

January 13 2006

Falmouth aims for ship-to-ship transfers

Commissioners start consultation process despite controversy over similar Firth of Forth proposals, writes Felicity Landon — Friday January 13 2006

A PROPOSAL to carry out ship-to-ship crude oil transfers in Falmouth Bay is being pushed forward by Falmouth Harbour Commissioners with a consultation process now under way.

STS operations in the bay would offer a number of benefits, the most important of which would be the diversification of port activities, say the commissioners.

However, while the consultation process goes ahead, the board is keeping a close eye on similar Forth Ports proposals for the Firth of Forth, which have run into controversy and are now the subject of a 12-week consultation co-ordinated by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.

Transfer operations

While the Falmouth scheme is small in comparison with Forth Ports' proposals, which are for more than 100 transfer operations a year, the issues are clearly the same and there is considerable public concern.

"This is understandable given the well-publicised campaign to have the transfers stopped in Lyme Bay, although these operations had been conducted off the Dorset coast for many years without incident," says an update report by the harbour commissioners.

However, there are distinct differences between the two, it adds. The operations carried out at Lyme Bay were considered

to take place at sea, while those proposed for Falmouth Bay would come under control of a harbour authority.

This would mean every aspect of the operation could be regulated and "the highest safety standards enforced by a local administration".

"Vessels and masters involved and their insurance arrangements would be carefully vetted and the operations would be overseen by a specialist", says the report. "Only vessels with double hull protection would be considered."

The proposal to carry out STS operations has come from FenderCare, which was acquired by James Fisher last year.

Consolidation

About one such operation a month would be expected, said Falmouth harbourmaster Mark Sampson. This would involve the consolidation of Russian crude shipped by Baltic tankers for voyages further afield.

"We are going through the process of consulting with stakeholders, local authorities and so on and rewriting our oil pollution planning and putting that out to consultation," he said. "The board will make the decision when the consultation process is completed and when the plan has been discussed with the MCA.

"The key thing to us is how the Forth Ports case goes.

"At the moment we have a similar scenario in terms of local opposition, although perhaps less intense than it is up there. We need clarification from the Secretary of State. We need to know what the government's preferred process is for resolving these issues before we get too far out on the track."

In their report the harbour commissioners say: "The history of Falmouth Harbour shows that it is necessary to seek new businesses for the port as and when the opportunity arises.

Ceased

"Bunkering operations ceased temporarily at the end of 2003 and although they have restarted they have not, so far, returned to their previous volume of business. The export of stone which accounted for up to 10% of harbour movements all but ceased in 2004.

"The number of ships coming for repair in the docks has reduced, with significant customers such as P&O Ferries reducing the size of its fleet. New activity is needed to ensure long-term survival."

Port operations contribute substantially to the local economy, with a recent government report estimating that Falmouth Docks alone, with a turnover of £35m (\$,66m) is responsible for wages of £13.8m in Cornwall.

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

Vessel	Type	Flag	Class	GT	DWT	Bit	Casualty
<i>ARKAIM III</i>	general	KHM	BV	1,599	3,760	1982	Grounded on a shoal in the Tatar Strait Jan 1. Refloated Jan 3 and proceeding to Vanino. Breaches to bow and bottom. ETA Vanino Jan 3.
<i>ATLANTIC SUPERIOR</i>	bulker	CAN	LR	23,955	38,900	1982	Arrived Halifax Jan 2, after drifting for 12 hours, to effect repairs to a damaged engine cylinder.
<i>BIKOI</i>	ferry	SLB	—	488	—	—	Struck the sea wall at Point Cruz wharf, Honiara, Jan 2. Bow cracked open. Five of the 100 persons on board fell into the water
<i>CELTIC TERRIER</i>	chem tanker	GBR	NV	7,676	12,905	1979	Towed into Brunsbuttel locks, Kiel Canal Jan 3 due disabled machinery. Arrested.
<i>CHEMTRANS RAY</i>	product tanker	LBR	AB ABS	40,516	71,637	2000	Grounded in the lower Mississippi Jan 3. Refloated and currently at Baton Rouge for Coast Guard inspection.
<i>EGON-W</i>	general	NLD	(LR)	2,409	3,250	2004	Had engine fire in lat 55 38.3N, long 15 11.8E, Jan 2. Engine damaged. Taken in tow of tug <i>Vitus</i> bound for Kiel. ETA Jan 3.
<i>GEYSIR</i>	general	USA	AB ABS	2,266	2,000	1980	Reported disabled off Bell Island, Newfoundland, in lat 47 38.36N, long 53 01.48W Jan 3 after a main engine crankcase explosion. Holed in engine block. Safely anchored and awaiting assistance. Proceeded Jan 5 on completion of repairs.
<i>MOL RENAISSANCE</i>	container	LBR	GL	35,881	41,743	2005	Arrived Aqaba Dec 29 with No 2 hold totally burned. Salvage services being rendered by Svitzer/Wijsmuller under LOF. Vast majority of cargo believed undamaged.
<i>OCTAVIA</i>	tanker	CYP	(LR)	1,500	3,600	2005	Struck pilings when trying to stop at Audorf, Kiel Canal, 03 Jan 2006. Hull damaged over 15 metres. Proceeded to Hamburg, where arrived same day. Thirteen pilings demolished.
<i>ORAN STAR</i>	general	PAN	GL	5,966	8,035	1983	Arrived Cartagena Dec 14 in tow of <i>Sertosa Diecisiete</i> , where unable to effect repairs. Sailed Dec 22 in tow of V.B.Artico, bound for Tuzla for repairs. Passed Canakkale Jan 1.
<i>OVERSEAS FRAN</i>	crude oil tanker	MHL	AB ABS	62,385	112,118	2001	Arrived Kalundborg Jan 1 with damage to No.3 starboard ballast tank, allegedly sustained by grounding in the Tallinn area. To drydock for repairs.
<i>STAVTANK</i>	chem/oil carrier	NIS	NV	5,378	8,491	1995	In collision with chem tank <i>Tarnhav</i> near Fischerhutte, Kiel Canal overnight Jan 3. Sustained severe damage to port side superstructure. Being assisted to Brunsbuttel by tug <i>Bugsier 15</i> . Arrived Jan 3. Arrived Hamburg Jan 4.
<i>TARNHAV</i>	chem tanker	SWE	GL	9,980	14,796	2002	In collision with chemical/oil carrier <i>Stavtank</i> near Fischerhutte, Kiel Canal, overnight Jan 3. Anchored at North harbour, Kiel. Damaged from bow region to deck level. Proceeded to Fredericia for repairs.

CONTENTS

Reports appear in alphabetical order under the following headings and relevant page number:

Marine, including Overdue & Missing Vessels	1
Seizures & Arrests	9
Pipeline Accidents	10
Weather & Navigation	10
Earthquakes	14
Political & Civil Unrest	15
Kidnappings	20
Labour Disputes	20
Awards & Settlements	21
Railway Accidents	21
Computer Systems	22
Miscellaneous	22
Fires & Explosions	23
Aviation	27
Product Recalls	30
Port Conditions	30
Bloodstock	30
Port Conditions charts	31

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The following reports are reprinted from Lloyd's List



ADAM E.CORNELIUS (U.S.A.)

London, Jan 2 — Following received from Coast Guard Cleveland, timed 1910, UTC: Bulk *Adam E.Cornelius* (15674 gt, built 1973), empty, had port main engine become inoperable at Indiana Hbr. at 1751, UTC, today. Vessel is to proceed under power of its starboard engine to Sturgeon Bay for repairs.

London, Jan 5 — Bulk *Adam E.Cornelius* arrived Sturgeon Bay Jan 3.

AMT EXPLORER (U.K.)

London, Jan 3 — Following received from Corsen MRCC, timed 1515, UTC: Tug *Letojanni* (705 gt, built 1977) lost its tow, pontoon *AMT Explorer* (5689 gt, built 1984), in bad weather in lat 48 59N, long 04 58W, at 0310, UTC, Dec 30. Assistance was rendered to *AMT Explorer* by tug *Abeille Bourbon* which arrived on the scene at 1628, UTC, same day and towed the pontoon to Roscoff, arriving at 0910, Dec 31. *Letojanni* towing *AMT Explorer* subsequently continued voyage to Rotterdam yesterday. (Note — *Letojanni*, Las Palmas for Rotterdam, passed Cape Finisterre Dec 27.)

London, Jan 3 — Understand salvage services were rendered to pontoon *AMT Explorer* by Les Abeilles International under Lloyd's Open Form.

ANNA (North Korea)

London, Jan 3 — Following received from Piraeus MRCC, timed 1100, UTC: North Korea tug *Anna*, HMWW9, grounded in lat 38 39.5N, long 20 43.9E, at 2045, Dec 30. Tug refloated itself and is now at anchor in the grounding area.

London, Jan 5 — Following received from Piraeus MRCC, timed 1035, UTC: Tug *Anna* is now berthed at Lefkada.

APL PANAMA (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Dec 29 — Following received from Coast Guard San Francisco, timed 1347, UTC: C.c. *APL Panama* is still aground. A refloating attempt by three tugs was unsuccessful, and the tugs are still connected to the vessel to hold it in place. A further three tugs are proceeding to assist in refloating operations, ETA on scene later today.

London, Dec 29 — A press report, dated today, states: A private U.S. company was working today to rescue c.c. *APL Panama* that has been hung up on a beach off Mexico's northern Pacific coast since Dec 25, a Mexican port captain confirmed. *APL Panama*, originating in Oakland, was preparing to enter the port of Ensenada on Dec 25 when it became stuck about 1.5

miles south of its destination, port Capt. Jose Luis Rios Hernandez said. Mexican officials hired a U.S. company specializing in marine salvage operations to rescue the ship, but so far the company has had no luck, Hernandez said. The captain added that he believed it might take as much as a month to free the ship's hull and propellers from the sand. The ship was carrying about 35,000 tons of cargo, Rios said. Officials had not determined the cause of the mishap and the master of the ship had not yet given a statement, he said.

London, Dec 30 — A press report, dated Dec 29, states: C.c. *APL Panama*, which has been stuck in the waters off Ensenada since Dec 25, when it ran aground on its way into port, will not be dislodged until early next week, its owners said today. In a telephone interview today from Bremen, Germany, Jens Meier-Hedde, managing director of Mare Britannicum Schiffahrtsgesellschaft MBH & Co, said that his company expects the vessel will be dislodged early next week. Three tugs are being brought down from Seattle to assist the three tugs currently being used to try to free the vessel, Meier-Hedde said. "The vessel drifted because of the strong current in the area," Meier-Hedde said. He disavowed an early report from Port of Ensenada officials that the vessel had attempted to enter the port without a pilot. "The master knows very well that he needs a pilot," Meier-Hedde said. Jose Luis Hernandez, captain of the Ensenada port, said that it is premature to draw conclusions as to what happened because the investigation has yet to be concluded. He said the vessel's master and its Croatian crew remain on the vessel and have not yet been interviewed. The port's services have not been curtailed as a result of the incident, Hernandez said. He said the grounding of the vessel "was not due to any irregularity of services" on the part of the port.

London, Dec 31 — Jens Meier-Hedde, managing director of Mare Britannicum Schiffahrtsgesellschaft MBH & Co, owners of c.c. *APL Panama*, has reported that three additional tugs are being brought down from Seattle to assist the three tugs currently being used to try to free the vessel, which grounded on a sandbank near Ensenada, Mexico, on Dec 25. "We are deploying all the necessary resources to work on freeing the vessel and, based on our current assessment of the situation, we expect it will be refloated by early next week," he said. According to the owners the vessel is stable and in no danger. Port services have not been affected and there has been no pollution, although the company has implemented its emergency response plan as a precaution. The company is co-operating closely with Mexican authorities in investigating the cause of the incident. The company said earlier media reports that the vessel had attempted to enter the port

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without a pilot were incorrect: "Our vessels regularly call at the Port of Ensenada and our masters know very well that they need a pilot to enter the harbour."

London, Jan 3 — Following received from the owners of c.c. *APL Panama*, dated today: The next attempt to refloat *APL Panama* will be in mid-January. At that time six tugs will attempt to refloat the vessel. Work has now begun to remove the bunker fuel and ballast water which will lighten the vessel considerably. A temporary roadway has been constructed from the beach enabling road tankers to be used for the removal of the fuel oil. Power packs have also been delivered to the vessel by helicopter, enabling power to be maintained to the accommodation areas, the reefer containers on board and for the machinery required in the salvage operations. Jens Meier-Hedde, Managing Director of MS "Mare Britannicum" Schiffahrtsgesellschaft mbH & Co KG, confirmed that in a statement to the investigating authorities, the vessel's master stated that he had absolutely no intention of entering the port without pilot assistance and was fully aware of the regulations. The master stated that the vessel had arrived early at the pilot boarding ground and was ready to have the pilot board the vessel. Shortly thereafter the vessel went aground. MS "Mare Britannicum" Schiffahrtsgesellschaft mbH & Co KG and the vessel's crew continue to work closely with the local authorities and salvage company to achieve a satisfactory solution to this incident.

ARCHANGELOS GABRIEL (Greece)

London, Jan 3 — Product tanker *Archangelos Gabriel* arrived Houston Dec 29 and, according to LMIU AIS, was subsequently reported 1.5 nautical miles off St. Rose, in lat 29 56 39.01N, long 90 18 37.71W, speed 6.2 knots, course 22 deg, at 0936, UTC, Jan 3.

ARKAIM III (Cambodia)

London, Jan 3 — A press report, dated today, states: General cargo *Arkaim III* (1599 gt, built 1982), Vanino for Toyama, cargo timber, which ran aground in the Tatar Strait, at 0339, Sakhalin time, Jan 1 got off the shoal rocks this morning and began heading for Vanino. The shoal where it was grounded for two days is located 85 miles to the south from Vanino, sources at the Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk Maritime Salvage and Coordination Centre said. The ship sustained breaches in the bow and bottom. They reached the ballast tanks, but the crew did not report water leaks into the holds or the engine-room. The crew has 12 Russian seamen, and none of them suffered during the incident. The vessel is expected to arrive in Vanino tonight.

ATLANTIC SUPERIOR (Canada)

Troy, Mich, Jan 4 — Bulk *Atlantic Superior* (23955 gt, built 1982)

arrived Halifax Jan 2 for repairs after an engine breakdown. The ship had lost power on one engine cylinder and was drifting for over 12 hours, but was able to reach Halifax on five cylinders. — Great Lakes and Seaway Shipping News.

BEETPULP TRADER (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Jan 3 — General cargo *Beetpulp Trader* sailed St. Malo Dec 28.

BERIT (U.K.)

London, Jan 5 — Following received from Aarhus MRCC, timed 1040, UTC: C.c. *Berit* (9981 gt, built 2001), St.Petersburg for Rotterdam, with containers, grounded in lat 54 31.2N, long 12 03.3E, at approximately 0100, UTC, today. Vessel refloated itself shortly after. No damage reported. Vessel is now at anchor awaiting inspection.

BIKOI (Solomon Islands)

London, Jan 3 — A press report, dated Jan 1, states: Nearly 100 passengers on board Solomon Islands ferry *Bikoi* (488 gt) panicked when the ship struck head-on the brick sea-wall at Point Cruz wharf, Honiara, yesterday afternoon. Onlookers said the ship, packed with passengers returning to Honiara from Malaita province, failed to slow down as it approached for berthing at one of the Point Cruz jetties. A witness said the vessel's bow cracked open and passengers had to be off-loaded in great haste to save the vessel from taking in water. Our source says about five passengers fell off the boat into the sea as a result of sudden impact. However, he says no one was injured during the incident. The Marine and Rescue Centre say they will be investigating the incident.

BOW MARINER (Singapore)

London, Jan 3 — A press report, dated today, states: A Coast Guard investigation into the explosion and sinking of chemical/oil carrier *Bow Mariner* off the Virginia coast nearly two years ago has disclosed that the master abandoned ship without sending a distress call or trying to save his crew. While unable to pinpoint what sparked the explosion that led to the deaths of 21 of the 27 men on board, the investigation also faults the master for violating safety guidelines when he ordered vapour-filled cargo tanks opened for cleaning while the ship was en route to Houston. Capt. Efstratios Kavouras' order to open 22 tanks that previously held methyl tert butyl ether "was a stunningly significant breach of normal safe practices for a tank ship and defies explanation or excuse," according to one of 20 conclusions by Coast Guard investigators. The report, obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request, further concluded that the crew was poorly trained in safety procedures and that friction between the ship's Greek officers and Filipino crew members

contributed to the death toll. The explosion involved the ignition of a fuel/air mixture, the report said. While the ignition source could not be determined, investigators said it probably came from one of the following: electrostatic discharge, mechanical sparks caused by metal-on-metal contact, faulty electrical equipment, hot soot or particles from the ship's smoke stack or funnel, or even sparks from changing batteries in a flashlight. Because the tanks had not been washed or mechanically ventilated, the concentration of vapour was well above the "upper explosive limit" for methyl tert butyl ether, the report said. Opening all the cargo tank hatches permitted vapours to escape at deck level, exposing crew members to a greater risk of an explosion from an accidental spark. The ignition produced two major explosions less than two minutes apart that began at 1806, Feb. 28, 2004, that resulted in catastrophic structural damage and immediate flooding. The ship sank in one hour and 32 minutes. Kavouras, whose body was among those missing after the explosion, was one of three Greek officers on board ship and drew much of the criticism from investigators. However, also contributing to the disaster "was the failure of the operator, Ceres, and senior officers of *Bow Mariner* to properly implement the company's and vessel's Safety, Quality and Environmental System," investigators said. For example: Cargo tanks were not fixed in stationary positions or neutralized of their chemical activity as required; procedures for cleaning tanks were not followed; procedures for entering confined spaces were not followed; the failure of one of two required blowers used to disburse vapours was not reported; monthly fire drills were not conducted; training was scheduled and recorded in the minutes of a safety committee meeting but not actually held. "Opening of all of the hatches for the empty cargo tanks, as was done on the *Bow Mariner*, fails to conform to any known customary marine practice," investigators wrote. "Because the tanks had not been washed or mechanically ventilated, the concentration of vapour was very high and certainly above the upper explosive limit for the MTBE," the report continues. "Opening all of the cargo tank hatches permitted vapours to escape at deck level, where the crew was actively working. This exposed them to toxic vapours and increased the likelihood of an explosion to initiate from an accidental spark." In a statement, an Odfjell official said the company will review the Coast Guard report to determine how safety can be improved. "Odfjell has been very active in international industry organizations to reduce the risk of a tragedy of this magnitude ever happening again and has also worked to implement procedures and training to strengthen safety in our operations," said Jan Didrik Lorentz,

a senior vice president. Investigators also cited significant culture problems between the Greek officers and 24 Filipino crew members. The Filipinos said they were treated with disrespect by the officers and were constantly threatened with being fired. "The survivors clearly feared the Greek officers, and each stated that they would obey any order from them, even if they knew the order to be unsafe," the investigators said. "While these may have been the usual complaints of the lowest ranking crewmen on board ship, there can be no question that such fear can lead to a shipboard culture where safety takes a backseat to preserving one's livelihood," the report said. "Filipino officers did not take their meals in the officer's mess, were given almost no responsibility and were closely supervised in every task," according to the report. The attitude toward Filipino officers and crew was not limited to *Bow Mariner*, the Coast Guard said. As part of the investigation, Jerry R. Crooks Jr., senior investigator for the Marine Safety Office in Norfolk and the investigating officer for *Bow Mariner*, wrote that he visited a sister ship, *Bow Transporter* in Singapore, and observed many of the same attitudes. "The Filipinos were only permitted to speak to the investigating officer and Singapore officials in the presence of the senior officers, leading to obvious nervousness," Crooks wrote in the report. "Nevertheless, several crew members made statements confirming the same cultural divide existed onboard *Bow Transporter*." Probably the most telling evidence of the lack of cohesiveness onboard *Bow Mariner* was its response to the explosion, the report said. Although the official language of the crew was English, Kavouras and Chief Engineer Legantis-Eley A. Athansiou, 47, were conversing in Greek when they assembled with some of the crew on the stern of the ship after the explosions. "Messman Tagle, who was with this group, reported that he and the rest of the crew were simply waiting for someone to tell them what to do," the investigators wrote. "Those instructions never came." "The final blow came when Captain Kavouras ignored questions from Third Officer Ortilano about whether a distress signal had been sent," the report said, referring to Lugen T. Ortilano. "Instead of an organised, thoughtful response, the situation deteriorated to 'every man for himself!' Ceres officials have defended Kavouras actions, the Coast Guard acknowledged, citing emotional trauma triggered by the explosions, fire and immediate tilting of the ship. "However, such trauma is expected and is precisely the reason that crews must be thoroughly trained and frequently drilled," the report concluded. "Capt. Kavouras abandoned ship without sending a distress signal, or conducting a muster, and left behind crew members he knew to be alive," the investigation said. "Such conduct reflects his failure

to conduct regular, realistic drills to prevent just such a reaction." Kavouras and Athansiou abandoned ship within 10 minutes of the explosion, surviving crew members told the Coast Guard. The ship was still afloat when Coast Guard rescue helicopters and other ships arrived. Ortilano, 33, making his first trip on *Bow Mariner*, was credited with saving his life and those of five others by rushing from the stern of the ship back to the bridge to radio a distress call to the Coast Guard. Their delayed entry into the water limited their exposure to the cold and allowed them to climb into a life raft that had been released. All six were rescued by the Coast Guard. The Coast Guard recommended its report be sent to the governments of Greece, the Philippines and Singapore, as well as to the owners and operators of the ship and international and American shipping interests. However, other than recommending that Ceres review its internal policies on workforce interaction and reminding maritime interests of the importance of verifying a tanker ship's compliance for tank cleaning, tests and inspections, there were few other suggestions. Although the delay in releasing the report is unusual, the Coast Guard complained from the beginning of the investigation that legal and political maneuvering by the ship's owners and operators hampered the investigation. Except for the cook and messman, the four other survivors initially declined to talk to authorities. The U.S. attorney's office in Norfolk issued subpoenas to get them to speak before a grand jury, but only after promising immunity from prosecution. The Coast Guard cited Ceres for pollution and has recommended a fine of \$11,000, said Crooks, the senior investigator. That case is pending.

BUMI JAYA (Indonesia)

Chittagong, Jan 3 — According to vessel's local agent, general cargo *Bumi Jaya* remains in same position, lying at Chittagong outer anchorage. — Lloyd's Agents.

C.S.S. ARKANSAS (U.S.A.)

London, Jan 4 — A press report, dated Jan 2, states: When tug *C.S.S. Arkansas* collided with bulk *Rodon Amarandon* on Feb 10, the tug sank to the bottom of the river. Despite severe damage, the insurance company's survey determined that the salvaged vessel was not a total loss and sent the survey out for bid. Subsequently, the refurbishment of the vessel was awarded to C & C Marine & Repair LLC's boat yard on Peters Road along the Harvey Canal, Louisiana. "We got the boat and had to gut it right down to bare steel," said C & C yard manager Glen Page. "That included opening up all the tanks and voids and pressure washing every corner of the boat." Damage was extensive with both the wheelhouse and second deck collapsed. The hull and bulwarks sustained substantial damage as well.

"After we repaired the steel work we sandblasted the boat inside and out and repainted it," explained Page, "Then we changed out the 600 hp. Cummins KTA19M engines and the Cummins-powered gen sets for the same models supplied by the owners, Carline Marine."

CELTIC TERRIER (U.K.)

London, Jan 3 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: Chem.tank *Celtic Terrier* (7676 gt, built 1979), bound Latvia, was towed, with disabled machine, into Brunsbuttel locks of Kiel Canal. Police arrested the vessel after a ship's officer gave information about further damages on the vessel. The "Seeberufsgenossenschaft" in Hamburg had already controlled the vessel during last weekend (Dec 31/Jan 1) and had allowed it to continue its voyage only after having carried out repairs. (Note — *Celtic Terrier* arrived Hamburg Dec 27 and sailed Dec 30 for Klaipeda.)

CHEMTRANS RAY (Liberia)

London, Jan 4 — Following received from Coast Guard New Orleans, timed 1545, UTC: Product tanker *Chemtrans Ray* (40516 gt, built 2000) grounded in Lower Mississippi at 0615, local time, yesterday. No pollution or damage reported. Vessel has refloated and is now at Baton Rouge for Coast Guard inspection. (Note — *Chemtrans Ray* sailed Antwerp Dec 16 for Baton Rouge.)

CP VALOUR (Bermuda)

Ponta Delgada, Dec 29 — A heavy lift helicopter is removing hazardous cargo which remains on board c.c. *CP Valour*. *Magadir* still in scene to collect the combustibles from the vessel's tanks under adverse sea conditions in the casualty area.

London, Dec 30 — A press report, dated today, states: Air Force helicopters have removed all toxic materials on board c.c. *CP Valour*, maritime officials said. The vessel was carrying eight tonnes of triphenyl phosphate, six tonnes of paint and 19 tonnes of oxidants when it got stuck in shallow water in a bay off the northern coast of Faial island on Dec 9. A Portuguese Air Force Puma helicopter removed the last of the 19 tonnes of oxidant sodium persulfate yesterday, officials said. Last week another helicopter removed the other toxic materials from containers on the vessel. Authorities had feared the materials could prove lethal to marine life if they leaked. Last week, a fuel vessel pumped about 550 tonnes of fuel from the grounded vessel's tanks before rough weather forced the operation to stop. There are still some 400 tonnes of fuel remaining.

Ponta Delgada, Dec 30 — C.c. *CP Valour*: The heavy lift helicopter is still on removing operations of the toxic and inflammable products which remains on board the vessel. Product tanker *Magadir* is still in scene pumping off the oily products from the vessel. Despite several attempts made

to refloat the vessel it has remained immobile. It was reported that due to heavy swells and the hull damage sustained by the vessel it makes it impossible to remove the vessel from the site and that under the present circumstance the vessel will be dismantled where it is. The vessel dismantling operation is intended to commence soonest and probably they will not be completed until August. All the containers remaining stowed on board the vessel which has a present list of 16 degrees to starboard side. Holds and engine-room are reported as flooded. No reports concerning the oil spots extension to other places of the Island. — Lloyd's Agents.

Ponta Delgada, Jan 2 — C.c. CP Valour: All the toxic cargo, fuel and inflammable products have been unloaded from the vessel. Refloating operations have been stopped and the vessel is now reportedly going to be dismantled at the grounding place. All the empty and loaded containers are still stowed on board. According to local authorities, dismantling operations will not be completed before Aug 2006. — Lloyd's Agents.

DBL 152 (U.S.A.)

London, Jan 3 — A press report, dated Dec 31, states: More than six weeks after tank barge *DBL 152* struck a submerged oil platform damaged by Hurricane "Rita", the barge is in Holcim dock, Theodore, Ala, to be either "salved" or repaired, according to information from the U.S. Coast Guard.

EAGLE CARINA (Singapore)

London, Jan 3 — Crude oil tanker *Eagle Carina*, Genoa for Mangalia, in ballast, passed Canakkale 0815, Jan 1 and subsequently passed Bosphorus 2215 same day.

EGON-W (Netherlands)

London, Jan 3 — Following received from Aarhus MRCC, timed 1140, UTC: A report was received at 1139, UTC, yesterday that general cargo *Egon-W* (2409 gt, built 2004) had an engine fire in lat 55 38.3N, long 15 11.8E. A short while afterwards a report was received that the fire was under control but vessel's engine was damaged. Vessel was taken in tow by tug *Vitus* bound Kiel, where due tomorrow afternoon.

ELBETOR (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Dec 31 — General cargo *Elbetor* arrived Amsterdam Dec 29 and sailed at 1715, Dec 30.

ELLY LANE (U.S.A.)

London, Dec 29 — A press report, dated today, states: Nine crew members quickly abandoned tug *Elly Lane* (286 gt, built 1974) Dec 16 as the vessel suddenly sank around 1600 hrs while tying off at a dock near Calvert City, Ky. Most were able to step off onto the dock while the master, the last person off the stricken vessel, climbed onboard a nearby boat, according to company

spokesperson, Greg Beuerman. Beuerman said the 3,000 hp. vessel had been in a coal run from Calvert City to the (TVA) Colbert Steam Plant at Tennessee River Mile 245 and was returning light boat to the dock facilities of First Marine Corporation near Tennessee River Mile 11 to take on supplies when the incident took place. First Marine is located approximately three miles downstream from the Calvert City Coal Terminal. He said the crew had placed a head line on the vessel and "was in the process of tying off a second line when it was noticed that the vessel was taking on water." Initial reports in the local media indicated the boat had been tied to the dock when it was discovered to be in peril. Beuerman said the towboat went down in about 15 minutes. It settled parallel to the dock in about 25 feet of water with the pilothouse and part of the second deckhouse remaining above the river's surface.

ELWOOD (Panama)

See under "Labour Disputes".

ENVOY (Norway (Int. Register))

London, Jan 3 — Passenger ro/ro *Envoy* sailed Ymuiden 2235, Jan 2, for Harwich.

EUGENIA (Honduras)

London, Dec 29 — A press report, dated today, states: India's Defence and Interior Ministries were investigating how 100 tonnes of explosives went missing from general cargo *Eugenia*, bound for Iran, officials said. The six missing containers of explosives were intended for road construction in Afghanistan where India's Border Road Organisation was constructing a highway. "About 100 tonnes of explosives meant for the Border Road Organisation in Afghanistan were reported missing on Dec 26," said a government official. "We are treating this as a serious security matter," the official said yesterday. The master and six crew of the vessel were detained for questioning. The official said the master's claim that the cargo was lost as the sea was choppy was being investigated. He said officials from customs, police, Indian Navy, Coast Guard and other security agencies were inquiring into the incident. (See issue of Dec 30.)

London, Jan 2 — A press report, dated today, states: Twelve days after more than 100 tonnes of explosives went missing from general cargo *Eugenia*, security agencies and defence authorities were still clueless about their whereabouts even as questioning of its supplier did not lead to any headway in the probe. A joint team of security officials questioning the arrested crew of the vessel were also contemplating a move to get installed a software through which Russian and Myanmar languages will be translated into English. The team also visited Secunderabad where they questioned the supplier of the explosives "Prime

Trading" but nothing concrete emerged from that. As a result, the focus of the investigators had shifted to Bombay Port Trust (BPT) in a bid to ascertain how the consignment of the explosives could go missing. Meanwhile, Naval deep sea divers operating from three war ships continued to hunt the sea bed in a bid to trace the six missing containers. The master of the *Eugenia* had told interrogators that the containers sunk into the sea.

London, Jan 2 — A press report, dated today, states: Naval vessels engaged in searching for missing explosives from general cargo *Eugenia* in the sea off Mumbai have found two containers in the area where the vessel's crew had claimed to have dumped the consignment, official sources said today. Efforts were on to lift the containers, the sources added. Three Western Naval Command vessels have been deployed for the search. Also ONGC multi-purpose support vessel *Seamac III* has been put into service with its positioning system and crane for lifting the containers. The search team had located something looking like containers on Dec 29 but it turned out to be junk.

EURO FJORD (Norway)

Trondheim, Dec 30 — Repairs to general cargo *Euro Fjord* are now expected to be completed at the end of next week. — Lloyd's Agents.

FRI RIVER (Bahamas)

London, Dec 30 — Following received from Coastguard Humber MRCC, timed 2130, UTC: A report was received at 2116, UTC, that general cargo *Fri River* (1981 gt, built 1991) had broke moorings at Flixborough and contacted the berthed general cargo *Uno* (1473 gt, built 1986). Damage to vessels not known but *Fri River* is now reported aground. VTS Humber have arranged for a pilot and tug to assist *Fri River* tomorrow. (Note — *Uno* had arrived Flixborough 1626, Dec 29 and *Fri River* had arrived Flixborough 1144, Dec 28.)

London, Jan 4 — General cargo *Fri River* passed Dover Strait Jan 1 for Seville.

FRI RIVER (Bahamas.)

London, Dec 31 — Following received from coastguard Humber MRCC, timed 0540, UTC: General cargo *Fri River* refloated at 0517, UTC, this morning, and is outbound to sea. No damage reported.

FUNCHAL (Madeira)

London, Jan 4 — Passenger *Funchal* arrived Singapore at 0540, Jan 1.

GEYSIR (U.S.A.)

London, Jan 3 — General cargo *Geysir* (2266 gt, built 1980) was reported disabled off Bell Island, Newfoundland, in lat 47 38 36N, long 53 01 48W, at 0225, UTC, Jan 3, following a main engine crankcase explosion. No fire or injuries reported. The vessel's engine was out of

commission, with a hole in the engine block. The vessel safely anchored awaiting assistance.

London, Jan 4 — Following received from Halifax RCC, timed 1545, UTC: It was reported at 1502, UTC, yesterday that vessel *Minnow II*, with an engineer on board, was en route to general cargo *Geysir* to assist the vessel.

St. John's, NF, Jan 5 — Vessel Traffic have advised that repairs to general cargo *Geysir* were effected and the vessel has departed. — Lloyd's Sub-agents.

HAIL MARY II (U.S.A.)

London, Jan 4 — A press report, dated today, states: Commercial fishing *Hail Mary II* (79 gt, built 1993) capsized in Shinnecock Inlet (approximately lat 40 52N, long 72 28W) yesterday morning in high winds and rough seas, dumping more than 30,000 pounds of fish, 4,000 gallons of diesel fuel and three crew members into the frigid water, Coast Guard officials said. Shortly before 0500 hrs, the 63-foot *Hail Mary II* capsized after its owner, John Windels of East Quogue, lost control of the boat while hauling up an outrigger, police said. Windels, was on board with Jerzy Bogucki and Richard Gardiner, according to Southampton Town police. The boat capsized 30 yards from Soleaus Pier, near the fishing station dock, police said. A neighbouring vessel, *Cindi Sea*, contacted the Coast Guard minutes after the capsizing and was able to rescue Bogucki. The Coast Guard arrived and transferred him, Windels and Gardiner to shore, Coast Guard Lt. J.G. Robert Skinner said. All three men were taken to Central Suffolk Hospital by Flanders Volunteer Ambulance for hypothermia symptoms, police said. A spokeswoman for Central Suffolk Hospital said the men were later released. The State Department of Environmental Conservation was notified of the diesel spill, Skinner said. The vessel remained 95% submerged in the Shinnecock Inlet last night.

ICE KING (Greece)

Piraeus, Dec 30 — General cargo *Ice King* is in dry dock at Eleusis due to pitch control damage to its propeller. Repairs have commenced and are expected to take at least eight to 10 days. — Lloyd's Agents.

INZENIERIS NECIPORENKO (Malta)

Freeport, Bahamas, Dec 12 — Repairs to ro/ro *Inzenieris Neciporenko* are proceeding quite well. The entire engine has been dismantled and the crankshaft removed for renewal as per the request of Class. The new shaft is expected to arrive from Europe within the next few weeks at which time rebuilding will take place. Ro/ro *Nicea* was brought in by the charterers to load the cargo (used vehicles) from *Neciporenko* and to ship them on to

the Dominican Republic. This operation was completed over the New Year period and *Nicea* sailed at 2100 hrs, Jan 1. — Lloyd's Agents.

ISLAND SPIRIT (U.S.A.)

London, Dec 31 — A press report, dated today, states: The crew of tug *Island Spirit* (90 gt, built 1981) was rescued by the Coast Guard early yesterday after a fire aboard the tug disabled the vessel and it began to list badly while being towed to port. A 41-foot Coast Guard utility vessel and a helicopter were dispatched from Port Angeles after the tug reported the fire about 0625 hrs, the Coast Guard said. Darkness and six-foot seas complicated removal of the crew from the tug.

London, Jan 2 — Following received from Coast Guard Seattle, timed 2050, UTC: Tug *Island Spirit* had fire on board in the Strait of Juan de Fuca at 1338, local time, Dec 30. The fire was quickly extinguished by the vessel's carbon dioxide system and *Island Spirit* was safely towed into Port Angeles by tug *Pacific Princess*.

ISOLDE (Sweden)

London, Dec 31 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: Vehicle *Isolde* (51071 gt, built 1985) crashed with its stern into the northern lock of Bremerhaven harbour, early Dec 30, due to machine failure. Two tugs escaped in the last second. The *Isolde* was towed to the Columbuskaje in Bremerhaven after the collision. The vessel was only slightly damaged, but the lock was out of order. The vessels *Jingu Maru*, *Taronga*, *Terrier*, *Autosun*, *Autorunner*, *Weser Highway* and *Volga Highway* were trapped in the harbour. The repair of the lock will last three to four days. (Note — *Isolde* arrived Bremerhaven at 1125, Dec 30.)

Bremen, Jan 2 — Vehicle *Isolde* had an accident in the locks at Bremerhaven at 0930, Dec 30. While entering the "Kaiser-Schleuse", the only available bigger sluice to enter the Bremerhaven ports, the post of the vessel collided with one of the two inner sluice gates and damaged same. This unit will now have to be exchanged which will take about three to four working days. The vessel was discharged later on the outside quay at Bremerhaven. There are at present three further vessels of Wallenius Wilhelmsen which were trapped within the port basin due to the accident. It is hoped that the locks will be back to working order by tomorrow. It is further reported that divers investigated the hull of *Isolde* but did not find any damages. It is assumed that the vessel will continue trading as normal. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Jan 3 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: The new lock Bremerhaven was in service again on Jan 2 after it had been hit by vehicle *Isolde*. The damaged gate was towed away by three tugs and taken to the Kohlehafen (coal harbour). In the night from Jan 1 to Jan 2, testings

with the new gate took place, then it went into service. The damage caused is estimated to be about €420,000. The police are still investigating.

London, Jan 3 — Vehicle *Isolde* sailed Bremerhaven 1810, Dec 31, for Ulsan.

IVAR LAURITZEN (DIS)

Ponta Delgada, Dec 30 — Ref *Ivar Lauritzen* (14406 gt, built 1990), Rotterdam for Cristobal, had a main engine problem and deviated to Ponta Delgada where arrived Dec 29 for the necessary repairs to turbo-charger. Understand that the new spare parts will arrive by plane at Ponta Delgada. — Lloyd's Agents. (Note — *Ivar Lauritzen* sailed Rotterdam 1455, Dec 23 for Valparaiso.)

Ponta Delgada, Dec 31 — Ref *Ivar Lauritzen* has completed repairs to turbo-charger and has already left Ponta Delgada, resuming its voyage to Cristobal. — Lloyd's Agents.

JAAMI (Bangladesh)

See under "South-East Asia."

JENNIE DEHMER (U.S.A.)

London, Dec 29 — A press report states: While moving a barge from Conoco/Phillips dock to Magnolia's dock in Wood River Dec 9 the starboard engine of tug *Jennie Dehmer* (298 gt, built 1968) caught fire engulfing the engine-room in fire and smoke. Tugss *Gilda Shurden* and *Miss Kathy* came to the rescue and had the fire extinguished within 30 minutes. The engine-room sustained a lot of smoke and heat damage. The tug was scheduled to go in the shipyard at Greenville this month for new engines and generators. It will now go in tow with tug *Kelly Lee*.

JOANNA (St. Vincent & Grenadines)

See *Stena Nautica*.

KANNON MARU NO.8 (Japan)

London, Jan 3 — A press report, dated today, states: Product tanker *Kannon Maru No.8* (699 gt) and general cargo *Taisei Maru* (697 gt) collided in the Inland Sea, at 0030 hrs, Monday (Jan 2), the Coast Guard said. No injuries or oil spills occurred in the collision. The Coast Guard questioned the masters and other crew members of both vessels about the collision, which occurred about five kilometres west of Awaji Island, in Hyogo Prefecture.

LECONTE (U.S.A.)

London, Dec 30 — An Alaska Marine Highway System press release, dated Dec 29, states: The Alaska Marine Highway System today announced that ro/ro *Leconte* is expected to depart Bellingham, WA, at 1800 tonight, en route to Ketchikan following emergency repairs to its propulsion shafts at Todd Shipyard in Seattle. *Leconte* will resume its published schedule from Juneau on Sunday morning, sailing for Haines and Skagway at 0900 hrs. "We are especially pleased that the work in

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

Seattle has been completed in a timely manner, which has allowed us to get *Leconte* back on schedule on Jan 1," said Captain John Falvey, AMHS General Manager. "The repairs to the shaft couplings were expertly done, approved by the American Bureau of Shipping, and the vessel was certified for passenger service by the Coast Guard in Bellingham today." Falvey said the shaft repairs were in line with AMHS engineering estimates after the vessel was taken out of service in Sitka on Dec 5. The shipyard also made permanent repairs to damage done to the hull on Nov 30, when *Leconte* grazed the metal top of a piling in Petersburg. This contact put a 10-12 inch gash in the forepeak of the vessel, about 13-15 feet above the waterline. A temporary repair was made in Juneau the next day.

London, Jan 4 — An Alaska Marine Highway System press release, dated Dec 30, states: The Alaska Marine Highway System today announced that its previous expectation that ro/ro *Leconte* would be able to resume its schedule am Jan 1, has been revised to Wednesday (Jan 4) due to required repairs to replace a switch related to the vessel's fast rescue boat. *Leconte's* regular Sunday voyage to Haines and Skagway, and on Monday/Tuesday to Sitka and Kake, have consequently been cancelled. "Our plan at this time is to have *Leconte* resume its schedule on Jan 4, with its 0615 hrs sailing from Juneau to Hoonah, Angoon, Kake and Petersburg," said Captain John Falvey, AMHS General Manager. "We have been delayed by an unexpected problem with a limit switch on the davit that lowers the vessel's starboard fast rescue boat. Fortunately, the replacement switch is on its way to Juneau, so we should be able to have it replaced, tested and ready to sail by Wednesday morning." *Leconte* sailed from Bellingham en route to Ketchikan Thursday night as expected, after undergoing repairs to its propulsion shafts in Seattle. It is expected to arrive in Juneau on Sunday, where the davit motor will be repaired.

LETOJANNI (Italy)

See *AMT Explorer*.

MARGARET (Georgia)

See "Italy" under "Weather & Navigation."

MARINA IRIS (Panama)

London, Jan 5 — A press report, dated today, states: A High Court judge blasted a Singapore shipping company for sending out "woefully unseaworthy" tug *Marina Iris* that sank in the open sea, claiming the lives of six Indonesian crewmen, the published decision said today. Family-owned Marina Offshore allowed the aging tug to depart from Kobe for Singapore during the northeast monsoon season, despite an expert's opinion that the vessel was unfit to sail on the high seas. It sank barely 80 kilometres from the port, taking

the crewmen down with it on Dec 26, 2003. The shipping company sued its two insurers, China Insurance Co. and AXA Insurance, after they refused to compensate the loss of the vessel. It had been insured for S\$800,000 (US\$473,000). In throwing out the suit, Justice Tan Lee Meng was quoted as saying that the boat's conditions were "clearly wanting". The boat was not manned by a qualified master, its structure was not suited for open-water voyages and its radio was tuned to a Japanese channel that none of the crew understood, Tan said. The judge agreed with the insurers' expert witness, Captain Christopher Noel Phelan, that the choice of crew was irresponsible. *Marina Iris*, built in 1982, took a different route than the one recommended by Captain Tony Goh, the surveyor engaged by Marina Offshore. Goh wanted the boat to hug the coastline as much as possible. Instead, it headed for the Kii Suido Strait leading into the Pacific Ocean. Tan said that the failure to stick to Goh's route breached the insurance policies, rendering them void. Marina Offshore intends to appeal the decision.

MARITIME LADY (Gibraltar)

London, Jan 5 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: Scrapping of general cargo *Maritime Lady* has begun in Cuxhaven. It is still unclear who will have to bear the salvage expenses as the vessel was abandoned by its original owners so that the German state had to pay in advance and now the jurisdiction has to judge. The cost of the salvage was several €100,000.

MAZNAH (Indonesia)

See under "Seizures & Arrests"

MIRAC-3 (Turkey)

Venice, Jan 1 — General cargo *Mirac-3* completed repairs, including installation of new rudder, and sailed Dec 30 for Porto Nogaro. — Lloyd's Agents.

MISSISSAGI (Canada)

London, Jan 4 — Following received from Coast Guard Cleveland, timed 1505, UTC: Bulk *Mississagi* (9706 gt, built 1943) was reported yesterday evening in St. Marys River with possible loss of rudder. Vessel is still at anchor waiting for a diver to assess the situation.

MOL RENAISSANCE (Liberia)

Amman, Dec 31 — C.c. *MOL Renaissance* (35881 gt, built 2005) arrived at Aqaba Dec 29 with hold No. 2 totally burned. Vessel was not destined to Aqaba but arrived due to the incident. Cause of the fire unknown to us at this stage. — Lloyd's Agents. (Note — *Mol Renaissance* sailed Singapore Dec 21 for Genoa.)

London, Jan 2 — A press release from Wijsuller Salvage, dated Dec 30, states: SvitzerWijsmuller Salvage B.V. was today instructed by the owners and underwriters of c.c. *MOL*

Renaissance to provide salvage services to the vessel, which sustained a fire in containers in one of her holds. The vessel is re-routed to the port of Aqaba where it will be met with a SvitzerWijsmuller salvage/fire-fighting team from The Netherlands combined with other resources, which amongst others include fire-fighting tugs.

London, Jan 3 — Understand salvage services are being rendered to c.c. *MOL Renaissance* by SvitzerWijsmuller Salvage BV under Lloyd's Open Form.

London, Jan 3 — Following received from the managers of c.c. *MOL Renaissance*, dated today: *MOL Renaissance* has been involved in a fire incident in the Red Sea. On Dec 28, a fire started in a container loaded into No. 2 hold. *MOL Renaissance* acted immediately to contain the fire and contracted with experienced international salvors, Svitzer Wijsmuller, who are currently on board. The fire in No. 2 hold is believed to be extinguished but salvors are continuing to monitor the situation. Contrary to early reports indicating that No. 2 hold was "totally burned", the managers advise that the damage is relatively minor and limited to a few containers within the hold. The overwhelming majority of cargo in No. 2 hold and on board the vessel is in a sound condition and has not sustained any damage from the fire, and will be safely delivered to its receivers.

MOUNT ATHOS (Cyprus)

London, Jan 5 — Bulk *Mount Athos* arrived New Orleans Dec 21.

NAPOCOR POWER BARGE NO.106 (Philippines)

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

NAPOCOR TUGBOAT NO.1 (Philippines)

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

NESTE (Finland)

London, Jan 5 — Chemical/oil carrier *Neste* arrived and sailed Singapore Dec 25 for Port Said.

NORD STAR (U.K.)

Glasgow, Dec 28 — Understand that general cargo *Nord Star* completed permanent repairs and sailed from Buckie at around 1100 hrs, Dec 10. The vessel is now believed to be trading out of ports on the west coast of Scotland. — Lloyd's Agents.

NSI NO.1

London, Jan 2 — Following received from Coast Guard Miami, timed 1920, UTC: Ferry *NSI No.1*, length 55 ft, bound St. Thomas, US Virgin Islands, grounded at Stevens Cay, in lat 18 19.9N, long 64 48.4W, on Dec 31. Three people were injured. Vessel was towed to Tortola for emergency drydocking.

OCTAVIA (Cyprus)

London, Jan 4 — Following received from Kiel, dated today: Tanker

Octavia (1500 gt, built 2005), Estonia for Hamburg, cargo 3,200 tons of oil, struck pilings when trying to stop at Audorf (Kiel Canal) at 0315, Jan 3. Thirteen pilings, each consisting of 16 logs, were completely demolished, the others damaged. The vessel's hull was damaged over a length of 15 metres. The ship was later allowed to proceed to Hamburg. At the time there was dense fog with less than 50 metres visibility. (Note — *Octavia* sailed Kunda Dec 31 and subsequently arrived Hamburg 1646 yesterday.)

London, Jan 4 — According to LMIU AIS tanker *Octavia* was in lat 53 53 04.08N, long 09 08 11.58E, at 0956 today, speed 6.9 knots.

ORAN STAR (Panama)

London, Jan 3 — General cargo *Oran Star* (5966 gt, built 1983) in tow of salvage tug *V.B. Artico*, Cartagena for Tuzla, passed Canakkale 0906, Jan 1. (Note — Understand *Oran Star* arrived Cartagena Dec 14 in tow of tug *Sertosa Diecisiete* from Algiers and left Dec 22 in tow of *V.B. Artico* for Tuzla.)

Valencia, Jan 4 — Understand from sub-agents in Cartagena that general cargo *Oran Star* arrived Cartagena Dec 14 as the vessel needed some repairs. The intention was for the vessel to be repaired at "Navantia" but due to some discrepancies over the repairs, a decision was made to take the vessel to Turkey in order to carry out repairs. — Lloyd's Agents.

OVERSEAS FRAN (Marshall Islands)

London, Jan 4 — Following received from Aarhus MRCC, timed 1045, UTC: Crude oil tanker *Overseas Fran* (62385 gt, built 2001) arrived Kalundborg Jan 1 with damage to ballast tank allegedly sustained in the Tallinn area. The vessel is still at Kalundborg looking to discharge its cargo of fuel oil to enable it to drydock for repairs. Location where repairs to be carried out not known. (Note — *Overseas Fran* had sailed Muuga Dec 30.)

London, Jan 4 — OSG Shipmanagement report that their double hull crude oil tanker *Overseas Fran*, is currently in the port of Kalundborg where damage to the outer hull in way of No.3 starboard ballast tank is being assessed. It is believed that the damage was caused by grounding in the Tallinn area, where the vessel loaded a full cargo of fuel oil and departed on Dec 31. Immediately on arriving in Kalundborg, Class attended the vessel and divers carried out a temporary repair to the hull to stop a small ingress of water. The intention is to lighten the vessel of its cargo of fuel oil and proceed to dry dock for repair. No pollution occurred as a result of this incident.

PEQUOT (Liberia)

Caracas, Jan 3 — Repairs to bulk *Pequot* commenced on Dec 24, stopped later the same day and resumed on Dec 26. The vessel completed

temporary repairs on Dec 30. The Port Authorities and Class declared the vessel fit to proceed from Maracaibo to Santos. The vessel was scheduled to sail at noon, Dec 31, with an ETA at Santos of Jan 16. The damage sustained by the vessel is not expected to significantly affect its steering. — Lloyd's Agents.

POLANA (Slovakia)

Bucharest, Jan 3 — Tug *Polana*: The wreck removal operations will be carried out by Multraship Salvage B.V., who are in the process of deploying their equipment to the site. — Lloyd's Agents.

PRINCESS OF THE WORLD (Philippines)

Chittagong, Jan 3 — Passenger ro/ro *Princess of the World* arrived at Chittagong Outer Anchorage on Dec 25, and was beached for subsequent demolition the following day. — Lloyd's Agents.

QUINAULT (U.S.A.)

London, Dec 31 — A press report, dated today, states: A narrow channel, extreme tides, heavy rain and strong winds caused ro/ro *Quinault* (1490 gt, built 1927) to contact a piling as it arrived at the Keystone Harbor ferry terminal on Whidbey Island yesterday afternoon. No one was hurt, and damage to the vessel "was purely cosmetic," said Washington State Ferries spokeswoman Susan Harris. There was an experienced captain at the helm "and the tide just kind of caught him," she said. "He went in for what we call a hard landing. There was no damage to the dock, the terminal or the wing wall." The 1430 hrs accident coincided with a planned "boat swap," Harris said. The *Klickitat*, which has a greater capacity for large trucks, is the regular ferry for the run and is now back on the water after undergoing annual maintenance for the last month or so. The *Quinault* sailed back to Port Townsend to pick up crew members' cars before heading to the State Ferries' Eagle Harbor yard on Bainbridge Island so the vessel can be inspected, Harris said.

RED WING (Liberia)

Gothenburg, Dec 29 — Chemical/oil carrier *Red Wing*: Discharge should commence 0800 tomorrow. — Westax Marine Services AB.

Gothenburg, Dec 30 — Chemical/oil carrier *Red Wing* remains aground. Product tanker *STOC Petrea* is on scene and will discharge about 2,000 tonnes of cargo. Plan is to commence pumping at 1600 hrs — capacity unknown under present conditions and therefore time operation will take not known — but presume refloating operations will commence later this evening/night. — Westax Marine Services AB.

Helsingborg, Dec 31 — Chemical/oil carrier *Red Wing*: Lightering of approximately 1,700 tonnes of naphta to product tanker *Stoc Petrea* completed shortly before midnight,

Dec 30. *Red Wing* deballasted and refloated early am, today assisted by local tug. Both vessels proceeded to Helsingborg for underwater and internal inspection of double bottom of the *Red Wing* and re-lightering of cargo, extent of grounding damage permitting. Inspection completed at 0900, today. Inspection revealed vessel's bottom shell softly indented, chafed, gouged over large areas and one propeller blade slightly fractured. However, attending Class and Swedish Maritime Safety Inspectorate surveyors were given the vessel permission to continue trading without any restrictions being imposed and re-lightering of cargo is scheduled for completion pm, today. — Damco Surveys AB.

Helsingborg, Jan 1 — Reloading of cargo from product tanker *Stoc Petrea* to chemical/oil carrier *Red Wing* was completed at 1700 yesterday and the *Stoc Petrea* departed Helsingborg in ballast for Brofjorden approximately 1830 same day. The *Red Wing* departed Helsingborg, fully laden with its original cargo of naphta, for Rotterdam at 1200, local time, today. It will be assisted by tug *Stevns Arctic* throughout the entire passage to Rotterdam. — Damco Surveys AB.

Malmö, Jan 2 — Chemical/oil carrier *Red Wing* was pumping over about 1,800 tonnes of the cargo to another vessel and refloated at 0310, local time, Dec 31 assisted by one tugboat. The vessel proceeded to Helsingborg harbour, by its own engine, where divers inspected the bottom. Following damages were found: Scratch all over the bottom. Ballast tank No. 2 indented about 50 mm. One propeller blade with cracks and small part missing. Vessel will repair the propeller after discharging Le Havre. Vessel left Helsingborg harbour at 1200, local time, Jan 1. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Jan 3 — Understand that chemical/oil carrier *Red Wing* arrived Ymuiden roads this morning escorted by tug *Stevns Arctic*.

SEA HAULER (Bahamas)

London, Dec 30 — A press report, dated today, states: The owners of general cargo *United Star* have got their vessel back up and running again more than two years after the collision with general cargo *Sea Hauler*. After satisfying requirements outlined by the Port Department — as is the case with any vessel applying for hire in Bahamian waters — the *United Star* started taking freight again this past Tuesday (Dec 27). The *United Star* travels to Colonel Hill, Acklins and Crooked Island. "Any vessel wanting to ply for hire must first apply to the New Providence Port Authority Board for a license. Once that license has been approved, they must satisfy the Port Department that they have met the inspections, which include safety, the navigational aspect, etc," Port Controller Captain Anthony Allens said. "They must satisfy us that the captain of record is licensed for the vessel they want to

ply for hire and that they have a qualified mate onboard and that the necessary safety mechanisms are in place." The *United Star* and the *Sea Hauler* collided during the predawn hours of Aug 2, 2003. At the time the *Sea Hauler* was on its way to Cat Island. Four people were killed in the mishap. Twenty-five others were injured. A comprehensive report found that the masters of both vessels, along with their deckhands, were culpable in the maritime accident. In addition, the handling of the vessels by the respective masters was described as "seriously negligent" as the *Sea Hauler* had on board eight times more than the number of passengers authorised by the Port Department, carrying probably as many as 191 passengers. The *United Star* carried as many as 31 passengers without any kind of approval, authorities concluded. The Port Department consequently suspended all excursions, putting in place more stringent measures before allowing them to resume. "If the boats qualify for excursions, then they can ply," Captain Allens explained. "But the fact of the matter is that most of the vessels that applied for excursions are not passenger vessels, but cargo vessels, which persons wish to use for excursion purposes and we have taken a stand. Unless they can satisfy us that they can carry the passengers they want to carry, they would not be granted permission to do so. That is what has been happening and this is why you are finding that there are fewer excursions now. The vessels cannot accommodate the passengers they wish to carry or enough passengers that would make it economically viable to do so." Captain Allens has admitted that the suspension of excursions translated into a loss of revenue for organisers. Following the Wreck Commission's inquiry into the incident, Transport and Aviation Minister Glenys Hanna-Martin revealed that certain recommendations were proposed. They included fixing the mandatory minimum and maximum number of crew members and their required competencies, which "must be sufficient and efficient for the voyage." It was also advised that sufficient vital information should be obtained to identify each passengers, fire and safety drills should be carried out and a reformed system for the dispatch of the vessels should be put in place including the boarding of passengers with prepaid tickets only. According to Captain Allens, "quite a number" of those recommendations have since been put in place.

SEGOVIA CARRIER (Bahamas)

Maassluis, Dec 31 — Ref *Segovia Carrier* (15834 gt, built 1980), C6KF2, outbound from Antwerp, struck the Wismarsdonk bridge at approximately 2350, Dec 30. The vessel returned back to its original berth, No 188. As a result of this, it has a small hole of

approximately 30 cm about one metre above the waterline. Further investigations will follow as soon as vessel is alongside. — Lloyd's Sub-agents.

London, Jan 3 — Ref *Segovia Carrier* sailed Antwerp 1930, Dec 31, for Hamburg.

London, Jan 4 — Ref *Segovia Carrier* arrived Hamburg Jan 1 from Antwerp.

SHARK (Lebanon)

Beirut, Jan 3 — General cargo *Shark* is still lying sunk at Beirut. — Lloyd's Agents.

SOLIDOR 5 (France)

Nantes, Jan 3 — Repairs to passenger *Solidor 5* were completed at the end of last week. The vessel is expected to sail on Jan 6 for Italy. — Lloyd's Agents.

SPICA (Germany)

Helsinki, Dec 30 — C.c. *Spica* (7550 gt, built 1994) grounded off Oulu at 0030 today. The vessel refloated approximately three hours later and berthed at Oritkari main pier at 0515 hrs. There was no danger to the 11 crew members. A hole in the vessel was reported, but no oil leaked into the sea as the tank above the hole was empty. Divers will survey the vessel today. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Dec 30 — Following received from Turku MRCC, timed 1030, UTC: C.c. *Spica* grounded in lat 65 06.9N, long 25 05.4E, at 0058, local time, today. Vessel has been safely refloated and is currently in Oulu harbour.

London, Jan 5 — C.c. *Spica* sailed Oulu Dec 30 and arrived Fredericia Jan 3.

STAVTANK (NIS)

London, Jan 3 — Following received from Kiel, dated today: Chemical/oil carrier *Stavtank* (5378 gt, built 1995) and chem.tank *Tarnhav* (9980 gt, built 2002) collided in the Kiel Canal near Fischerhutte, during the night of Jan 2/3. *Stavtank*, which has a gash on its port side, is headed for Brunsbuttel, assisted by the tug *Bugsier 15*. *Tarnhav* proceeded to Kiel and is now at the North harbour. (Note — *Stavtank* departed from Rotterdam at 1250 hrs, Dec 30, bound for Aalborg and *Tarnhav* sailed from Antwerp at 2210 hrs, Jan 1, bound for Hamburg.)

London, Jan 3 — Following received from Kiel, dated today: Chem.tank *Tarnhav* was carrying no cargo at the time of collision and has now reached Kiel. The vessel is damaged in the bow region up to deck level. Oil has covered the bulbous bow. This could be hydraulic oil from *Stavtank*. Chemical/oil carrier *Stavtank* was loaded with 6,600 tons of light gas. Its tanks remained undamaged and no oil escaped. The superstructure of *Stavtank* is severely damaged on the port side. The ship seems to have caused the collision, as it came more-or-less rectangular before the bow of *Tarnhav*. There was dense fog at the time of the collision.

London, Jan 4 — Following received from Kiel, dated today: Chemical/oil carrier *Stavtank* berthed at the port of Brunsbuttel around midday yesterday. It is believed that the vessel had got into the "wrong lane" at Canal kilometre 47, close to Breiholz, and thus "got before" the bow of chem.tank *Tarnhav*, at 0115 hrs. *Tarnhav's* bow, being strengthened for ice, struck *Stavtank* in the region between the machine-room and aftmost tank. The hull was torn open above the water to a length of 3.5 metres and a height of two metres. A crane was damaged, the hydraulic oil of which was then visible on the bow of *Tarnhav*, as well as on a rescue boat and a ballast water tank. The bridge of *Stavtank* was also hit and damaged. Luckily, no-one on it was hurt. When the crew of *Tarnhav* inspected the foreship, they found broken glass from *Stavtank's* bridge windows there. After the collision *Stavtank* was pushed into the canal embankment where it remained stuck fast until 0630 hrs. The canal traffic had to be stopped for larger ships until tug *Bugsier 15* came from Brunsbuttel and towed the ship back into deeper water. Dozens of ships had to wait for their passage until *Stavtank* got underway to Brunsbuttel. It has yet to be decided whether the cargo of 6,600 tons of light gas oil will be unloaded in Brunsbuttel or whether the ship will be allowed to proceed to its original destination of Hamburg. At Hamburg, it was intended to hand the ship over to new Swedish owners and to rename it *Betty Theresa*, under the charter of Herning Tankers. *Tarnhav* left Kiel around midday yesterday and proceeded to Fredericia where repairs are to be carried out.

London, Jan 5 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: Damaged chemical/oil carrier *Stavtank* (now renamed Betty Theresa) reached Hamburg at 1500, Jan 4. The vessel had been allowed to proceed to Brunsbuttel first. Then the vessel had to be given an artificial list to get the gash in the hull higher above the water. Down by the bow almost to the anchors and with an allowed speed of six knots it proceeded to the Vopak Terminal to unload the cargo of almost 7000 tons of oil. It is not yet known which yard is to carry out the repairs.

STEEL TRADER (Panama)

London, Dec 30 — Understand salvage services were rendered to general cargo *Steel Trader*, in ballast, by Tsaviris Salvage (International) Ltd under Lloyd's Open Form dated Dec 12.

STEENBORG (Germany)

Bremen, Jan 4 — General cargo *Steenborg*, bound Bremen with a cargo of grain, had a black-out Dec 22. As a result of the power loss, the steering failed and the vessel grounded on Harriersand, an island

opposite Brake. The vessel grounded outside the traffic lanes and did not obstruct the passing traffic. The vessel refloated at high water, with tug assistance, and proceeded to Bremen without any further assistance. There were no injuries, and no damage was found to the vessel. — Lloyd's Agents.

STENA NAUTICA (Sweden)

Gothenburg, Dec 30 — Following is a short summary of the Swedish Accident Investigation Board report on the collision between passenger ro/ro *Stena Nautica* and general cargo *Joanna* outside Varberg in February 2004: The various points the commission pointed out to Stena Line was the fact that, among other things, ten watertight doors that should be closed at sea were in fact opened at the time of collision. According to the commission, it was known on board that engineers thought it was impractical for the daily work and routines to have those gates closed. The officers on board the *Stena Nautica* also received criticism for generally not steaming at substantial distances from other vessels and it was "accepted" that vessels normally within this route did pass each other at a very limited distance. Also, generally Stena Line did not have a sufficient safety strategy among the crew, resulting in, eg, the ten open security/watertight doors. Also, the Inspectors of the Board of Shipping and Navigation were criticised for the following: They had not checked the actual watertight doors sufficiently and thereby not made any remarks on the lack of functions with reference to the electrical system not properly working; they had not checked and made remarks in vessel's Security Manual Systems; they had not checked the crew's knowledge of handling of the actual watertight doors in distress situation. The commission stated that the *Stena Nautica* could not be considered as generally seaworthy when it departed Grenaa on the actual day of the casualty. Furthermore, the commission stated that the inspectors granted Stena Line an exemption for the normal handling of the actual doors and not keeping them closed as per stipulated rules. The criticism was also hard on the master of the *Joanna*, who was described as being liable to negligence in (sea) traffic. — Westax Marine Services AB.

SYDSTRAUM (NIS)

London, Dec 29 — Following received from Aarhus RCC, timed 1345, UTC: Chem.tank *Sydstraum* arrived Marstal Bay early this morning and is currently in the process of transshipping 2,000 tonnes of its cargo of alcohol to another vessel. This operation is expected to take between 10 and 20 hours, after which a decision will be made whether to remove the oil on board the vessel

while it remains in Marstal Bay or to have the vessel sail to another port to carry out this operation.

London, Dec 30 — Following received from Aarhus MRCC, timed 1010, UTC: Chem.tank *Sydstraum* left Marstal Bay about one hour ago in tow of tug *Asterix*, bound Gdansk for repairs, ETA in around 48 hours.

London, Jan 5 — Chem.tank *Sydstraum* arrived Gdansk Jan 1 from Gdynia.

TAISEI MARU (Japan)

See *Kannon Maru No.8*.

TAMBORA (Philippines)

Manila, Dec 30 — The owners of non specific tanker *Tambora* claimed in their Marine Protest filed before the Philippine Coast Guard that the vessel had left its berth at the Baseco pier at the Port of Manila on Dec 22 without any authorisation. Manila-based White Gold Marine Services also said in its report to the Coast Guard that the tanker was not carrying any cargo when it left port. On Dec 23 the vessel was sighted by a Coast Guard helicopter abandoned by its six-man crew and drifting off the coast of Limay, Bataan. There were also signs of an on-board fire. When tugs sent to retrieve the vessel arrived at the site of its last sighting, the *Tambora* was nowhere to be found, raising fears that it had sunk. The Coast Guard said that a Board of Marine Inquiry had been convened to determine the reason behind the disappearance of the vessel. Subpoenas have also been issued to the owners of the vessel to testify before the Board. The Board is scheduled to meet on Jan 7 at the Philippine Coast Guard National Capital Region office in Manila. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

TARNHAV (Sweden)

See *Stavtank*.

TRANSMODAL (Argentina)

Buenos Aires, Dec 29 — Understand ro/ro *Transmodal* has not sailed yet. — Lloyd's Agents.

UNITED STAR (Bahamas)

See *Sea Hauler*.

UNO (DIS)

See *Fri River*.

VIBORG (Singapore)

Durban, Jan 5 — We have been advised that repairs to the affected section of bulk/c.c. *Viborg* were completed on Dec 29. In order to effect repairs the affected section of plate was cut out and a new section welded in place. The repair that was carried out is a permanent repair and was overseen by a Germanischer Lloyd surveyor. Following completion of the repairs the vessel sailed from Port Elizabeth on the morning of Dec 30. — Lloyd's Agents.



Seizures & Arrests

ALCOR (Comoros)

Limassol, Jan 2 — General cargo *Alcor* is still at Limassol under arrest with prospects for its release not known yet. — Lloyd's Agents.

ANNA (Germany)

London, Jan 5 — Italian authorities have released part c.c. *Anna* (3618 gt, built 2005), after 12 Kurdish stowaways were returned to Turkey by the shipping company Nimmrich & Prahm. The company chartered a German private aircraft, which returned the group from Venice airport to Istanbul, a spokeswoman said. The *Anna* was detained on Dec 31, in the port of Venice, following the discovery of the illegal immigrants, presumably from Turkey, in an unloaded container. The stowaways were taken back on board until a solution was found. An immediate return of the stowaways from Venice to Turkey was prevented by Italian authorities, as there are no direct flights to that country. The authorities had refused transport to Milan, due to a lack of personnel. Before calling in Venice the vessel had loaded cargo in the Turkish port of Mersin and Lattakia in Syria. (Note — *Anna* arrived Venice on Dec 31 and sailed on Jan 3, for Alexandria, Egypt.)

ANNA (Lebanon)

Beirut, Jan 3 — General cargo *Anna* (1084 gt, built 1966) is currently reported, under seizure, at Tripoli, Lebanon. — Lloyd's Agents. (Note — *Anna* arrived at Tripoli, Lebanon, on Jul 9.)

BANG ZHOU (Cambodia)

London, Dec 30 — General cargo *Bang Zhou* (4792 gt, built 1975), XUKN8, which arrived Hong Kong at 2250 hrs, Dec 29, is today reported at South West Lamma Anchorage, Hong Kong, under arrest.

London, Jan 4 — General cargo *Bang Zhou* sailed from Hong Kong at 2326 hrs, Dec 30, bound for Noro.

BIGA (Canary Islands)

Bilbao, Jan 2 — General cargo *Biga* is still under embargo at Bilbao. — Lloyd's Agents.

BOREAS (Cyprus)

Bilbao, Jan 2 — General cargo *Boreas* is still under embargo at the port of Bilbao. — Lloyd's Agents.

CHEMSEA (Greece)

London, Jan 4 — Chemical/oil carrier *Chemsea* sailed Eleusis Dec 3 for Aliaga.

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

EVER GENTLE (Taiwan)

London, Jan 3 — C.c. *Ever Gentle*, which was arrested at Jawaharlal Nehru Dec 15, subsequently sailed Dec 16, passed Port Said Dec 25 and arrived Barcelona Dec 30.

INDONESIAN FISHING VESSEL SEIZED BY AUSTRALIA

London, Dec 30 — A press report, dated today, states: The crew of an illegal Indonesian fishing vessel is being questioned in Broome after being apprehended in Western Australia's northern waters. The vessel, carrying 19 crew members, was spotted by a Customs Coastwatch surveillance aircraft at Bedford Island, north of Broome, Dec 26. It is believed the crew was intending to collect trochus shell. Customs district manager Peter Constantino said the Navy vessel *HMAS Fremantle* intercepted the vessel and transported the crew. The vessel was deemed unseaworthy and destroyed at sea. The crew arrived at Broome, 2,219 km north of Perth, at 0700 yesterday. All were medically examined and given a clean bill of health, Mr Constantino said. "They are currently being interviewed by fisheries and customs officers and once fisheries decide who they want to prosecute the remainder will be moved to a detention facility either probably in Darwin or Adelaide," he said. Mr Constantino said he believed four or five trochus boats had been apprehended in the past few months. More than 200 Indonesian fishing boats have been apprehended this year in Australia's northern waters fishing for shark fin, trochus shell and reef fish.

LAMA (Belize)

Beirut, Jan 3 — General cargo *Lama* is still lying sunk and under arrest at Beirut. — Lloyd's Agents.

LUBAVA (Belize)

Gothenburg, Jan 3 — General cargo *Lubava* (3120 gt, built 1984) arrived Uddevalla on Dec 24 and has been placed under embargo by the Labour Union. The cause of the embargo is that wages on the vessel are too low and no pay cheques have been issued since November, according to Goran Larsson of the Transport Union. The nine-man crew signed on in Panama before the trip to Europe. The crew claim that the previous crew also did not receive their full wages. The vessel was due to discharge coal/coke at Uddevalla and to load grain, but the loading was interrupted when the Union representative arrived on board, requesting that the owners sign the ILO standard contract. No loading will commence before an agreement is signed, the union says. — Westax Marine Services AB.

MAZNAH (Indonesia)

London, Jan 3 — Following received from Hong Kong MRCC, timed 0040, UTC: Contact with general cargo *Maznah* (10751 gt, built 1977) was last made, by owners, at 0200, UTC,

Dec 26, when vessel was in lat 15 30N, long 115 38E. Later attempts to contact vessel unsuccessful. (Note: *Maznah* at Tawau, reported arrested by High Court order July 5, at request of bunker supplier. Crew abandoned vessel at Tawau, without fresh water and food, and still under arrest off Tawau as of Oct 6. Crew unpaid for four months.)

London, Jan 5 — Following received from Hong Kong MRCC, timed 0010, UTC: Still no contact with general cargo *Maznah*.

OTAPAN (Mexico)

Amsterdam, Jan 2 — Tank barge *Otapan* is currently at Amsterdam Shipdock for demolition. — KVSA Rapportage. (Note — *Otapan* has been seized in Amsterdam since July 2001 due asbestos contamination of its deck.)

PAN YUN BO 1 (China)

London, Dec 30 — General cargo *Pan Yun Bo 1* is still reported at Western Anchorage No.1, Hong Kong, under detention.

QUEEN CONSTANTINA (Cyprus)

Limassol, Jan 2 — Passenger *Queen Constantina* is still laid up at Limassol. — Lloyd's Agents.

SANDRIEN (Bolivia)

Amsterdam, Jan 2 — Chem.tank *Sandrien* is still at Amsterdam Shipdock, under embargo. — KVSA Rapportage.

SEA EMPEROR (Georgia)

Mumbai, Jan 3 — The Ernakulam First Class Magistrate court has directed the owner of bulk *Sea Emperor* to appear in the court on Jan 6, in connection with the arrears of pay due to the crew. The vessel, loaded with 5,000 tonnes of sulphur, had arrived at Cochin Port in December, 2005. It had a 22 member crew, 21 Yugoslavs and one Ukrainian. The vessel was owned by W. W. Ship management Ltd, Limassol, Cyprus. The vessel had been detained at the port on the orders of the Mumbai High Court, on a petition filed by Cyprus-based Island Oil Ltd company, complaining that \$1,20,087 was due to the company, for supplying oil to the vessel. Meanwhile, the Cochin ITF (International Transport Workers Federation) Inspectorate had also intervened in the matter, knowing that the crew were not paid the wages. The ITF Inspector at Cochin, Mr. Thomas Sebastian, said that he had contacted the company and asked them to sign an ITF approved agreement, in respect of the crew of the vessel. The Special Seafarers Department, at ITF London, also interacted the company to sign the ITF agreement. As the company had decided to sell the vessel in Kochi, the crew, at the instance of ITF Cochin Inspectorate and Cochin Port Staff Association, filed claim petition in the Magistrate Court for the back wages for \$2,05,453. The Magistrate ordered distress warrant to the vessel

till Jan 7 and sent notice to the owner to appear in the court. — Lloyd's Agents.

Pipeline Accidents**DELTA STATE, NIGERIA**

Warri, Nigeria, Dec 28 — Fires that broke out yesterday along a pipeline in the southern Nigerian state of Delta have been put out, an oil official said today, but there was no word on what caused the blazes. The fires were on the pipeline, which carries petroleum products from a refinery in Warri to northern Nigeria. A senior government oil official in Warri, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the fires were now out but gave no further details. He said he had been instructed not to talk to media about the fires. Several senior officials at the state oil firm, which operates the pipeline, said they did not have any information while others were not taking calls. Police and army spokesmen in Delta and in the capital Abuja also declined to comment. An official from the Pipelines and Products Marketing Company (PPMC), an arm of the state oil company, had said yesterday fires had broken out in several locations along the PPMC pipeline in Adeje community, about 12 km from Warri. There has been no word on casualties, if any. The pipeline is a frequent target for thieves who tap into it to siphon off fuel. The practice, known as bunkering, often causes fires and slicks, but it is unusual for several fires to break out at once. — Reuters.

Weather & Navigation**CHINA**

London, Jan 5 — A press report, dated today, states: Violent blizzards have forced the evacuation of 97,000 people in a largely Muslim region of western China, as the nation braces for its worst winter in 20 years. Sixty centimetres of snow covered large parts of Xinjiang, a vast desert territory near China's border with Central Asia, said Wang Zhenyao, a disaster relief official with the civil affairs ministry. "The most urgent issue right now is to ensure traffic and transportation," Wang told a briefing in Beijing. An official with the Xinjiang Civil Affairs Bureau, surnamed Zhang, said the nearly 100,000 evacuees had been moved mostly because their homes had collapsed under the heavy blanket of snow. He warned that the crisis was far from over, saying: "It's still snowing." Reports on the state-run

Xinjiang News website said the blizzards had affected mainly the Altay area in the north of Xinjiang. Winds blowing in from Siberia had caused the temperature to drop precipitously to minus 36 degrees Celsius in some spots, the website said. While no people were reported dead or injured in Xinjiang as of this afternoon, mass starvation among the region's livestock was a possibility. The Xinjiang news website said 300,000 head of cattle and sheep were unable to graze because of the thick snow cover. The snowstorms in Xinjiang were just the most dramatic result of a cold front descending over China this week. Most provinces in the north of China were affected, and heavy fog caused a series of cancellations and delays at major airports, including in Beijing.

EUROPE

London, Dec 30 — A press report, dated today, states: Europe was braced on today for more freezing temperatures after blizzards swept through northern and central European countries, causing flight cancellations, power cuts and even some deaths. Much of the continent was battened down against the harsh weather, the coldest December in a decade in Britain, where temperatures plunged to minus 11 Celsius (12 Fahrenheit) in Scotland and north-eastern England. France reported a second death yesterday from freezing temperatures after snowstorms left thousands of people trapped in their cars in sub-freezing temperatures this week. Road conditions remained icy and dangerous in many areas, but the only serious disruptions were in western Brittany and around Calais in the north. Prague's Ruzyně airport was closed down temporarily due to heavy snowfall, forcing carriers to cancel around 50 flights, both incoming and outgoing. The airport reopened by mid-day yesterday, though officials continue to deal with high winds whipping snow onto the runways. In Belgium, severe disruptions were reported at southern Charleroi airport where several flights had to be cancelled due to the dangerous weather. Florence airport in northern Italy was also temporarily closed because of snow. Across Scandinavia, snowstorms cut power lines and disrupted rail and road traffic, with the situation expected to worsen in some places. In southern Sweden, some 3,750 people were left without power in sub-zero temperatures by snowstorms packing high winds, the TT news agency reported. Power was expected to be restored by late yesterday. In the southern Scania region, dozens of local and regional train services were cancelled after the tracks were snowed under, with fallen trees and ripped cables on several sections of the network. Road traffic was badly disrupted across Poland, especially in the northern Gdansk region, as well as in Hungary.

London, Jan 4 — Following received from LaSalle, dated today: A press report, dated today, states: The rescue action in the Lidl supermarket, whose roof collapsed under the weight of heavy snow yesterday evening, ended at 0030 today and the search using trained dogs proved that nobody was buried under the ruins, firefighter spokesman Petr Kudela said. A 20-year-old woman working in the supermarket of the Lidl retail chain was treated with a minor shoulder injury. No other injured people have been identified. The accident occurred in the Futurum shopping area in Moravska Ostrava (Czech Republic) at 1930 hrs. When the roof collapsed, no shoppers were in the supermarket. According to an expert, the roof is so damaged that the whole building will have to be pulled down. Zdenek Nytra, head of the South Moravian firefighters, told public Czech Television (CT) it is highly probable that the heavy mass of the snow caused the accident, yet that it is possible that it could happen also due to its bad construction. Heavy snow also caused the collapse of a large part of the roof of a small factory in Hostalkova, north Moravia, yesterday. A 15 metres to 25 metres roof block collapsed, but nobody was injured. A similar, but more serious accident occurred in the neighbouring Germany where snow broke the roof of a winter arena on Monday, killing up to 15 people.

INDONESIA

London, Jan 2 — A press report, dated today, states: Flash floods have killed at least 26 people and swept away hundreds of houses in Indonesia's East Java province overnight, police said today. "The number of deaths so far stands at 26. Families have reported missing members. We suspect there will be many more victims," local police commissioner Teduh Tedjo said. More than 100 houses in the Kemiri village in Jember district were swept away while houses belonging to plantation workers nearby were also submerged, he said. Heavy rains have inundated the area since Saturday (Dec 31), he said. The state-run Antara news agency said hundreds of houses in four villages in Jember district had been swept away by the floods after the swollen Kaliputih river burst its banks.

London, Jan 3 — A press report, dated today, states: The death toll from floods and landslides that have devastated half a dozen villages in Indonesia's East Java province has risen to 51. Most of those killed were living on hillside coffee plantations and riverbanks. Rescue workers are struggling to reach some villages that are still cut off.

Kemiri, Indonesia, Jan 3 — Hundreds of rescue workers and soldiers struggled today to reach villages devastated by floods and landslides in Indonesia's East Java as the known death toll climbed to 63. Eddy Susilo, head of the Information

Ministry branch in the town of Jember, not far from the scene, said the bodies of 61 villagers had been found. Two rescue workers had also drowned in swollen rivers today, he added. Heavy rains late on Sunday (Jan 1) triggered the floods and landslides at six hillside villages near Jember, around 800 km east of Jakarta. Most of the villagers lived on coffee plantations and river banks where many trees had been felled, stripping the area of natural protection from such a disaster. A few villages were still cut off because of collapsed bridges and landslides blocking access, said Muhammad Suryadi of the state disaster management agency. "Thousands have sought refuge and more than 300 can't get out," Suryadi said. As well as the fast-flowing rivers, sporadic rains was slowing evacuation efforts, rescue officials said. In Kemiri, around 100 soldiers used fallen trees to build emergency bridges to try to cross raging waterways and reach those in need. Mud was waist deep in some parts of Kemiri, where an avalanche of mud had flattened most houses along the river bank. Flooding and landslides are common in tropical Indonesia. Many mudslides are caused by illegal logging or clearing farmland that removes natural protection. — Reuters.

London, Jan 4 — A press report, dated today, states: More than 200 people were listed missing and are feared dead, in a landslide that buried more than 100 houses in Indonesia's crowded Central Java province early today, only days after a similar disaster in adjacent East Java province, which killed at least 58, officials said. "We have just got fresh reports from the scene that around 200 people were listed as missing and buried under tons of mud. Two bodies and two survivors were rescued so far," Yulaika, a spokesperson of the Banjarnegara district office said. The landslide, triggered by several hours of torrential rain, buried at least 104 houses in Cijeruk village of Central Java's Banjarnegara district, about 360 kilometres south-east of Jakarta, around 0500, local time, (2200, UTC, Jan 3.) Yulaika said 44 residents escaped from the landslide and they were temporarily sheltered at other houses in a nearby village unaffected by the disaster. Rescue workers, comprising of military and police officers as well as volunteers, were digging out for possible survivors or bodies buried under tons of mud. Heavy equipment was sent to the scene to help the rescue workers. A resident said that the landslide had flattened more than 100 homes and 10 survivors were brought to a nearby hospital with injuries. Meanwhile, the death toll rose to 58 from the flash floods and landslides that inundated East Java over the weekend after rescue workers discovered one more body, an official said. Triggered by heavy rains, rivers passing four subdistricts of East Java's Jember regency overflowed, flooding

thousands of homes and forcing residents to seek shelter at mosques and government buildings, according to Jember district spokesman. The torrential rains also triggered landslides, burying a number of houses. By this morning, up to 58 people have died from the floods and landslides. Many others were injured. Fifty-two of the dead were residents of Panti subdistrict, the hardest-hit area, while the other six from three other subdistricts. Local social workers said emergency supplies and paramedics have been sent to the homeless residents, in an attempt to prevent the outbreak of disease among refugees. Environmentalists have blamed deforestation from illegal logging as the cause of the East Java flash flooding and landslides, claiming that the floods occurred after water catchment areas above the villages were destroyed by deforestation.

ITALY

Genoa, Jan 6 — Removal of fuel from general cargo *Margaret* tank is being carried out. — Lloyd's Agents.

KENYA

Nairobi, Jan 2 — Kenya's president, Mwai Kibaki, has declared a state of national disaster in areas of the country hit by severe shortages of food and water following a prolonged drought, and appealed for donations to alleviate the plight of those affected. "In the next six months, up to 2.5 million of our people will be in need of famine relief," he said in his New Year speech to the nation early yesterday. The region most affected by the drought is Northeastern Province where, according to news reports, at least 20 people died of malnutrition related illnesses in Mandera and Wajir districts. The situation is also critical in Marsabit District in the north. A significant proportion of farming households in the southeast and coastal lowlands are also under severe food stress, particularly in the Makueni, Kitui, Malindi, Kwale, Kilifi and Taita Taveta districts where long rains failed for the second consecutive year and the short rains were poor. Kibaki said the initial cost estimate for the provision of food was 11 billion Kenyan shillings (US \$153 million). However, he said, additional aid will be required to meet other needs arising from the drought. Some of these needs include the provision of water for people and animals, education, healthcare, restocking of livestock, and distribution of seeds to farmers in preparation for the next crop season. The government has stepped up food aid deliveries to the worst affected districts in Northeastern Province, with the army transporting grain and water to some areas. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies said in a statement it had allocated \$326,073 from its disaster relief emergency fund to begin meeting immediate needs of those affected and to start detailed assessment activities. — Reuters.

MALAWI

London, Jan 5 — A press report, dated today, states: Floods in the southern African country of Malawi have forced tens of thousands of people to leave their homes. More than 40,000 people have had to evacuate to escape flash flooding in southern Malawi where food shortages are already affecting millions. At least one man was killed when his car was washed away by the water, and housing, livestock and crops have also been swept away. Communication has been cut to many small villages so the total number affected is unclear. More heavy rain is expected across the region, including in Mozambique, where floods have killed at least 13 people in the last few days.

MOZAMBIQUE

London, Dec 30 — A press report, dated Dec 29, states: Heavy rains in Mozambique have killed at least three people and left thousands homeless since Sunday (Dec 25), the Lusa news agency reported today, citing officials in the south-eastern African country. The deaths occurred in the city of Nampula, the capital of the northern province with the same name, city officials told the agency. The rough weather damaged about 1,200 homes in Nampula, destroyed more than 100 homes in the capital of southern Gaza province, Xai-Xai, and left hundreds homeless in Beira, Mozambique's second largest city, the agency said. The torrential rains follow a severe drought which has left about one million people in the former Portuguese colony facing hunger.

Maputo, Jan 3 — At least eight people died after heavy rain swept Mozambique and left about 1,700 families homeless, destroying roads and other infrastructure, a disaster management official said today. Radio Mozambique said 13 people had died in rainstorms over the last week in the central and northern regions of the country but disaster authorities contacted by Reuters could only confirm eight deaths. Officials were watching water levels in Mozambique's major rivers after the Pungue river rose to 6.27 metres, just below the seven-metre flood alarm level, Mozambique Disaster Management spokesman Rogerio Manguela said. "The situation due to continued rains is worrisome. Our access links and the houses used by most of the population cannot resist the bad weather," he said. Mozambique weather services predicted rain would continue to fall over the next four days, although with decreasing strength. Meteorologists have forecast normal to above-normal levels of rainfall in central and northern Mozambique through to the end of the rainy season in March, while the southern part of the country was expected to see normal to below-normal rain. — Reuters.

PAKISTAN

Karachi, Jan 4 — Pakistan Railways said that Railway traffic in the whole country partially came to a halt last night after visibility became too low around midnight. As a result Karachi bound trains, including Qaraqaram Express, Tezgam Express, Allama Iqbal Express, Bahaddin Zikarya Express, Shah Farid Express, and Karachi Express, were from three to nine hours late. A night coach scheduled to arrive this morning would now arrive this evening. A similar situation was reported from Superhighway, National Highway and Motorway, where traffic was closed after midnight. Highway police and motorway police were waiting for visibility to improve. Similarly, flight operations were disturbed at the Lahore and Islamabad airports were closed at midnight due to heavy fog. Karachi airport also remained closed for two hours while railway traffic remained suspended for eight hours, officials of airlines and civil aviation said. They said the Lahore airport was closed at 0100 after visibility was reduced to only 150 metres, and at 0800 this morning there was only 200 metres visibility which does not allow landing and take-off. All flights arriving in the small hours of this morning and this morning at Lahore, Karachi, Islamabad, Multan Sargodha and Faisalabad airports were delayed. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

ST. LAWRENCE SEAWAY

Troy, Mich, Jan 4 — The St. Lawrence Seaway officially closed for the season on Dec 29, with the passage of chemical/oil carrier *Maria Desgagnes*, through the St. Lambert Lock at 1740 hrs. The Welland Canal section closed at 2311, Dec 30, with the transit of bulk *Mississagi*. The Seaway is now closed for the winter to accommodate annual maintenance on its 13 Canadian locks and connecting channels. This year's winter works program encompasses some \$23 million in expenditures, divided between the Montreal / Lake Ontario section (\$7 million) and the Welland Canal section (\$16 million). Projects include upgrades to various locks and bridges, including the conversion of lock gates, valves and ship arrestors to hydraulic operation for Welland Canal Locks 4, 5 and 6. The Seaway is expected to re-open in late March. — Great Lakes and Seaway Shipping News.

TROPICAL STORM "KAJIKI"

Manila, Dec 30 — State-owned National Power Corporation (Napocor) will bear all the costs incurred for the oil spill clean-up resulting from the grounding of its barge *Napocor Power Barge No.106* and tug *Napocor Tugboat No.1*. "As the spiller, Napocor will shoulder all the costs of clean-up operations," Philippine Coast Guard commandant Vice-Admiral Arthur Cosingan said. The costs will be over and above the penalties the Coast Guard may impose on Napocor for damaging the marine environment

around Semirara island where the two vessels ran aground. About 45,000 litres of heavy fuel oil had leaked from two oil storage tanks of *Napocor Power Barge No.106* which had been breached as a result of the accident. Coast Guard and Napocor personnel had so far cleaned an estimated 600 metres of Semirara Island coastline. Efforts are now focused on 56 hectares of mangrove plantation severely damaged by the oil spill. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Manila, Jan 2 — Barge *Napocor Power Barge No.106* reached the Keppel Philippines Marine shipyard in Batangas today. The barge will undergo repairs to its damaged underwater hull at the shipyard. The barge was refloated on Dec 28 and towed by tugs from Malayan Towage and Salvage Co. to a sheltered cove in Bulalacao, Mindoro, west of Semirara island. After undergoing a temporary patch-up job to seal fractures in its hull, the tug was towed by Malayan Towage tugs to Batangas for permanent repairs. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

TROPICAL STORM "ZETA"

London, Dec 31 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: Tropical storm "Zeta" located near lat 26.0N, long 37.7W, at 0900, UTC, Dec 31. Position accurate to within 25 nautical miles. Present movement towards the north-west, or 320 deg, at four knots. Maximum sustained winds 50 knots with gusts to 60 knots. Forecast for 0600, UTC, Jan 1: Position lat 26.5N, long 39.4W. Maximum sustained winds 45 knots with gusts to 55 knots.

London, Jan 1 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: Tropical storm "Zeta" located near lat 25.7N, long 38.5W, at 0900, UTC, Jan 1. Position accurate to within 20 nautical miles. Present movement towards the west, or 270 deg, at two knots. Maximum sustained winds 45 knots with gusts to 55 knots. Forecast for 0600, UTC, Jan 2: Position lat 25.5N, long 40.2W. Maximum sustained winds 35 knots with gusts to 45 knots.

London, Jan 2 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: Tropical storm "Zeta" located near lat 24.5N, long 39.7W at 0900, UTC, today. Position accurate within 20 nautical miles. Present movement toward the west or 265 degrees at six knots. Maximum sustained winds 45 knots with gusts to 55 knots. Forecast position lat 24.4N, long 40.5W at 1800, UTC, today. Maximum winds 35 knots, gusts 45 knots. Forecast position lat 24.3N, long 41.5W at 0600, UTC, Jan 3. Maximum winds 30 knots, gusts 40 knots.

London, Jan 3 — A press report, dated today, states: Tropical Storm "Zeta" slightly gained strength early today as it moved westward over the central Atlantic, but it posed no threat to land, forecasters said. The 27th named storm of a record-breaking hurricane season, had top sustained winds near 65 mph, up from

50 mph, according to the National Hurricane Centre in Miami. At 0400 hrs, the storm was centered about 1,450 miles east-northeast of the northern Leeward Islands and moving west southwest near 2 mph.

London, Jan 3 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0900, UTC, today, the centre of tropical storm "Zeta" was located near lat 23.3N, long 41.3W. The position is accurate to within 20 nautical miles. The present movement is toward the west-south-west, or 245 degs, at two knots. The estimated minimum central pressure is 995 mb. The maximum sustained winds: 55 knots with gusts to 65 knots. The radius of 50 knot winds: 60 nautical miles in the north-east and north-west quadrants and zero nautical miles in the south-east and south-west quadrants. The radius of 34 knot winds: 100 nautical miles in the north-east and north-west quadrants, 75 nautical miles in the south-east quadrant and 50 nautical miles in the south-west quadrant. At 0600, UTC, Jan 4, the centre is predicted to be near lat 23.3N, long 42.9W, with maximum winds of 55 knots and gusts to 65 knots.

London, Jan 4 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0900, UTC, today, the centre of tropical storm "Zeta" was located near lat 22.1N, long 43.1W. The position is accurate to within 25 nautical miles. The present movement is toward the south-west, or 220 degs, at six knots. The estimated minimum central pressure is 994 mb. The maximum sustained winds: 55 knots with gusts to 65 knots. The radius of 50 knot winds: 60 nautical miles in the north-east and north-west quadrants and zero nautical miles in the south-east and south-west quadrants. The radius of 34 knot winds: 100 nautical miles in the north-east and north-west quadrants, 75 nautical miles in the south-east quadrant and 50 nautical miles in the south-west quadrant. At 0600, UTC, Jan 5, the centre is predicted to be near lat 22.4N, long 45.2W, with maximum winds of 55 knots and gusts to 65 knots.

London, Jan 5 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0900, UTC, today, the centre of tropical depression "Zeta" was located near lat 22.0N, long 47.0W. The position is accurate to within 20 nautical miles. The present movement is toward the west, or 280 degs, at ten knots. The estimated minimum central pressure is 1005 mb. The maximum sustained winds: 30 knots with gusts to 40 knots. At 0600, UTC, Jan 6, the centre is predicted to be near lat 24.3N, long 49.3W, dissipating, with maximum winds of 25 knots and gusts to 30 knots.

TURKEY

London, Jan 4 — Northbound tanker traffic in the Istanbul Strait was cancelled at 0700, local time, this morning due to dense fog.

UNITED STATES

London, Jan 1 — A press report, dated today, states: A powerful storm yesterday set off mudslides that blocked highways and sent rivers and creeks over their banks and into cities across northern California. At least half a dozen persons had to be rescued from the rushing water and forecasters were warning of another storm today. California officials urged residents along the Napa and Russian Rivers and on hillsides to collect their valuables, gather emergency supplies and get out. In the city of Napa, near the heart of wine country, the river was already five feet over flood stage. Further inland, Reno, Nev, was seeing its worst flooding since a 1997 flood that caused \$1 billion in damage. Firefighters in the Sonoma area rescued two persons from a mobile-home park, where four feet of rushing water washed at least one home off its foundation, and they were searching for a third person, said Division Chief Bob Norrbom with the Sonoma Valley Fire Authority. Cars floated through the park, pushed by the water. Elsewhere, television footage showed a stranded driver being plucked from the back of a pick-up truck by a rescue helicopter and another person being pulled to safety through the water. In downtown San Anselmo, the creek overflowed into as many as 70 businesses, town administrator Debbie Stutsman said. Two persons rescued from the rising water there were hospitalised with hypothermia, she said. In St. Helena, the Napa River was at record levels, seven feet over flood stage. The last record flood there destroyed dozens of homes and businesses. Mudslides closed several major roads, including Interstate 80 in the Sierra Nevada about 25 miles west of Reno. Six tractor-trailer rigs were caught up in one slide on the interstate early yesterday but no injuries were reported. Interstate 80, the major corridor that links Northern California and points east, was expected to remain closed for at least two days, said California Department of Transportation spokesman Mark Dinger. "No work can be done until the slide stabilises, and we don't know when that will occur," Mr. Dinger said. The Russian River at the Sonoma County town of Guerneville could rise as high as 11 feet above flood stage if the storm hits today as expected, officials said. Together, the two weekend storms could add as much as six inches of rain to the already waterlogged region, said Rick Canepa, a weather service meteorologist in Monterey.

London, Jan 3 — A press report, dated today, states: Homeowners shoveled away mud and other debris and authorities worked to repair damaged levees yesterday after a pair of storms that flooded Northern California's wine country moved south. The rain let up over the hard-hit region and moved into Central and Southern California, drenching the Rose Parade for the first time since 1955 and threatening mudslides on

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hills stripped bare by last summer's wildfires.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger toured parts of Napa yesterday and declared a state of emergency in seven counties. He pledged to work with state and federal officials to get disaster relief money and to fortify the areas for the next deluge. Initial estimates put the damage throughout Northern California at more than \$100 million. The storms were blamed for at least three deaths, all caused by falling trees. The Russian River at Guerneville was receding yesterday after remaining for hours at 41 feet, 9 feet above flood stage, but officials said it probably wouldn't fall below flood stage until this morning. Hundreds of homes were flooded in the scenic community, but most of the downtown was spared, Sonoma County spokesman Dan Levin said. The Marin County town of San Anselmo, north of San Francisco, sustained an estimated \$40 million in damage when a creek inundated downtown under 4 feet of water and coated streets in mud. About 70 businesses and 100 homes were damaged. About two miles west in Fairfax, mudslides nearly wiped out three homes. Water also receded below flood stage in the heart of wine country along the Napa River, which rose out of its banks at the town of Napa and inundated several downtown blocks. Napa officials said about 1,200 homes and 250 businesses were flooded, and damage was estimated at nearly \$75 million. There were no immediate reports of serious damage to wineries. Grapevines are largely dormant this time of year. The weather threatened several levees across the state, including at least two in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, where a levee was weakened near Collinsville, forcing about 40 people from their homes. Many residents began returning late yesterday, according to Paula Toynbee, a sheriff's spokeswoman. The storm was drenching the central coast on its way south yesterday, causing flooding and mudslides throughout Santa Cruz County. Heavy snow fell across the Sierra Nevada yesterday, where several avalanches shut down Highway 395, a main north-south route, officials said. About 89,000 Pacific Gas and Electric Co. customers from Bakersfield to the Oregon border remained without power yesterday. Officials said crews had restored power to more than 1.25 million customers since Friday (Dec 30).

London, Jan 4 — A press report, dated Jan 3, states: Most rivers and streams throughout California had receded back below flood stage today following a pair of severe storms, allowing residents and officials to clean up and assess the damage. While Northern California recovered from the severe weather, heavy rain followed by snow had turned to ice on highways across northern Nevada, creating hazardous driving conditions and dozens of accidents this morning.

However, no major accidents or injuries were reported. The weekend storms saw up to eight inches of rain fall in places, swelling streams and washing mud down hills and onto homes and highways. Levees were breached or weakened, forcing evacuations of dozens of residents. At least three deaths were blamed on the storm - all from falling trees. Yesterday, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger declared a state of emergency in Del Norte, Humboldt, Mendocino, Napa, Sacramento, Sonoma and Trinity counties. Initial estimates put the damage in two towns alone at more than \$100 million. In Napa, where the river had inundated several downtown blocks, a layer of mud and debris still coated city streets, but most flooded roads had been reopened. Initial damage estimates there approached \$75 million, with about 1,200 homes, 250 businesses and 150 vehicles damaged, Napa spokesman Peter Dreier said yesterday. The storm also flooded thousands of acres of wine country land, but vintners escaped serious damage because grapevines are largely dormant this time of year. The Marin County town of San Anselmo, north of San Francisco, suffered some \$40 million in damage when a creek flooded the downtown with four feet of water, coating city streets with mud. The Russian River at Guerneville crested early Sunday (Jan 1) at 42 feet - 10 feet above flood stage - submerging farms and trailer parks. Hundreds of homes were flooded, and the California Army National Guard used all-terrain vehicles to pick up people stranded by high water. Farther inland, about 40 residents of the rural Solano County town of Collinsville began returning home yesterday after a weakened levee the day before threatened their homes and forced evacuations, said sheriff's spokeswoman Paula Toynbee. In Novato, authorities said crews completed repairs on a 100-foot section of a levee that was breached Saturday (Dec 31) near Highway 101.

Earthquakes



FIJI AREA, SOUTH PACIFIC

London, Jan 3 — A huge 7.1 magnitude earthquake has hit deep under the South Pacific near Fiji, the US Geological Survey reported. There were no immediate reports of injuries or damage and the Hawaii-based Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre said it did not expect the quake, which happened 360 miles below the Earth's surface, to trigger a damaging Pacific-wide tsunami. The tremor hit about 62 miles north-north-east of the remote Fijian island of Ndoi, the USGS said. Lasarus Vautibau, a seismologist at Fiji's Mines and

Resources Department, said the quake was too deep to have been felt anywhere in the Fiji islands.

INDONESIA

London, Jan 2 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: An earthquake measuring 5.8 on the Richter scale rattled Indonesia's tsunami-ravaged province of Aceh today, causing panic but there were no reports of casualties, an official said. The offshore quake occurred at 0847, GMT, with the epicentre 91 kilometres south-west of the provincial capital Banda Aceh, said Syahnan, chief meteorologist in Aceh. The quake was felt strongly at Calang in West Aceh but there were no reports of casualties or damage.

MEXICO

London, Jan 4 — A strong earthquake struck early today off the Baja California peninsula in the Sea of Cortes, also known as the Gulf of California. The US Geological Survey said the 6.7-magnitude quake occurred at 0232, local time and was centred 56 miles north-east of Santa Rosalia, Baja California. The quake occurred at an estimated depth of 6 miles. The area is sparsely populated, and there were no immediate reports of damages or injuries.

PANAMA

London, Dec 31 — An earthquake measuring 6.2 on the Richter scale shook Panama yesterday but there were no injuries or damage reported, Panamanian authorities said. The quake hit at 1826, GMT, with its epicentre located just off the coast of western Panama in the Pacific Ocean, according to the National System of Civil Protection. The earthquake struck in a zone known as the "Panama fracture" near the town of David, the capital of Chiriqui province, near the border with Costa Rica, the agency said. The US Geological Survey also confirmed the quake, saying it had a magnitude of 6.0 with its epicentre 335 kilometres west-southwest of Panama City. The center of the quake was about 20 kilometres below the earth's surface, the USGS said.

SOUTH ATLANTIC

London, Jan 2 — An earthquake measuring 7.4 on the Richter scale shook the South Atlantic today and may have caused a tsunami, Finland's Institute of Seismology said. "The quake may have caused a tsunami," it said in a statement, adding the earthquake took place at 0610, GMT. However, the United States Geological Survey (USGS) said the quake was "in a remote area and no damage or casualties are expected". It described it as a "major quake" which occurred at a depth of 10km. The USGS gave the magnitude as 7.3 and the location as being east of the South Sandwich Islands and some 3945km south-southeast of Buenos Aires.

SOUTH-EAST ASIA

London, Jan 5 — General cargo *Jaami* will be sold in its existing condition, in Colombo, upon the order of the High Court of the Republic of Sri Lanka, in the exercise of its Admiralty Jurisdiction in action in Rem. No.09/2005, by public auction, free of all encumbrances, at 1400, Jan 17, by the Marshal of the High Court of Colombo. (Note — *Jaami* anchored off Colombo before Dec 26, 2004, and entered Colombo on Feb 8, 2005.)

Political & Civil Unrest

**BANGLADESH**

Dhaka, Jan 1 — Nearly 60 people were injured in clashes between police and activists from rival political groups in the Bangladesh capital Dhaka today. Most of the injuries occurred when militant supporters of opposition Jatiya Party, led by former military ruler Hossain Mohammad Ershad, stormed a small rally of Bangladesh Communist Party, witnesses said. The attackers burned books and furniture, and roughed up communist supporters before police arrived and chased away angry crowds, a witness said. The communists have been an ally of the main opposition party, the Awami League, during its campaign to force out Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia out, accusing her government of failing to control prices and harbouring militants. About 20 people were injured when police attacked Awami League supporters trying to march on the office of the Election Commission in the capital, witnesses said. They were angry about the start today of the creation of a new list of electors, saying it was wrong to make a list before other election issues were settled. They want the Election Commission to be reformed to make it truly independent and capable of holding free and fair elections. Bangladesh marked the New Year amid tight security in the wake of a recent wave of bomb attacks, including suicide bombings, by Islamists calling for introduction of sharia law, replacing Bangladesh's secular democratic constitution. — Reuters.

COLOMBIA

Bogota, Jan 2 — Left-wing Colombian rebels dynamited eight oil wells and an electricity tower near the Ecuadorean border over the weekend, police said today, the latest attack in a series that killed 37 soldiers and police last month. The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, destroyed the wells yesterday in the town of Orito, in the southern jungle province of Putumayo, spilling oil into nearby rivers and streams, said regional police commander Humberto

Guatibonza. The guerrillas also destroyed an electricity tower on Saturday (Dec 31) in Putumayo, leaving 300,000 people without power. No one was killed in the bombings. — Reuters.

London, Jan 3 — A press report, dated Jan 2, states: Colombia's main rebel group has ruled out an exchange of prisoners with the government of President Alvaro Uribe. In a statement on its website, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Farc) said President Uribe lacked the political will to agree such a deal. The Farc is holding about 60 hostages - including a former politician and several foreigners. Mr Uribe has pursued a tough military campaign against the rebels since coming to office in 2002, but commentators suggest he had been keen to secure the release of the hostages ahead of presidential and congressional elections in May. The idea of a prisoner exchange was put forward by France, Spain and Switzerland. It would have involved setting up a demilitarised area for the two sides to discuss the terms of the exchange. In the statement, the Farc acknowledged the "good offices" of the three European nations, but it said: "We have spent years seeking a humanitarian exchange so that the captives are able to leave the jails and the mountains and can be reunited with their [loved ones], but neither in [former President Andres] Pastrana nor in Uribe we have found reciprocity... It is clear that with Uribe there will be no humanitarian exchange. The country needs a president with political will," the statement said.

EGYPT

Cairo, Dec 30 — Ten Sudanese protesters died and around 30 were injured today after Egyptian police dispersed a protest by thousands of Sudanese in Cairo, a statement from Egypt's Interior Ministry said. The statement said there had been a stampede among the protesters, who want to be relocated to another country, which led to the deaths and injuries. "The security forces were present to ensure a process of transporting those mentioned and to prevent squatting," the ministry said. Twenty-three police were also injured in the attempt to move the protesters, who had been living at the site for more than three months, the ministry added. The protesters said they were demonstrating at the treatment they had received from the UN refugee agency, UNHCR. About 2,000 riot police stormed the camp site early on Monday morning (Dec 26) and beat the people inside with truncheons and sticks after officials failed to persuade the Sudanese to board buses to take them to another site. About 4,000 riot police in total ringed the site, in an affluent part of Cairo near the UNHCR offices. UNHCR has said it is prepared to provide more assistance to Sudanese in Egypt fleeing conflict at

home but cannot arrange for all of them to be resettled in another country. — Reuters.

Cairo, Jan 2 — A morgue official on Sunday said the number of Sudanese killed when Egyptian police cleared a Sudanese refugee protest camp last Friday (Dec 30) had reached 27. The Egyptian government has called for an investigation into the "large" number of deaths of women and children, a report from Egypt's official Middle East News Agency (MENA) said. The report said the government had ruled out an international investigation and added that the police had exhausted peaceful means to end the protest. It said people had thrown bricks and stones at the police. — Reuters.

FRANCE

London, Jan 3 — A press report, dated today, states: The French government has passed a decree to lift a state of emergency imposed in November during the worst rioting in the country in nearly 40 years. The emergency powers, which allowed local authorities to impose curfews and ban public gatherings, were lifted six weeks earlier than originally planned after New Year's celebrations proved calmer than expected. Almost 9,000 cars were burnt out and 3,000 people were arrested in three weeks of violence.

INDIA

Bhubaneswar, India, Jan 2 — Indian police shot and killed nine tribesmen today after they were attacked with arrows and stones, killing a constable, a police official said. The attack happened after 1,000 tribespeople, some armed with bow and arrows, opposed a move by authorities to acquire land for the setting up of a steel plant in Jajpur in the eastern Indian state of Orissa. "We fired in self defence," Jajpur's police chief Binaytosh Mishra said. Jajpur is 100 km north of Bhubaneswar, the state capital. "While four people were killed on the spot, five died in hospital," Mishra said, adding that about 25 people, including four policemen, had been wounded in the clash. Police said authorities had offered compensation to the tribespeople living on the land but they had rejected it. Police said they were caught unaware when they were surrounded and pelted with stones and arrows. The police had been assigned to protect local officials who were demarcating the land for the proposed steel plant. Police said the land in Jajpur had been acquired by the government and was to be given to India's largest private steel producer, Tata Steel Ltd. — Reuters.

INDONESIA

Lhokseumawe, Indonesia, Dec 29 — Indonesia's military pulled the last of its troop reinforcements from Aceh province today, fulfilling one of the major conditions of a landmark peace agreement with separatist rebels. The final withdrawal of Indonesian security forces — a contingent of

police reinforcements — will take place on Saturday (Dec 31) and once the last police contingent goes, government forces in Aceh should be no more than 14,700 soldiers and 9,100 police. Security experts say the next challenges are finding jobs for demobilised GAM fighters and satisfying rebel demands for political participation in Aceh. — Reuters.

London, Dec 31 - A press report, dated today, states: Six people have been killed and 45 hurt by a bomb blast at a market in Indonesia's Central Sulawesi province, police said. Witnesses in the town of Palu reported seeing bodies lying on the ground after hearing a deafening blast. The bomb exploded in the busy morning hours at a stall selling pork, in a largely Christian part of the town. Police officials said the bomb was packed with nails and ball bearings. "Most of the victims suffered injuries to their legs because of the shrapnel from the bomb," a police spokesman said. Another explosive device was reportedly discovered and defused near the site of the explosion. Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono has condemned the attack. Recent attacks in Indonesia is the world's most populous Muslim nation but the population in many parts of Central Sulawesi province is split equally between Muslims and Christians.

Palu, Indonesia, Jan 1 — Indonesian police have detained a man and tightened road blocks around the city of Palu in a hunt for those responsible for killing seven people in a nail bomb attack on Christian market yesterday. Rais Adam, spokesman for police in volatile Central Sulawesi Province where Palu is the capital, said today that police had also raided several locations. "A man has been detained. We are interrogating him," Adam said from Palu, 1,650 km north-east of Jakarta. The man was detained yesterday near the site of the blast but had not been named as a suspect, he added. Police said the detained man had been acting suspiciously near the market the day before the blast. He had not been seen in the area before and was asking store keepers questions about where they lived. Some 53 people were wounded in the attack, many by nails packed into the homemade bomb. Adam said numerous witnesses had been questioned. Roadblocks set up around Palu a few months ago — part of security preparations for various Muslim and Christian holidays — had been tightened, he added. Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono condemned the bombing and ordered an investigation. — Reuters.

IRAQ

London, Dec 30 — A press report, dated Dec 29, states: Iraq's largest oil refinery has been shut down following death threats to tanker drivers, jeopardising supplies of electricity across northern Iraq. The threats followed a steep rise in the price of petrol earlier this month, ordered by

the government. The oil ministry said the shutdown at Baiji was costing \$20m (£12m) a day. The ministry said it hoped the refinery, which has been out of action since the weekend, would be back up and running within days. "Efforts are being made to convince the drivers to return to work," a spokesman said. The Baiji refinery normally produces 8.5m litres of petrol per day, along with 7.5m litres of diesel. Oil distribution has been further disrupted by storms that have prevented exports being shipped from the Basra terminal in the south, Reuters said. Although billions of dollars have been spent on infrastructure since Saddam Hussein's regime was toppled, fuel and electricity production have not reached the levels maintained before the US-led invasion of Iraq. Elsewhere in Iraq, about 12 Shia Muslims were killed by insurgents after apparently failing to heed warnings that they should move out of their homes in the mainly Sunni town of Latifiya, about 30km south of Baghdad, officials said. In another incident, a web statement attributed to the militant group al-Qaeda in Iraq said it was holding five Sudanese hostages. The group said it had "arrested five employees of the Sudanese embassy in Baghdad, including diplomats". It said the Sudanese government had "48 hours to clearly announce it is breaking off diplomatic relations with the [Iraqi] government... Otherwise the government must assume responsibility for sacrificing its diplomats". At the weekend Sudan said six of its nationals, including five embassy employees and a "friend", had been abducted in Iraq.

Baghdad, Jan 1 — An oil pipeline was on fire after a bomb exploded near a refinery in southern Baghdad today, police said. It was the second sabotage attack on the Doura refinery in Baghdad in the past few days. It comes as Iraq struggles with a fuel crisis caused largely by the closure of a major refinery in the north, which has triggered panic buying and long queues at petrol stations. — Reuters.

London, Jan 2 — A press report, dated today, states: A suicide car bomber killed at least seven people in an attack on a bus of police recruits north of the Iraqi capital, Baghdad. At least 13 others were wounded in the attack, near Baquba, 60 km from the capital. The recruits were travelling to a training centre when their bus was rammed by the vehicle. Separately, Iraqi police found eight bodies south of the capital. It is not known how they died or who killed them.

London, Jan 4 — A press report, dated Jan 3, states: The sister of Iraq's interior minister has been kidnapped at gunpoint, the government says. Bayan Jabr's sister was travelling in a vehicle in north-eastern Baghdad when she was ambushed. The interior ministry did not name her, and gave no further details, but it was reported that one bodyguard was killed and another

injured in the attack. But it is not known if the kidnapping was politically motivated. Three months ago, the minister's brother was abducted as he drove to work at a hospital near the Sadr City district of Baghdad. He was released the following day. In a separate incident, several members of the same family, including women and children, have been killed in a US air strike that destroyed their home in the town of Beiji, north of Tikrit. US forces said they acted after seeing three men suspected of planting a roadside bomb enter the house. US military spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Barry Johnson said the men, who ran into the house after digging a hole, were assessed as a threat to civilians and military forces. "An unmanned aerial vehicle... observed the would-be attackers as they dug a hole following the common pattern of roadside bomb emplacement," he told the AFP news agency. "The individuals left the road site and were followed from the air to a nearby building. Coalition forces employed precision guided munitions on the structure."

Baghdad, Jan 4 — A suicide bomber killed 36 people and wounded 40 at a Shi'ite funeral and gunmen ambushed a vital fuel convoy outside Baghdad amid a wave of attacks that made today Iraq's bloodiest day in weeks. Car bombs also went off in the capital and in the recently peaceful Shi'ite holy city of Kerbala, suggesting a level of co-ordination that may be a response by Sunni Arab insurgents to last month's largely peaceful parliamentary election. The funeral attack was the bloodiest single incident since the election. Some Sunni groups had declared an informal truce to encourage their community to vote and have been disappointed to see results handing continued domination to the Shi'ite Islamists and Kurds who have been in power for the past year. The attack took place in Miqdadiya, 100 km north-east of the capital, where people were mourning a bodyguard to a local leader of the Dawa party, headed nationally by Shi'ite Islamist Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari. Assaultants fired mortars on the mourners, forcing them to take cover in the cemetery. A bomber wearing an explosive vest then blew up among them, security officials said. Soon afterwards, rebels armed with rocket-propelled grenades and machine-guns ambushed 60 fuel tankers on a road north of Baghdad, destroying 20 of them, police and oil officials said, saying the convoy's police escort was still fighting the attack. There was no immediate word on casualties. The convoy was part of a major government effort to ease fuel shortages in the capital following the recent closure of Iraq's main refinery at Baiji in the north; supplies were halted for 10 days because of threats to tanker drivers. At least eight people were killed and 12 wounded when a car bomb exploded in southern Baghdad, police and hospital sources

said. The car was parked close to a busy commercial market in the Doura district, they said. Earlier, three people were killed when a car bomb went off in the Shi'ite district of Kadhimiya in the north of the city. The bombers defied a major security operation launched, police said, to find the kidnapped sister of the interior minister. The violence came as Shi'ite, Sunni and Kurdish politicians pledged to plough on with efforts to form a national unity government capable of stemming the bloodshed. The area around Miqdadiya has seen mounting violence in recent weeks and security officials have said hardline Sunni Islamist groups such as al Qaeda have been increasingly active in the area. While that area's inhabitants have grown used to such attacks, the blast in Kerbala, south of Baghdad, was a rarity of late — the first of its kind in the Shi'ite holy city since December 2004 when a car bomb killed 12 and wounded 30. Mistrust between Iraq's majority Shi'ite and minority Sunni Arab communities has been heightened by the results of last month's election, which some Sunni and secular leaders charge were rigged to favor the Shi'ites. The Iraqi electoral commission has called in a panel of four international monitors to investigate those claims. In the meantime, representatives of all the main parties have been holding bilateral meetings in the north with Iraq's Kurdish president, Jalal Talabani, and other senior Kurds. All have agreed to meet again in Baghdad soon to try to forge a government tasked with halting the killings and abductions which have become part of daily life for millions of Iraqis since the U.S.-led invasion of 2003. — Reuters.

Kerbala, Jan 5 — A suicide bomber killed 49 people and wounded 68 in the southern Shi'ite city of Kerbala today in the worst single attack in Iraq for over a month. Police said the bomber detonated his explosive belt on a crowded street near one of the city's main Shi'ite places of worship, the Imam Hussein shrine. It was the second bomb attack in Kerbala in as many days after more than a year of relative calm. It followed a day of carnage across the country on Wednesday, when at least 58 people died in multiple killings and bombings. — Reuters.

ISRAEL

London, Dec 30 — A press report, dated Dec 29, states: A Palestinian suicide bomber blew himself up today, killing an Israeli army officer and two other Palestinians after Israeli soldiers ordered him to remove his overcoat at a West Bank checkpoint set up specifically to foil the attack. The Arabic satellite station Al-Arabiya reported that Syrian-backed militant group Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for the bombing. The report could not be confirmed, but the group earlier this week rebuffed Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas'

appeal for an end to suicide bombings and rocket attacks. The suicide bombing took place just south of the Palestinian town of Tulkarem, about two miles inside the West Bank. The army had set up roadblocks in the area shortly after receiving warnings that a suicide bomber was headed toward Israel. The army said the bomber, an accomplice and the taxi driver were killed, along with a 21-year-old Israeli army officer, Lt. Uri Binamo. Seven Palestinians and three soldiers were wounded. Israel's deputy defense minister, Zeev Boim, blamed local Islamic Jihad operatives with direct support from the group's leadership in Syria. In a separate incident, Al-Qaida in Iraq, claimed it fired a barrage of rockets into northern Israel from Lebanon on Tuesday (Dec 27). The claim, on an Islamic Web forum where the group often posts statements, could not be independently verified. It apparently was the first time al-Qaida in Iraq claimed responsibility for a direct attack against the Jewish state. The rockets landed in a residential neighbourhood of the northern Israeli town of Kiryat Shmona, causing damage but no casualties. Israel had blamed Tuesday's rocket attack on a radical Palestinian militia and bombed one of its bases near Beirut. Israeli officials would not immediately comment on the al-Qaida statement.

Gaza, Dec 30 — A previously unknown Palestinian group called Brigades of the Mujahideen announced today it had freed three British hostages as a "gesture of goodwill" and demanded that Britain and Europe put pressure on Israel. In a video released to media by the group, a masked gunman stood next to human rights worker Kate Burton as he listed demands and threatened that more foreign hostages would be taken if they were not met. — Reuters.

Gaza, Jan 1 — Masked gunmen kidnapped an Italian activist in the Gaza Strip today and police tried to negotiate for his release. The gunmen seized the hostage during a visit by a delegation of 18 Italians ahead of the election. The kidnapping came just three days after three British hostages were set free in Gaza. He was the last member of the group to head towards the group's bus as they left an office in the southern city of Khan Younis. Suddenly a white car stopped beside him and the gunmen leapt out. "The gunmen fired three times into the air, forced the man into their car and sped away," said Mohammad Murad, a bus driver who witnessed the scene. A member of the group, European parliament member Luisa Morgantini, said she had been told by Palestinian security forces that he was free but security forces said they were still in talks with the hostage takers. An offshoot of al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, part of Abbas's own ruling Fatah movement, said it carried out the kidnapping. The faction calling itself Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades-Sunni People said its

demands were a full investigation into the death of late leader Yasser Arafat in 2004 and the removal of corrupt leaders from Fatah. — Reuters.

Gaza, Jan 1 — Palestinian security forces said they had freed an Italian hostage who was kidnapped by masked gunmen in the Gaza Strip today. Security forces said that the Italian peace activist was being taken to a compound in the southern Gaza city of Khan Younis. "Our forces surrounded the area and the kidnappers fled in fear and left the hostage behind," said a member of the Preventive Security force. — Reuters.

Gaza, Jan 2 — Israeli aircraft struck at Gaza Strip militants and Palestinian police stormed government offices in the territory today as internal unrest brought new calls for a Palestinian election delay. Amid the growing chaos, an Israeli paper said Prime Minister Ariel Sharon planned to one day abandon a U.S.-peace "road map" because of the Palestinian failure to disarm militants and would seek Washington's approval to annex occupied West Bank land. Struggling for control, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has resisted growing pressure to postpone the Jan 25 parliamentary vote from within his ruling Fatah movement — which faces a strong challenge from Hamas Islamic militants. Fatah's main militant wing, al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, joined calls for an election postponement today after Israeli aircraft destroyed a building in the Gaza Strip which the army said was used by the Brigades for preparing attacks. Israel also targeted roads that it said were used by militants firing rockets into the Jewish state. "How will there be an election with the continuation of the killings and destruction," the Brigades said in a statement in Gaza, calling on Abbas to form a national unity government that would prepare for a ballot at a later date. Senior Fatah officials said the idea had already been rejected by Hamas. The Islamist faction, sworn to destroying Israel, has been buoyed ahead of the polls by Fatah's division between veteran politicians and a young guard. Despite Fatah's troubles, Abbas has a big personal stake in ensuring that elections happen on time. His message to Western backers has been that they will strengthen democracy, and also help tame Hamas by bringing it into the political mainstream. Western favour is vital for Abbas in his push for statehood talks with Israel. But Abbas's authority has been undermined by the internal disorder, particularly since Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip last year intensified complicated local power struggles. Firing in the air, hundreds of police stormed government offices in southern Gaza today to protest over the failure of the Palestinian Authority to give them the strength to bring order — despite Abbas's pledge to do so at the weekend. Gaza's police

chief said some of those involved were either ex-militants or still moonlighting for armed factions. — Reuters.

Gaza, Jan 2 — Israel killed two Palestinian militants in a missile strike on a car in the northern Gaza Strip today, Palestinian medics said. The Israeli military said it had launched an “aerial strike,” which targeted a vehicle carrying a senior member of Islamic Jihad in the Jabalya refugee camp. “The terrorist had been involved in numerous projectile rocket attacks against Israel in the past few weeks,” it added. One of the two dead men, Saeed Abu Al-Jedian, was a senior commander of Islamic Jihad’s armed wing in northern Gaza. The other, Akram Qadas, also belonged to its armed wing. Medics said a third member who was travelling in the car was critically wounded. Israel has shelled the northern Gaza Strip in recent days to enforce a “no-go zone” it says is aimed to stop cross-border rocket fire by militants, which has been condemned by the Palestinian Authority. — Reuters.

London, Jan 5 — A press report, dated Jan 4, states: Two Egyptian border guards were killed in clashes with Palestinian militants near the Gaza Strip’s Rafah border, amid spiralling anarchy in the south of the territory. The clashes came after Palestinian militants used a bulldozer to plough through a section of a concrete wall on the border with Egypt, allowing dozens of youths to rush force their way to the Egyptian side. Security sources said at least 40 Egyptian border guards were also injured during an exchange of fire with the Palestinians. Witnesses said dozens of gunmen fired into the air as the bulldozer punched its way through a giant slab of concrete near the Rafah border crossing which had been earlier forced closed by followers of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, an offshoot of the ruling Fatah faction. Dozens of mainly teenagers then rushed through the breach in the wall but were unable to cross beyond a swath of barbed wire, behind which were stationed Egyptian border guards, witnesses said. The attack on the Rafah border, Gaza’s only link with the outside world avoiding Israel, was part of a series of protests designed to secure the release of a local Al-Aqsa leader, arrested yesterday over the kidnapping of three Britons. Militants also occupied government buildings in Rafah and attempted to kidnap the parents of an American peace activist who was killed by an Israeli bulldozer three years ago and is regarded as a heroine by Palestinians. Interior minister Nasr Youssef convened an emergency meeting of security officials in Rafah in a bid to halt the chaos, vowing to confiscate the weapons of militants in the run-up to January 25 parliamentary elections, but he appeared powerless to halt the descent into lawlessness. Senior members of Fatah acknowledged that

the security chaos was undermining the movement’s prospects at the ballot box where it faces its first real challenge from the radical Islamist movement Hamas. As well as taking over the governor’s headquarters in the morning, gunmen also raided the town’s courthouse and central post office. They later blocked a road leading to the Rafah terminal, effectively preventing anyone from reaching the crossing.

IVORY COAST

Abidjan, Jan 2 — Heavily armed men attacked two military bases in Ivory Coast’s economic capital Abidjan today, briefly seizing one before government forces recaptured it and restored control, officials said. Residents woke to the sound of intense automatic rifle-fire and detonations of heavier arms as fighting raged at two camps in the eastern Akouedo district of the city. Witnesses saw seven bodies near the two camps, four wearing civilian clothes and three in military uniform. There were also burned-out vehicles and two prisoners, bloodied with their hands tied. The government did not immediately say who carried out the attacks, which occurred days after new Prime Minister Charles Konan Banny named a cabinet to advance a UN peace plan for the country. New Force rebels, who have occupied the north of the country since 2002, denied responsibility for the raids, which temporarily disrupted cocoa exports in the southern port city. “We have nothing to do with this. We think it’s a problem among them (on the government side),” said Issiaka Ouattara, who is known as Commandant Wattao and is second in command of the rebels’ military forces. “At around 0500 today, the two camps at Akouedo were heavily attacked by infiltrators,” Ivory Coast army chief General Philippe Mangou said in a broadcast on national radio. “We can reassure the population that the situation is under control,” he added. A spokesman for President Laurent Gbagbo also said the government was in control. Military officers said the attackers, armed with automatic rifles, heavy machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades, briefly took over the Basa anti-aircraft artillery base, one of two bases at Akouedo. They were later dislodged by government troops and police backed by armoured vehicles. Helicopters of the French armed forces, which work with a UN peacekeeping mission in Ivory Coast, flew over the area. “There was fighting around the Akouedo bases and the Ivorian forces have taken the situation in hand. This affair concerns neither the UN nor the (French army) but we remain vigilant,” said French military spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Jean-Luc Cotard. — Reuters.

NEPAL

Kathmandu, Jan 2 — Nepal’s Maoist rebels have decided not to continue their unilateral cease-fire which

expired today after four months. Declared Sep 1, this was the first unilateral cease-fire announced by the rebels after nearly a decade of violence aimed at overthrowing the monarchy and establishing a Maoist state. Two cease-fires in 2001 and 2003 were called jointly by both rebels and government but ensuing peace talks ended in failure. On this occasion, the government, currently under the direct rule of King Gyanendra and his council of ministers, did not reciprocate the Maoist ceasefire. In a statement the insurgents accused the state of arresting dozens of Maoists cadres and killing one of their key members, Kimbahadur Thapa, despite their cease-fire. The king has come under severe criticism both at home and abroad, for failing to respond to the Maoist decision to cease hostilities and an offer of peace talks. The United Nations expressed concern Dec 31 that violence would escalate should the cease-fire end. “Secretary-General Kofi Annan deeply regrets that despite the appeal of so many national and international voices, including his own, no progress appears to have been made towards a mutually agreed truce,” said a statement by Annan’s office. The suspension of hostilities had been widely welcomed and had led to an increase in aid and development work in the Himalayan kingdom as well as fewer deaths, injuries and abductions. A recent report by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) said that despite continued human rights violations during the recent ceasefire period, the number of killings during the past four months had dropped sharply in 33 conflict-affected districts of Nepal. The Maoists said in today’s statement that they would consider returning to a cease-fire if the situation improved and the army stopped killing their members and supporters. — Reuters.

Kathmandu, Jan 3 — A series of explosions rocked Nepal today with one blast erupting in the popular tourist town of Pokhara, just hours after after Maoist rebels called off a four-month truce, raising fears of a resurgence of violence. No one was injured in the blasts in Pokhara, in central Nepal, or the western towns of Butwal and Bhairahawa shortly after the rebels’ unilateral ceasefire ended at midnight, yesterday. In its first official reaction to the end of the truce, Nepal’s royalist government said it stood ready to protect the country. “It is unfortunate. The state is prepared for any eventuality,” junior Information Minister Shris Shumsher Rana told Reuters. The explosions raised fears of a major resumption of violence across the troubled Himalayan kingdom if the rebels step up their attacks. The Maoists first declared a three-month truce in September, but later extended it for another month under popular pressure. Yesterday, Prachanda, the elusive rebel leader, said the ceasefire would not be prolonged further and accused

government troops of provoking his forces to break it. As the ceasefire ended, local media reported that the rebels, who have a strong presence across much of the countryside, were planning to attack the heavily defended capital, Kathmandu. — Reuters.

Kathmandu, Jan 5 — Two policemen and a civilian were wounded when Nepal's Maoist rebels opened fired on a patrol today, the first attack on security forces since the rebels ended a four-month truce this week, police said. The shooting took place in the town of Mahendranagar, the largest in the district of Kanchenpur, a rebel stronghold 650 km west of the capital, Kathmandu. "Eight police officers were on their way to replace their colleagues when the Maoists fired on them," a police officer told Reuters. — Reuters.

NIGERIA

London, Jan 2 — A press report, dated today, states: Security forces in Nigeria have killed 12 men they say were stealing oil from a pipeline in the southern Niger Delta. Officials said that a gun battle broke out when troops on patrol came across a group using heavy drilling equipment to siphon oil from a pipeline. Three others in the group, in the remote Oghara community, were wounded and five were arrested. Correspondents say oil theft is a common practice in one of Africa's biggest oil-producing countries. The men were caught on Saturday (Dec 31) about to siphon the oil into trucks from a pipeline owned by the Pan Ocean Oil Corporation, Nigeria's This Day newspaper said. Nigerian security forces have been working hard to curb the crime, which is known locally as bunkering.

PAKISTAN

Karachi, Jan 4 — The gas pipeline to the 386 MW Uch power plant in Balochistan province of Pakistan, was blown up in an attack last night, suspending supply to the plant, while sporadic rocket and artillery duels between security forces and tribesmen continued in different parts of Dera Bugti. According to local media report, the district coordination officer has said that the rocket fire had damaged a water plant of the Loti gas field and voiced fears that if repair work was not undertaken within 72 hours the supply of gas would be suspended. An official of the Mir Hasan police station in Nasirabad confirmed that the Uch gas pipeline had caught fire at 2300 hrs. He, however, was unable to confirm whether it was technical fault or subversive act. —Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Karachi, Jan 5 — The state owned largest exploration and production firm-Oil and Gas Development Co (OGDC) said an engineering team has started repair work on the gas pipeline for Uch power plant in Balochistan province of Pakistan that had been damaged in a rocket attack on Tuesday night. Hopefully, it would

be completed soon. An official of the company said that the 80-foot pipeline between Chatter and Dera Murad Jamali was damaged in a subversive act. —Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Islamabad, Jan 5 — Gas supplies from a pipeline blown up by tribal militants in Pakistan's troubled Baluchistan province are expected to resume to a U.S. and British-owned power plant by tomorrow, a company official said. Two blasts early yesterday damaged a 24-inch diameter pipeline in the Dera Murad Jamali area, about 220 km southeast of the provincial capital Quetta, cutting off the gas supply to the 586-megawatt Uch power plant. A spokesman for the power plant, Tariq Jamali, said repairs were being carried out by the state-run Oil and Gas Development Co Ltd. "It will be done by tomorrow evening or night," he said. Jamali said he understood a 40-50 foot section of pipeline needed to be repaired or replaced. — Reuters.

SOMALIA

Aden, Yemen, Jan 3 — Somalia's president and parliament speaker have agreed in principle to move the government to Mogadishu, which could end a rift that has almost paralyzed the administration, Yemeni officials said today. President Abdullahi Yusuf and speaker Sharif Hassan Sheikh Adan are holding talks in the Yemeni city of Aden and could reach a final agreement on the move by tomorrow, they added. A group led by Yusuf, who has no real support in the capital, set up the government in Jowhar, 90 km north of Mogadishu, saying it was unsafe. But another group comprising Hassan, hundreds of parliamentarians and powerful warlords in the cabinet say Mogadishu must be the capital as stipulated in Somalia's transitional charter. "Yesterday they reached a preliminary agreement on the move to Mogadishu but talks are still going on. They might sign a final deal tomorrow, in the presence of (Yemeni) President Ali Abdullah Saleh," a government official said. Yemeni officials said that under the deal, ministers and government institutions would move to Mogadishu before Yusuf, who will stay in his stronghold Jowhar until he can ensure his personal safety. Yemen is brokering talks between the rival faction leaders who are wrangling over where the government should be based and who have refused to hold talks on each others' territory. Both factions have accused each other of belligerent words and actions and a U.N. report indicates that they are stocking up on weapons and massing militiamen, raising fears of yet another war in this impoverished country that has been in a state of anarchy since 1991. — Reuters.

London, Jan 5 — A press report, dated today, states: Rival political leaders have signed a deal they hope will reunite Somalia after 15 years of division. Under the agreement, the transitional parliament will assemble

in the next 30 days for the first time on Somali soil. The parliament includes representatives of the main clans and militia groups and last met in Kenya a year ago. The Yemen talks have been led by the president who is based outside the capital and the parliamentary speaker allied to militias who run Mogadishu. There is reported to be no mention in the agreement about whether President Abdullahi Yusuf will move the central government back to the capital, Mogadishu. He has previously refused to do so on security grounds, because it is controlled by rival militias and set up his government in the town of Jowhar - some 90 km away. But Speaker Sharif Hassan Sheikh Adan and many MPs disagreed and went to the capital to try and establish a rival administration. It is unclear where the parliament will meet. Correspondents say Mr Yusuf's eventual return to the capital is likely to depend on an agreement by the militias to withdraw from the streets of Mogadishu.

SRI LANKA

Colombo, Dec 30 — Suspected Tamil Tiger rebels fired at police in Sri Lanka's war-ravaged north and east today, the military said, as a Norwegian peace envoy prepared to visit the island amid rising fears of a return to civil war. Troops scoured roadside vegetation in military-held areas in the north and east for claymore fragmentation mines that have killed 39 armed forces personnel in ambushes this month. Analysts said the intensity of the attacks was proof that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam were ready for war. "We are slipping back into a war situation," said Iqbal Athas, an analyst for Jane's Defence Weekly. "If the attacks go on, there will come a time when the army has to retaliate." Security experts say the LTTE have used a 2002 cease-fire to regroup and rearm, have acquired an air capability — light aircraft smuggled into the country in pieces — and have suicide bomber sleeper cells at the ready in Colombo. "The Tigers have built a much stronger military machine in the four years of the cease-fire," Athas said. "If the intensity of the war increases, there is no doubt they have developed a capability to strike in Colombo." One policeman was shot and injured in the eastern district of Batticaloa today, but there were no major incidents. The government has held back from retaliating in the hope the international community will isolate and shun the Tigers, and wants the European Union to make good on a threat to list them as a banned terrorist organisation. The Tigers, who have tried to raise their international image and do not want to be blamed for restarting the war, deny any involvement in recent attacks. But few in Colombo believe them. The head of the Nordic team that oversees the cease-fire — which halted a two-decade civil war that killed over 64,000 people — warned

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yesterday that “war may not be far away”. Norwegian peace broker Erik Solheim will visit the island on Jan 23 in a bid to break the deadlock between the two sides, who cannot even agree on a venue for emergency talks, diplomats said. In the northern military enclave of Jaffna, which is hemmed in by rebel lines, British mine clearers have closed their office after armed men raided their compound this week and stole dozens of mine detectors. The Jaffna peninsula, where more than 40,000 troops are now based — twice the LTTE’s entire estimated strength — remained tense, with many streets deserted. Suspected rebel fronts have already forced the government offices in Jaffna to close down indefinitely, and one such group warned youths in the town to move to rebel-held territory. The government and the Tigers are poles apart over the rebels’ demands for wide political powers in the north and east, where they want to build a homeland for ethnic Tamils, many of whom feel sidelined economically by the island’s majority Sinhalese who dominate the south and the island’s politics. Sri Lanka’s stock market has plunged with each major attack as panicked small investors sell their holdings, but analysts say the wider market is not yet betting an all-out conflict will hit the \$20 billion economy. — Reuters.

London, Jan 3 — A press report, dated Jan 2, states: A bomb blast in the eastern Sri Lankan town of Trincomalee has killed five people and wounded two, police say. They said the victims were all young Tamils from the area, are not clear. One policeman told the AFP news agency that officials were investigating whether the Tamil youths had been transporting explosives.



ISRAEL

See under “Political & Civil Unrest.”

YEMEN

Aden, Dec 31 — Yemeni tribesmen freed a former German government minister and hostage negotiator, his wife and three children today after abducting them while they were on holiday and holding them captive for three days. Yemen’s Defence Minister had been leading talks on securing the release of Juergen Chrobog and his family, who were seized in eastern Yemen on Wednesday (Dec 28) by a group of men seeking the release of fellow tribesmen jailed for murder and other crimes. Chrobog and his family were handed over to Yemeni officials and flew from eastern Shabwa Province to Aden, where officials said President Ali Abdullah Saleh would meet them. A senior

Yemeni official close to the talks said: “Four men who carried out the kidnapping were held and are being interrogated but we are still looking at the issues brought up by the tribe.” He had earlier said that the authorities had promised to look into the tribesmen’s demands. Yemeni officials said the family was seized by members of the al-Abdullah tribe who were demanding the release of five fellow tribesmen jailed on criminal charges including murder. Steinmeier said the family “are in the care of Yemeni government officials and on their way in a helicopter to Aden.” — Reuters.

Sanaa, Jan 1 — Yemeni tribesmen kidnapped five Italian tourists today to press for the release of fellow tribe members held by the authorities, a Yemeni official said. “Tribesmen stopped the vehicle the tourists were travelling in and abducted them,” the security official said. The five were kidnapped in the eastern province of Maarib, about 170 km east of the capital Sanaa. Kidnappers, members of a tribe that has carried out similar abductions in the past, wanted eight people held on criminal charges freed, the official added. — Reuters.

Dubai, Jan 2 — One of the Yemeni kidnappers holding five Italian tourists hostage threatened today to kill them if government forces attacked their remote hideout. “We are warning the Italian and the Yemeni governments that if they use any force, we will kill them,” the kidnapper, a tribesman said. “Two of our people have been arrested by the government, and they’ve been detained for a year without trial. And we don’t have any political contacts (to help get them freed),” he said. The Italians, kidnapped yesterday, were the fourth group of Western tourists to be abducted in Yemen in less than two months. The kidnapper said the hostages were being held separately but were being treated well and were in good health. He was speaking from the remote, mountainous Marib province. Security forces and army units have surrounded the area where the kidnappers are believed to be holding the Italians. The government earlier appointed a senior army officer and seasoned hostage negotiator to lead talks with the tribesmen. — Reuters.



CHILE

London, Dec 31 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: Contract workers at Chile’s Codelco, the biggest copper producer in the world, will resume a strike next week to demand a one-time bonus tied to the surge in prices for the metal this year. Workers were back on the job today, after staging protests yesterday in

Rancagua, 90 kilometres south of the capital, Santiago, temporarily blocking an entrance to the company’s El Teniente mining division, Codelco said. The strike didn’t affect production at its five divisions, the company said. The company’s 28,000 contractors are demanding a 500,000-peso (\$973.14) bonus per person, arguing that they should share in the benefits from the 41 percent gain in copper prices this year.

London, Jan 5 — A press report, dated Jan 4, states: Police and copper workers have clashed during a strike over pay in Chile. Two officers were injured and 42 people arrested in the city of Rancagua. Some 28,000 contract workers at Chile’s state-owned copper company Codelco are said to be taking part in the nationwide walk-out. The strike comes as copper prices are at record levels on the world market and the workers are calling for those prices to be reflected in a \$960 bonus. The strikers are also demanding better employment terms, they say union workers, who number around 14,000, receive higher salaries. The government has insisted it will not give the workers a bonus, but has said it is prepared to discuss improvements in labour conditions. Police said strikers in Rancagua, south of the capital, had tried to prevent regular employees from reaching the El Teniente mine. Six demonstrators were arrested when they tried to hijack a bus, police said. A group of about 200 workers then went to the police station to demand their release and violence erupted. A representative of the contract workers called on the government to curb police action.

ELWOOD (Panama)

London, Jan 4 — A press report, dated today, states: Eleven crewmen are remaining on board general cargo *Elwood* (1573 gt, built 1978) in Dublin port in a dispute with the vessel’s Dutch owners. The sailors on *Elwood* rejected a compensation offer of \$35,000 to be split between the crew to compensate them for the loss of their jobs. The owners, Aqua Azul, want to have it towed to Rotterdam, where it will be either sold or scrapped. The crew had been in dispute with the owners before Christmas over unpaid wages. (Note — *Elwood* arrived Dublin 2247, Dec 19.)

PORTUGAL

London, Jan 5 — A press report, dated today, states: A 24-hour strike by airport workers in Portugal planned for today over job security issues could lead to flight cancellations, union and airport officials said. Some 200 airport emergency services workers, who provide security, intervene in the event of a fire and aid planes during take-offs and landings, will provide just minimum services at airports across the country, their SITAVA union said. However, the airports at

Lisbon, the nation's busiest, and in Funchal, the capital of the island of Madeira, should operate as normal, said a spokesman for airport management company ANA-Aeropostos de Portugal. ANA will ensure international safety standards are met during the strike although some flights may have to be grounded, he told the Lusa news agency.

UNITED KINGDOM

London, Dec 31 — A press report, dated today, states: Thousands of Tube workers have started a 24-hour walkout threatening to shut much of the network on New Year's Eve. London Underground (LU) said it will run as full a service as possible. At lunchtime trains ran as normal. But the effects may not be felt for hours and revellers are advised to plan their journey home, without the Tube. Union officials are accused of "exploiting" Londoners in a row over new rotas which they said may leave stations dangerously under-staffed. Rail, Maritime and Transport (RMT) union members were expected to stop reporting for duty from noon, today. The union has said the network will shut down slowly throughout the afternoon, but LU hopes to keep the key central London stations open. LU has said it may be some hours before the full impact of the strike is known, but it will continue to run services where it is safe to do so. Spokesman Nigel Holness said train drivers and many other staff would work as normal. "This dispute is about station staff, and our train operators will be in," he said. "They'll be working normally, and we're looking to ensure that we keep all our stations open tonight and throughout tomorrow."



CLASS-ACTION SETTLEMENT, UNITED STATES

See "Sony Anti-Virus Programs" under "Computer Systems."
 London, Jan 5 — A press report, dated Jan 4, states: A settlement was reached today in a class-action lawsuit alleging Sempra Energy and two of its utilities, including Southern California Gas Co., conspired to stop competition for natural gas, leading to the state's 2000-01 energy crisis. Sempra Energy and two subsidiaries, Southern California Gas Co. and San Diego Gas & Electric, are accused of colluding with El Paso Natural Gas Co. to restrict the supply of natural gas to California, causing shortages and driving up prices. The proposed settlement, which still needs approval by a judge and plaintiffs including the cities of Los Angeles and Long Beach, totals about \$350 million, according to Sempra officials.

FAILURE TO INVEST EARNINGS, CANADA

London, Dec 30 — A press report, dated Dec 29, states: An Ontario judge has ruled that disabled war veterans and their dependents are owed more than \$4 billion by the federal government. Many veterans returned from wars and peacekeeping duties with psychological injuries which put them in hospital, unable to care for themselves or to manage their affairs. In those cases their pension cheques went into government bank accounts where they earned no interest and were never invested. The lawsuit alleged the government held the pensions of those disabled veterans in trust without being prudently invested. The suit sought payment on behalf of some 30,000 veterans from the First and Second World Wars, the Korean War, and peacekeeping missions dating back to 1919. After nearly seven years of legal battles, an Ontario court today ruled the government owes \$4.6 billion in damages for failing to invest the earnings. A spokesman for the federal Justice Department said the government will probably appeal the decision.

FALSIFYING OF DOCUMENTS, UNITED STATES

London, Jan 5 — A press report, dated Jan 4, states: ABN Amro Mortgage Group has agreed to a \$41 million settlement with the federal government for falsifying documents in tens of thousands of loans insured by the Federal Housing Administration, the Department of Housing and Urban Development said today. The agreement is the largest monetary settlement of an enforcement action in the FHA's history, HUD said. The loans in question originated from 2000 to 2003. In 2003, HUD discovered underwriting deficiencies and improper conduct by an ABN employee. After that was brought to ABN's attention, the company began an internal investigation. The company found that some of its employees, in violation of FHA rules, falsely certified that two ABN underwriters had reviewed more than 28,000 loans before FHA endorsement when they had not. As a result, ABN has agreed to pay \$16.9 million to the U.S. government and won't submit 783 defaulted loans to HUD. That will save the FHA insurance fund an estimated \$24.4 million in losses. Ann Arbor-based ABN is a subsidiary of Dutch financial services giant ABN Amro Holding, through its Chicago-based LaSalle Bank. ABN Amro Mortgage Group issued a statement emphasizing that it, not HUD, had detected the problem. The settlement "represents a final resolution of a matter the company discovered, investigated and self-reported to the government," the company said. Under the FHA mortgage insurance program, ABN has "direct endorsement authority" to approve FHA-insured loans. This allows the

company to underwrite loans and submit them to FHA for insurance endorsement, HUD said. In general, the FHA requires that before a lender may submit a loan for endorsement, its underwriters must perform due diligence and make certain certifications. One certification is that the loan meets the FHA's underwriting requirements. HUD found that the affected loans were submitted with certifications purporting to be signed by one of two underwriters when neither had signed the certifications or reviewed the loans to see whether they qualified for FHA insurance. As part of the matter's resolution, ABN told HUD that it has fired several senior-level employees and taken steps to increase accountability for FHA-insured loans. "The company remains steadfast in monitoring its improved controls and does not and will not tolerate misconduct," ABN said.

WRONGFUL DEATH, UNITED STATES

London, Jan 5 — A press report, dated today, states: A man whose wife and toddler died in a collision with a fire truck has accepted a wrongful death settlement from the Grand Traverse Metro Fire Department. The settlement with Matthew Garrisi is worth about \$2.2 million. Rebecca Garrisi and her 11-month-old son Jesse were killed on Mar 8 2005, when a fire truck crashed into the family's sport-utility vehicle. The driver, part-time firefighter Cory Carlton, has been charged with two counts of negligent homicide.



ALPHA AREA, QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA

London, Dec 30 — A press report, dated today, states: A passenger train derailment has left travellers stranded in central-western Queensland. The Spirit of the Outback locomotive came to a standstill near Alpha, between Longreach and Rockhampton, when wheels of one of its three carriages left the track at 1220, AEST, yesterday, a Queensland Rail spokeswoman said. The 29 passengers were unharmed and waited on the train for around two hours before buses arrived, the spokeswoman said. "A couple of wheels came off the track but the carriage stayed upright. Passengers stayed on the train until buses arrived, and they then ferried passengers onto the next destination and picked up other passengers along the way." QR expected the track to be cleared by 1900 today, but would not comment on the cause of the derailment until investigations had taken place, the spokeswoman said. Senior Constable Lee Newton said

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that the train was not moving at full speed when the accident occurred. "It's been under brake coming into the 25 kph zone and it appears that the rear carriage left the tracks," Mr Newton said. "In turn, it pulled the next carriage in front of it off the track and the carriage in front of that has partially left the track," he said.

BHAIRAB AREA, BANGLADESH

Karachi, Jan 2 — A bogie of Dhaka bound container train of Bangladesh Railway from Chittagong derailed near Bhairab station in Southern Bangladesh yesterday. As a result, traffic remains disrupted for quite some time. It is said the accident caused at 0250 hrs due to faulty line but none was hurt. All trains passing through Bhairab remained stranded. Train services resumed at about 0815 hrs after salvage train from Akhaura cleared the line. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

DERAILMENT, YERONG CREEK, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA

London, Jan 5 — A press report, dated today, states: Rail services between Sydney and Melbourne may be disrupted until tomorrow night, after a derailed freight train blocked the line near Wagga Wagga, in south west NSW. The train was carrying goods from Adelaide to Brisbane when the last six carriages came off the tracks at Yerong Creek, between Wagga and Henty, at 1715, AEDT, yesterday. The derailment has interrupted services on the single-line track, with rail passengers being taken by bus between Wagga and Albury. The 49-carriage train was transporting some hazardous materials, including wet cell batteries, but police Inspector Mick Rochester said no one was injured in the incident. "It had some hazardous materials as part of the load and as a precaution the Hazmat units responded from Henty and Wagga, and they eventually declared the site safe," he said. Investigators from the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) were at the scene. "At this stage our best estimate of reopening is late tomorrow night." He said repairs would be carried out on the rail line to allow trains to keep running once the derailed train had been cleared and temporary speed restrictions would likely be imposed.

YAMAGATA PREFECTURE, JAPAN

London, Dec 30 — A press report, dated Dec 29, states: Police today completed search-and-rescue operations at the site of a fatal derailment of an East Japan Railway Co. express train in Shonai, Yamagata Prefecture, judging that no passengers remain in or are buried under the debris of the trains. They had been searching for a woman and a girl as some survivors said they had spotted them together in the front car, but a 41-year-old woman told them in the morning that she and her 6-year-old daughter had exited the train at the station before the site of the

derailment, and she notified them because she was worried they may be searching for them. The police have almost concluded the mother and daughter are the ones who were witnessed, they said. JR East will start moving the damaged compartments to a facility in the city of Akita sequentially from tomorrow, it said. Meanwhile, JR East Chairman Masatake Matsuda signaled today he may resign to take responsibility for Sunday's (Dec 25) derailment, in which five people were killed and 32 injured, after investigations into the cause of the accident are finished. Matsuda said the accident may have been caused by more than just a blast of wind from one direction. "A gust of wind does not necessarily come from only one direction, it may whirl around like a tornado," he said.



SONY ANTI-VIRUS PROGRAMS

London, Dec 30 — A press report, dated Dec 29, states: Sony BMG has rushed forth to settle a class-action lawsuit brought by Girard Gibs and Kamber & Associates in New York over its embarrassing rootkit scandal. A few months ago it came to light that Sony was using a particularly egregious form of copy protection on CDs that implants hooks into the Windows kernel to make sure you don't use the CD in a manner of which Sony doesn't approve. The so-called rootkit caused a furor online and in the media, and after trying to play it down as par for the course, Sony eventually relented and claimed it would no longer use the DRM in question. That didn't stop the lawsuits, however. A class-action lawsuit was filed in California within days of the evidence becoming public, and suits in other regions followed quickly. The settlement will include a promise by Sony to stop all use of the XCP and MediaMax DRM technologies, which is a given. Then, after paying lawyers' fees, the company will recall all remaining XCP and MediaMax DRM-backed CDs, and then compensate customers who have purchased the ill-begotten discs. Sony has said that it was recalling discs previously, but the company says it is having trouble getting all retailers to comply. Customers who purchased the poisoned discs will have two options. First, they can cash in on a payment of US\$7.50 per CD they purchased, and snag one free album download. Or, if one don't want to bother with cashing a check for \$7.50, the cash payment can be cast aside in favoUr of three free album downloads. In both instances, the offending CDs will be replaced with DRM-free discs, but the album downloads will most likely use a less heinous form of DRM. The

company will also be required to provide a safe tool for removing the rootkits. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this settlement is the requirement regarding downloadable albums. Sony has the right to limit the albums that are available to a list of 200, but the company can not force you to use their music store. Instead, Sony must use at least three different venues to distribute content: Settlement Class Members may download albums from any one of three major download services. SONY BMG will use commercially reasonable efforts to offer Apple Computer, Inc.'s popular iTunes as one of the download services available to Settlement Class Members. The settlement will not take place until it is approved by the court. Proof of purchase will be required, or proof of a return if a disc was taken back to a retailer after Nov 14.

UNITED AIRLINES FLIGHTS DELAYED, UNITED STATES

London, Jan 4 — A press report, dated today, states: Travellers holding United Airlines tickets were greeted with long delays at O'Hare Airport and across the globe as a computer system outage forced the airline's reservations and passenger check-in to be done manually. By late evening the computers were up and running. Airport officials anticipated travellers spending the night as a result of the outage, according to the Chicago Aviation Department. United's "Apollo" system, which manages reservations and check-ins, went down about 1700 hrs, said Jean Medina, a spokeswoman for the Elk Grove Village-based airline. The computers were up and running by 2100 hrs, and in the end, 200 flights worldwide were delayed, Medina said. It was still not known late yesterday what caused the computer glitch, but the outage was related to a problem with the system's processor, and IBM helped resolve the problem. On average, inbound and outbound flights were delayed between 60 and 90 minutes, Medina said. An Aviation Department official said flights to and from the East Coast were delayed two hours.



AVALANCHE, PAKISTAN

London, Dec 30 — A press report, dated Dec 29, states: An avalanche killed at least 25 people who were digging for gemstones in a remote area of north-western Pakistan, police said. Regional police chief Ataullah Wazir said the avalanche happened near Kohistan, 210 miles north-east of Peshawar. The area is rich with precious stones, which villagers sell on the open market. Wazir said rescuers had recovered some bodies.

COLLAPSE OF ICE RINK ROOF, BAD REICHENHALL, GERMANY

London, Jan 2 — A press report, dated today, states: The roof of an ice skating rink in a southern German town has collapsed, trapping up to 50 people, police said. The accident happened about 1600, local time, in the town of Bad Reichenhall. It was unclear what caused the collapse but it came after a heavy snowfall. Fritz Braun, a police spokesman, said: "We expect there are several seriously injured and possibly also dead." He said that, by 1720 hrs, one seriously injured person and 10 slightly injured people had been rescued. He added that fire officers were "trying to shore up the remains of the roof to get to the injured." Heavy snow made the task especially difficult. Hanna Hutschenreiter, a spokesman for Bavarian Red Cross, believed "several" people had been killed. She said rescue services had been called in from a wide area around Bad Reichenhall, including from Salzburg in Austria.

London, Jan 4 — A press report, dated today, states: Rescue workers today recovered three more bodies from beneath a collapsed skating rink in southern Germany, raising the death toll to 14, and said there were no further signs of life as they searched for a missing woman. The bodies of two boys and a girl were found today, and a 40-year-old woman remained missing. The boys' bodies were found earlier, and the girl's was found later with the help of a search-and-rescue dog, police official Peter Huber said. "We have to give the sad news that we have found another victim," said Georg Grabner, chief administrator of the surrounding district of Berchtesgaden. "Only one more person lies buried under the rubble." Hopes faded of finding survivors from Monday's (Jan 2) accident at the end of a second night of snow and freezing temperatures. Rescuers digging with shovels and their hands found a five-year-old girl alive with only minor injuries Monday night, but no other survivors have been found since. More than half the surface of the rink had been cleared of debris from the collapsed roof by midday today. Nine children were among those already confirmed dead in the accident, which happened after heavy snowfall Monday afternoon, when about 50 people were inside, including many schoolchildren on Christmas break. The search was interrupted last night because authorities feared the roof might collapse further. They brought in new equipment to remove large chunks of rubble and clear the way for rescuers to safely return early this morning. Authorities also moved cars parked in an underground garage beneath the rink and braced the site from below. Special cranes were brought in to clear the way, and workers spent the night tearing away pieces of the facade and the remains of the roof. Rescuers had difficulty making progress due to fears the rubble would shift and concern that heavy

equipment would crush any survivors. Prosecutors launched an investigation for possible negligence, an automatic step after a fatal accident. Experts suggested a structural flaw was a more likely cause of the collapse than the heavy snow. City officials said they had measured the snow on the roof Monday and found it well within the building's margin of safety. However, town officials had planned to close the rink after the end of the day's public skating because the heavy, wet snow was continuing. The roof collapsed at 1600 hrs, just as the rink was closing for the day.

LANDSLIDE, YEMEN

Sanaa, Dec 31 — At least 56 bodies have now been recovered from the ruins of a small Yemeni village that was devastated in a landslide earlier this week, a relief official said today. "Relief operations are still going on to find those missing, which are estimated at over 50," the official said, adding that there was little hope of finding any survivors. Rocks slid off a mountain on Wednesday (Dec 28) and crushed 27 houses in al-Dhofair village, about 20 km south-west of the capital Sanaa. — Reuters.

Sanaa, Jan 3 — Rescue operations are ongoing for the victims of last week's landslide in the remote village of al-Dhafeer, some 50 km west of the capital, Sana. Efforts to recover the bodies of victims have been hampered by the presence of enormous boulders that have prevented the use of proper digging machinery, according to Hashim al-Zein, country representative of the World Health Organisation. "We're facing a lot of difficulty in pulling the dead from destroyed houses," he said. The governor of Sana has forecast that the search-and-rescue process would last several more days. On Dec 29, a rocky hill overlooking al-Dhafeer collapsed onto the village, destroying about 15 houses. Since then, around 30 other families have fled their homes in fear of further landslides. Geologists are still investigating the cause of the natural disaster. The death toll from the incident has increased to 65, according to Yemeni officials. However, the Yemeni Red Crescent Association (YRCA) has stated that only 16 bodies have been recovered from the rubble so far. The total number of dead is expected to increase to 90 by the time rescue operations are concluded, according to al-Zein. — Reuters.

OUTBREAK OF "BIRD FLU"

London, Jan 4 — A press report, dated today, states: China's Agriculture Ministry has confirmed an outbreak of bird flu in the south-west. The China Daily newspaper reports more than 1,800 poultry were found dead last week on a farm in Sichuan province. Officials have confirmed the birds had the H5N1 strain of bird flu. Nearly 13,000 chickens in the area have been culled to try to contain the virus.

London, Jan 5 — A press report, dated today, states: The Turkish Government has announced a second person, a 15-year-old girl, has died there from the H5N1 strain of bird flu. Fatma Kocycigit is thought to be the sister of 14-year-old farm boy Mehmet, who died in a hospital in eastern Turkey earlier this week. The boy's death marked the first confirmed bird flu fatality outside Asia, where more than 70 people have died from the disease since 2003. Tests on other suspected victims are continuing. Turkish health ministry spokesman Sebatin Eydan says the victims were not professional poultry workers. Two other members of the same family are still being treated for the disease. Turkey, which lies on the path of migratory birds that are believed to spread the virus, has suffered two outbreaks of the disease among poultry in the past three months.

Fires & Explosions**BUSH, AUSTRALIA**

London, Dec 30 — A press report, dated today, states: Fire fighting operations are winding down at the scene of the Piliga Forest fire that has burned out almost 6,000 hectares, near Narrabri in north-east of New South Wales. The blaze began in the Bibblewindi State Forest, east of Bohena Creek, on Christmas Eve. Staff from State Forests and the National Parks And Wildlife Service, as well as 150 Rural Fire Service volunteers, turned out to control the fire. Six aircraft were used to water bomb the blaze, which had a perimeter of more than 50 kilometres.

London, Dec 31 — A press report, dated today, states: Firefighters have contained two blazes which burnt out more than 23,000 hectares of bushland on South Australia's Eyre Peninsula, after rugged terrain made access to the area difficult. The fire poses no threat to property, but continues to burn within containment lines. The Country Fire Service (CFS) said waterbombing aircraft had been brought in to assist but the fires, at Middle Camp and Pinkawillinie in the state's west, were difficult to extinguish because of the rugged terrain. CFS spokeswoman Lisa Lalic said 22,000 hectares at Pinkawillinie and 1,400 hectares of bush at Middle Camp had been destroyed by the blazes which were sparked by lightning strikes on Dec 27. Firefighters are currently fighting another fire at Horrock Pass in the Flinders Ranges, north of Adelaide, which has burned 2,500 hectares since mid morning.

BUSH, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA

London, Jan 1 — A press report, dated today, states: Firefighters are

battling two major bushfires on the New South Wales Central Coast today, with more than 50 homes under direct threat in the Woy Woy and Mount White areas. One home had reportedly gone up in flames at Phegans Bay, with evacuations underway in affected areas. The F3 Freeway was closed at Mount White, where another fire was burning, with the Old Pacific Highway and Woy Woy Road also closed in both directions. Bush fire volunteer Michael Wood, at a fire in Woy Woy Bay, said residents were being told to evacuate, with some 50 homes in the fire's direct path. Dozens of fire crews and four water bombing aircraft were battling the blazes, Mr Wood said, with changeable wind conditions starting spot fires nearby. Strong north-westerly wind gusts and temperatures of up to 44 degrees posed extremely dangerous fire conditions, the Rural Fire Service said. CityRail services were experiencing major delays. The RFS said the Woy Woy fire front was expected to make a large run to Umina and Pearl Beach in the coming hours, with 300 firefighters working to contain the flames. Several cars and properties were reportedly alight. Another fire had also broken out in the northern Sydney suburb of Belrose, and was expected to cause problems in coming hours, the RFS said. Flames were virtually licking the edge of the F3 at Mount White. Several volunteer firetrucks were gutted by flames at Woy Woy. The NSW Ambulance Service said emergency crews were on standby for evacuations. Little relief from the searing temperatures and gusting winds was expected until 2200, AEDT, the Bureau of Meteorology said. Humidity had also dropped to as low as nine per cent, fuelling flames of up to 20 metres high, the bureau said. Homes were also being evacuated at Merimbula, on the NSW far south coast, after a fire broke containment lines. Firefighters were also battling blazes in Newcastle and near Junee, in the state's south-west.

London, Jan 2 — A press report, dated today, states: Firefighters have until Friday (Jan 6) to contain 27 blazes around NSW, before high temperatures are expected to return at the weekend. NSW suffered through extreme conditions yesterday, with Sydney baking under the hottest New Year's Day ever recorded, as bushfires, fanned by hot winds, destroyed at least three homes on the Central Coast and five houses at Junee, north of Wagga Wagga, in the state's south-west. One St John Ambulance volunteer died while helping people who fled extreme bushfires on the Central Coast yesterday. A volunteer firefighter remains in a serious condition in Sydney's Concord Hospital, with third degree burns to 60% of his body, after being injured while fighting a blaze on his Junee property. Hundreds of firefighters are today battling 27 blazes across the state, including about five uncontained fires.

Bushfires under close watch include three blazes on the Central Coast, one in the Hawkesbury area, as well as the Junee fire, which has so far burnt out more than 34,000 hectares. NSW Rural Fire Commissioner Phil Koperberg said today cooler temperatures have provided some relief and the threat to lives and property had eased. "It is basically no longer a threat to property in the short term," Mr Koperberg told reporters. "There are literally thousands of hectares of fire there and it's going to take us about four days to get round all these fires and mop them up. We expect that all the fires will be contained by Friday and we will be well equipped to deal with any new outbreaks as the weekend approaches." Mr Koperberg said it was too early to speculate on the causes of the blazes, however fire investigators were assessing each one.

London, Jan 3 — A press report, dated today, states: Firefighters are confident they will contain four bushfires on the NSW Central Coast by early tomorrow, but they are concerned about a return of hot, dry conditions later this week. Authorities today also warned firebugs they face up to 14 years jail, as the NSW Government said it would pay for the funeral of a St John Ambulance volunteer, who died while assisting evacuees. With temperatures expected to soar in the coming days, a total fire ban is in place today in the Upper Central Western Plains, Lower Central Western Plains, and Greater Hunter area. Rural Fire Service Commissioner Phil Koperberg said fire crews were water bombing, backburning and cutting trails around the fire perimeter to help contain the blazes. Fires ran through the area at the weekend destroying three houses and burning out 2400 hectares of bushland. "There is little fire activity, but what there is will become active during the course of today as the temperatures increase," Mr Koperberg said. "We are very confident that by nightfall or perhaps tomorrow morning most of the fire around the Central Coast will be contained." Thirty six fire units, six aircraft and a water-bombing helicopter are involved in surveillance and firefighting today. Five tankers have been called in from Hornsby as spot fires flare ahead of containment lines, but an RFS spokesman said the fires were still under control. Mr Koperberg said a major fire near West Wyalong in south-west NSW could flare up in the next day or so. He was also concerned that fire could break out in central and south-western NSW where grass, which sprung up after recent rain, had now dried out. Fires at Junee in the state's south-west ripped through 35,000 hectares of farmland destroying crops, pasture and livestock, as well as five houses. Almost 30 fires were still burning around NSW today, the most serious in the Hawkesbury region, the Central Coast and near the Riverina town of Junee. Since Sunday about

2400 hectares of bushland has been destroyed in the Brisbane Water National Park, north of Sydney, and another 35,000 hectares near Junee. Three homes were lost at Phegans Bay, near Woy Woy. Drizzle helped ease conditions for firefighters yesterday but hampered back-burning operations. About 30 fire crews and five helicopters will be battling fires, today, at Woy Woy and Spencer. Firefighters will also be deployed on containment lines to prepare for expected dangerous conditions tomorrow, while mopping-up operations continue to reduce the threat of further outbreaks in the event of another hot, dry spell.

London, Jan 4 — A press report, dated today, states: Firefighters are still battling to control bushfires across New South Wales, with hot and dry conditions inland likely to add to their troubles at the end of the week. Big fires were still flaring on the Central Coast late yesterday, near Umina Heights, Kariong, Woy Woy Bay and Mount White, but they were moving away from populated areas. Three houses and 2400 hectares of bush were destroyed on Sunday, and officials say the burned area could reach 5000 hectares before the flames are extinguished. About 500 Rural Fire Service volunteers were deployed around NSW yesterday, supported by a water-bombing helicopter and six fixed-wing aircraft. Five extra tankers were summoned from Hornsby to support Central Coast volunteers, but the Rural Fire Service commissioner, Phil Koperberg, said he expected the blazes would be under control by this morning. The huge fire near Junee, south-western NSW, which started on New Year's Day and burnt over 25,000 hectares of farmland and five houses, has been encircled by containment lines. There were 36 other bushfires, many of them small and relatively easily contained, burning at other points around the state last night. Weather conditions over the next few days should be more favourable for firefighters, with lower temperatures and a chance of showers.

London, Jan 5 — A press report, dated today, states: Almost 200 firefighters supported by water bombing aircraft are battling to contain a bushfire in a central western New South Wales national park, which has already burnt out 4,000 hectares of land. A Rural Fire Service (RFS) spokeswoman says crews are continuing to work on a number of fires around the state, including those in Junee, in south western NSW, and Woy Woy. The main focus was now on the Weddin Mountains National Park, 10km from Grenfell. Backburning was currently taking place but the fire has already blackened 4,000 hectares of land, she said. There are 135 RFS volunteers, 37 NSW Fire Brigade firefighters, 16 national park firefighters and five NSW Forest firefighters working on the blaze, along with six fixed wing aircraft and two helicopters providing

air support. The fire was not currently threatening any property, the spokeswoman said.

BUSH, TASMANIA, AUSTRALIA

London, Jan 5 — A press report, dated today, states: A bushfire is burning out of control on Tasmania's east coast. The fire started on Tuesday (Jan 3) and has burned through 550 hectares of bush, fanned by winds of up to 120 kph. Tasmania Fire Service spokeswoman Jade Wright said the blaze was heading towards Friendly Beaches, just north of Freycinet National Park, but had weakened with easing winds. "It's still continuing to be uncontrolled," she said. "We've got eight fire appliances out there at the moment plus our helicopter. The last couple of days we had winds up to 120 kph around the south of the state, today it's dropped off massively." Ms Wright said no property was threatened.

London, Jan 5 — A press report, dated today, states: Firefighters are battling to control a blaze which has threatened property on Tasmania's east coast. The fire started on Tuesday (Jan 3) and has burned through 740ha of bush, fanned by winds of up to 120 kph on land north of Coles Bay. This afternoon, about 60 firefighters began backburning, making the most of moderate weather conditions. The backburning was to protect nearby tourist accommodation, believed to be Freycinet Lodge, Forestry spokeswoman Liz Wren said. Firefighters worked today to consolidate control lines around the fire. Incident Controller Jeremy Smith said crews from the Tasmania Fire Service and Parks and Wildlife Service were helped by three bulldozers and two helicopters. "Although the fire is only moving slowly, our aim is to get it contained while we still have favourable weather conditions," Mr Smith said. Campers were relocated from the Friendly Beaches campsite when the fire started on Tuesday. The campsites and Friendly Beaches Road will remain closed for several days. Tasmania Fire Service spokeswoman Jade Wright said today the blaze was heading towards Friendly Beaches, just north of Freycinet National Park, but had weakened with easing winds. Ms Wren said firefighters expect to have the blaze contained by tomorrow afternoon and will keep working until 2200 today.

COAL MINE, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA

London, Dec 31 — A press report, dated today, states: Firefighters are having difficulty accessing a blaze at a coal mine in Victoria's Latrobe Valley. About 90 Country Fire Authority (CFA) firefighters and workers from the Hazelwood power plant worked through the night but failed to extinguish the fire at the Morwell open cut brown coal mine, 130km south east of Melbourne. CFA spokeswoman Adele Buhagiar said the workers were still at the scene as the

fire which began late yesterday continued to burn on a coalface about 200m long and 100m deep. Smoke from the fire blanketed the Latrobe Valley but there was no threat to Victoria's power supply, Ms Buhagiar said. She said firefighters were wetting down the area to contain the fire but poor access meant there was little opportunity to extinguish the blaze.

COAL MINE, WEST VIRGINIA, UNITED STATES

London, Jan 2 — A press report, dated today, states: An explosion at a coal mine in West Virginia trapped 13 miners more than a mile underground, a county emergency official said today. The explosion happened about 0800 hrs at the Sago Mine in Upshur County, said Steve Milligan, deputy director of the county's Office of Emergency Management. Six miners made it out of the mine. The trapped miners' condition was not immediately known as an attempt by co-workers to reach them was unsuccessful, Milligan said. "They essentially came to a wall," Milligan said. "So they can't get to them at this time." The miners were one to two miles underground, he said. A specially trained mine rescue team was being sent to the scene. The mine, in north-central West Virginia, about 100 miles from Charleston, is owned by Anker West Virginia Mining Co.

London, Jan 4 — Only one of the 12 trapped miners found in a US coal mine today has survived, company officials say. The company chief said that only one man, critically ill and rushed to hospital, had been found alive by rescuers, just hours after all were reported safe. The company named the survivor as 26-year-old Randal McCloy Junior. Relatives had celebrated in churches after reports that the rescue attempts had found all 12 men alive in an air pocket in the mine. Ben Hatfield, president of mine operators International Coal Group, said: "We are incredibly saddened by the horrific loss." "This is certainly not the outcome we had hoped for and prayed for," he said. He said earlier news that the 12 men had been found alive was "bad information". He said he believed the men had survived the explosion and gone to what they thought was a safe area. They are then thought to have been poisoned by toxic fumes. The cause of the blast is not yet known.

HOSPITAL, BYTOM, POLAND

Warsaw, Jan 1 — Three patients died and 35 were injured when fire broke out in a hospital in the southern Polish town of Bytom early today, police said. "Two male patients, aged 56 and 72, were burnt alive, and an 84-year-old woman died of asphyxiation in the fire which broke out at around 0330 hrs," police spokesman Jacek Pytel said. Two policemen on patrol saw the fire, heard cries for help and immediately began evacuating patients from the upper floors of the building before the fire brigade and ambulances arrived.

"Thirty-five patients required treatment for smoke inhalation and carbon monoxide poisoning, as did the two policemen who had evacuated the patients to safety without any protective gear or oxygen tanks," the spokesman said. An inquiry would determine the cause of the fire, he said. — Reuters.

MARINA, EVERETT, WASHINGTON, UNITED STATES

Seattle, Jan 5 — A fire at the Everett Washington Marina caused substantial damage on Jan 1. Fire was noted at 1830, PST, Jan 1. Several private vessels were lost and or damaged severely. The cause is under investigation. No injuries were reported. — Lloyd's Agents.

MARKET, TAEGU, SOUTH KOREA

London, Dec 31 — A press report, dated today, states: Firefighters extinguished a massive fire that engulfed 947 shops in a conventional market in Taegu, Friday, Dec 30. The fire was brought under control about 16 hours after it broke out at around 2150, Dec 29, on the first floor of the market, in the south-eastern city, 302 kilometers south of Seoul. Police said the property damage could reach 50 billion won (\$49 million).

NATURAL-GAS WELL, ROSTRAVER AIRPORT, PENNSYLVANIA, UNITED STATES

London, Dec 30 — A press report, dated Dec 29, states: An explosion at a natural gas well shot flames high into the air today and injured five people, two seriously. A crew of 17 was attempting to activate the new well at Rostraver Airport by pouring water down a drilled hole when the blast occurred, said Joel Feldstein, a spokesman for the company that owns the well. A valve had accidentally opened and allowed gas to escape, said Betsy Mallison, a spokeswoman for the state Department of Environmental Protection. The gas passed over machinery and vehicles, which were apparently hot enough to ignite the gas, she said. Firefighters battled the blaze for two hours at the airport about 20 miles south of Pittsburgh.

PREMISES, GREAT FALLS, VIRGINIA, UNITED STATES

London, Jan 3 — A press report, dated Jan 2, states: A 9,000 square-foot house in Great Falls in northern Virginia, valued at \$5 million, is a total loss after being destroyed by fire today, according to Fairfax County Fire spokesman Dan Schmidt. More than 100 firefighters responded, but the situation got so dangerous they were forced out. This afternoon, some five hours after the fire broke out, firefighters had the blaze under control but were still dealing with flare ups and hot spots. Schmidt says the lady of the house and an employee were home at the time but escaped safely. The cause of the fire is not yet known.

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

PREMISES, SARATOGA, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES

London, Jan 4 — A press report, dated Jan 3, states: A home, estimated at \$4 million, sustained major structural damage in a two-alarm blaze last night that displaced three people in Saratoga, a Santa Clara County fire official said today. The cause of the fire is still under investigation but fire investigator Dennis Johnson said it started in a car parked in the home's garage. He estimated the damage to be nearly \$1.5 million, with about \$1 million in structural damage and the rest in content loss. A couple and their daughter escaped the house to their front yard before fire crews arrived on the scene shortly after the first alarm came in around 1844 hrs. A second alarm was called in about six minutes later, Johnson said. The fire was under control around 1921 hrs and the area cleared around 2249 hrs. The two-story home in the 15200 block of Sobey Road sustained smoke and fire damage to nearly 70 percent of the estimated 5,000-square-foot structure, Johnson said.

SCHOOL, SWADLINCOTE, DERBYSHIRE, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Jan 5 — A press report, dated Jan 4, states: A school badly damaged by fire in an arson attack is due to reopen to all its students tomorrow. About a quarter of the Pingle School at Swadlincote in Derbyshire was destroyed in the fire last month. Staff said the repair bill will cost more than £2m. Around 20 classrooms were destroyed when the fire broke out in the sixth form block on Dec 2.

SCRUB, NORTH ISLAND, NEW ZEALAND

London, Jan 2 — A press report, dated today, states: Firefighters and Department of Conservation staff were, this afternoon, working to contain a large scrub fire in the Far North. About seven appliances and a helicopter were fighting the blaze near Paihia, Fire Service staff said. "We had between 30 and 40 calls about 1148 hrs about the fire," a Fire Service northern communications centre spokeswoman said. She said the fire was in a forest area on Department of Conservation land, in hills near Paihia, between State Highway 11 near Haruru Falls and School Road. "It's potentially getting near the road, which could mean there may be a need for evacuations." Initial reports suggested the blaze was started from a car fire, but this had yet to be confirmed, the spokeswoman said.

London, Jan 3 — A press report, dated today, states: Fire-fighters are continuing to douse the remaining hot spots, burning after yesterday's 15ha bush fire in Paihia, Bay of Islands. Overnight, 30 firefighters from the Department of Conservation and New Zealand Fire Service contained the fire that was first reported just before noon yesterday. "The fire's in a mop-

up phase — just a little bit of smoke here and there," DOC duty officer Glen Coulston told NZPA today. "It hasn't grown any more from yesterday and we are hoping that by the end of today it should be all finished." Up to seven fire appliances and three helicopters brought the fire under control by mid-afternoon, Mr Coulston said. Mr Coulston said a few houses were threatened during the blaze. He said DOC was unsure of the cause of the fire and they were still investigating.

WAREHOUSE, BOTANY, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA

London, Jan 2 — A press report, dated today, states: Sydney firefighters have managed to contain a massive warehouse blaze south of the city. Twelve fire crews are on the scene of the fire in Hale Street, an industrial area of Botany, that broke out just before 0500, AEDT, today. NSW Fire Brigades Superintendent Ross Brogan said it was unclear what was inside the building, but it was not believed to contain any toxic products. "The fire is contained," Brogan said. "The main building itself is steel framed with corrugated iron walls and roof. All of the walls and roof have collapsed into the building." Nearby residents have been warned to stay indoors to avoid thick smoke.

WILDFIRES, NEW CALEDONIA

London, Jan 2 — Teams from Australia and France have been helping firefighters in New Caledonia battle blazes in the South Pacific territory. Officials say the fires are starting to be brought under control but that strong winds are hampering the effort. Crews are continuing to battle fires on the outskirts of the capital, Noumea, and strong winds are hampering operations. The fires are believed to have already destroyed around 4,500 hectares of the tropical rainforests that surround Noumea. Ecological groups have warned of an environmental disaster as a result of the blazes.

WILDFIRES, SOUTH AFRICA

London, Dec 30 — A press report, dated Dec 29, states: A runaway fire is threatening several properties at Franschoek in the Boland, SABC news reported today. The fire is spreading rapidly, because the vegetation is so dry and a strong Southeaster is fanning the flames. Workers on the farm Waterfall, at Franschoek, were evacuated from their houses. Fifty horses were removed from the main area of the farm. Several other properties at Franschoek are also threatened by the fire that is burning across a wide area from the construction site of the new Berg River Dam to Kylemore. Three helicopters were used to water bomb the flames. Two fixed wing aircraft, which assisted earlier in the day, were withdrawn because of the dense smoke. Assistants from the neighbouring towns of Stellenbosch, Worcester and Ceres were called in to

help protect property and lives. Meanwhile, Cape Town firefighters have managed to extinguish veld fires at Richwood near Bothasig, and close to the lower cable car station on Table Mountain. Danie Wilds, the Cape Winelands Fire Services spokesperson, says the fire is spreading rapidly because the vegetation is dry.

London, Jan 5 — A press report, dated Jan 4, states: Fire fighters today entered the eleventh day fighting a massive blaze in the Franschoek mountains near Cape Town. The fire was allegedly started by a man burning rubbish illegally in the area, and has caused massive damage in the Boland region. A strong Southeaster wind, which is gusting at up to 40 knots, is hampering efforts to quell the fire, officials of the fire department said. Several helicopters are being used to water bomb the fire and a large number of fire fighters have been deployed, while reinforcements have been brought in from neighbouring towns as well as from the Free State and Eastern Cape to assist the fire fighters. Officials say there are also fires burning in Du Toits Kloof at Donkerhoek and above Dewdale on the Hottentots Holland mountains. There are no reports of casualties since the fire started.

WILDFIRES, UNITED STATES

London, Dec 30 — A press report, dated today, states: As Texas Gov. Rick Perry toured the wildfire-ravaged town of Cross Plains yesterday and urged counties to prohibit fireworks around the New Year's holiday, more grass fires flared in windy weather in eastern Oklahoma. Wildfires raced through grass dried out by the region's worst drought in 50 years earlier this week, charring nearly 200 homes and killing four people in Texas and Oklahoma. Severe drought, wind gusts of 40 mph and temperatures reaching the low 80s set the stage for the fires. Authorities believe they were mostly set by people ignoring fire bans and burning trash, shooting fireworks or throwing out cigarettes. By late afternoon, the flames in central Oklahoma appeared to ease as firefighters gained the upper hand on the blazes, said fire Maj. Brian Stanaland. Many fires in Texas had been contained, but unseasonably dry and hot conditions persisted. The Agriculture Department is lending equipment and firefighters to help battle blazes in Texas and Oklahoma. In all, the grass fires destroyed about 120 homes across Texas and about 75 in Oklahoma, authorities said.

London, Jan 3 — A press report, dated today, states: Authorities went house to house in a search for victims in burned-out towns yesterday as firefighters in Texas, New Mexico and Oklahoma battled grass fires across the drought-stricken region. Since Tuesday (Dec 27), fires have charred

thousands of acres of grassland and farmland and destroyed more than 250 structures in the three states. Four deaths were reported last week in Texas and Oklahoma. One of the weekend blazes destroyed most of this ranch-and-cattle town of some 100 people near the Oklahoma line, burning about 50 homes and 40,000 acres as wind swept the fire 13 miles from Ringgold to Nocona. "It didn't take 30 minutes," Carol Ezzell said of the blaze's run through town, destroying all but seven buildings on Main Street, including the post office. She said the wind caused little fire tornadoes. "It was just turning, and every time it would make a loop it would just leap" and begin burning somewhere new, she said. Everyone had been accounted for in Ringgold, but crews searched from house to house for potential casualties in other fire-blackened towns, including Kokomo and Cross Plains, where more than 90 homes and a church were destroyed last week. The weather service said conditions could worsen today, with low humidity and above-normal temperatures in the 70s in a region experiencing one of its worst droughts in 50 years. Forecasters also predicted high winds, which make fighting the fires from the air more difficult. Weary firefighters remained on the job yesterday trying to contain several of the 20 fires that broke out the day before in Texas, including one in Eastland County, about 125 miles west of Dallas, that stretched for 25 miles. By Monday afternoon, firefighters had beaten back the blaze to a few hundred of acres of mostly open ranch land, fire officials said. Since Nov 1, Oklahoma wildfires have covered more than 285,000 acres and destroyed 200 buildings, said Michelle Finch, a spokeswoman for the Agriculture Department's forestry division. Crews in southeastern New Mexico were helped by calmer weather yesterday as they mopped up four fires that had blackened more than 53,000 acres of grassland and burned 11 houses and two businesses near Hobbs since Sunday (Jan 1). The flames forced the evacuation of 200 to 300 people on the city's fringe, including about 170 from two Hobbs nursing homes. All but about 50 had returned home by midday yesterday, authorities said.

London, Jan 5 — A press report, dated today, states: A wildfire that scorched about 50,000 acres in western Texas was nearly contained yesterday as firefighters across the state monitored flare-ups amid slightly lighter winds and cooler temperatures. The blaze, which stretched across Irion and Reagan counties west of San Angelo, was the last major wildfire in Texas. Grass fires started by as little as a spark from a car or downed power lines have burned more than 600,000 acres across a drought-stricken stretch of Oklahoma, Texas and New Mexico in the past week and a half. The fires have destroyed at least 470 homes and killed five people.



AIRCRAFT HIT BY TURBULENCE ON A FLIGHT FROM MADRID, SPAIN, TO SOFIA, BULGARIA

London, Dec 30 — A press report, dated Dec 29, states: A Bulgaria Boeing 737-500 hit a turbulence field last night as it flew from Madrid to Sofia. A steward's leg was broken during the shaking, and a woman suffered arm fracture. They received first aid while on board and after the aircraft landed in Sofia the two were immediately transported to the Military Medical Hospital. The aircraft hit a turbulence field above Italy's Adriatic zone. The passengers were stressed, but the board staff had the situation under control and did not allow panic or chaos, reports said today. The aircraft travelling from Madrid to Sofia had 100 passengers on board and landed safely in Sofia after the accident. The injured steward is still at hospital, local Darik radio said today, disclosing that the other injured person has already been let out.

AP-BGL

Karachi, Jan 3 — State owned airline-Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) said one of its Boeing aircraft, bearing registration number AP-BGL, has been grounded at Lahore International Airport, following damages to one of its engines during take off yesterday. The flight PK-766, with over 250 passengers and crew, bound for Karachi from Lahore, while taxiing at the airport, was hit by a bird, in engine. The captain immediately cancelled take-off. The passengers were transferred to another aircraft, while a team of engineers was dispatched from Karachi, for inspection and repair. The aircraft is expected to arrive Karachi today. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Karachi, Jan 3 — A Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) spokesman has said that the Boeing aircraft grounded earlier at Lahore International Airport, arrived at Karachi at noon today and has resumed normal operations. —Lloyd's List Correspondent.

CRASH INTO DAM, NEAR IPSWICH, QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA

London, Jan 2 — A press report, dated today, states: Five people are confirmed dead after an aircraft carrying a group of parachutists plunged into a dam near Ipswich, west of Brisbane. Two other people on board the single-engined aircraft survived and have been taken to hospital. The Cessna 206, operated by the Brisbane Skydiving Centre, crashed seconds after it took off from

Willowbank about 1100, AEDT, today. A Queensland police spokesman said one body had been found and four others were in the wreckage, which is submerged in the dam. "Our investigator on site has confirmed there are five dead but four are still in the aircraft which is submerged, upside down," she said. "We believe there are no other missing people. We believe there were seven on board." One of the survivors is expected to undergo arm surgery after being airlifted to Princess Alexandra Hospital while the second, a 27-year-old woman, is being assessed at Ipswich Hospital. An Ipswich Hospital spokeswoman said the woman appeared to have suffered internal injuries and may undergo surgery today. A friend of the pilot was first at the scene and notified emergency services. He helped the woman, who walked away from the crash and was found in a nearby paddock. Police divers, Queensland Fire and Rescue crew and emergency services staff are at the crash site. Civil Aviation Safety Authority spokesman Peter Gibson said the aircraft crashed into the dam about 500 metres from where it had taken off, at Willowbank. Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) investigators are working with police at the crash site. Mr Gibson said it could take weeks to determine the cause of the crash. ATSB spokesman Alan Stray said the bureau's formal investigation would begin tomorrow morning. Ipswich Police said witnesses saw a plume of smoke from the back of the aircraft before it clipped a tree and crashed into the dam at 1015, AEDT. He said the aircraft was carrying three instructors, three students and the pilot. "We are talking to witnesses to try and establish the last moments of the flight, but it appears that it definitely had difficulty gaining height," he said.

London, Jan 3 — A press report, dated today, states: The Australian Transport Safety Authority says preliminary investigations indicate engine failure was a likely cause of yesterday's aircraft crash in south-east Queensland that killed four skydivers and a pilot. The wreckage was salvaged from a dam near Ipswich this morning, about 90 metres from the airstrip. Witnesses reported seeing a puff of black smoke coming from the Cessna soon after take-off. Investigator Mike Cavenagh says the engine will be dismantled for examination while maintenance and pilot records will also be reviewed. "We'll commence examining the wreckage here and until we start examining it, we really are not sure as to what further steps or other examinations we may need to do," he said. "Our focus in the next few days will be the examination of the wreckage. After that, we then start other aspects of the investigation." A former operator of Whyalla Airlines in South Australia says he is appalled to

hear that the light aircraft had an engine like the one which failed in his Piper Navajo Chieftain in May 2000. The Whyalla Airlines aircraft ditched in Spencer Gulf when its engines failed, killing the eight people on board. The Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) says the Cessna that crashed yesterday had the same type of engine. Chris Brougham, who ran Whyalla Airlines, says he is shocked by the news. "Quite frankly I feel sick in the stomach," he said. "If it is a Lycoming engine and it's subsequently shown to be a similar problem to the one that caused the Whyalla airline tragedy, then it's absolutely amazing that CASA haven't done something to detect this problem before now and to have done something to fix it." In 2002 the US manufacturer, Textron Lycoming, recalled 900 of the engines in question, including 40 in Australia. The ATSB says its investigation will look at the condition of the aircraft, the weather and the training of those on board. The Cessna had been fitted with the new engine to provide more horsepower. Australian Transport Safety Bureau spokesman Alan Stray says it is too early to say whether the modification contributed to the crash. "The aircraft in Whyalla was fitted with these engines, which is a standard fitment for that type of aircraft," he said. "The Piper Navaho Chieftan comes from the factory with that type of engine fitted. "However, the Cessna had a much lower powered engine and the type of engine used in the Piper Chieftans was fitted to the Cessna." A huge crane slowly and carefully pulled the Cessna six-seater from the dam this morning. Mike Cavenagh from the Australian Transport Safety Bureau says it will now sit on the bank to be examined further. "We will probably take some components away with us for further examination, but we aren't sure yet what those components might be," he said. Police have confirmed a 22-year-old male pilot from Brisbane was among the five people killed. Four skydivers also died including a 34-year-old man from Ireland, a 41-year-old man and 49-year-old woman from England, and a 40-year old woman from Nerang. Police say one of the female victims was celebrating her birthday. The two survivors, a man and a woman, are still being treated at the Princess Alexandra Hospital. Meanwhile, the British High Commission in Australia is working with authorities in London to contact the relatives of two of the victims. Deputy High Commissioner Jean Harrod says their names will not be released until the families have been notified. "We understand that there were two Britons on board," she said. "Since then our British consular officials in the Consulate General up in Brisbane and in London have been notifying families and are assisting all the families of those involved."

CRASH, MILLARD AIRPORT AREA, NEBRASKA, UNITED STATES

London, Dec 30 — A press report, dated Dec 29, states: A small aircraft crashed into a field, killing all three people aboard, officials said today. The wreckage was spotted by a utility worker shortly before 1000 today about a mile south of the Millard Airport. Dense fog blanketed the area at the time. Three people were on board the Piper 28, a single-engine aircraft, and there were no survivors, said Don Hughes, manager of the Federal Aviation Administration's Omaha terminal approach control. It was unclear whether the aircraft crashed late yesterday or early today, he said. Millard Airport, in southwest Omaha, is not equipped for instrument approaches, Hughes said. Omaha, Sarpy County and La Vista emergency crews were on the scene and an investigation by federal authorities was expected.

CRASH, PAPUA PROVINCE, INDONESIA

London, Jan 5 — A press report, dated today, states: A small aircraft with two people on board crashed in Indonesia's easternmost Papua province today, leaving no survivors. The Cessna aircraft, operated by Associated Mission Aviation, crashed in Burmey district about one hour after taking-off from the provincial capital Jayapura, the state Antara news agency said. A rescue team has been despatched to the scene to evacuate the bodies of pilot Willy Kocu, 29, and a passenger identified as Alex Tony Rumberan. The weather was good when the accident occurred at around 1000 hrs (0100, UTC), it said.

CRASH, PAYSON AREA, ARIZONA, UNITED STATES

London, Jan 5 — A press report, dated Jan 4, states: Federal investigators are looking for clues into a plane crash north-east of Payson that killed the pilot who was en route to Scottsdale to visit his gravely ill father. Mike Martin died when his Cessna 182 crashed above the Mogollon Rim in the rugged Forest Lakes area. His plane was spotted yesterday following a three-day search. James Nova, spokesperson for the Arizona Wing of the Civil Air Patrol, said Martin had flown a direct route from Durango and was expected at Scottsdale Airport about 1930 hrs, on New Year's Eve. A search party began looking for the overdue plane at 0400 hrs, on New Year's Day. "The pilot of a search aircraft thought he found the plane around 1600 hrs, Tuesday," and called in an Arizona Department of Public Safety helicopter, Nova said. That turned out to be the wreckage from an older crash, but the DPS pilot then discovered Martin's plane about a half-mile

away. Nova said it did not appear weather was a factor in the accident. The Federal Aviation Administration and the National Transportation Safety Board are investigating the cause of the crash.

EMERGENCY LANDING, ARLANDA AIRPORT, STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN

London, Jan 3 — A press report, dated today, states: Eighty-five passengers were evacuated from an Austrian Airlines aircraft as it landed at Stockholm's Arlanda airport this morning. The aircraft, a Fokker 70 arriving from Vienna, experienced technical problems during the landing procedure just before 1030 hrs and the passengers were forced to disembark on the runway. During the approach to Arlanda the pilots noticed that there was something wrong with the aircraft's wheels and emergency services at the airport were put on full alert. The aircraft flew low over the airport so that the ground staff in the control tower could see whether the wheels had emerged. Air traffic at the airport was not affected, since the aircraft had been directed to land on a different runway.

EMERGENCY LANDING, LOS ANGELES, UNITED STATES

See VT-AIM.

EMERGENCY LANDING, NEW YORK, UNITED STATES

London, Dec 30 — A press report dated today, states: An engine fire forced a British Airways jet to return to John F. Kennedy International Airport shortly after taking off last night. One of the four engines on the London-bound Boeing 747 ignited shortly after its 2300 hrs, departure, said John McCarthy, a spokesman for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. The plane landed safely and no one was injured, he said, and the pilot extinguished the fire. Approximately 300 passengers were on Flight 116, which was headed to Heathrow airport, McCarthy said. The passengers and crew were scheduled to take another flight this morning.

N1050F

London, Jan 4 — Cessna 185F (Skywagon) N1050F crashed near Seward, Alaska, at 0001, Jan 2. The aircraft was destroyed. One of the two persons on board was killed and the other was seriously injured.

N1254Z

London, Jan 3 — A press report, dated Jan 2, states: A Laurel pilot was killed Monday when his single-engine airplane crashed in Utah. Thomas Mark Harmon, 50, was flying alone on a work-related trip when the plane went down in Summit County, about five miles from Park City, authorities said. Weather conditions were likely a contributing factor. "It was pretty much whiteout conditions - there was very low visibility, a lot of

snow and a lot of pretty high winds," Summit County Sheriff David Edmunds said. A motorist called authorities about 1300 hrs, to report a low-flying aircraft, and at 1530 hrs, another caller spotted the downed plane, Edmunds said. The plane's fuselage was badly damaged but intact, and the tips of the wings had been sheared off. Harmon, who was found in the pilot's seat, was pronounced dead on the scene. Harmon, who was traveling to Spanish Fork, Utah, to work on a power plant, had logged about 1,000 hours of flight time since taking his first solo flight on March 3, 1999. He bought his plane, a Beechcraft Debonair, in 2001. The Federal Aviation Administration and National Highway Transportation Safety Board were expected to conduct a more thorough investigation beginning today, Edmunds said.

N2169T
London, Jan 3 — Beechcraft Bonanza 35 N1254Z crashed near Heber City, Utah, at 1945, Jan 2, while on a flight from Billings, Montana, to Spanish Fork, UT. The aircraft was destroyed. The one person on board was killed.

N2169T

London, Jan 3 — Piper PA-28-180 (Cherokee) N2169T crashed near Atlanta, Georgia, at 0120, Jan 2, while on a flight from Jacksonville, Florida, to Macon, GA. The aircraft sustained substantial damage. The one person on board was killed.

N22L

London, Jan 3 — A press report, dated Jan 2, states: A shrimp boat today apparently snagged the wreckage of a small plane that crashed last month in the Atlantic Ocean, killing three of the four people on board, officials said. St. Johns County sheriff's Sgt. Chuck Mulligan said the agency believes the plane the boat's crew snagged is the wreckage of the Cessna 195 that crashed on December 18, killing three Rome, Ga., residents. Mulligan said two bodies were recovered today.

N2759M

London, Jan 3 — A press report, dated Jan 2, states: A student pilot and his instructor were rescued today from the Hudson River after their single-engine Piper Warrior crashed near the Yonkers city pier, police said. Instructor John Eberle, 43, of Marlton, N.J., and student Mark Sorey, 44, of Burlington, N.J., were pulled from the water by New York City police and Coast Guard divers, who jumped from rescue helicopters. London, Jan 3 — Piper PA-28-161 (Warrior II) N2759M crashed into the Hudson River near Yonkers, New York, at 1652, Jan 2. The aircraft was destroyed. The two persons on board suffered minor injuries.

N753FE

London, Dec 31 — Cessna 208B Caravan I Super Cargomaster

operated by FedEx/Empire Airlines, N753FE, was cleared for takeoff from runway 3 at Portland, Dec 24. The aircraft did not gain height on takeoff and collided with a glide slope antenna and a fence. It then crash-landed at Broadmoor Golf Course.

N781RS

London, Dec 30 — A press report, dated Dec 29, states: Federal investigators began their probe today into the crash of a Learjet 35A (N781RS) heading from Idaho to California that went down in a fiery crash as it tried to land at an airport north of Lake Tahoe, killing both occupants. Placer County Sheriff Edward N. Bonner said the victims had been tentatively identified, but positive identification was awaiting forensic testing. The aircraft is owned by R.S.B. Investments, based in Washington, Pa., a company that does business as Skyward Aviation, Nelson said. Skyward is an aircraft charter, sales and management company. Investigator Wayne Pollack flew to Truckee today from Los Angeles. He and other members of his team will analyse the wreckage and the weather conditions at the time of the crash. The aircraft attempted to land during a rainy Sierra storm, with winds of 23 mph and gusts hitting more than 40 mph, officials said.

N7944R

London, Jan 3 — Beechcraft Bonanza V35A N7944R crashed near Valley Center, California, at 1650, Dec 31, while on a flight from Valley Center. The aircraft was destroyed. The three persons on board were killed.

N799TM

London, Dec 31 — A press report, dated today, states: A small aircraft crashed into the side of a mountain in western North Carolina yesterday. According to the civil air patrol office in Asheville, it happened on the Macon County-Jackson County line in a remote, heavily wooded area. Two people on board were killed. The single-engine four-seat plane is a Cirrus SR22.

London, Jan 3 — Cirrus SR22 N799TM crashed near Sylva, North Carolina, at 1800, Dec 29, while on a flight from Sylva to Pensacola, Florida. The aircraft was destroyed. The two persons on board were killed.

N8165W

London, Jan 2 — A press report, dated today, states: Two people died and three others were critically injured when an aircraft flying from Indianapolis to Albany, Ga., crashed yesterday afternoon in southwestern Georgia, according to the Federal Aviation Administration. The names of those killed and injured had not been released late Sunday. The multi-engine Beech aircraft registered to Joseph C. Krier, Indianapolis, crashed about 1500 hrs as it attempted an emergency landing at the Dawson

Municipal Airport, about 170 miles southwest of Atlanta, said FAA spokeswoman Kathleen Bergen. The three injured passengers, all of whom were in critical condition at Phoebe-Putney Memorial Hospital in Albany, are believed to be the pilot's children, he said. Two of the passengers, described as young men, were in the intensive care unit, a hospital supervisor said. The other, identified as a young woman, was not in intensive care. Bergen said the aircraft's flight plan showed it was heading from Indianapolis to Albany, Ga., with five people on board. "The circumstances of what happened aren't clear yet," she said. "The plane made at least one attempt to land at Albany, then headed to the Dawson airport." Dawson is about 20 miles north-west of Albany.

London, Jan 3 — Beechcraft Baron D55 N8165W crashed near Dawson, Georgia, at 2000, Jan 1, while on a flight from Indianapolis, Indiana, to Moultrie, GA. The aircraft sustained substantial damage. Two of the five persons on board were killed and the other three were injured.

N9072J

London, Dec 30 — Piper PA-28-180, N9072J, operated by Aerolease of America Inc, with three persons on board, crashed at Millard Highlands, Nebraska, at 1600, UTC, Dec 29. The aircraft was destroyed and the three persons on board were all killed.

P4-AOD

London, Jan 2 — A press report, dated today, states: At least two people were killed when a small aircraft that took off from Moscow with three people onboard crashed in Ukraine today, Russian news agencies reported. The BAe-125 aircraft crashed outside of Kharkiv airport in Ukraine at 1116 hrs, about an hour after taking off from Moscow's Sheremetyevo airport, the Russian Emergency Situations Ministry said. The Ukrainian Emergency Situations Ministry told the Itar-Tass news agency the aircraft was carrying three people, all of them crew members, and at least two of them were found dead. The aircraft fell near a lake and burst into flames when it crashed. Rescuers have found two bodies. The private aircraft was registered in Aruba.

London, Jan 3 — British Aerospace BAe-125-700A, operated by Evolga, P4-AOD, Moskva-Sheremetyevo Airport for Kharkov Airport, crashed near Lake Komsomolskoy at 1116, Jan 2. Two bodies were found, the third occupant is presumed dead.

VT-AIM

London, Dec 29 — Four starboard main body landing gear tyres on Boeing 747-400, VT-AIM, operating as Air India flight 136, blew during take-off from Los Angeles International Airport, at 2030, PST, Dec 19. The captain, first officer, a relief captain, 14 flight attendants, and 256

passengers were not injured, the airplane sustained substantial damage. The flight was originating at the time and was destined for Frankfurt International Airport, Frankfurt. After the event, the aircraft circled off shore to jettison fuel in order to land. The aircraft returned to the airport and landed at 2155 hrs. National Transportation Safety Board investigators and the Federal Aviation Administration accident coordinator examined the aircraft on Dec 20. All of the wheel assemblies had been removed to facilitate recovery of the airplane from the runway. The starboard main body gear wheel assemblies were laid out and examined. The forward rims were intact and the tyre beads remained attached to each rim. Circumferential rub marks were present along the outer lips of the rims. The aft wheel assemblies were more significantly damaged. Both outer lips of the rims were fractured into multiple pieces. The aft hub sections showed considerably more circumferential rubbing than the forward pieces. Shrapnel from the rims penetrated the fuselage structure in multiple locations. There were two approximate 2-foot by 2-foot holes in the lower fuselage. Closer examination showed that three of the rim sections on the outboard, aft wheel assembly were located within the fuselage structure and one had penetrated through the pressure vessel of the aircraft. Investigators noted numerous smaller punctures along the lower fuselage back toward the leading edge of the right horizontal stabilizer and lower portion of the starboard elevator.

Product Recalls



SAAB MOTOR VEHICLES, UNITED STATES

London, Jan 5 — A press report, dated Jan 3, states: General Motors is recalling more than 17,000 Saabs because a defect at the fuel pump connection may lead to vehicle fires, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. General Motors says plastic fuel pump retaining tabs holding the fuel lines were damaged during manufacturing 17,400 Saab 9-3 vehicles at a Finland plant between May 2000 and July 2002. Over time, GM says that could cause the fuel lines to loosen from the pump resulting in fuel leakage. If the leak happens while in the presence of an ignition source, there could be a fire.

Port Conditions



ITALY

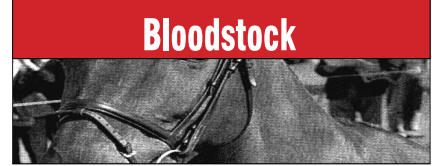
Genoa, Jan 2 — Port situation: Genoa: One bulk carrier and two container vessels awaiting berths. Average berthing delay: one to two

days. Savona: No vessels awaiting berths. La Spezia: No vessels awaiting berths. — Lloyd's Agents.

SYRIA

Lattakia, Dec 17 — Waiting period for Lattakia port two days and for Tartous six days. — Lloyd's Agents. — Lloyd's Agents.

Bloodstock



JEUNE

London, Jan 4 — A press report, dated today, states: Former Melbourne Cup winner Jeune has died of heart failure at the Collingrove stud in Victoria. The horse won the Cup and the Horse of the Year award in 1994. Racing Victoria's Bernard Saundry described Jeune as a legend who was known for his versatility as a racehorse and as a sire. Jeune's progeny have won more than A\$14.2 million in 212 races, including 30 stakes races.

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		
Abbott Point	03-Jan-2006	Coal: 13 vessels due by 24/1; up to 1 day's delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Brisbane	03-Jan-2006	Coal: Fisherman Island coal berth: 4 vessels due by 28/1; no delays expected.
Dalrymple Bay	03-Jan-2006	Coal: 27 vessels due by 13/1; up to 24 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Dampier	03-Jan-2006	Iron ore: Parker Point A berth: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 2 waiting to load; 12 vessels due by 13/1; 3-4 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; Parker Point B berth: 4 vessels due by 14/1; no delays expected; East Intercourse Island: 10 vessels due by 16/1; up to 2 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Geraldton	03-Jan-2006	Iron ore: 1 vessel anchored waiting to load; up to 2 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Gladstone	03-Jan-2006	Coal: R.G. Tanna coal terminal: 2 vessels berthed and loading, 1 berthed and waiting; 44 vessels due by 1/2; 1-10 days berthing delay expected due to port congestion and cargo availability; Barney Point: 1 vessel berthed and loading; 7 vessels due by 13/3; up to 1 day's delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Hay Point	03-Jan-2006	Coal: 1 vessel berthed and loading; 15 vessels due by 12/2; due to an accident on 28/12, shiploader 1 has sustained damage and is expected to be out of action for at least 4 weeks; up to 7 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Newcastle	03-Jan-2006	Coal: Kooragang 4, 5 and 6: 3 vessels berthed and loading; 50 vessels due by 23/1; 9-10 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; 15 vessels off port awaiting berths; Dykes 4+5: 2 vessels berthed and loading; 24 vessels due by 23/1; 7-8 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; 7 vessels off port awaiting coal.
Port Hedland	03-Jan-2006	Iron ore: BHP Iron Ore Pty. Ltd., Mt. Newman (Nelson Point), "A" berth: 2 vessels berthed and waiting; 5 vessels due by 11/1; up to 2 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; "B" berth: 1 vessel berthing; 6 vessels due by 12/1; 1-4 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; BHP Iron Ore Pty. Ltd., Goldsworthy (Finucane Island) "C" berth: 1 vessel due 5/12; no delays expected; "D" berth: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 1 berthed and waiting; 5 vessels due by 13/1; 1-2 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; Cockatoo Island: 4 vessels due by 24/1; up to 1 day's delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Port Kembla	03-Jan-2006	Coal: 12 vessels due by 25/1; no delays expected.
Port Walcott	03-Jan-2006	Iron ore: 2 vessels berthed and loading, 3 vessels waiting to load; 13 vessels due by 20/1; up to 13 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Whyalla	03-Jan-2006	Iron ore: 7 vessels due by 27/1; up to 1 day's delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Bulgaria		
Bourgas	03-Jan-2006	Thirteen vessels in port operating, of which 11 loading (1 bulk ammonium nitrate, 1 reinforced concrete, 6 coils, 1 sunflower seeds, 1 steel sheets, 1 lead), 2 discharging (1 coal, 1 wheat); 5 vessels in roads, of which 2 to load (1 coils, 1 empty vessel), 3 to discharge (1 iron ore, 1 coils, 1 salt); 13 vessels due, of which 4 to load (1 sunflower seeds, 1 containers, 1 trucks, 1 equipment), 9 to discharge (1 coke, 1 billets, 2 coal, 1 containers, 1 trucks, 1 manganese ore, 1 salt, 1 equipment).
Chile		
Antofagasta	02-Jan-2006	Four vessels berthed, 3 berths vacant; 20 vessels due this week to load/discharge concentrates, bulk copper, containers and general cargo.
Arica	02-Jan-2006	Four vessels berthed, 3 berths vacant; 21 vessels due this week.
Iquique	02-Jan-2006	Three vessels berthed, 4 berths vacant; 18 vessels due this week.
Lirquen	02-Jan-2006	Four vessels at terminal, 2 berths vacant; 20 vessels due this week.
Puerto Montt	02-Jan-2006	Two vessels at terminal, 1 berth vacant; 7 vessels due this week.
Punta Arenas	02-Jan-2006	Five vessels at terminal, 2 berths vacant; 13 vessels due this week.
San Antonio	02-Jan-2006	Seven vessels berthed, 2 berths vacant; 21 vessels due this week.
San Vicente	02-Jan-2006	Two vessels berthed, 3 berths vacant; 18 vessels due during the week; Steel pier: 1 vessel at terminal, 1 berth vacant; 2 vessels due this week; Coronel pier: 2 vessels at terminal, 2 berths vacant; 7 vessels due this week; Oil terminal: 1 tanker at terminal, 1 berth vacant; 1 tanker due this week.
Valparaiso	02-Jan-2006	Four vessels berthed, 4 berths vacant; 5 vessels anchored; 21 vessels due this week.
Cyprus		
Larnaca	03-Jan-2006	Four conventional vessels discharging at berth; 2 conventional vessels due 4/1; no delays expected.
Limassol	03-Jan-2006	Seven container vessels loading/discharging at berth, 1 conventional vessel discharging at berth; 7 container vessels, 2 conventional vessels due 4/1; no delays expected.

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Port Conditions

Egypt

Adabiya	02-Jan-2006	Six vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 1 general cargo, 3 bulk carriers, 2 containers.
Alexandria	02-Jan-2006	Forty-nine vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 32 general cargo, 12 bulk carriers, 3 container vessels, 2 tankers; 32 vessels dry-docked; 12 vessels at inner anchorage, 14 at outer anchorage.
Damietta	02-Jan-2006	Twenty-one vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 15 general cargo, 3 bulk carriers, 1 Ro/Ro, 2 containers; 5 vessels at outer anchorage, 1 at inner anchorage.
Dekheila	02-Jan-2006	Nine vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 2 general cargo, 6 bulk carriers, 1 container vessel; 2 vessels at outer anchorage.
Port Said	02-Jan-2006	Five vessels berthed (loading/discharging), all containers.
Suez	02-Jan-2006	Ten vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 2 general cargo, 1 tanker, 3 reefers, 4 passenger vessels; 3 tugs, 1 vessel dry-docked.
Suez Canal	02-Jan-2006	Twenty-four vessels transiting Northbound, 23 Southbound.

Estonia

Tallinn	03-Jan-2006	Paljassaare (formerly Kopli): 2 vessels loading at berth (1 fertiliser, 1 coal); no vessels waiting at anchorage; 2 vessels due, with 7 days berthing delay expected.
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Israel

Ashdod	03-Jan-2006	One general cargo vessel loading at berth, 9 vessels discharging at berth (6 general cargo, 3 bulkers), 4 container vessels loading/discharging at berth; 4 container vessels waiting at anchorage to load/discharge; 1 vessel awaiting orders; 18 vessels due, with 2-3 days delay expected.
Haifa	03-Jan-2006	Five vessels discharging at berth (4 general cargo, 1 bulker), 5 container vessels loading/discharging at berth; 1 container vessel waiting at anchorage to load/discharge; 7 vessels under repairs/dry-docked, none awaiting orders; 20 vessels due, with 2-3 days delay expected.

Mozambique

Maputo	03-Jan-2006	Twenty-four hour berthing/sailing. There are some restrictions to berthing at certain badly lit wharves. Vessels have to be geared for general cargo berths as shore cranes are very few and unreliable. The Port is working normally and is expected to remain so, hence vessels should berth on arrival, daylight, draft and weather permitting. No berthing delays envisaged. A shortage of equipment is being experienced (except at the Container terminal). Shed space is currently available. Safe draft for transiting the channel is 9.1 metres plus the tide of the day. Density of water varies from 1.020 to 1.023. Vessels with ramps on starboard side can berth with the ebbing tide. Should ramps be portside, vessels to berth with the flowing tide. Pilot launch is operational. Both tugs are operational. Leading lights are lit. One container gantry is operational, the second is under repairs. Matola coal terminal is operational. Ressano Garcia, Goba and Limpopo railway lines are all operational. Seven vessels are currently in port berthed, of which 1 loading bulk coal, 3 discharging (1 frozen fish, 1 bagged rice, 1 bulk maize), 1 transshipping bulk wheat/soya, 1 discharging/loading containers, 1 dredger; 1 vessel due to berth 3/1 to load ferro chrome; 21 vessels due by 24/1 of which 5 to load (2 bulk coal, 2 bagged sugar, 1 other cargo), 7 to discharge (1 vegetable oil, 1 vehicles/bagged alumina, 1 bagged rice, 1 vehicles, 1 bulk alumina, 1 bulk wheat, 1 petcoke), 6 to discharge/load (4 containers, 1 containers/steel cargo, 1 petcoke/aluminium ingots), 2 passenger vessels, 1 other vessel.
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Pakistan

Karachi	03-Jan-2006	Five vessels loading at berth (1 ethanol, 1 naphtha, 1 MOL, 1 rice, 1 cement), 9 discharging at berth (1 crude oil, 1 scrap, 2 steel coils, 2 urea, 2 general cargo, 1 phosphate), 4 container vessels loading/discharging at berth; 2 vessels waiting at anchorage to load (1 containers, 1 MOL), 5 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (1 containers, 1 general cargo, 1 scrap, 1 MEG, 1 chemicals); no vessels bunkering, none under repairs/dry-docked, 1 awaiting orders; 5 vessels due (2 containers, 3 general cargo), with no berthing delays expected.
Port Qasim	03-Jan-2006	Two vessels discharging at berth (1 jute, 1 canola), 1 container vessel discharging/loading at QICT berth; 4 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (2 palm oil, 1 jute, 1 MEG).

Russia

Novorossiysk	02-Jan-2006	Twenty-three vessels in port operating, of which 18 loading (2 pipes, 1 bulk cement, 1 bulk urea, 1 scrap, 1 H-beams/steel billets/cars, 1 steel billets/tin plates/steel sheets/coils, 1 pipes/steel sheets/steel billets, 2 steel billets, 1 bulk ammonium nitrate, 1 aluminium, 1 slabs, 2 wheat, 1 barley, 1 diesel oil, 1 UAN solution), 4 discharging (2 bulk sugar, 1 citrus, 1 products), 1 discharging/loading containers; 16 vessels waiting in roads of which 12 to load (1 pipes, 2 diesel oil, 1 slabs, 1 coils/WRIC, 1 bulk cement, 1 bulk NPK, 1 steel billets, 1 coils/tin plates/steel sheets/pipes, 1 coils, 1 wheat, 1 copper), 4 to discharge citrus; 75 vessels due, of which 73 to load (2 DRI, 2 bulk fertiliser, 3 bulk ammonium nitrate, 7 aluminium, 1 pipes/steel billets, 10 bulk urea, 2 bulk ammonium nitrate/bulk NPK, 7 steel billets, 1 WRIC, 2 UAN solution, 4 slabs, 5 copper, 6 bulk NPK, 5 coils, 1 slabs/coils, 4 wheat, 1 pipes, 1 soda ash, 1 steel
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Port Conditions

billets/coils/steel sheets, 3 oil, 1 HBI, 1 coils/tin plate, 1 scrap, 1 steel billets/slabs, 1 tin plates), 1 to discharge debars, 1 to load/discharge containers; Oil terminal: 3 tankers berthed, all loading, of which 2 crude oil, 1 diesel oil; 6 tankers in roads, all to load, of which 5 crude oil, 1 diesel oil; 19 tankers due, all to load, of which 16 crude oil, 1 fuel oil, 2 diesel oil.

Slovenia

Koper	03-Jan-2006	Fifteen vessels berthed of which 1 discharging/loading containers, 3 car carriers discharging/loading vehicles, 3 vessels discharging bulk cargo, 2 loading bulk cargo, 5 loading sawn timber/general cargo, 1 tanker discharging liquid cargo; 8 vessels waiting at anchorage of which 3 to discharge bulk cargo, 3 to load bulk cargo, 1 to load sawn timber, 1 tanker to discharge liquid cargo; 20 vessels due over the next 2 days of which 4 to discharge/load containers, 4 car carriers to discharge/load vehicles, 1 vessel to discharge bulk cargo, 5 to load bulk cargo, 5 to load sawn timber/general cargo, 1 to discharge general cargo.
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Spain

Cadiz	03-Jan-2006	Nineteen vessels in port of which 9 operating (3 Ro/Ros, 2 containers, 1 minerals, 1 charcoal, 1 shipbuilding materials, 1 sand), 10 vessels under repair; no delays.
Sagunto	03-Jan-2006	Fifteen vessels in port operating, of which 2 loading (1 steel products, 1 bulk fertiliser), 13 discharging (11 steel products, 1 anhydrous ammonia, 1 machinery); no vessels outside commercial wharf; no berthing delays at present.

Sri Lanka

Colombo	02-Jan-2006	Berthing/unberthing (pilotage) delays being experienced on breakbulk/conventional vessels. Delays to conventional vessels are due to the fact that container/feeder vessels are given priority at breakbulk berths if there is container congestion. Conventional cargo vessels at BQ 1 and 2 are facing navigation delays. Six container/feeder vessels loading at berth, 15 vessels discharging at berth (6 containers/feeders, 3 bulk palm oil, 2 bagged maize, 1 bagged fertiliser, 2 steel cargoes, 1 bulk cement); 2 container/feeder vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge; 4 vessels dry-docked, 1 at dolphin tanker berth; 8 vessels due (7 containers/feeders, 1 bulk cement), with no delays expected.
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Ukraine

Ilichevsk	03-Jan-2006	Ten vessels in port operating, of which 7 loading (5 steel products, 1 trucks, 1 equipment), 3 discharging/loading (2 containers, 1 containers/steel products); 2 vessels in roads, both to load, of which 1 steel products, 1 sunflower oil; 23 vessels due, of which 13 to load (10 steel products, 2 sunflower oil, 1 ferro nickel), 3 to discharge ore, 7 to discharge/load containers.
Mariupol	03-Jan-2006	Twelve vessels in port operating, all to load, of which 6 steel, 2 sulphur, 1 fire-clay, 2 coal, 1 wheat; 29 vessels in roads, of which 27 to load (18 steel, 2 coke, 3 coal, 1 sulphur, 1 barley, 1 bran, 1 fire-clay), 1 to discharge heavy lift cargo, 1 to discharge/load magnetite/steel products; 34 vessels due, of which 30 to load (16 steel, 7 coal, 1 coke, 1 sulphur, 1 bran, 1 pitch, 1 sunflower beans, 2 sunflower beans/husks), 2 to discharge (1 citrus, 1 containers), 2 to discharge/load containers.
Odessa	03-Jan-2006	Eighteen vessels in port operating, of which 11 loading (5 metal, 2 pig-iron, 1 corn, 1 wheat, 1 pitch, 1 LNG), 4 discharging (2 luggage, 1 car parts, 1 sand), 2 loading/discharging containers, 1 passenger vessel; 4 vessels in roads, of which 3 to load (1 oil, 2 metal), 1 to discharge citrus; 65 vessels due, of which 28 to load (18 metal, 5 pig-iron, 2 corn, 1 timber, 1 general cargo, 1 lubricants), 6 to discharge (1 meat, 2 vegetable oil, 2 bananas, 1 sugar), 31 to discharge/load containers.

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