 vessels waiting in roads; 32 vessels due over the next 7 days; Private terminals: Terminal 37: 1 full container loader/discharger; Tecondi: 1 full container loader/discharger; Termares: 1 Ro/Ro loader/discharger; Rodrimar: 1 full container loader/discharger; Cosipa: 1 coal discharger, 1 fertiliser discharger; Ultrafertil: 1 fertiliser discharger; Cargill: 1 pellets loader; Santos Brasil: 2 full container loaders/dischargers; Cutrale: 1 pellets loader; Dow: no vessels.
Sao Sebastiao	18-Oct-2005	Four vessels berthed, 4 waiting in roads; 5 vessels due over the next 10 days.
Vitoria	18-Oct-2005	Three vessels berthed of which 1 granite loader, 1 sugar loader, 1 pig-iron loader; Terminal Vila Velha: 1 container loader/discharger; Tubarao: 1 iron ore loader, 1 sulphate discharger, 2 other vessels; Praia Mole: 2 steel products loaders, 2 coal dischargers, 1 general cargo loader; Portocel: 2 cellulose loaders; Ubu: 1 iron ore loader; 27 vessels due over the next 7 days.
Bulgaria Oct 17		
Bourgas	17-Oct-2005	Three vessels in port of which 1 loading wheat, 2 discharging (1 concrete iron, 1 billets); 3 vessels in roads of which 2 empty vessels to load, 1 vessel to discharge concrete iron; 15 vessels due of which 8 to load, 7 to discharge.
Varna	17-Oct-2005	Varna East, Varna West, Balchik: Twenty-five vessels in port operating of which 12 loading (1 bulk wheat, 1 liquid urea, 1 bulk clinker, 1 bulk sulphuric acid, 5 soda, 1 chamote/kaolin/soda, 1 bulk cement, 1 chamote/kaolin), 7 discharging (3 bulk coal, 1 iron, 1 bulk copper slag, 1 liquid urea, 1 phosphate), 6 discharging/loading (4 containers, 1 equipment/misc. cargo, 1 bulk coal/chemicals); no vessels waiting in roads.

Port Conditions

Chile

Antofagasta	17-Oct-2005	Five vessels berthed, 2 berths vacant; 15 vessels due this week to load/discharge concentrates, bulk copper, containers, general cargo.
Arica	17-Oct-2005	Three vessels berthed, 4 berths vacant; 14 vessels due this week.
Iquique	17-Oct-2005	Three vessels berthed, 4 berths vacant; 12 vessels due this week.
Valparaiso	17-Oct-2005	Three vessels berthed, 5 berths vacant; 4 vessels at anchorage: 16 vessels due this week.

Egypt

Adabiya	17-Oct-2005	Eight vessels at berth (loading/discharging) of which 4 general cargo, 3 bulk carriers, 1 container vessel.
Alexandria	17-Oct-2005	Thirty vessels at berth (loading/discharging) of which 21 general cargo, 5 bulk carriers, 2 tankers, 2 container vessels; 24 vessels at inner anchorage, 2 at outer anchorage; 17 vessels dry-docked.
Damietta	17-Oct-2005	Nineteen vessels at berth (loading/discharging) of which 11 general cargo, 4 bulk carriers, 1 Ro/Ro, 3 container vessels; 1 vessel at inner anchorage, 2 at outer anchorage.
Dekheila	17-Oct-2005	Nine vessels at berth (loading/discharging) of which 1 general cargo, 5 bulk carriers, 3 container vessels; 1 vessel at outer anchorage.
Port Said	17-Oct-2005	Five vessels at berth (loading/discharging) of which 5 container vessels.
Suez	17-Oct-2005	Eight vessels at berth (loading/discharging) of which 2 general cargo, 3 reefers, 3 passenger vessels; 4 tug boats; 1 vessel dry-docked.
Suez Canal	17-Oct-2005	Twenty-one vessels transiting Northbound, 25 Southbound.

Estonia

Tallinn	17-Oct-2005	No labour problems. City port: No vessels at berth, none at anchorage; no vessels due, with no delays expected; Paljassaare (formerly Kopli): 1 vessel loading at berth, 2 discharging coal at berth; 3 vessels due; 9 days delay expected; Muuga: no vessels at berth, none at anchorage; no vessels due, with no delays expected
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Israel

Ashdod	17-Oct-2005	No labour problems; Two vessels loading general cargo at berth, 20 discharging at berth (12 general cargo, 8 bulkers), 1 loading/discharging containers at berth; 5 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (2 general cargo, 3 bulkers); 16 vessels due, with 2-3 days delay expected.
Eilat	17-Oct-2005	No labour problems; One vessel discharging general cargo at berth, 1 car carrier loading/discharging at berth; 2 vessels due, with no delays expected.
Haifa	17-Oct-2005	No labour problems; Five vessels discharging at berth (4 general cargo, 1 bulker), 7 loading/discharging at berth (5 containers, 1 car carrier, 1 passenger vessel); 3 tankers waiting at anchorage to load/discharge; 3 vessels under repairs/dry-docked; 14 vessels due, with 2-3 days delay expected.

Kazakhstan

Aktau	14-Oct-2005	Oil products: Three vessels loading crude oil at berth; 2 vessels in roads to load; 4 vessels due by 16/10, all to load.
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Pakistan

Karachi	19-Oct-2005	One naphtha vessel loading at berth, 10 vessels discharging at berth (1 crude oil, 1 coal, 2 DAP, 1 TSP, 2 general cargo, 2 sugar, 1 phosphate), 4 container vessels loading/discharging at berth; 4 vessels waiting at anchorage to load (2 containers, 1 cement, 1 MOL), 8 waiting at anchorage to discharge (2 containers, 2 general cargo, 1 crude oil, 1 MEG, 2 sugar); no vessels bunkering, none under repairs/dry-docked, 1 awaiting orders; 1 vessels due (5 containers, 2 general cargo, 1 DAP, 2 coal, 1 tallow), with 2 days berthing delay expected for general cargo and container vessels.
Port Qasim	19-Oct-2005	Two vessels discharging at berth (1 sugar, 1 jute), 1 container vessel loading/discharging at QICT berth; 6 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (1 sugar, 2 wheat, 1 palm oil, 1 VCM, 1 other vessel)

Poland

Gdansk	17-Oct-2005	Five vessels in port operating of which 2 loading at berth (1 coal, 1 tanker), 3 discharging at berth (1 bulk cargo, 2 tankers); 10 vessels under repairs/dry-docked; 23 vessels due.
Gdynia	17-Oct-2005	Eleven vessels in port operating of which 4 loading at berth (3 bulk cargo, 1 grain), 6 discharging at berth (3 general cargo, 2 grain, 1 tanker); 1 coal vessel awaiting orders, 20 vessels under repairs/dry-docked; 41 vessels due.

Port Conditions

Russia

Novorossiysk	17-Oct-2005	Sixteen vessels in port operating of which 13 loading, 1 discharging bulk sugar, 2 discharging/loading (1 container, 1 pipes/steel billets); 6 vessels in roads all to load (2 steel billets, 1 bulk urea, 2 wheat, 1 D/O); 65 vessels due of which 63 to load, 2 discharge (1 zinc ore, 1 coils); Oil terminal: 1 tanker in roads to load fuel oil; 7 tankers due all to load (6 crude oil, 1 diesel oil).
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Slovenia

Koper	17-Oct-2005	Port working normally; Thirteen vessels berthed of which 4 bulk carriers discharging ore/coal/solid chemicals/grain, 2 bulk carriers loading coal/general cargo, 2 vessels loading sawn timber, 2 car carriers discharging/loading vehicles, 2 tankers discharging liquid cargo/mineral oils, 1 vessel discharging/loading containers; 1 bulk carrier waiting at anchorage to discharge ore; 17 vessels due over the next 2 days of which 3 bulk carriers to load coal, 2 vessels to load sawn timber, 3 bulk carriers to discharge minerals/general cargo, 6 vessels to discharge/load containers, 3 car carriers to discharge/load vehicles.
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Spain

Bilbao	17-Oct-2005	Thirty vessels in port operating (4 tankers, 26 others), of which 4 loading, 17 discharging, 9 loading/discharging.
Sagunto	17-Oct-2005	Twenty-two vessels in port operating of which 2 loading (1 cement, 1 machinery), 14 discharging (10 steel products, 1 anhydrous ammonia), 6 discharging/loading (4 general cargo, 2 steel products); Outside commercial wharf: no vessels; no delays expected.

Turkmenistan

Aladja	14-Oct-2005	Oil products: Three vessels loading at berth (2 gasoil, 1 gasoline); 3 vessels in roads, all to load (1 gasoil, 1 gasoline, 1 crude oil); 1 vessel due 14/10 to load gasoil.
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Ukraine

Ilichevsk	17-Oct-2005	Nine vessels in port operating of which 6 loading (3 steel products, 2 grain, 1 sun flower oil), 3 discharging/loading containers; 2 vessels in roads; 22 vessels due of which 12 to (7 load steel products, 2 grain, 2 vegetable oil, 1 rape cake), 10 to discharge/load containers.
Mariupol	17-Oct-2005	Thirteen vessels in port operating of which 12 loading (6 steel, 1 coke, 2 fire-clay, 1 coal, 1 sulphur, 1 sunflower beans), 1 discharging/loading feldspar/fire-clay; 4 vessels in roads of which 3 to load (2 steel, 1 coal), 1 to discharge/load containers/fire-clay; 56 vessels due of which 53 to load (27 steel, 9 coal, 12 fire-clay, 1 wheat, 2 barley, 1 ferrosulphate, 1 fertiliser), 1 to discharge equipment, 2 to discharge/load heavy lifts/steel products/containers.
Odessa	17-Oct-2005	Eleven vessels in port operating of which 7 loading (4 metal, 1 ore, 1 wheat, 1 barley), 4 discharging (1 baggage, 1 sugar, 1 bananas, 1 sand), 62 vessels due of which 36 to load (22 metal, 2 pig iron, 3 ore, 1 sugar, 4 wheat, 1 barley, 1 wood, 1 corn, 1 soybeans), 5 to discharge (2 citrus, 1 bananas, 1 baggage, 1 oil), 21 to load/discharge containers.

Published by Lloyd's Marine Intelligence Unit, part of T&F Informa plc, Sheepen Place, Colchester, Essex CO3 3LP.

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ISSN 0047 4908

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