

Charterers 'did not check' oil spill master's certificates

Solar 1 captain's papers had expired, writes Marcus Hand — Thursday August 31 2006

THE master of Solar 1, which caused the Philippines' worst ever oil spill, has admitted his certificates were out of date but alleges that charterers did not care.

Solar 1 master Noberto Aguro told the Philippines Special Board of Maritime Inquiry that his certificates in general tanker familiarisation and advance training on chemical tanker operations had expired in 2002.

However, he also alleged that major charterers did not appear to see this as a problem.

"Caltex, Petron and Shell evaluated my papers and they did not say anything. Once they saw the chemical tanker, there were no questions about my papers," Capt Aguro told the SBMI.

This allegation flies in the face of the strict vetting oil majors say they carry out.

The admission will no doubt put further pressure on part state-owned charterer Petron, which, according to one source close to the company, is being targeted in the investigation as it is seen as having "deeper pockets" than the vessel's owner.

The age of the vessel has also come under scrutiny, with environmental group Greenpeace reportedly describing the 55-year-old vessel as a "floating relic".

An industry source said that such ageing vessels were common in the Philippines domestic trades.

An engineer who inspected the vessel after a drydocking in February told the

inquiry that the vessel was in good condition, and all fingers would now seem to be pointing towards human error on the part of the master.

According to local television, Capt Aguro said that the tanker left the port of Bataan on August 9 and encountered rough weather after reaching Mindoro.

He added that he decided to navigate the ship straight to the west of Panay instead of a longer route east of the island to save on fuel.

The vessel's owner, Sunshine Maritime, placed the blame for the incident squarely on the master, citing his choice to proceed in bad weather.

"In hindsight, I would say he made the wrong decision," Sunshine Maritime president Clemente Cancio told the inquiry.

Mr Cancio said the master was "given the discretion whether or not to proceed".

The oil spill of around 500,000 litres of bunker fuel has affected 61 km of coastline in an area that is heavily dependent on fishing.

Stranded Edco crew faces longer ordeal

THE Egyptian crew of a bulk carrier stranded in Charleston for more than two months face three further weeks on board following a court ruling that the vessel must be sold, writes David Osler.

District judge David Norton has ordered an auction of the ship on September 21.

The hope is that the vessel will raise around \$2m, which will be set aside while legal claims are settled.

Edco (38,300 dwt, built 1980) was seized in June after a Hong Kong company filed a suit against its owner, named in US media reports as Misr Edco of Egypt.

The vessel had delivered a load of salt from Chile and was preparing to depart for South America.

None of the crew has a US visa and Customs and Border Protection has hired private security to make sure they remain on board.

They will not be allowed to leave the vessel unless they have plane tickets, a customs spokeswoman confirmed.

The crew claims not to have been paid for nine months and to receive no assistance from the owner.

Local charities have ensured that the crew has adequate supplies, especially drinking water.

But water for hygiene purposes has been in short supply and the lack of opportunity to take showers has caused some of the seafarers to suffer from skin fungus.

The master has had hospital treatment following a heart attack.

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

Vessel	Type	Flag	Class	GT	DWT	Bit	Casualty
<i>ANNA SOPHIE DEDE</i>	container	ATG	GL	9,981	11,382	2001	Sustained total machinery failure due fault in the coolwater circuit, an hour after leaving Kiel Holtenau locks Aug 20. Grounded. Refloated by tugs and towed to Kiel for inspection. Sailed Kiel Aug 21 after investigation.
<i>ATLANTIC FOREST</i>	barge	USA	ABS	37,460	40,881	1984	Reported fire in engine-room while moored at Mile Marker 93, lower Mississippi, Aug 23. Crew evacuated. Firefighting vessel on scene. Hatch secured and carbon dioxide system activated.
<i>BEAUFORT SEA</i>	tug	USA	ABS	391	—	1971	Reported fire in engine-room 127 miles south-south-east of Cameron, Louisiana, in lat 27 47N long 92 23W, Aug 21. Extinguished by crew. Taken in tow of Lady Neva bound for Bollinger, Texas City. ETA Aug 23.
<i>BOA QUEEN</i>	tug/	CYM	NV	2,655	2,200	2001	Arrived at the Curacao Drydock Co, Curacao, Aug 17, after a fire in the engine-room.
<i>CMA CGM AEGEAN</i>	container	LBR	GL	30,280	35,966	1996	Had an oil outflow in the Odessa port area Aug 21. City beaches polluted. Damages estimated at several million US dollars.
<i>FINNMAID</i>	ro-ro	FIN	NV	42,100	9,300	2006	Had steering problem, but able to berth at Helsinki Aug 21, with tug assistance. Sailed same day. ETA Bremerhaven Aug 24 for repairs at Lloyd Werft. ETC 4 days.
<i>FUTAMI</i>	general	PAN	LR	12,963	20,963	1986	Had serious engine problems Jul 18 and towed into Jeddah, where arrived Aug 10. Repairs effected, sailed 13 Aug and passed Suez Canal Aug 16.
<i>GLENORA</i>	passenger	CAN	—	210	—	—	Sustained total machinery loss due clutch problems in lat 44 03N, long 77 01W, Aug 21. Bay of Quinte, Ontario. Secured same day for repairs.
<i>GULSUM ANA</i>	bulker	TUR	—	19,864	33,423	1975	Reported Aug 17 salvage services being rendered since Aug 15 in the southern Red Sea due spontaneous combustion in cargo of coal. Anchored south of Victor berth No.8, Port Said.
<i>KOLMANSKOP</i>	trawler	NAM	—	341	223	1980	Broke free from moorings at Walvis Bay due strong winds 15 Aug 2006 and grounded on rocks at Vierkantlip, just south of Swakopmund. Still aground Aug 21.
<i>LOUIS S. ST-LAURENT</i>	icebreaker	CAN	—	11,441	4,714	1969	Sustained total propulsion failure in all three shafts in 75 35N 156 17W 19 Aug 2006. Drifting in loose ice. Reported Aug 23 in lat 75 24N 157 12W, still drifting.
<i>PACIFIC SAPPHIRE</i>	crude oil tanker	MHL	LR	53,830	96,173	1994	Lost steering and grounded 200 feet south of Light 64, Mobile Ship Channel Aug 22. No damage/pollution reported. Refloated, effected repair to steering gear and arrived Shell Dock, Mobile Aug 23 for survey.
<i>RHONEBORG</i>	container	NLD	LR	18,144	20,027	1993	Had steering failure between Hong Kong and Zhangzhou Aug 14. Towed to Hong Kong by <i>Salvage Queen</i> , where arrived Aug 20 for drydocking.

CONTENTS

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

Marine, including Overdue & Missing Vessels	1
Port State Control	15
Seizures & Arrests	15
Pipeline Accidents	16
Pollution	16
Weather & Navigation	17
Earthquakes	21
Volcanic Activity	22
Political & Civil Unrest	23
Kidnappings	29
Labour Disputes	29
Awards & Settlements	30
Railway Accidents	31
Miscellaneous	32
Fires & Explosions	33
Aviation	36
Space Vehicles	38
Product Recalls	38
Port Conditions	39
Port Conditions charts	40

© Lloyd's MIU 2006 These reports may not be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photographic, recorded or otherwise without the prior written permission of the publisher.



The following reports are reprinted from Lloyd's List



AL MAHA (North Korea)

London, Aug 17 — Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 1850, UTC: Bulker *Al Maha* has been repaired and is now awaiting survey.

London, Aug 18 — Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 1131, UTC: Bulker *Al Maha* is currently at Kalimnos anchorage, awaiting survey.

AL MANARA (St. Kitts-Nevis)

Victoria, Aug 23 — An Iraqi captain was saved from marauding Somali pirates by U.S. Marines, and made sails with old cloth to power his 3,000-ton general cargo *Al Manara* to the Seychelles when the engines failed. A court on the Indian Ocean islands today ordered the the Dominican Republic-registered vessel to be sold so the captain could pay debts of almost \$300,000, which included the cost of towing the ship and several months' unpaid wages for his crew. The master and his 17-man crew were rescued from Somali pirates in December by U.S. Marines from the destroyer *USS Roosevelt* who saved it and its cargo of charcoal. — Reuters.

ALBI HELLAS (Greece)

London, Aug 21 — Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: During the afternoon of Aug 19, fire broke out in a crew cabin of passenger ro/ro *Albi Hellas*, 592 gt, built 1977, Piraeus Registry 5865, while the vessel was anchored at Rion. The fire was extinguished by the crew without injuries or pollution. The Port Authority of Rion prohibited departure pending inspection of the repairs.

AMAR (Singapore)

See *Bright Artemis*.

ANNA (Georgia)

London, Aug 23 — Chemical tanker *Anna* arrived at Kaliningrad on Aug 16 from Liepaja.

Riga, Aug 22 — Chemical tanker *Anna* sailed (from Liepaja) at 1650 hrs, Aug 15, bound for Kaliningrad. — Lloyd's Agents.

ANNA SOPHIE DEDE (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Aug 21 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: On the way to Rotterdam container carrier *Anna Sophie Dede* (9981 gt, built 2001) sustained a total machine failure following a fault in the coolwater circuit in the Kiel Canal at 1100, local time, Aug 20, one hour after leaving Kiel Holtenau locks. In spite of attempting an emergency anchoring with the starboard anchor it ran aground on the south embankment of the canal, a short distance before the passing point Neuwittenbek at canal kilometre 90. As the master

realised that he was unable to refloat his ship, the tugs *Kitzeberg* and *Holtenau* of SFK Kiel were contracted. They arrived at 1200 hrs and about one hour later the vessel was refloated and towed to the Kiel north harbour for divers inspection. The Kiel Canal had been totally closed for two hours. It is unclear when the voyage to Rotterdam will be resumed.

London, Aug 22 — Following received from Kiel, dated today: Container Carrier *Anna Sophie Dede* departed from Kiel at 1640 hrs, yesterday, after completion of investigations. The vessel was bound for Rotterdam via Brunsbuttel.

APL ITALY (Liberia)

London, Aug 23 — An APL Customer Advisory, dated Aug 8, states: An inspection in New Jersey of the chartered Container Carrier *APL Italy* (50243 gt, built 2002) has shown problems with the ship's rudder that will require repairs before it can return to service. In the meantime, here is an update on the status of your cargo: All cargo onboard *APL Italy* has been discharged in New Jersey. Much of that cargo has been transferred to *APL Malaysia* and is en route to final destination ports. Remaining cargo will be loaded onto *APL Turquoise* this week and transported to final destination ports. You may experience a delay of at most two weeks in receipt of your cargo. We will notify customers when their cargo is available for pick-up. The vessel's owners have declared General Average as a result of the incident. However, as a special accommodation to our customers, APL will assume responsibility for our customer's General Average obligations, if any. APL customers will not be subject to any General Average contribution in this matter. Once cargo arrives at its final destination port and all normal clearances have been completed, it will be available for pick-up. (Note — *APL Italy* arrived New York 0400, July 25 and according to Lloyd's MIU AIS was in lat 37 32 16N, long 74 11 19W, at 0324, Aug 17, course 193 degrees, speed 7 knots, and subsequently arrived Freeport, Bahamas, for repairs, in tow of salvage tug *Powhatan* at 0900 yesterday.)

ASTRO LUNA (Greece)

London, Aug 23 — Crude oil tanker *Astro Luna* arrived at Ulsan on Aug 19.

ATLANTIC FOREST (U.S.A.)

London, Aug 23 — Following received from Coast Guard New Orleans, timed 1442, UTC: Barge carrier *Atlantic Forest* (37460 gt, built 1984) reported a fire in the engine-room at 1240, UTC, today, while moored at Mile Marker 93, Lower Mississippi River. All the vessel's crew were safely evacuated. The New Orleans Fire Department responded to the incident, along with firefighting vessel *General Kelly*. The vessel's hatch has been secured and the carbon dioxide firefighting system has been activated.

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

ATLANTIC ODYSSEY (Canada)

Halifax, Aug 23 — Fishing (general) *Atlantic Odyssey* called at Shelburne, NS, to the owner's dock facility. Rectified problems and departed the port, date not known. — Lloyd's Agents.

BANGLAR SHOURABH (Bangladesh)

Chittagong, Aug 23 — GM-Ship Repair have advised that the owners of crude oil tanker *Banglar Shourabh*, Bangladesh Shipping Corporation (BSC), have already received settlement from the respective Hull & Machinery underwriters, "after deducting the salvage value of the damaged wreck". The owners also report that the vessel is presently undergoing temporary repairs on a "no cure, no pay" basis. The work is being carried out by an outside contractor: Karnaphuli Ship Builders, of Chittagong, from whom BSC has obtained a financial sum, as a security deposit. If the contractor can repair the vessel, BSC intends to tow the vessel to Chittagong Dry Dock for permanent repairs. — Lloyd's Agents.

BEAUFORT SEA (U.S.A.)

London, Aug 23 — Following received from Coast Guard New Orleans, timed 1442, UTC: Tug *Beaufort Sea* (391 gt, built 1971) reported a fire in the engine-room 127 nautical miles south-south-east of Cameron, Louisiana, in lat 27 47N, long 92 23E, at 0648, UTC, Aug 21. The fire was extinguished by the vessel's crew. Tug *Lady Neva* took the vessel in tow for Bollinger Shipyard, Texas City, ETA 1500, UTC, today.

BOA QUEEN (Cayman Islands)

Portsmouth, UK, Aug 17 — Tug/supply *Boa Queen* (2655 gt, built 2001) arrived at the Curacao Drydock Company, Curacao, after a fire in the engine-room. — Correspondent.

BOULARIBANK (Isle of Man)

Manila, Aug 18 — Roll On Roll Off Container Car *Boularibank* is still in Davao and her destination and date of sailing is still undetermined to date. No repair has been effected, nor is there any repair plan while she is in Davao. — Lloyd's Agents.

BREAKSEA (U.K.)

London, Aug 23 — Product tanker *Breaksea* sailed from Dublin on Jul 14.

BRIGHT ARTEMIS (Singapore)

London, Aug 17 — A Mitsui O.S.K. Lines, Ltd press release, dated Tokyo today, states: Mitsui O.S.K. Lines, Ltd. (MOL, President: Akimitsu Ashida) reports that the MOL-owned crude oil tanker *Bright Artemis* which sustained a gash on its hull above the water during a rescue operation of a distressed vessel, (general cargo *Amar*) is now proceeding toward the sea off the shore of Penang. On the day of the incident, Aug 14, crude oil was leaked from the damaged part of *Bright Artemis* and its volume is estimated to about 4,500 tons or less.

However, there have been no further spillages. MOL sent six oil spill control and response experts to the site yesterday to examine the status of the oil spillage. According to radio communications with our marine experts on the charter plane that transported the six experts; there were some oil patches of a few square metres found at the site, but a broad oil sheen was not observed. MOL received an opinion from the oil spill control and response experts on the plane - they recommend not to use treatments such as spreading dispersant at the area under the current status of the spill. Also, masters of two oil tankers and one car carrier, all owned by MOL, informed MOL that they did not observe any oil sheen in the area of the incident when they sailed through the area. There is a high possibility that the crude oil that was spilled in the area of the incident is evaporating quickly. In addition to the fact that crude oil is light-sulphur and has high volatility, sea water's high temperature of 30 degrees Celsius and strong winds and high waves in the monsoon season may become factors which allow for the quick evaporation of the oil. MOL is going to keep the surveillance of the site. The chartered plane left Singapore 0710, JST, yesterday and observed the sea area between lat 06 30N, long 90 00E, and lat 05 40N, long 88 50E, which include the area of the incident by flying in zigzags for two hours from 1200 to 1400 hrs at an altitude of 50 metres.

London, Aug 17 — Following navigation warning issued at 1525, UTC, Aug 16: Derelict general cargo *Amar* is currently adrift in lat 06 14.3N, long 89 51E.

London, Aug 18 — Emergency repairs to crude oil tanker *Bright Artemis* are expected to start in the next few days, off the coast of Penang, Malaysia. Tanker owner Mitsui OSK Lines yesterday confirmed that the vessel, which was gashed trying to rescue the crew of general cargo *Amar*, was close to Penang. MOL spokesman Kenji Shikano said repairs would be done at sea. Crew on board *Bright Artemis* redistributed oil from the two ruptured tanks to other undamaged tanks. MOL said an aerial survey of the casualty area, by six oil spill and response specialists, found some oil patches covering a few square metres, but no major oil slick. The aircraft flew over the area for two hours at a height of 50 metres.

London, Aug 22 — Following navigation warning issued at 0738, UTC, Aug 21: Derelict general cargo *Amar* adrift in lat 05 45N, long 89 02E.

London, Aug 23 — Mitsui OSK Lines was unable to confirm broker reports that it has booked the tanker *Oriental Venture* to transport crude oil from its crude oil tanker *Bright Artemis* which sustained damage in the Indian Ocean last week. A broker told Reuters the 255,000 dwt single-hulled *Oriental Venture* is expected to take on the cargo from the VLCC *Bright Artemis*

via a ship-to-ship transfer operation. *Bright Artemis* is currently anchored 10 miles west of Malaysia's Penang port. An MOL spokesman said the vessel will be repaired where it is lying at anchor. As MOL was not prepared to confirm the Reuters story it is not possible to ascertain where such a transfer of cargo might take place. *Bright Artemis* had been carrying 249,997 tonnes of crude oil from Oman's Mina Al Fahal and Saudi Arabia's Ras Tanura terminal when it was holed above the water line by the 14,680 dwt container vessel *Amar* during an operation intended to rescue the latter vessel after it caught fire on Aug 14. About 4,500 tonnes of oil spilled into the eastern Indian Ocean from the single-hull tanker after its sustained a five metres long, one metre high gash on the starboard side about 1.7 metres above the water line.

CANADIAN PROGRESS (Canada)

London, Aug 24 — Bulker *Canadian Progress* arrived at Duluth on Aug 22.

CAPE FINISTERRE (Antigua & Barbuda)

Balboa, Aug 17 — Refrigerated general cargo *Cape Finisterre* remains in port at Balboa and understand repairs will be effected locally, with expected date of departure of late August or early September. — Lloyd's Agents.

CELEBRATION (Panama)

London, Aug 18 — A press report, dated Aug 17, states: Passenger (cruise) *Celebration* docked at Jacksonville early this morning, after the Coast Guard said it was safe to return to port. Divers with Carnival examined the propellers on *Celebration*. The vessel is scheduled to set sail on its next voyage at 1600 hrs this afternoon.

London, Aug 18 — A press release, dated Aug 18, states: Passenger (cruise) *Celebration* arrived Jacksonville at 0130 hrs, this morning and left for another cruise at 1630 hrs. Both the Coast Guard and Carnival Cruise Lines said *Celebration* is safe to go to sea, despite the damaged propeller. The propeller problem cannot be fixed at Jacksonville. *Celebration* is too big to fit in Atlantic Marine's dry dock, on the St. Johns River. So the vessel took passengers on a new cruise to the Bahamas, with one broken propeller. Because the vessel cannot sail at its best speed, the cruise line has decided to drop a planned stop in Freeport from this new trip's schedule, instead spending more time in Nassau. Carnival gave passengers scheduled to sail Thursday the option of a full refund for their tickets. A Bahamas cruise on board *Celebration*, scheduled for next week, has been canceled by Carnival. The vessel will, instead, head to a dry dock facility at Freeport, Bahamas, for repairs. The more than 1,000 passengers scheduled for that voyage will be given full refunds and offered a future cruise at half price.

London, Aug 21 — Damage to the propulsion system of Carnival Cruise Lines' passenger (cruise) *Celebration* has forced the company to cancel a five-day cruise set to start today so the vessel can be drydocked for repairs. Because the technical problem had reduced the vessel's sailing speed it had to alter the itinerary of a four-day cruise from Jacksonville this week with one call at Freeport being cancelled. Passengers on this week's cruise each received a \$100 credit to shipboard accounts and a 20% discount off a future three to seven-day cruise. Passengers on next week's cruise will receive a full refund in addition to a 50% discount on a future cruise. US Coast Guard inspectors went on board the vessel this week while it was returning to Jacksonville after going aground when entering the port of Nassau.

CEMFJORD (Cyprus)

Belfast, Aug 17 — Bulk cement carrier *Cemfjord* sailed from Londonderry on Aug 13 bound for Goole. — Lloyd's Agents.

CENWULF (U.K.)

London, Aug 23 — A press report, dated today, states: Engine problems forced the 1315 hrs Wightlink passenger ro/ro *Cenwulf* (761 gt, built 1973) bound for Yarmouth to return to Lymington on Sunday (Aug 20). *Cenwulf* returned to Lymington with only one engine. The vessel had a problem with an oil pump, which is being investigated by Wightlink. The Solent Coastguard and the Maritime Accident Investigation Bureau (MAIB) were informed in line with standard procedure, according to a Wightlink spokesman. *Cenwulf*, which had been carrying 94 passengers and 28 cars, was back in service by 1815 hrs.

CHALLENGER II (New Zealand)

Portsmouth, UK, Aug 19 — Two Nelson fishermen were plucked from their liferaft this morning after their fishing trawler sank about 130km south of Greymouth. The crew of 17m fishing (general) *Challenger II* (50 gt), believed to be owned by the Fortune Fishing Company in Whangarei, radioed a distress call at 0100, local time, initially requesting a portable pump when their engine-room flooded. Shortly afterwards, the call turned to a mayday and the two men abandoned ship in their liferaft in two metre swells. *Challenger II* sank at around 0345. The men were rescued by the factory stern trawler *Amaltal Columbia*, the large 38-man crew ship picking up the men in its rescue craft at about 0600. *Amaltal Columbia* master Shane Wells, who was just about to go to bed, said they heard over the Greymouth maritime radio that the men were requesting a pump. "I couldn't hear his end of the conversation but I understand he was taking on water." Thirty minutes later when the mayday came out he was about half an hour away, 28 miles off the coast. The *Amaltal Columbia* crew spoke with the *Challenger II* master

and then headed for its position, travelling at 13 knots but the crew abandoned ship 30 minutes after the last call. "Before they left they knew we were on our way, about 30 minutes away." Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre also dispatched a rescue helicopter from Te Anau with special night vision equipment on board. Centre spokesman Lindsay Sturt said the men kept in touch with rescue authorities from a cellphone in the liferaft. As *Amaltal Columbia* approached at around 0600 the *Challenger II* crew fired off two flares, which Mr Wells spotted, guiding the large trawler slowly to the liferaft by the men using a flashlight. The weather was poor with rain and reasonably high seas. "There was not a lot of wind but possibly a 2m swell, so for a small boat it took a bit of a pounding." The crew was taken on board, where they showered and were given spare clothing. The helicopter arrived to winch them off the bow of *Amaltal Columbia* at about 0700. Mr Sturt said the two men were suffering from shock, but were otherwise unharmed, and they were taken by the helicopter to Hokitika. Mr Wells said the boat owner was depressed by the vessel's loss, but relieved that he knew help was coming and they would be rescued. Mr Sturt said that Maritime New Zealand would investigate the incident. "We'll have Accident Investigation talk to the fishermen and the company." — Correspondent.

Wellington, Aug 20 — A local press report, dated Aug 19, states: Two Nelson fishermen were plucked from their liferaft this morning after their fishing trawler sank about 130km south of Greymouth. The crew of fishing *Challenger II*, a 50 tonne, 17m boat believed to be owned by the Fortune Fishing Company in Whangarei, radioed a distress call at 0100, initially requesting a portable pump when their engine room flooded. Shortly afterwards, the call turned to a mayday and the two men abandoned ship in their liferaft in 2m swells. The *Challenger II* sank around 0345. The men were rescued by the factory stern trawler *Amaltal Columbia*, the large 38-man crew vessel picking up the men in its rescue craft about 0600. *Amaltal Columbia* captain Shane Wells, who was just about to go to bed, said they heard over the Greymouth maritime radio that the men were requesting a pump. "I couldn't hear his end of the conversation but I understand he was taking on water." Thirty minutes later when the mayday came out he was about half an hour away, 28 miles off the coast. The *Amaltal Columbia* crew spoke with the *Challenger II* captain and then headed for its position, travelling at 13 knots but the crew abandoned ship 30 minutes after the last call. "Before they left they knew we were on our way, about 30 minutes away." Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre also dispatched a rescue helicopter from Te Anau with special night vision equipment on board. Centre spokesman Lindsay Sturt said the men

kept in touch with rescue authorities from a cellphone in the liferaft. As the *Columbia* approached around 0600 the *Challenger II* crew fired off two flares, which Mr Wells spotted, guiding the large trawler slowly to the liferaft by the men using a flashlight. The weather was poor with rain and reasonably high seas. "There was not a lot of wind but possibly a 2m swell, so for a small boat it took a bit of a pounding." The crew was taken on board, where they showered and were given spare clothing. The helicopter arrived to winch them off the bow of *Amaltal Columbia* about 0700. Mr Sturt said the two men were suffering from shock, but were otherwise unharmed, and they were taken by the helicopter to Hokitika. Mr Wells said the boat owner was depressed by the vessel's loss, but relieved that he knew help was coming and they would be rescued. Mr Sturt said Maritime New Zealand would investigate the incident. "We'll have Accident Investigation talk to the fishermen and the company." — Lloyd's Agents.

CHI-CHEEMAUN (Canada)

London, Aug 23 — Passenger ro/ro *Chi-Cheemaun* (6991 gt, built 1974) sustained a port engine failure at 0701, Aug 21. The vessel proceeded at reduced speed and safely docked at South Baymouth, Ontario.

CHIPOLBROK MOON (Hong Kong)

See *Minerva*.

CHRESTENA II (Panama)

Mumbai, Aug 18 — General cargo *Chrestena II* is still aground. The leakage of oil has stopped and lightening operations are in hand to remove the oil on board the vessel. — Lloyd's Agents.

Mumbai, Aug 23 — General cargo *Chrestena II* is still aground, and there are no visible signs that salvage operations are in progress. — Lloyd's Agents.

CLIPPER FALCON (Bahamas)

London, Aug 23 — Bulker *Clipper Falcon*, from Singapore, passed Port Said on Aug 17.

CMA CGM AEGEAN (Liberia)

Portsmouth, UK, Aug 22 — Container Carrier *CMA CGM Aegean* (30280 gt, built 1996) had an oil outflow in the Odessa port area, yesterday. The oil patch has already affected one of the biggest city beaches "Luzanivka" having mixed with the beach sand. Damage in the port of Odessa estimated at several million USD. Two to three days are needed to completely liquidate consequences of the accident. — Correspondent.

CMA CGM ALGER (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Aug 17 — A Cesam report, timed 1116, Aug 16, states: Container carrier *CMA CGM Alger*, update, Aug 16: As per information received from various sources and confirmed by Lloyd's Salvage Arbitration Branch, salvor's security demand is for 30% of

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

cargo CIF values. It is further recalled that General Average has been declared.

London, Aug 18 — Container Carrier *CMA CGM Alger*, Malta for Black Sea ports, loaded with general cargo in containers, grounded off Serifos Island. The vessel's master signed a Lloyd's Form salvage agreement with Loucas G. Matsas Salvage & Towage on Aug 5. A diving inspection revealed that the vessel was aground on rocks and that its bulbous bow had sustained damage. Efforts to refloat by tug assistance were unsuccessful and it was necessary to lighten bunkers and a number of containers to barges. Thereafter the vessel was refloated, with the assistance of a tug, on Aug 12. Containers were reloaded at an anchorage off Serifos and the vessel proceeded to Piraeus under its own power with tug escort. Discharge of all containers at Piraeus is expected to complete on Aug 18.

CMA CGM OTELLO (French Southern Territories)

London, Aug 22 — A SvitzerWijmsmuller Salvage BV report, dated Aug 18, states: Yesterday, Aug 17, the oil pollution prevention operations involving a 100,000 DWT container vessel (Container Carrier *CMA CGM Otello*) were successfully completed with the entry of the vessel into the dry dock. The vessel sustained considerable bottom damage last month and needed expert assistance in order to allow it to be discharged and at the same time ensuring that no oil would leak out from several breached fuel tanks. This part was successfully completed on Aug 6 when the vessel completed discharging. Preparations continued to allow the vessel to enter dry dock which required salvage techniques to be deployed to achieve the required draughts. Buoyancy regaining techniques were used, while at the same time oil continued to be pumped out of and skimmed off breached tanks. Diving inspections were executed to ensure that patched cracks were sufficiently tight to allow further buoyancy recreation. The vessel subsequently entered dry dock on Aug 17 and "touching the blocks" marked the end of the wholly successful SvitzerWijmsmuller Salvage Singapore Pte. Ltd. involvement.

COUGAR ACE (Singapore)

London, Aug 18 — Vehicle carrier *Cougar Ace* arrived at Dutch Harbour previous to Aug 17.

London, Aug 21 — A press report, dated Aug 20, states: The USCG Marine Safety Detachment, in Dutch Harbor, has reported that vehicle carrier *Cougar Ace* is stable, but most decks sustained vehicle damage and all the vehicles must be resecured. The owners, Mitsui OSK Lines, and the contracted salvor, Titan, are conducting soundings of all tanks to verify the vessel stability in order that Titan can return operation of the *Cougar Ace* to Mitsui OSK Lines. The vessel's emergency generator is on line and the service generator is being

considered for placing back on line, once Titan releases the vessel back to its owners. The water and sewage systems and the main and low pressure carbon dioxide fire systems are inoperable, as there was a loss of CO₂ when the *Cougar Ace* began to list. They will be evaluated for repairs by the owners. The owners will also clean spilled transmission fluid and other lubricants, from all the car decks, and containerize the recovered fluids for proper disposal. The tugs *Sea Victory* and *Gladiator* remain standing by *Cougar Ace* on scene, in Wide Bay, with the *Makushin Bay*, *Kashega Barge* and the motor vessel *Redeemer* in port. The salvage crew has boarded the *Cougar Ace* and recovered and organized all salvage equipment back on board the *Makushin Bay* and *Redeemer*. This equipment will be kept on stand by at the dock for demobilization back to Titan's warehouse in Florida.

DELTA ST.PETERSBURG (Gibraltar)

See *Elbe 3*.

DEWI PARWATI (Panama)

Yokohama, Aug 17 — General cargo *Dewi Parwati* arrived at Yokohama on Aug 16 from Shimoda. — Lloyd's Agents.

EDERRA 3 (Uruguay)

Montevideo, Aug 21 — Pilot ship *Ederra 3* (12 gt) sunk during strong winds and low temperatures at 2030 hrs, Aug 20, in the River Plate about 750m from the Uruguayan coast, while delivering pilots in order to board vessels which were to enter the port of Montevideo. Six people on board, pilots and crew members; Two disappeared and four rescued, one later died in hospital. — Lloyd's Agents.

ELBE 3 (Germany)

London, Aug 24 — Following received from Kiel, dated today: German pilot ship *Elbe 3* capsized yesterday afternoon, close to the buoy "Elbe" in the Elbe estuary. The crew of three were safely rescued, although one had to be treated for shock and hyperthermia in hospital. *Elbe 3* was proceeding to take off the pilot from the Container Carrier *Delta St. Petersburg* (8971 gt, built 2006), when it suddenly capsized and drifted upside down. Three local vessels successfully salvaged the pilot vessel, which was taken to Cuxhaven. Police investigators subsequently established that waves caused by "a fast manoeuvre" by *Delta St. Petersburg* caused the *Elbe 3* to capsize.

EMERALD STAR (Belgium)

London, Aug 24 — A press report, dated today, states: A skipper who had been drinking crashed his trawler into a jetty at a port set to handle tankers loaded with liquefied natural gas (LNG), a report has found. Trawler (All types) *Emerald Star* hit the well-lit berth at Milford Haven, Pembrokeshire, in January. Damage to

both was minor but marine accident investigators said "the outcome could have been much worse" if an oil tanker had been alongside. The port authority accepted staff who could have intervened were distracted. The ship's captain was arrested after he crashed into the ChevronTexaco Number 6 berth in the early evening of Jan 18 this year travelling at full speed. The man continued drinking before and after being breathalysed. Prosecutors later charged him with navigating a vessel while under the influence of drink. The crash came 15 minutes after the skipper, who has not been named but lives in Belgium, put out to sea. The beam trawler has been a regular visitor to Milford Haven in the last 10 years. The Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) report said: "Fortunately there was no oil tanker lying alongside at the jetty at the time, otherwise the outcome could have been much worse." Two liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminals are currently under construction at Milford Haven, the fifth busiest port in the UK, including the facilities to accommodate LNG tankers. Accident investigators said: "A collision with one of these vessels could have alarming consequences." They found the accident was caused by the skipper's impaired judgement. The trawler also had no lookout on the bridge. However, although the port's traffic management team played no part in the accident, the investigation concluded they could have intervened and possibly prevented the crash had they not been distracted by a routine phone call. The MAIB report said the team 'failed to notice *Emerald Star* deviating from her expected route until it was too late, therefore no intervention took place that might have averted the accident'. After striking the jetty, *Emerald Star* then headed back in the estuary and towards the sea, passing very close to other vessels coming in, before being instructed to return. Investigators found the port's traffic controllers did not inform other shipping that a "rogue" vessel was at large, and routine communications carried on as normal. The MAIB report recommended an upper speed limit in the haven, procedures to cut routine phone calls to the port control office and for vessels crossing the haven to have at least two people on the bridge. It noted that the port authority had requested police to breathalyse as a matter of routine any fishing vessel skipper involved in an accident, near miss, or oil pollution. In a statement, Milford Haven Port Authority said its port control had made "significant investments in technology and staff training over many years". It read: "Whilst it is worth re-iterating that this particular situation was caused by an individual under the influence of alcohol, we acknowledge the points raised by the MAIB report that on this occasion, the high standards that we set ourselves were not met. "As the report states, we took a number of immediate and decisive actions as a

result of the incident, and will continue to assess critically their impact. "Our thorough internal investigations have satisfied us that this was a singular incident, and there is no evidence whatever of any endemic failure in our systems."

ENTERPRISE (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Aug 18 — Bulker *Enterprise* arrived at Adelaide on Aug 16 from Port Pirie.

FANTASY I (Panama)

Buenos Aires, Aug 23 — Chemical tanker *Fantasy I*: All inspections carried out by the Argentine Coastguard (H&M and Safety Equipment) and a further underwater inspection, revealed no damages sustained. — Lloyd's Agents.

FAREAST SUNNY (Hong Kong)

London, Aug 23 — Following received from Coast Guard New Orleans, timed 1442, UTC: Bulker *Fareast Sunny* (23270 gt, built 1989) lost power and grounded near Mile Marker 115, Lower Mississippi River, at 0821, UTC, Aug 21. The vessel was refloated at 0357, UTC, today and proceeded to anchorage. No damage reported but the vessel has been prohibited from sailing, pending a Class inspection.

FINNARROW (Sweden)

London, Aug 23 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: At 1130, local time, Aug 22, a fire broke out on Roll On Roll Off *Finnarrow* (25996 gt, built 1996) in the Baltic, at the approach of South Quay, berth 6, in Lubeck-Travemunde, where it was expected at 0230, Aug 23. The fire was on a truck carrying peat. The crew prevented the fire from spreading to other trucks on the car deck. But as they were unable to extinguish the fire completely, the Lubeck Fire Brigade was alarmed. Forces from Kucknitz, Schlutup and Travemunde with special equipment were already waiting at the quay when the vessel arrived at 0221. Several trucks had to be unloaded to reach the burning truck. This was unloaded at 0225. With the help of special cameras, the fire, still burning, was traced on the aft part of the truck. The truck was unloaded and the fire extinguished on the quay. The fire was completely extinguished on 0254. On the whole 30 members of the fire brigade were involved.

Hamburg, Aug 24 — The fire on board roll on roll off *Finnarrow* consisted of a smouldering and heavily smoking consignment of peat located on a truck. The truck with the smouldering peat was unloaded from the vessel at Travemunde. After thoroughly airing the vessel and an inspection by the Danish Coastguard *Finnarrow* proceeded to the port of Malmo, where she is presently located. No repairs were carried out. The ship's agents at Lubeck have no knowledge of any damage sustained by the vessel, but cannot rule out that slight water

damage took place by the use of the sprinkler installation. — Lloyd's Agents.

FINNMAID (Finland)

London, Aug 23 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: Passenger ro/ro *Finnmaid* (42100 gt, built 2006) which has just been delivered by Fincantieri, Ancona, has sustained problems with it's steering. It was able to berth in Helsinki (Arrived and sailed Aug 21) only with the help of a tug. On Aug 22 it reached Travemuende where it was expected around midnight. From there the ship proceeded directly to Bremerhaven where it is expected at 0600 hrs, Aug 24. Here the ship is to be repaired at the Lloyd Werft. The work is expected to take four days.

FLORENCE (Bahamas)

Hanoi, Aug 24 — According to information available to our office, bulker *Florence* is still in shipyard for continuous building and expected delivery in Oct 2006. — Lloyd's Agents.

FPSO DALIA (Panama)

London, Aug 22 — A press report, dated today, states: After more than two months in port floating production tanker *FPSO Dalia* and its three tugs finally left Cape Town on Aug 20 and are now on their way to Block 17 off Angola. The departure was delayed for two weeks waiting for a suitable window in the weather patterns.

FRONT SUNDA (Marshall Islands)

London, Aug 18 — Following received from the operators of crude oil tanker *Front Sunda*, dated today: Understand *Front Sunda* is still at the anchorage at Batam. All the cleaning and preparation for drydocking and repair has now been completed, and the vessel's owners and managers are currently in negotiations with shipyards as to where and when repairs will take place.

London, Aug 23 — Analysts yesterday were told by Frontline management that the damaged crude oil tanker *Front Sunda*, which lost a crew member following an explosion in the South China Sea in June, will be the first in a proposed series of conversions to heavylift. Conversion work on the *Front Sunda* is scheduled at Cosco shipyard for completion at the beginning of 2007.

FUTAMI (Panama)

London, Aug 17 — General cargo *Futami* (12963 gt, built 1986), Japan for Jeddah and various European ports with 14,725 tonnes of steel products, coils/pipes/rods etc, had serious engine problems on Jul 18 requiring the employment of a tug to tow the ship to its first discharge port, Jeddah. A tug was tasked from Fujairah and owners declared General Average. Tug *Gal Ross Sea* delivered the casualty to Jeddah, arriving Aug 10. Repairs to the vessel are being effected at Jeddah and *Futami* is

expected to complete its voyage. (Note — *Futami* subsequently passed through Suez Canal northbound Aug 16.)

London, Aug 23 — General cargo *Futami* completed repairs at Jeddah and sailed on Aug 13 for Suez.

GENOA (Bahamas)

London, Aug 21 — A press report, dated today, states: A fight reportedly broke out in Volos over the disposal of 2,000 tons of rotting South American bananas. The fruit was on a cargo ship (refrigerated general cargo *Genoa*, 8254 gt, built 1983) that had been docked since last Monday (Aug 14). The local mayoral council has agreed to dump the rotted fruit in a nearby landfill, but residents who live adjacent to the site have begun protesting, it has been reported. Petitions have been signed saying that dumping that many bananas will harm the local environment. The ship had been carrying the bananas from Ecuador to Turkey when one of the vessel's refrigeration units, in which the fruit was being stored, broke down and the master had to dock at Volos. (Note — *Genoa* sailed Guayaquil May and passed Gibraltar Jul 10 for Istanbul.)

London, Aug 21 — Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 0840, UTC: Refrigerated general cargo *Genoa* is still at Volos. Vessel hopes to be able to discharge the rotting bananas today and sail in a few days.

GEORGIS NIKOLOS (Greece)

See "United States" under "Port State Control."

GLENORA (Canada)

London, Aug 22 — Passenger (cruise) *Glenora* (210 gt) sustained total machinery loss due to clutch problems to one of two engines in lat 44 03N, long 77 01W, Bay of Quinte, Ontario at 1815, yesterday. Vehicles and passengers were safely off-loaded. Vessel secured at 1908 for repairs.

GORKY (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Aug 18 — According to Cartagena Port Authority general cargo *Gorky* is still at at Muelle Fertilizantes, Escombreras, under repair.

GOTLANDIA II (Sweden)

Gothenburg, Aug 19 — Passenger ro/ro *Gotlandia II* has had new engines installed and underwent sea trials on Aug 17. If the tests were successful the vessel may return to service later next week.

Gothenburg, Aug 23 — Following tests, passenger ro/ro *Gotlandia II* will return to service at noon tomorrow from Visby. — Westax Marine Services AB.

GULSUM ANA (Turkey)

London, Aug 17 — A SMIT Salvage report states: Salvage services are being rendered to bulker *Gulsum Ana* (19864 gt, built 1975) under Lloyd's Open Form 2000 since Aug 15. The vessel is loaded with a cargo of coal en

route to the Suez Canal and is presently southern part of the Red Sea. The cargo of coal spontaneously caught fire in the first two holds. SMIT Salvage has sent out a team to liaise with the assisting tug from Egypt. The services are ongoing at this stage.

Port Said, Aug 24 — Bulker *Gulsum Ana* arrived Suez outer harbour on Aug 17 laden condition with coal. The master advised S.C.A that the vessel is sustaining big problems with her hatch cover. These problems were due to excessive cargo heating causing pressure on the hatch covers. All attempts to close the hatches by crew members failed. S.C.A anchored the vessel at the south of Victor berth No. 9. — Lloyd's Agents.

HAO HAI (Belize)

London, Aug 18 — General cargo *Hao Hai* arrived at Katagami on Aug 7.

HARVEST HOPE (U.K.)

London, Aug 19 — A press report, dated Aug 16, states: A fishing boat sank within minutes after snagging its nets on an unmarked pipeline. The crew of seven on board fishing (general) *Harvest Hope* barely had time to scramble into a liferaft before the vessel capsized and sank. An official report revealed yesterday that the 91ft vessel's nets had caught on a huge pile of boulder clay left over from burying a North Sea oil and gas line. The Marine Accident Investigation Branch of the Department of Transport also found that the line, from Shell's Goldeneye development, had not been marked on any official charts. The trawler sank in August last year as it fished around 40 miles off Peterhead. The crew were picked up unharmed by another fishing boat. Shell said last night they were trying to remove the obstruction.

HELGA SPIRIT (Bahamas)

London, Aug 18 — Crude oil tanker *Helga Spirit* sailed from Tees on Aug 16 bound for Immingham.

HIFOFUA (Tonga)

See *Nai'a*.

ICE FLAKE (Cayman Islands)

London, Aug 23 — As of Aug 22 refrigerated general cargo *Ice Flake* was still at Dormac, Durban, undergoing repairs.

INDIA ROSE (Republic of Ireland)

Stornoway, Aug 17 — Fishing (general) *India Rose* arrived Stornoway in tow Aug 16. The vessel is still alongside and is due to be inspected by an engineer today. — Lloyd's Sub-agents.

Stornoway, Aug 22 — Fishing (general) *India Rose* is still at Stornoway and ETD later today in tow of tug *Storesund* for repairyard in Denmark. — Lloyd's Agents.

IRAN PIROOZI (Iran)

London, Aug 18 — Container Carrier *Iran Piroozi* sailed from Antwerp on Aug 17 bound for Castellon.

JELLY BEAN 2 (U.S.A.)

London, Aug 22 — A press report, dated Aug 12, states: Yacht *Jelly Bean 2* (162 gt, built 2005) limped into the repairyard yesterday, where workers began the painstaking task of restoring the \$4 million vessel. A Thursday (Aug 10) night fire caused tens of thousands of dollars in damage to the yacht, a custom-built yacht docked at Balboa Marina. No one was injured. Billed as "luxury meets versatility," the unique Jellybean features four staterooms, granite built-in buffets, rich Sapelli and Sakura woods and custom-made stainless-steel details. Most of the fire damage was confined to the engine room and the rear of the boat. Firefighters had to break through the boat's locked doors and drill a square through the floor to put the electrical fire out. No one was aboard, and no injuries were reported. Fire investigators are looking into what caused flames to break out on the unoccupied boat. "Arson is not really being speculated," Sgt. Fritz Von Rettberg of the Harbor Patrol said. Towboats delivered the smoke and water-damaged Ocean Alexander creation to Newport Harbor Shipyard midafternoon Friday. It took two years for the *Jelly Bean 2*, designed by naval architect Ed Monk Jr., to be built. It was finished last year.

KOLMANSKOP (Namibia)

Portsmouth, Aug 17 — A press report, dated today, states: The possibility of salvaging trawler *Kolmanskop* (341 gt, built 1980) that ran aground just south of Swakopmund this week was still uncertain yesterday afternoon. The strong south-westerly wind experienced at the coast over the last few weeks caused the Novanam Fishing Company's vessel to break from its moorings at the Walvis Bay harbour on Tuesday (Aug 15) night, despite the vessel being anchored and chained to concrete blocks. There was no crew on board. *Kolmanskop* was swept northwards and got stranded in the rocky terrain at Vierkantklip, only about 50 metres from dry land. It could not be established whether the ship was resting on the seabed or stuck between rocks. There was, however, no sign of leaking fuel. The company responsible for salvaging the vessel, Namib Marine Services, and divers from Walvis Bay Diving and Launch Services were at the scene early yesterday morning to assess the situation. According to Namib Marine Services Managing Director Willie Prosser, any possible progress was foiled by rough seas and strong wind. He declined further comment. According to a source in the shipping industry, the load of the vessel would have to be reduced by removing equipment and emptying fuel tanks before an attempt can be made to lift the ship off the rocks and tow it back to deeper waters when the tide allows. He estimated that the salvage process could take up to a few weeks, depending on the weather and the

availability of the necessary equipment. Novanam management could not be reached for comment. — Correspondent.

London, Aug 18 — A press report, dated today, states: Very little progress was made yesterday in dislodging the stranded trawler *Kolmanskop* from the rocky perch on which it came to rest early Wednesday morning. Strong winds ripped the fishing vessel from its mooring buoy inside the Walvis Bay port limits on Tuesday night, after which it drifted about 40 kilometres northwards before running aground at Vierkantklip, just south of Swakopmund. According to Willie Prosser of Novaship Namibia, the agents for *Kolmanskop*, the salvage process is now focused on removing any potential pollutants from the vessel. By yesterday afternoon there was still no sign of leaking fuel. Since the ship has been decommissioned and out of operation for about a year and a half, the threat of pollution is considered to be minimal. Prosser said inclement weather made it difficult for salvage workers to reach the vessel from the ocean side. However, divers managed to get on board from the beach side yesterday and succeeded in connecting the ship to cranes on the beach with cables. The next step will be to pump all remaining diesel from the vessel into fuel tankers on the beach to lighten the load enough for *Kolmanskop* to be towed back into deeper waters. *Kolmanskop* belongs to Glomar Fisheries.

Cape Town, Aug 21 — Trawler (All types) *Kolmanskop* was reportedly laid up at the time when it went adrift and ran aground with no crew and minimal fuel on board. It is not presently known whether any salvage attempts are being made. — Lloyd's Agents.

KOSCIERZYNA (Panama)

Portsmouth, UK, Aug 18 — General cargo *Koscieryna* (3127 gt, built 1980) encountered engine problems 2230, Aug 16, in a position 55 nautical miles north of Ymuiden. Tug *Arion* delivered the vessel safely to Ymuiden at 0630, Aug 17. — Correspondent.

Maassluis, Aug 21 — General cargo *Koscieryna* is still in port at Ymuiden. Repairs will be completed next Wednesday and it is understood that the vessel will be sailing later the same day. — Lloyd's Sub-agents.

KRIOS (Malta)

Montreal, Aug 17 — Bulker *Krios* is still en route to Windsor. She was stopped on Aug 16 but she is moving again. (According to Informa's AIS system, *Krios* was reported at 0537, UTC, Aug 17, in lat 45 17 10.27N, long 73 56 12.26 W. Nearest port was Valleyfield, Canada, distance 9.7 nautical miles, speed (SOG) 6.4 knots, Course (COG) 199.1deg.)

LADY MOURA (Bahamas)

London, Aug 23 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: Yacht *Lady Moura* departed from

Monte Carlo on Aug 10. Understand that she is still expected at Blohm & Voss for repairs in October.

LAILA (Cambodia)

Santo Domingo, Aug 22 — General cargo *Laila* is still under repairs at Santo Domingo. It is understood from the vessel's local agents, Transmarine S.A., that repairs are estimated to be completed within three to four weeks. — Lloyd's Agents.

LAKE EXPRESS (U.S.A.)

London, Aug 18 — A press report, dated today, states: The ferry *Lake Express* high-speed service from Milwaukee to Muskegon is shut down for a fourth straight day. A ferry official says repairs to a damaged gear are taking longer than expected. Lake Express spokesman Jeff Fleming says ferry managers are "very confident" that the work will be completed today and service will resume tomorrow morning.

Chicago, Aug 24 — Reported Aug 15: Ferry *Lake Express* will be out of service for three days this week due to unexpected damage to a large gear. The ferry will not run any Tuesday (Aug 15) through to Thursday (Aug 17) while workers replace a gearbox shipped from Europe, operators said Monday (Aug 14). Installation will begin Monday evening. Lake Express will offer refunds to passengers who booked trips during those days and will help customers find alternative travel options. Lake Express said experts examining the gear speculate that the damage is the result of an unusual manufacturing defect and that it does not reflect an ongoing problem with the ship's equipment. The damage was discovered late last week, said Lake Express spokesman Jeff Fleming. The damage affects only one of the ship's four engines. It continued to operate Monday on the three remaining engines, Fleming said, but the third of three daily roundtrips it takes between Milwaukee and Muskegon, Mich., has been cancelled. — Lloyd's Agents.

LONG HAI (Panama)

London, Aug 18 — Bulker *Long Hai* sailed from Mundra on Jul 16 bound for Singapore.

LOUIS S-ST-LAURENT (Canada)

London, Aug 21 — Icebreaker *Louis S.St-Laurent* (11441 gt, built 1969) reported that it had sustained a total propulsion failure involving all three shafts in lat 75 35 18N, long 156 17 12W at 1325, UTC, Aug 19. Vessel drifting in loose ice and using bubbler system to maintain heading for satellite communications.

Vancouver, Aug 23 — A scientist on board icebreaker *Louis S.St-Laurent* reports that on the evening of Aug 18 following maintenance work on the vessel's drive shafts, the drive system failed to come back on line after a reboot. The vessel has been drifting at about 0.5 knots ever since. The vessel's position at 1200, UTC, Aug 23, was reported as lat 75 24N, long 157 12W. — Lloyd's Agents.

MELANIE (Netherlands)

Mannheim, Aug 17 — Non specific tankers *Melanie* and *Viking* were in collision on the Rhine, near Mannheim late on Aug 16. Allegedly one of the vessels sank. However, navigation on the river is still open. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Aug 18 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: Non specific tankers *Melanie* and *Viking* collided on the Rhine, close to Kirschgartshausen on Aug 16. *Melanie*, length 97m, which was moving upstream, crashed bow-to-bow into *Viking*. The bow of *Melanie* was torn open and the foreship sprang a leak. The tanks with 1,700 tons of diesel fuel remained intact. Boats of the Police, River Authority and Fire Brigade pushed the sinking ship out of the shipping lane onto the embankment at Mannheim. The bow had sunk so deep that it subsequently grounded at Ballauf. Tanker *Demis* commenced with lightering, which was interrupted due to the increasing risk for the salvagers in the darkness. Work was continued Aug 17. After completion of lightering the ship shall be dewatered and then enter a yard for repairs. The damage is estimated to be some 100,000 Euro. *Melanie* was destined for the Kaiserworth-Harbour in Ludwigshafen. *Viking*, which was underway from Karlsruhe to Frankfurt with 1,500 tons of diesel fuel resumed its voyage in the morning of Aug 17 after inspections.

London, Aug 21 — Following the collision with non specific tanker *Viking*, non specific tanker *Melanie* developed a leak in its bow and was pushed to the river bank, where it grounded on a gravel bank. Tanker *Demis* came alongside and transhipped the vessel's cargo of diesel oil, bound for the Kaiserworth Hafen in Ludwigshafen. The hole in the vessel's hull was then patched and the water was pumped out, after which the vessel was able to proceed under its own power to a repair yard. Officials reported that the total damage from the collision will be in the region of Euros 100,000. A river police investigation into the cause of the accident found that no alcohol or drugs were involved and the equipment on both vessels was in good condition. There were no injuries.

MELLINO II (Argentina)

London, Aug 18 — A navigation warning issued today, states: Fishing *Margot* towing trawler *Mellino II* (232 gt, built 1957) in lat 40 53S, long 58 33W, line length 550 metres, speed 8.5 knots, course 016, bound for Mar del Plata.

MIDAS (Panama)

Karachi, Aug 18 — Understand from Indus Divers that owner of bulker *Midas* has changed its shipping agent in Pakistan for the shipping facility and co-ordinating repair work. Now the ship agent is M/s WMA Shipcare, Capt Mustaq and a team of workshop engineers is still onboard vessel doing

some repairs on the main engine fuel pump. Another team from Indus Divers will also be boarding the vessel in couple of days to augment repair works. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Karachi, Aug 22 — Local agents of bulker *Midas* have advised that at present the vessels' turbo charger and anchor windlass are out of order. The Master of the *Midas* is negotiating with Mehran Engineering, Karachi, for the purchase of another turbo charger. The vessels' owner has sent an engineering team on board to attend to the windlass repair work. Understand that repairs are expected to be completed by Aug 30, monsoons allowing. — Lloyd's Agents.

MINERVA

Portsmouth, Aug 17 — Barge *Minerva* sank at quay 306, P&O Ports, Antwerp, at 1115, local time, today, while alongside general cargo *Chipolbrok Moon* (24167 gt, built 2004). The master of the barge was found dead by divers within an hour after the incident but one person is still missing. Three dockworkers were taken to hospital, all with minor injuries. The accident occurred while loading direct overboard from the barge onto *Chipolbrok Moon* a heavy lift piece of 154 tonnes, which came loose from the slings at approximate height of 20 metres and fell back into the barge, smashing/cracking the tanktop, after which the barge sank immediately. Divers are still looking for the missing person, believed to be the master's wife, but that has not yet been confirmed. — Correspondent.

London, Aug 20 — Last Thursday (Aug 17) the inland barge *Minerva* sank in the Antwerp Docks after a steel coil from general cargo *Chipolbrok Moon* fell from the hoist straight through the hold of the vessel, which sank immediately. The skipper drowned and was found by divers. A dock worker, who was working in the hold was missing, but his body was been found on Friday evening. The vessel, which is lying on the bottom at quay 306, lies on her side as soundings have found out on Friday. It is not clear yet when the vessel will be raised. The Nautical Commission has asked several salvage companies for a quotation for the salvage, which has to be in their office by Monday at 1600 hours. It is not clear yet when this vessel will be raised.

Maassluis, Aug 22 — General cargo *Chipolbrok Moon* was released from arrest at 1352 hrs, Aug 20. — Lloyd's Sub-agents. (Note — *Chipolbrok Moon* departed from Antwerp at 0416 hrs, Aug 21, bound for Hamburg.)

London, Aug 23 — The inland barge *Minerva*, which sank at quay 306, Antwerp, after a steel coil fell through her hold, will most probably be raised on Thursday, Aug 24 by the Dutch salvage company GPS. The Antwerp Harbour company wants the salvage as soon as possible, while there is still a dock worker missing. On Friday it was reported that this man had been found, but this was not true. The

Dutch skipper of the vessel drowned in the accident. (See issue of Aug 23.)

London, Aug 24 — Following received from Kiel, dated today: GPS Marine Services BV has mobilised its floating crane *GPS Ajax* and the tug *Zeepia* for the salvage of the barge *Minerva* in Antwerp. Divers have already carried out an inspection on site. If all goes well, the barge and its cargo will be salvaged this weekend.

NAI'A

London, Aug 22 — A press report, dated today, states: A freak tornado struck three vessels linked together, in a search and rescue mission in Ha'apai last Friday (Aug 18) that nearly ended in tragedy for 35 crewmen on board. After being hit by 40-50 knot winds, a rescue barge owned by the Tonga government was swamped and began to sink, starting to pull down two other boats chained to it, tug *Hifofua* (188 gt, built 1994) and yacht *Nai'a* (built 1979). In order to save the crews the barge was cut loose and sank, while the five men on board the barge escaped in a dingy. Today, from the safety of port in Nuku'alofa, Jonathan Smith the master of Fijian whale-watching vessel *Nai'a* that was rescued by the barge after running aground on a Ha'apai reef on Aug 10, said that they were on their second whale-watching trip of the season to Ha'apai when they first got caught up in a storm while anchored at Luanamo Island, Ha'apai, on Aug 10. "The weather was not anything that the weather forecast predicted," he said, describing the wind swelling to 15 knots and swinging them right around onto a reef, where *Nai'a* stayed stuck until Aug 17. Government tug *Hifofua* went over with a barge to rescue *Nai'a*. After several attempts they finally managed to pull *Nai'a* off the reef and began towing the boat, with both vessels chained to the barge that had gone in close to the reef to enable the rescue. After surviving seven days on the reef, Captain Smith said that they did not expect to get hit by another freak storm with 40-50 knots wind, "that came out of nowhere," early on Friday morning when the linked convoy was just past Hunga Island. Johnathan said that they had to turn back towards Ha'apai because the barge that was towing them was taking on water, and to try and to save the five men who were on board the barge. "The barge was taking on so much water that it began to sink pulling *Nai'a* with it. Then Commander Lupeti Vi ordered from Nuku'alofa that we cut off the barge that was chained to both *Hifofua* and *Nai'a* so as to save the crew, and we did it and the barge sank - but it saved about 30 crew that were onboard both boats, and the five guys on board the barge also managed to get out safely on a dingy," he said. *Hifofua* then continued to tow back *Nai'a* and they got in safely to the Nuku'alofa harbour on Saturday night (Aug 19). *Nai'a* had on board 12 crew with three-salvage crew, and *Hifofua*

carried 15 crewmen, and five on the barge. *Nai'a* will be towed back to Fiji by *Hifofua* "today and will go on the slipway for repairs.

NAMA (Panama)

Chennai, Aug 18 — General cargo *Nama*: Vessel refloated at 0850, local time, Aug 11. After refloating, the vessel arrived and anchored at Kakinada Anchorage. As per the vessel agents; Class Survey (BV) and underwater inspections were carried out. On completion of underwater survey and inspection they found there was no damage. Now *Nama* is waiting for MMD clearance. After obtaining permission from MMD the vessel will load a cargo of rice in bags at Kakinada Anchorage. — Lloyd's Agents.

NAN HAI 6 (China)

London, Aug 21 — A press report, dated today, states: Woodside's plans for a multi-million-dollar drilling program this season in the Timor Sea and the Browse Basin have been thrown into disarray because of the length of time repairs are taking on drill platform *Nan Hai 6*. A fire and explosion on the drill ship early on Jul 23 as it was preparing to drill the Kuda Tasi-3 appraisal well left two men injured and virtually destroyed a store-room containing drilling materials. The Timor Sea Designated Authority said yesterday the fire and subsequent repairs were expected to keep *Nan Hai 6* inoperable for about 30 days. Woodside and the TSDA said there was no certainty about when the rig would be cleared to resume work. "We have to be certain that the drill has been repaired to our standards," a Woodside spokesman said. The TSDA said once repairs were complete an inspector would be sent out to the drill ship, which is moored at Kuda Tasi. The inspection could take place this week but might be delayed for a further week to ensure reconstruction of the damaged parts of the rig and its electrical wiring rig met insurance requirements.

NEW NIKKI (Panama)

Alexandria, Aug 21 — Bulker *New Nikki* (15757 gt, built 1995) struck quay No 35 at Alexandria port on Aug 12. Damage to the quay was minor, with only two stone blocks being slightly cracked. The vessel sustained slight damage to the stern aftpeak tank. Underwater inspection found the propeller and rudder to be in sound condition. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Aug 24 — Bulker *New Nikki* sailed from Alexandria on Aug 22 bound for Gibraltar.

NOBEL FORTUNA (Bahamas)

London, Aug 24 — Combined bulk and oil carrier *Nobel Fortuna* arrived at Hamburg on Aug 21 and sailed on Aug 22.

NORWAY (Bahamas)

Mumbai, Aug 18 — According to newspaper reports, the Supreme Court said yesterday that the controversial

passenger (cruise) *Norway*, now renamed *Blue Lady*, should not be dismantled without its permission. *Blue Lady* has beached at India's ship-breaking yard at Alang in Gujarat. Environmentalists, led by Greenpeace, say that the 46,000 tonne ship contains more than 900 tonnes of toxic waste like asbestos, risking the health of poorly equipped ship-breakers at Alang. "Breaking cannot take place without our orders," the court said, when it was told the ship had beached at Alang. The petitioner representing the environmentalists sought orders restraining authorities from breaking up the ship. The court declined this but said, "If it's done without our orders, we shall deal with it." In June the court allowed *Blue Lady* to enter Indian waters but appointed an expert committee to look into how much toxic waste was on board, before it could be broken. The committee has to formally submit its findings to the court but senior Alang port officials said earlier this month the panel had cleared *Blue Lady* and it was ready to be scrapped, raising concern among environmentalists. In February, the French government recalled the former aircraft carrier *Clemenceau*, which had been heading for Alang, after a lengthy campaign by Greenpeace, which said the ship carried toxic waste. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Aug 21 — In the first week of August, a technical committee of the Gujarat Maritime Board and the Gujarat Pollution Control Board had concluded that passenger (cruise) *Norway*, now renamed *Blue Lady*, sold for scrap at Alang by Malaysia's Star Cruises to Haryana Shipbreakers, could be recycled on the grounds that it contained toxic and hazardous material within permissible limits. However, environmentalists who had fought the *Blue Lady's* sale for scrap on the grounds that it had more than 900 tonnes of potentially carcinogenic material on board, went to the Supreme Court again, contending that no official order for the vessel's breaking had been passed. And so it proved. The apex court judges appeared bemused that the vessel had beached at Alang on Aug 14, and promised to take stern action if their orders had been contravened.

ODYSSEA VOYAGER (Vanuatu)

London, Aug 18 — Tug *Odyssey Voyager*: Following received from Vanuatu Maritime Services, dated today: The fire on board has not yet been confirmed to have started in the engine-room. We have an investigation in progress and we expect to be on board this weekend (Aug 19-20) when vessel is towed in to port, quite possibly Amelia and not Fourchon.

PACIFIC SAPPHIRE (Marshall Islands)

London, Aug 23 — Following received from Coast Guard New Orleans, timed 1442, UTC: Crude oil tanker *Pacific Sapphire* (53830 gt, built 1994), inbound to Mobile with a cargo of

crude oil, lost steering and grounded 200 feet south of Light 64, Mobile Ship Channel, at 0630, UTC, Aug 22. No damage or pollution reported. The vessel was refloated, effected repairs to its steering gear and was reported proceeding to berth at Mobile at 0910, UTC, today.

Mobile, Aug 23 — Crude oil tanker *Pacific Sapphire* is currently at the Shell Dock in Mobile. A surveyor is expected to board the vessel later today to assess any damage. — Lloyd's Agents.

PATRICIA ANNE NO.1 (Canada)

Vancouver, Aug 18 — Fishing (general) *Patricia Anne No.1* struck rocks on the north end of Hardwick Island Aug 10 in strong westerly winds. The four persons on board abandoned the vessel into a skiff and were recovered by passenger (cruise) *Volendam*. Coast Guard 508 took the skipper back to the accident scene. Investigations are continuing. — Lloyd's Agents.

POTOMAC (U.S.A.)

Mobil, Aug 23 — A US Army Corps of Engineers press release, dated Aug 16, states: Workers with the US Army Corps of Engineers and the Tennessee Valley Authority successfully removed a damaged gate from Wilson Lock this evening. The upstream lock gate was damaged Aug 3 when a barge being pushed by tug *Potomac* inside the main lock chamber damaged the gate. The front of the barge apparently became entangled in the upstream gate on the lock when the lock chamber was filled with water, forcing the gate upward and off its tracks. The barge was also damaged but did not lose any of its cargo of xylene. The damaged gate forced the closure of the lock and backed up a long line of barges waiting to go both upstream and down. Corps officials are developing plans to begin locking commercial boat traffic through the reopened lock chamber in the next day or two using a temporary removable caisson. It is expected that this operation will run during daylight hours only. This operation will help lockmasters to clear out the backlogged barges waiting on the Tennessee River above and below Wilson Dam. Officials hope to use the temporary removable caisson as a gate as necessary during the period of time it takes to repair the damaged gate to allow barges to pass through Wilson Lock. Expected repair time is eight weeks. Once the gate is cleaned and inspected, a more definite repair projection can be established. — Lloyd's Agents.

PRINCESS (Netherlands)

London, Aug 23 — At about 1930, local time, yesterday, a fire broke out in the aft part of the 80 metres long inland passenger (cruise) *Princess*, built 1981 at the Husumer Werft in Husum, Germany and owned by Exploitatie Maatschappij Princes B.V. at Heesch, Neth. The incident happened when the vessel was sailing

down the River Rhine near Brey (Kreis Mayen/Lobach) and a fire broke out in her engine room, which caused lots of smoke. One of the crew members suffered from a light smoke toxication. The 90 passengers on board were taken off the vessel and a Fire Brigade vessel extinguished the fire. The cause of the fire is not yet known.

London, Aug 23 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: Passenger (cruise) *Princess* caught fire on the Rhine at Lahnstein at 1935, local time, Aug 21. The fire was accompanied by dense fumes in the machine room. As it was impossible to tackle the flames, the ship anchored at Lahnstein. A police boat evacuated the 90 passengers who had been taken to the upper deck. A boat of the Koblenz Fire Brigade succeeded in extinguishing the fire. It destroyed the machine room and damaged the electricity on board. One man of the Dutch crew had to receive medical treatment due to smoke inhalation. As the vessel was unable to proceed under own power it was towed into a nearby yard by a tug.

PRINCESS K. (U.S.A.)

Honolulu, Aug 22 — Fishing *Princess K.* is currently drydocked at Keehi Marine Center undergoing repairs, although it is unknown at this time how long they will take. — Lloyd's Agents.

QUEEN OF THE NORTH (Canada)

London, Aug 17 — A press report, dated today, states: The investigation into the sinking of passenger ro/ro *Queen of the North* has revealed that passenger manifest procedures were lacking. A report from the Transportation Safety Board said shore side personnel prepared a manifest according to company procedures that recorded the number of passengers that should have been on board the vessel. However, no physical head count of passengers was done as they boarded the vessel and names of passengers were not recorded. "During and following the abandonment of the vessel, those responsible for ensuring that everyone had been accounted for had difficulty establishing the total count, reconciling that count against the recorded information and identifying those who were missing," wrote TSB official Marcel Ayeko in a letter to Transport Canada. Although it was initially reported that everyone was accounted for following the sinking, it was later discovered that two passengers were missing. The couple were never found and are presumed drowned. Since the sinking, BC Ferries has updated its passenger reservation system for the northern routes to create a manifest listing passengers' names. Ayeko recommended that current Transport Canada regulations regarding manifests be reviewed to ensure more accurate information is available during an emergency on Canadian ferries.

London, Aug 21 — A press report, dated Aug 20, states: BC Ferries has signed a contract with a German firm to build a new ferry for its northern route, and said it was only days from buying another vessel for the same run. The vessels were purchased in an effort to fill the void left after the sinking of passenger ro/ro *Queen of the North* in March that killed two passengers. BC Ferries has picked the firm Flensburger Schiffbau to build the \$133-million vessel to replace the aging passenger ro/ro *Queen of Prince Rupert*. The announcement angered George MacPherson, head of the BC Shipyard General Workers' Federation. "We've given them now over \$700 million worth of work that should have stayed in Canada and Canadian shipyards," he said yesterday. However, BC Ferries president David Hahn said they gave Canadian firms the opportunity to bid on the vessel but none could meet the accelerated timeline. The contract guarantees the completion date, allows for penalties for late delivery and allows for 80% of the payment when the vessel is complete. The new vessel will operate between Port Hardy and Prince Rupert along the Inside Passage, the same route where *Queen of the North* ran into an island and sank in less than an hour. While service has been cut in half because of the accident, Mr. Hahn said they would have another vessel ready for next spring no matter what happens. "We're in very, very final stages of looking to acquire a vessel out of Europe, but there is one last condition that has to be removed," Mr. Hahn added, saying they hoped to confirm the sale in the next week to 10 days. However, if that agreement fails, BC Ferries also has a plan to lease another vessel that would be ready for early next year. Both ships would need renovations before they could be used on the route.

RADIANCE OF THE SEAS (Bahamas)

London, Aug 21 — A press report, dated Aug 19, states: Passenger (cruise) *Radiance of the Seas* (90090 gt, built 2001) leaving Vancouver harbour Saturday night (Aug 19) had some difficulty beginning its journey to Alaska. The Royal Caribbean's *Radiance of the Seas* had just sailed out of the Burrard Inlet when it lost power because of a complete blackout onboard. A tugboat was sent out, but the 962-foot vessel picked up steam once again on its own after about an hour-and-a-half of moving quite slowly. (Note — According to MIU AIS *Radiance of the Seas* was reported in lat 49 2N, long 126 12W, 19.1 nautical miles from Tofino, Canada, speed 24.8 knots at 1054, UTC, Aug 20.)

RADISSON (Canada)

London, Aug 23 — Ferry *Radisson* (1182 gt, built 1954) struck the quay while berthing at Ile aux Coudres, QuÉbec at 1732, Aug 22. Three passengers were injured and had to be sent to the hospital.

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

RHONEBORG (Netherlands)

London, Aug 22 — Understand container carrier *Rhoneborg* (18144 gt, built 1993) experienced a steering failure Aug 14 while on voyage Hong Kong for Zhangzhou. Tug *Salvage Queen* proceeded to assist and took the vessel in tow for Hong Kong, where the tow arrived Aug 20. Understand *Rhoneborg* is to be drydocked at Hong Kong.

RM MARGAUX (France)

London, Aug 23 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: On Aug 22 a Mammoet salvage team righted the sunken tug *RM Margaux*, which had been lying capsized in the River Gironde, southern France, since July. The ship was salvaged by *Jacomina*.

ROGER BLOUGH (U.S.A.)

Troy, Mich., Aug 19 — Bulker *Roger Blough* is scheduled to leave Sturgeon Bay late tomorrow or early Monday (Aug 21), and will head for Duluth to load. — Great Lakes Seaway & Shipping.

London, Aug 24 — Bulker *Roger Blough*, which arrived at Sturgeon Bay, departed from there at 1025 hrs, Aug 21, on completion of repairs, bound for Two Harbors, where ETA 0800 hrs, today.

SAFMARINE AGULHAS (Liberia)

London, Aug 17 — A press report, dated today, states: Four international companies submitted tenders to remove the wreck of Container Carrier *Safmarine Agulhas* from the western breakwater of East London harbour. Tenders closed yesterday and according to the South African Maritime Safety Authority (SAMSA) bids have been received from SMIT Salvage, SvitzerWijismuller, Titan Marine and Mammoet Salvage. SAMSA said it would take several weeks for the tenders to be evaluated before one of the bidders is awarded the contract. In terms of the contract the wreck has to be removed right down to seabed level with a February 2007 deadline set for the completion of the contract. This will however be regarded as flexible in the event of adverse weather.

SCANDINAVIAN STAR (Bahamas)

London, Aug 22 — Reports suggest that there will be no new investigation by the Danish authorities into the cause of the fatal fire on board the ferry *Scandinavian Star* in spite of allegations in the local press of a bungled police investigation following the accident. While the Danish parliament legal sub-committee is understood to have considered launching a fresh investigation it is now believed to have ruled it out, although the committee was unavailable to comment yesterday. Media reports in Denmark accused the Norwegian police of manipulating evidence given by a passenger following the 1990 accident in which 158 people lost their lives. The allegations centred on an eyewitness

identification of a man police believed to be an arsonist. The *Scandinavian Star*, under charter to Danish VR Da-No Line, was on a voyage from Oslo to Frederikshavn when a fire broke out on board in the early hours of Apr 7, 1990. The fire spread very rapidly, with many passengers being trapped in their cabins. Toxic gases produced by materials used on the vessel were believed to account for many of the deaths. The major shareholder of VR Da-No, a board director and the master of the vessel, were each found guilty of being responsible for inadequate security arrangements on the *Scandinavian Star* by a Danish court in 1992. This was the first time that jail sentences had been given for a violation of the Danish ship safety laws.

SCOT RANGER (U.K.)

London, Aug 24 — General cargo *Scot Ranger* arrived at Goole on Aug 22 from Hull.

SEALINK PACIFIC 101 (Malaysia)

London, Aug 21 — A press report, dated today, states: Barge *Sealink Pacific 101* (3148 gt, built 1996) has left the Durban graving dock outer dock, where repairs to its skeg and other areas were carried out. The barge had been towed to Durban by its attendant Kenyan tug *CPC Soave* to undergo repairs to its hull and skeg. The starboard skeg required considerable repair. Altogether something like 18 tonnes of steel was replaced on the barge, including a number of small areas damaged through normal wear and tear, making it quite a finicky job by all accounts. Of special interest on the barge are braced steel plates that have been added to create higher sides to the barge for the conveying of coal along the East African coast. This work was done previously in Maputo by an associate of the company in Durban that handled the current contract, Bayhead Marine Engineering. The barge exited the dry dock late last week in the company of two harbour tugs and a marine pilot and was later berthed at Maydon Wharf 12, prior to the return trip to East Africa with a cargo loading stop at Richards Bay scheduled.

SKAGERN (Sweden)

Hull, Aug 23 — General cargo *Skagern* is still at Hull and is currently undergoing temporary repairs. — Lloyd's Agents.

SOLAR 1 (Philippines)

London, Aug 17 — A press report, dated today, states: The Philippine Government will need at least pesos 700 million for the clean-up operation alone in the Guimaras Strait, where 2.7 million litres of bunker fuel were spilled. This proposed budget does not include the expenses needed to salve non specific tanker *Solar 1*, a Philippine Coast Guard statement said. It was not clear though if Petron Corporation and Sunshine Maritime Development Corporation are

amenable to the proposal since their current main concern is salvaging the vessel, which is believed to be lying 3,000 feet below sea level. The PCG said the spill would worsen without the urgent assistance from foreign experts in raising the vessel. Lieutenant-Commander Joseph Coyme, spokesman for the PCG, said that a clean-up operation is a must at this time to prevent the oil sludge from further damaging the Guimaras coastal areas and from reaching the coasts of Iloilo and Negros Occidental. Sunshine Maritime Development Corporation, the vessel's owners, have hired British experts through its international insurance and brokerage partner. The team of experts arrived in Guimaras yesterday. They were expected to conduct a water survey to determine whether they can reach the ocean floor of the Guimaras Strait. Guimaras Governor Rahman Nava earlier recommended that the sunken vessel be salvaged before the clean-up operation is carried out. Nava said he believed that an oil spill containment operation would be futile if the vessel, which still holds more than a million litres of oil, remains on the sea floor. It is believed that the remaining oil in the vessel is leaking by the day. Coyme agreed saying the vessel needs to be refloated before the clean-up begins. The spill, he added, has already devastated nature sites and covered miles of the Guimaras coastline with black sludge. While the oil slick cannot be cleaned up at the moment, teams were trying to contain it with booms and chemical dispersants, Coyme said. Nava said the environmental disaster had already affected more than 200 km of the Guimaras coastline, damaging mangrove swamps, seaweed plantations and coral reefs. More than 3,000 families from Nueva Valencia and Sibunag towns have already been affected causing the Provincial Government to start a food program. The PCG and the Bureau of Fishery and Aquatic Resources also warned people against selling or eating fish and shellfish harvested from the areas.

Manila, Aug 18 — The Philippine Coast Guard convened a Special Board of Marine Inquiry today at the Coast Guard Western Visayas District Headquarters in Iloilo City in central Philippines to investigate the sinking of non specific tanker *Solar 1*. The Board was convened even as the office of Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo promised a swift investigation of the sinking of the vessel and the resulting oil spill. "As we zero in on containment and cleanup, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Philippine Coast Guard are fast-tracking the investigation of this incident, which would also encompass recommendations to prevent a recurrence of such ecological disasters, and the reparations due for the rehabilitation of damaged marine resources," a statement released by

the Palace said. The resulting oil spill has ravaged hundreds of kilometers of Guimaras coastline causing millions of pesos in damages to both the environment and business in the area. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

London, Aug 18 — A press report, dated today, states: Retrieving the sunken non specific tanker *Solar 1* is already next to impossible. This Clemente Cancio president of Sunshine Maritime Development Corporation (SMDC), owner of *Solar 1*, said of the tanker now lying at a depth of 600 metres off Nueva Valencia, Guimaras. Cancio said it is already almost impossible to salvage the vessel even with the aid of modern equipment because the water is too deep. Retrieving *Solar 1* from the bottom of the sea is eyed as a possible solution to stop the continued oil spill. It is believed that bunker oil has not yet fully seeped out of the tanker's oil compartments. However, Cancio said that two British experts from the International Tanker Owners Pollution Federation will arrive today to assess the condition of the sunken vessel. Cancio said they have to find out what is happening under water before they can mount plans to plug the leaking tanker. They are also contemplating of using robotics. Cancio said the sinking of the vessel is considered a loss to the company but they are not running away from their responsibilities especially to the province of Guimaras. He stressed out that they will not turn their back. "We already have people on the ground to coordinate with the provincial officials," Cancio said. He added that SMDC will do whatever that they can to help the residents affected by the oil spill. Guimaras Governor JC Rahman Nava said about 5,000 people dependent on fishing as livelihood had been affected by the disaster so far. The company, through their insurance firm, will also shoulder all the expenses for clean up and rehabilitation of the affected areas, he said. Cancio also clarified that *Solar 1* was in "seaworthy condition" when it left its port of call. He said we always comply with the rules and regulations set by the Maritime Industry Authority (Marina). Cancio, on the other hand, denied the allegations of one of the 18 survivors that the company neglected their obligations to the crew. He said necessary assistance were already given to the vessel's surviving crew members. Meanwhile, two of the vessel's crew are still missing. Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Angelo Reyes visited Guimaras province on Wednesday to personally check on the extent of damage the oil spill has brought to marine life. Reyes told Governor Nava that the national government is working out to get help from international agencies to contain the massive oil slick. He is confident that the island-province of Guimaras will receive foreign assistance, the country, being a signatory to the Maritime International Treaty for Pollution. Reyes disclosed that the

government had initially asked for equipment and assistance of experts from Japan and Indonesia. The oil sludge reportedly affected a wide area of coral reef reserves at Taklong Island, a marine reserve sanctuary. Hardest hit are the coastal barangays of Lapaz, San Roque, Lucmayan, Tando, Dolores, Cabalagnan, Panobolon, Canhawan, Igdarapdap, San Antonio and Guiwanon. The oil spill also reached the neighboring barangays of Alegria, Sitio Naoway, Siraray Island, San Isidro, and Ususan Island. Two famous island resorts, the Nagarao and Inampulogan Islands were already reached by the oil spill. Barangays Sabang, Bubog, Sebaste, Sebario, Nadulao and Natunga Islands are also affected. There were also reports that the oil sludge has reached as far as the coastal areas of Pulupandan and Valladolid in Negros Occidental. Two vessels from the Philippine Coast Guard are already in Guimaras strait spraying dispersants to contain the oil spill. One is taking care of the east side of the province and the other the southern side which is badly affected of the oil spill. Also two tugs from Petron and five more boats from the Sunshine Maritime Development Corporation are helping in the clean up drive. Community cooperation is also being sought with Nava calling on residents of coastal areas to put up improvised stoppers like bamboos to block the shore not yet reached by the oil sludge. Meanwhile, the provincial government of Guimaras has yet to decide on whether SMDC and Petron Corporation will be sued for the oil spill that has already affected the island's entire southern flank. "We have not talked about it yet," said Governor JC Rahman Nava during a press conference Wednesday, together with Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes. "But that is an option." Nava said the legal team of Taskforce Sunrise, the group formed specifically to address the oil spill, is looking at the possibility of suing the two companies. "They are preparing all the evidence needed," the governor said. The team is still waiting for a copy of the contract between Petron and SMDC. Petron chartered SMDC to deliver P40 million worth of industrial oil for a power plant in Mindanao. The legal team is asking for more time, until next week to come up with a recommendation, Nava said.

London, Aug 19 — A press report, dated today, states: Petron Corp. faces a congressional investigation over the oil spill from non specific tanker *Solar 1* in Guimaras, Iloilo, that has blackened kilometres of coastline and disrupted the lives of thousands of fisherfolk. On Friday (Aug 18) Petron accepted responsibility for the environmental mess. It said it would help in the cleanup and lend assistance to affected villagers. Petron had chartered the *Solar 1* to carry 500,000 gallons of bunker from Bataan to Zamboanga. The joint House Committees on Natural Resources and on Ecology as well as the Committee

on Oversight will summon Petron officials to an inquiry. If found liable, the company could be charged in court, Agusan del Norte Rep. Leovigildo Banaag, chairman of the Committee on Natural Resources, said Friday. Banaag said the three committees would hold an initial inquiry next week.

London, Aug 20 — A press report, dated today, states: Initial findings from a Board of Marine Inquiry investigation of the Aug 11 oil spill in Guimaras reveal that the safety management certificate of non specific tanker *Solar 1* had already expired. The board also suspended the vessel's captain Norberto Aguro for failing to undergo oil tanker training and management. Marina has ordered the immediate grounding of the two sister vessels of *Solar 1*. Arnie Santiago, acting enforcement manager of Marina in Manila, identified the two sister vessels as *Solar 2* and *Solar 3*. "We will not allow them to operate until the probe on the sinking is over," he said during the Regional Disaster Coordinating Council (RDCC) 6 meeting here. The Board of Marine Inquiry, an agency under Marina, likewise recommended the filing of administrative charges against Aguro and the Sunshine Maritime Development Corporation, pending further investigations. *Solar 1* left Limay town in Bataan on Aug 9 en route to Sangali town in Zamboanga del Sur, southern Philippines. It was contracted by Petron to ship two million litres of bunker fuel to the Western Mindanao Power Corporation. Region 6 Coast Guard investigations showed that early in the morning of Aug 10, crew members had already noticed that the vessel's chain locker, the compartment that holds the anchor, had taken in water and the vessel itself had begun to lean by about six degrees to the right. Despite this, Aguro gave the order to sail toward Iloilo. Then at around noon while traversing Iloilo strait toward open sea to Zamboanga, the vessel leaned further to around 10 degrees. At around 1600, Aguro made a right turn to Iloilo when the vessel was already badly leaning right with its head down. He gave an order to abandon ship at 16.6 miles southwest of Lusaran Point in Nueva Valencia town, Guimaras island. Seventeen crew members including Aguro and two surveyors made it to the shore while two others, Victor Morados and Art Ian Nabua, failed to jump off to the sea. They remain missing.

Manila, Aug 20 — A Special Board of Marine Inquiry looking into the cause of the sinking of non specific tanker *Solar 1* uncovered a number of shortcomings in its safety standards. Local newspaper reports indicated that initial findings by the Board revealed that *Solar 1's* ISM certificate had expired and that its master, Norberto Aguro, had failed to undergo oil tanker training and management. These findings were disputed by the tanker's owner and operator, Sunshine Maritime Development Corporation,

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

however. "The reports are inaccurate. All our safety certificates are up to date and the master of the *Solar 1* has undertaken all the relevant courses," Sunshine Maritime operations manager Louie Noel said. In the meantime, the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA), the regulatory agency for the local maritime industry, said that it had ordered the immediate grounding of *Solar 1*'s two sister vessels *Solar 2* and *Solar 3* to enable MARINA to carry out safety inspections on these vessels. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

London, Aug 21 — A press report, dated today, states: Environmental watchdog Greenpeace said on Sunday (Aug 20) that it was "shocked" by the extent of damage caused by the Philippines' worst ever oil spill and called on the government to treat the raising of the sunken non specific tanker *Solar 1* as a matter of urgency. "It's really bad out there," Athena Ballesteros, climate and energy campaigner for Greenpeace International, said. "The extent of damage to such a wonderful part of the Philippines shocked us all." "The government must treat, as a matter of urgency, the raising of the tanker before more damage is done," she said. Some 50,000 gallons of oil has leaked from the vessel with some 450,000 gallons still in its hold. Oil has contaminated 220 kilometres of coastline and destroyed 454 hectares of mangroves and 58 hectares of seaweed farms, Gov. Joaquin Rahman Nava of Guimaras said over the weekend. He said the spill had also destroyed the livelihoods of thousands of people dependent on fishing for a living. Greenpeace says it will take several months to draw up its report on the full environmental impact of the spill. Harold Harder, Coast Guard regional commander, said the slick, stretching 15 nautical miles, was slowly being carried by ocean currents into the Guimaras Strait opposite Negros island. President Arroyo on Saturday said the government had sought the help of the United States, Japan and Indonesia to try and refloat the tanker. Fernando Hicap, national chairman of the Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya), said Petron should set aside P10 billion for the relief and rehabilitation of Guimaras. Hicap suggested the government send troops to Guimaras to help in the cleanup.

London, Aug 21 — A press report, dated today, states: Petron Corp. is negotiating with a Singaporean company to bring in advanced technology that would determine the exact location of non specific tanker *Solar 1* that sank off Guimaras island and siphon off the remaining bunker oil still in the vessel. Lori Tan of the World Wide Fund said Petron, which chartered the ill-fated *Solar 1*, will bring in deep-sea contractors who will use a side scan sonar to determine the wreck's actual location on the seabed, a remotely piloted submersible to find the leak, and hot tap to siphon the oil

that is still contained in the tanker's hold. Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes and Tan believe the cleanup might take two years if all the needed technology and assistance arrive soon. Meanwhile, the Coast Guard reported over the weekend that bunker fuel leaking at a fast rate from *Solar 1* has already reached northern Iloilo. Apart from the island-province, the bunker fuel spill has also reportedly affected at least two beach resorts in Negros Occidental as well as the Taklong Island National Marine Reserve located at the southern tip of Guimaras island which serves as a sanctuary for hundreds of endangered species of fish, sea grasses, mangroves and hard corals. The government has already put Guimaras island and affected towns in Negros Occidental under a state of calamity and sought help from Japan and Indonesia in containing what is considered as the country's worst oil spill. In Guimaras alone, over 15 percent of the province's 155,000 population, or roughly 23,000 people, lost their livelihood with fishermen in hardest-hit town of Nueva Valencia now relying on relief goods for survival. Meanwhile, a fisherfolk group said yesterday close to P300 million worth of livelihood for more than 10,000 fishermen have been lost. The oil slick coming from the vessel has split into several branches that have drifted into different directions, he added. Jarde said the presence of oil sheens has been confirmed in the seas off Bay-an, Ajuy in northern Iloilo, more than 24 nautical miles from where the tanker sank.

London, Aug 22 — A press report, dated today, states: Bunker fuel continued to leak from sunken non specific tanker *Solar 1* in the central Philippines, causing the worst oil spill in the country, environmentalists and coast guard officials said today. Coast guard chief Vice Admiral Arthur Gosangan said some 200 litres of oil were leaking every hour into the seas around Guimaras Island, 495 km south of Manila. Gosangan said the coast guard was still having a hard time pinpointing the exact location of the vessel because of the strong undercurrent. "We don't know the exact location of the source of the oil spill because of the undercurrent," he said. "The oil moves with the current so we cannot pinpoint the exact location." *Solar 1* was carrying an estimated two million litres of industrial oil when it sank on Aug 11. Authorities said an estimated 300,000 litres have already spilled into the sea. Virginia Ruivivar, a spokeswoman for Petron Corporation, which chartered the vessel, disputed the Coast Guard claims, adding that aerial surveys indicated the leak had stopped. "Based on our latest aerial surveillance, there is evidence that suggests that the oil coming from the vessel has stopped," she said. "There is no oil slick in the area where the vessel has sunk." Ruivivar added that Petron had already engaged the services of a company that could

undertake deep-sea inspection and salvage operations. "Our primary goal within the next few days is to determine how the fuel cargo can be safely retrieved from where it is," she added. Coast guard and Philippine navy officials admitted that they do not have the capability to salvage the vessel, which lies 3,000 feet underwater. Commander Harold Harder, a regional Coast Guard chief, said the oil slick has already reached the waters of nearby Iloilo province. The sludge has also affected at least five towns in Negros Occidental province, just across Guimaras. The oil spill has already affected some 40,000 people who depend on fishing for their livelihoods. It has damaged about 300 km of coastline, 500 hectares of mangroves and 60 hectares of seaweed plantations.

London, Aug 23 — A press report, dated today, states: President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo formed a task force on Tuesday (Aug 22) to oversee the cleanup of the country's worst oil spill and the retrieval of the bunker fuel oil still in the hold of non specific tanker *Solar 1*. The task force was formed after Ms Arroyo met with Defence Secretary Avelino Cruz, Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes, Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza and Philippine Coast Guard chief Vice Admiral Art Gosangan. Also present at the meeting were Sen. Richard Gordon and officials of Petron Corp. Joining the defence, environment, transportation departments and the PCG in the task force are the departments of health and energy. Cruz, head of Task Force Guimaras, said the formation of the group more than two weeks after the disaster did not come late. "The forming of the task force is to formalize what had been happening on the ground and in order for government to have a plan for the medium and long term," Cruz told reporters. He said he expected that the cost of cleaning up and retrieving the oil from the sea would be "substantial" but noted that Petron and the owner of the vessel would foot the bill. Reyes said it was difficult to estimate the cost of the damage to the environment and to the economy at this point because the sunken tanker continued to leak. He described the oil spill as a "disaster in progress." Cruz said the PCG was assigned to lead the retrieval of the oil from the sea and to investigate the cause of the spill through its Special Board of Marine Inquiry. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources will be responsible for preventing further damage to the environment. Mendoza said he had ordered the creation of the Special Board of Marine Inquiry to determine the culpability of those involved in the spill. It was set to hold its first hearing today at the PCG headquarters. "We expect to finish the investigation as soon as possible and bring to justice the person responsible for this catastrophe," Mendoza said. Cruz said the task force would release

money to the provincial disaster coordinating councils of Guimaras, Iloilo and Negros Occidental to compensate people involved in the cleanup operations. A person is paid 200 pesos a day for the work. "Petron will be reimbursing these funds and most important, Petron has assumed the responsibility of surveying all the way to recovering and siphoning off the remaining oil still in the sunken vessel," the defence secretary said. Senate President Manuel Villar said Petron must be made to pay for the damage wrought by the spill. He has filed a resolution seeking a Senate inquiry into the oil spill. The Integrated Bar of the Philippines will also conduct a fact-finding investigation.

Manila, Aug 23 — Petron Corp., charter of non specific tanker *Solar 1*, said today that it had contracted Okinawa-based salvor Fukada Salvage and Marine Works to pinpoint the location of the *Solar 1* and conduct an underwater survey of the wreck. A salvage ship of Fukada Salvage, equipped with an ROV (Remotely Operated Vehicle), is expected to arrive the site of the sinking off Guimaras island in central Philippines within three days. "While our aerial surveys indicate that the leak has stopped, we have been gravely concerned about the possibility that the oil remaining in the vessel will continue to be released into the environment," Petron Chairman and CEO Nicasio I. Alcantara said. "With the arrival of the ship we hope to establish the real condition of *Solar 1* and put to rest all this speculation." The Japanese salvors are also expected to determine if it would be practical to refloat the vessel, which is estimated to have sunk to a depth of between 1,800 to 2,100 feet, or just retrieve the remaining oil in its storage tanks. Petron said that it has been coordinating with the Shipowners' Mutual Protection and Indemnity Association (Luxembourg), the insurance company providing P&I coverage for the *Solar 1*. Petron said that it will also assist in securing customs and other government clearances for Fukada Salvage. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

London, Aug 24 — A press report, dated today, states: Carlos Tan, Petron Corporations health and safety manager, said Wednesday (Aug 23) said Petron has contracted the Fukada Salvage and Marine Works Co. Ltd. for the salvage operation. Petron had chartered non specific tanker *Solar 1* to ship 500,000 gallons of oil from Luzon to Zamboanga. Tan said the salvage ship would come from Okinawa, Japan, and is expected to arrive Friday or Saturday. "Petron took time to get the services of this salvage ship because it wants the best deep-sea salvage operator," he said. Philippine authorities had been trying to decide whether to refloat the vessel or siphon off the oil still onboard. The salvage ship is equipped with seabed scanners and has a remotely operated

position and condition of the tanker, Petron said. Two of the tanker's 20 crewmen remain missing. The Coast Guard said more oil has started to leak from the tanker, a claim Petron has disputed. "While our aerial surveys indicate that the leak has stopped, we have been gravely concerned about the possibility that the oil remaining in the vessel will continue to be released into the environment," said Petron Chairman Nicasio Alcantara. The Japanese Embassy said experts from the Japanese Coast Guard are in Guimaras trying to assess the damage. "A four-member assessment team from the United States Coast Guard and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency also arrived in Manila Tuesday and were heading to Guimaras to help assess the scale of the spill," said Stacy MacTaggart, spokeswoman for the US Embassy. Tan said that once the tanker's location is confirmed, Fukada would send down the submersible to inspect the hull and find the leak. Once the source of the leak has been pinpointed, the salvaging ship would reel out the umbilical with a hot tap to suck out the remaining oil. Tan said that after the oil is siphoned out, the wreck would be raised. "The tanker cannot be immediately retrieved, because we run the risk of halving it, which may spell a greater disaster," he said. On Wednesday the President ordered P20 million released to the local officials of the provinces of Negros Occidental, Iloilo and Guimaras to help clean up the oil spill. (See issue of Aug 24.)

London, Aug 24 — A press report, dated today, states: An international pollution fund will be used to compensate those affected by an oil spill that has ravaged the environment and economy of a central Philippine island, an oil company official said today. Up to \$301 million dollars from the International Oil Pollution Compensation Fund would be available to thousands of poor fishermen, resort owners and others on Guimaras Island who lost their livelihood after oil leaked from non specific tanker *Solar 1* when it sank south of the island two weeks ago, said Nicasio Alcantara, chairman of oil refiner Petron Corp. He said the fund was expected to put up a claims office in Guimaras, about 500 km south-east of Manila, by next week to start processing claims. "What we would want to do is to have a system that will enable the claimants to file their claims properly and be compensated," he said. He said, however, that Petron, the country's largest oil refiner, was not directly responsible for the disaster. He blamed the vessel's owner, Sunshine Maritime Development Corp. The oil came from a Petron plant in northern Bataan province and was headed to a power plant in the southern Philippines. Arnie Santiago, chief investigator for the Maritime Industry Authority, said the vessel's master was not certified to handle his cargo of oil, having been trained only to head a chemical tanker crew. A

Coast Guard report said that despite being buffeted by large waves and taking on water, the vessel's master proceeded with the trip after passing Guimaras. The vessel sank on Aug 11 as it tried to turn back to safer waters. The Guimaras provincial government has reported that more than 26,000 people directly and indirectly dependent on fishing have been affected. The oil slick also damaged about 220 km of coastline, 450 hectares of mangroves and 116 hectares of seaweed plantations. Two popular island and several beach resorts also have been damaged. "We at Petron deeply regret this unfortunate incident and will take responsibility in addressing the containment and recovery of the oil spill and more importantly map out the long-term rehabilitation of the island of Guimaras," Alcantara said in a statement. He said the company had hired more than 800 villagers at pesos 200 a day to help it clean up beaches and mangroves. He could not immediately estimate how much company funds have already been spent for the clean up, "but what we have is really our balance sheet that stands behind our commitment" to do the job. The vessel sank in about 900 metres of water. Coast Guard officials estimate it has spilled about 350,000 litres of oil since it sank. Three members of the Japan Disaster Relief Team and a four-person team from the US Coast Guard and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration were in Guimaras to help assess the damage. Fukada Salvage and Marine Works Co Ltd salvage vessel *Shinsei Maru* will be used to inspect the vessel, Alcantara said. *Shinsei Maru* is capable of providing images of sunken vessels from deep ocean floors.

SPAR JADE (NIS)

London, Aug 17 — A SMIT Salvage report, states: Salvage services were rendered to bulker *Spar Jade* between Jun 11 and 15. The vessel, laden with grain, ran aground in the port of Tema on Jun 9 just after high water when approaching the berth. As a result of the grounding the port side double bottom tank No.1 breached and filled with water. A few attempts were made with port tugs to refloat the vessel. However, these were in vain. On Jun 10 SMIT Salvage was contracted by the vessel's insurers to provide to salvage response to refloat the vessel. A salvage team was mobilized and after completing an initial diving survey and assessment of the damage which was minor - except for an area of approximately seven metres long and 1.5 metres wide from the turn of the bilge-keel leading inward and slightly forward. *Spar Jade* was lightened and the following day patching services were provided. On Jun 15 *Spar Jade* berthed alongside the quay assisted by a tug.

SUENO (Germany)

London, Aug 24 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states:

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

During the night of Aug 23 fishing (general) *Sueno* (length 14m) caught fire six miles off Suederoogsand in the North Sea. The crew of two reported the fire in the machine room at 0030, local time, today. After their Mayday-call two rescue boats, one of them the *Hermann Marwede*, rushed to the scene as well as a police boat. The crew of *Sueno*, which was underway from the island of Amrum to Sylt, was rescued at 0200 and taken to a hospital in Helgoland due to smoke inhalation. The second rescue boat tried to tow *Sueno*, which was no longer burning, to the harbour of Husum. At 0408 the towline broke and the connection could not be established again. At 0725 the wooden vessel sank nine miles west of the Eiderstedt peninsula. A slight oil film was seen above the wreck position. At the time of the sinking there were winds of 60 kph and waves of two metres in height.

SUNCRUZ VIII (U.S.A.)

London, Aug 23 — A press report, dated today, states: Hundreds of passengers enjoying a popular Little River casino vessel got more than they bargained for late Monday (Aug 21) night when the passenger (cruise) *Suncruz VIII* (96 gt, built 1991) ran aground, leaving them stranded on the high seas near the N.C. border for about five hours. The vessel, which was supposed to dock at 0015, Tuesday, wasn't safely moored to the waterfront in Little River until about 0530, Tuesday, according to several officials with the U.S. Coast Guard. The vessel had set sail with between 200 and 300 passengers about 1900, Monday, the officials said. There were no reported injuries or medical problems during the incident. Lt. Meridena Kauffman, a senior investigating officer with the Coast Guard in Charleston, said the trouble started when the vessel's captain "made a turn and the stern of the vessel came out of the channel and touched the mud" en route to shore. After that, it became a long waiting game until the tide came back up to get the 207-foot-long ship, which features 22 table games and 380 slots, moving again. Douglas Allen, general manager for SunCruz Casinos in Little River, blamed the mishap on the weather conditions in the area. "It was simply tides and winds that caused the vessel to get pushed under the sand," he said, noting that human error and mechanical problems were never an issue. The hull of the vessel was checked by the Coast Guard Tuesday morning. Within hours, the vessel was back in business.

SUNDBYHOLM (Finland)

Turku, Aug 21 — Passenger (cruise) *Sundbyholm* docked at Paraisten Telakka Oy on the evening of Aug 8 and was back in service two days later. — Lloyd's Agents.

SUNNY JEWEL (Panama)

Yokohama, Aug 22 — Chemical tanker *Sunny Jewel* was salvaged

from a sunken location on Aug 5 and towed to anchorage at off Yashima, Yamaguchi Prefecture. — Lloyd's Agents.

TAHOMA REEFER (St. Vincent & Grenadines)

Monrovia, Aug 24 — Refrigerated general cargo *Tahoma Reefer*, fire on board at Monrovia Aug 10 and towed to a position near the breakwater: Upon arrival alongside the vessel on Aug 11 the following was noted. The entire deckhouse was burned. The vessel was tilting/leaning on port side. Several boats and canoes were alongside the vessel. Men were on board the vessel apparently using manhold to get cartons of fish out from the hatches. The vessel apparently lost all electrical operation due to the fire, which was stated to have started in the engine-room. The cargo, which was destined for Nigeria will obviously spoli or be taken away, as the cooling system is dead and men were pilfering the cargo. — Lloyd's Agents.

THEODOROS (Panama)

Genoa, Aug 22 — Wine tanker *Theodoros*, which arrived at Genoa on Aug 18, is currently under arrest at the port. — Lloyd's Agents.

TK BREMEN (Malta)

London, Aug 18 — General cargo *TK Bremen*: Following received from Adriyatik Ship Management, Istanbul, dated today: We are the managers of subject vessel and we have noticed that an article has been published in issue of Aug 17 stating that the *TK Bremen* experienced an engine failure at the west harbour of Terneuzen and was secured by tug assistance. This information is totally incorrect. Vessel had been fixed to load from Antwerp but, due to delay on previous discharge port, vessel missed its cancelling date and the charterers cancelled the fixture. After cancellation of fixture, vessel returned and headed for Hamburg.

TOPAS (Antigua & Barbuda)

Cape Town, Aug 21 — Understand repairs to general cargo *Topas* will take some time, as the vessel has crankshaft problems. The repairs are expected to be completed during the second week of October. — Lloyd's Agents.

TRANSFER (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Aug 19 — A press report, dated Aug 18 states: 3D Marine Company, a salvage operation based in Houston, Texas, this week denied reports that it was paid U.S. \$500,000 to remove a cargo vessel sitting on Lighthouse Reef in offshore Belize. In a letter dated Aug 16, signed by its Chief Executive Officer David H. Scruton, 3D Marine claims that it was never paid any money to remove the abandoned part containerised general car *Transfer* and was not hired to do that job. A report last week stated that 3D Marine's only known officer, Elliot Tulloch, is nowhere to be found. *Transfer* ran aground on Lighthouse

Reef in January last year and has been there since, even though an insurance company in the United Kingdom has paid a million Belize dollars to have the ship removed from the reef. Scruton is disputing the claim that 3D Marine was given the job to remove the vessel. Scruton identifies Elliott Tulloch as the manager of a company called Waller Marine. According to Scruton, Waller Marine was paid to do the job of removing the abandoned vessel. "It was decided by our clients (the owner of the vessel), against our strong advice, to appoint Waller Marine to remove the vessel from the reef. I understand that Waller Marine were paid approximately \$500,000 US Dollars and subsequently attempted to remove *Transfer* from the reef, but were unsuccessful," Scruton wrote in his letter. There appears to be a conflict in what the Department of the Environment has to say and what David Scruton of 3-D Marine is now saying. The Department of the Environment said last week Elliot Tulloch of 3D Marine was paid to remove the ship from the reef. Scruton, now C.E.O. of 3D Marine, says that his company was hired only to remove the diesel from the stricken vessel. It was not employed to remove the hulk from the reef. Aside from conceding his company remains in contact with Tulloch, Scruton ended his letter by accusing the newspaper of making it appear that Tulloch was responsible for the shipping fiasco.

VIKING (Netherlands)

See *Melanie*.

WESTWOOD ANETTE (Bahamas)

London, Aug 18 — A press report, dated Aug 17, states: It has been two weeks since bulker with container capacity *Westwood Anette* spewed almost 30,000 litres of bunker fuel into Howe Sound near Squamish causing an environmental nightmare. But it appears the company involved is doing all it can to clean it up. While the clean up continues, Environment Minister Barry Penner says the cost, which will be picked up by the company that owns the barge, has already reached tens of thousands of dollars, and is expected to grow significantly. The cost of all remediation work to clean the estuary will also be sent to the company, Gearbulk Holding Ltd. Dozens of birds were soaked with bunker fuel in the spill but Penner says it's unclear if any of the affected wildlife has died.

Vancouver, Aug 22 — Understand from the representatives of bulker with container capacity *Westwood Anette* that the vessel sailed from Squamish last week. Repairs had been carried out on site to classification requirements. As of Aug 9, two-thirds of the oil spill had been contained or removed by a crew of approximately 40 personnel from Burrard Clean Operations, who had been hired by the vessel's owners. According to a District of Squamish oil spill report, dated Aug

16, there was minimal mobile oil in the estuary foreshore and marsh areas, and efforts were ongoing to separate oil from the foreshore and beach sediment in the areas just to the north of the Squamish Terminals. Cleaning of the leading edge of the wharf and bumpers was almost complete, and attention was being turned to the area under the dock. Oiled booms were being removed from the water and replaced with clean booms in a smaller pattern. The vessel's owners have established a compensation claim procedure for the incident. — Lloyd's Agents. (See issue of Aug 21.)

Vancouver, Aug 23 — Understand from the Squamish Oil Spill clean-up crew, that 90% of the oil spilled from bulker with container capacity *Westwood Anette* was contained within the first week. Local waterways are now open to the public, and the clean-up crew are concentrating on isolated spots where the oil has sunk to the bottom and beneath the beach surface. — Lloyd's Agents.

YARD NO.203 ODENSE (DIS)

London, Aug 18 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: Container Carrier *Yard No.203 Odense*, now named *Emma Maersk*, which was devastated by fire while under construction at Odense on Jun 9, left the shipyard on Aug 16, after replacement of six decks of the accommodation block, for sea trials.

YM GREEN (Liberia)

London, Aug 17 — A Cesam report, timed 1109, Aug 16, states: Container Carrier *YM Green*, update Aug 16: As per information received from various sources and confirmed by Lloyd's Salvage Arbitration Branch, salvor's security demand is for 10% of cargo CIF values. It is further recalled that General Average has been declared and the G/A deposit rate has since been set at 7%.

London, Aug 18 — Container carrier *YM Green*, which had a fire that forced a part cargo transfer, was due to sail from Singapore yesterday, leaving a trail of insurance claims and renewed questions over boxship logistics in its wake. *YM Green*, which was reportedly close to fully laden with 3,196 containers, a mixture of 20 footers and 40 footers, escaped structural damage in the blaze on Aug 8, and was able to resume a voyage to Europe. Only a small, unquantified part of the cargo was damaged, but the scare has caused a flurry of claims activity. Experts have reportedly identified the container where combustion began, but the precise cause is unknown. The container was a groupage load with several parcels. The box was in number four hold, and 25 containers, damaged by fire or heat, had to be unloaded from the vicinity, in Singapore. Other containers were feared to be affected by water used to extinguish the fire, or by smoke. Salvor Smit signed a Lloyd's Open Form, and salvors' security was set at 10% of the cif (cost insurance freight) value of each cargo owner's

interest, and similarly for the vessel, while the general average estimate is 5%. Cargo underwriters have instructed several specialist cargo recovery companies. The vessel had to discharge some deck cargo at anchorage, to allow access to number four hold, after which it returned to Singapore to prepare for sailing.

London, Aug 23 — Following received from Singapore Port Operations, timed 0015, UTC: Container Carrier *YM Green* is still in port, berthed at Pasir Panjang.

YUSHO OCEAN (Panama)

Yokohama, Aug 23 — General cargo *Yusho Ocean* sailed from Setoda to Korea, after completion of permanent repairs on Aug 13. — Lloyd's Agents.

ZHI QIANG (Hong Kong)

Port Moresby, Aug 21 — Bulker *Zhi Qiang* is still in port under going minor repairs and expect to transfer its cargoes early next month, it will then be towed to China for repairs at the dock. — Lloyd's Agents.



GIBRALTAR

Gibraltar, Aug 23 — General cargo *Melek N.* remains under detention at Gibraltar. — Gibraltar Port Authority.

Gibraltar, Aug 24 — General cargo *Melek N.* was released from detention and sailed from Gibraltar at 1550, local time, Aug 23. — Gibraltar Port Authority.

HONG KONG

Portsmouth, UK, Aug 18 — Hong Kong port state control officials detained Container Carrier *CHANG SHUN DA 89* (1598 gt, built 1983), ex *An Rong 1*, in July, after failing safety inspections. The 135-teu *Chang Shun Da 89*, operated by Guangzhou Sunny Ocean International Shipmanagement, spent 16 days under detention. Inspectors found no log book for navigation and emergency drills since January 2006, no oil record book and rubbish record book, no Panama official ISM log book and no nautical publications. The vessel's three liferafts were not rigged properly and fire dampers in the engine-room were not working or able to close properly.

UNITED STATES

London, Aug 22 — The chief engineer of the Greek-flagged product tanker *Georgis Nikolos* (40680 gt, built 2003) has pleaded guilty in Los Angeles on a felony count related to oily water pollution and failing to maintain true and accurate records. The 2003-built, 72,341 dwt tanker, operated by Diamlemos Shipping of Piraeus, was detained in Long Beach on Jun 4 this year after a US Coast Guard port state inspection, when evidence of the crime was detected. The tanker joins the

ever-expanding list of vessels and shipowners in the dock in the US, as Washington keeps up its cold pursuit of oily water separator offenders. According to federal prosecutors in Los Angeles, *Georgis Nikolos* chief engineer Georgios Vafeas pleaded guilty to ordering engine room crew to use a "magic pipe" to bypass the ship's oily water separator to discharge bilge and sludge into the ocean. Mr Vafeas could receive up to six years in jail for the crime when he is sentenced on Oct 30. (Note — *Georgis Nikolos* arrived Los Angeles Jun 4 and sailed Jun 10.)

London, Aug 23 — A press report, dated Aug 22, states: The launch of one of Florida's largest floating casinos will be delayed for a month because the ship's former owners failed to file proper evacuation and fire prevention plans. The U.S. Coast Guard says it will take four to six weeks to complete the paperwork and inspections to certify passenger (cruise) *Casino Royale* (9511 gt, built 1974) to carry passengers. Offshore casinos offer Las Vegas-style gambling in international waters. Passengers are carried to the ships on smaller ferry boats.



BAI LONG QUAN (China)

London, Aug 24 — General cargo *Bai Long Quan* (2700 gt, built 1992), BBCU, which arrived at Hong Kong at 2007 hrs, Aug 23, is today reported at Western Anchorage No.1, Hong Kong, under Admiralty and High Court arrest.

EDCO (Egypt)

Charleston, Aug 22 — Bulker *Edco* is still under arrest and is now docked at the SCSPA Veterans Terminal. Understand she will remain there until final disposition has been established. — Lloyd's Agents.

HE RONG (Panama)

Limassol, Aug 17 — Bulker *He Rong* was released, and sailed Limassol Aug 16 for Tripoli. — Lloyd's Agents.

LUCHEGORSK (Russia)

London, Aug 22 — A press report, dated today, states: Armed men have seized product tanker *Luchegorsk* (2966 gt, built 1990) with 19 Russians on board in Guinea, a shipping company said today. A spokesman for the Primorye Shipping Company said 10 armed men wearing the back uniforms of the Guinean Navy, climbed aboard the *Luchegorsk* and told the captain that it had illegally entered another country's economic zone. They demanded \$20,000 from the captain, but he said he only had \$7,000. The group then took over the tanker's communications unit and ordered it to set the course for Conakry. "Guinea officials have claimed that the Russian

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

vessel entered into the economic zone of Sierra Leone,” the spokesman said. “The captain of the Russian tanker has denied the violation.” He also said that in addition to the Russians, there was one Chinese citizen aboard the tanker. *Luchegorsk* is leased by a Swiss company. It supplies fuel to vessels working in Sierra Leone’s economic zone and has a valid license for such operations. The Russian consul has arrived at the port of Conakry to establish whether the detention was lawful.

London, Aug 23 — A press report, dated today, states: Authorities in Guinea have dropped all charges against the master of a Russian tanker that was detained in the country’s economic zone, a Russian shipping company said today. Ten armed men wearing the back uniforms of the Guinean Navy boarded product tanker *Luchegorsk* yesterday and told the master that it had illegally entered another country’s economic zone. Andrei Sychev, deputy general director of the Primorye Shipping Company, which owns the tanker, said the master proved that at the moment of detention the vessel was in the economic zone of a neighbouring state - Sierra Leone. “The Guinean authorities have dropped all claims against the *Luchegorsk’s* master. The crew of the vessel, which is registered at the port of Nakhodka, have all essential provisions,” he said. But he said the Guinean authorities had claimed the Swiss company that had leased the tanker had been engaged in illegal operations supplying fuel and water to vessels working in the country’s territorial waters. “The company will probably have to pay a fine for illegal operations in Guinean territorial waters. After this, the *Luchegorsk* will be allowed to leave the port of Conakry, where it is currently under arrest. This could happen today or tomorrow,” he said.

MEDIA V (Cyprus)

Durres, Aug 22 — Passenger ro/ro *Media V*, under arrest for several months: It seems that the owners/managers have reached settlement with local creditors and probable that the vessel may sail. It is not yet confirmed, but the Greek/Italian managers may send the vessel for repairs to a Piraeus shipyard. — Lloyd’s Agents.

OTAPAN (Mexico)

London, Aug 19 — A press report, dated today, states: The Environment Ministry yesterday said they need more documentation from the Dutch government before letting an allegedly toxic ship dock in Turkey. The Mexican vessel, reportedly containing a fatal amount of asbestos in its hull, contrary to Dutch government claims, is said to be waiting a mile-and-a-half outside Izmir’s Aliaga port. Under an agreement between Turkish and Dutch governments the Mexican tank barge *Otapan* will have its asbestos

coverings removed at a facility in the port. However *Otapan* became a subject of controversy from the first day it was announced it would come to Turkey. Several non-governmental organizations on Thursday (Aug 17) urged the government to refuse to accept the vessel and have it returned to the Netherlands instead. The vessel was recently towed from Dutch waters by naval police for its high level of asbestos after being kept in the Port of Amsterdam for seven years. No country but Turkey accepted the vessel, reports say. On the other hand, the firm which undertook the mission to bring the vessel to Turkey announced late on Thursday that the vessel was docked in the Amsterdam port due to a financial dispute between the Amsterdam shipyard and ship’s owner. The statement from the firm, Simsekler Food, Shipbreaking, Construction and Industry, also said that asbestos poses no threat to health unless workers fail to take necessary precautions during the breaking process. The European Non-Governmental Group on Shipbreaking urged the Turkish government on Thursday to bar the vessel from entering Turkish territorial waters. The group claimed that the vessel contains nearly 10 tons of asbestos in its hull.

RASA (Georgia)

Limassol, Aug 23 — General cargo *Rasa* is still under arrest and she is at Limassol Anchorage. Sailing date not available. — Lloyd’s Agents.

Limassol, Aug 24 — General cargo *Rasa* has been released from arrest and sailed from the port on Aug 23 bound for Tartous. — Lloyd’s Agents.

RUSTAVI (Georgia)

St. Petersburg, Aug 21 — Fish carrier *Rustavi* is still under arrest (at Murmansk). Prospects of release are unknown. — Lloyd’s Agents.

SAN FONG (Panama)

London, Aug 22 — General cargo *San Fong* (10489 gt, built 1978), 3FOU7, which arrived at Hong Kong at 1131 hrs, today, was subsequently reported at South West Lamma Anchorage, Hong Kong, under Admiralty and High Court arrest.

London, Aug 23 — General cargo *San Fong* sailed from Hong Kong at 2155 hrs, Aug 22.

SEA SERENADE (Cyprus)

Koper, Aug 23 — Roll on roll off *Chang Po Po*, ex *Sea Serenade*, is still at Izola Shipyard. The vessel was shifted to dry dock two days ago and is expected to remain in dock for two weeks. The vessel has reportedly been renamed *Marinos D.* and is flying the Greek flag. — Lloyd’s Agents.

SENTINEL (Comoros Islands)

Genoa, Aug 22 — General cargo *Sentinel* remains under arrest at Genoa. — Lloyd’s Agents.



TARAPOA AREA, ECUADOR

Quito, Aug 22 — State-owned Petroecuador and Chinese consortium Andes Petroleum said today that two of their pipelines in the the Amazon region of Ecuador were sabotaged, resulting in a spill of at least 1,000 barrels of oil. Unknown assailants on Sunday (Aug 20) and yesterday punctured secondary pipelines connecting oil fields to storage tanks in Lago Agrio, Sucumbios province. “We are trying to control the spill but it is raining in this area, which makes it more difficult,” Jaime Crow, a vice president at state oil firm Petroecuador, said. Andes Petroleum issued a statement saying one of its pipelines in the Tarapoa part of the Amazon jungle had been sabotaged. Both companies lost at least 500 barrels of oil in the attacks. Ecuador’s Amazon region has been targeted in the past by protesters who say oil firms do not invest enough of their profits in impoverished local communities. — Reuters.



GULF OF PAPUA

London, Aug 23 — A press report, dated today, states: Australian resource giant Oil Search has admitted it was responsible for an oil spill in the Gulf of Papua between Papua New Guinea and Australia. Oil Search confirmed a small spill occurred while loading oil at the Kumul terminal, 40 kilometres offshore August 9. The company says around 7,000 litres of crude oil leaked into the ocean and were immediately mopped up. Locals have reported dead turtles being washed ashore, but Oil Search says there is no evidence of environmental damage.

KLAMATH RIVER, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 21 — A press report, dated Aug 18, states: Hundreds of gallons of road sealant spilled into the Klamath River after a tanker truck overturned near the Oregon border today, authorities said. Between 500 and 1,000 gallons of chip seal, a tar-like substance used to repair and finish road surfaces, leaked into the river near Hamburg, a small town 50 miles west of Yreka in Siskiyou County, said Anna Counihan, a California Highway Patrol dispatcher. The oily liquid flowed from a hole punctured in the tanker when the

truck crashed and rolled onto its side on Highway 96 next to the river, Counihan said. The truck did not fall into the river. The driver, who was headed to a work site near Happy Camp, suffered minor injuries. The Klamath River west of Hamburg was closed to recreation, and state and county officials told residents to avoid swimming, boating or fishing in the river. "Don't go out there," Counihan said. "Definitely don't drink it." A hazardous materials team was working to contain and clean up the spilled liquid, which had travelled about eight miles downstream by this afternoon, said Michael Mayor, a spokesman for the California Department of Transportation. Work crews pumped the remaining oil out of the tanker to stop the leaking, Mayor said.

SONGHUA RIVER, CHINA

London, Aug 23 — A tributary of China's Songhua River, which suffered a major chemical spill last year, has been polluted by an illegal discharge from a chemical company, state media reported today. The Mangniu River, which runs through the north-east Chinese city of Jilin, was polluted by a five-kilometre-long slick of bubbly red water on Monday (Aug 21), the Xinhua news agency said. Preliminary tests indicate that the major pollutant was xylidine, a chemical used in manufacturing dyes and pharmaceuticals. Contact can cause dizziness, headaches and nausea as well as skin and eye irritations. High-level and repeated exposure can harm the liver and kidneys and cause respiratory difficulties and even death. More than 1,000 soldiers and firefighters built a pollution interception dam and two dams with activated carbon to absorb the pollutants, Xinhua said. No pollutants have so far been detected in the Songhua River, Xinhua cited the city's environmental protection bureau as saying, and the incident was brought under control Wednesday. There was no mention of anyone falling sick. The pollutants were illegally discharged by the Changbaishan Jingxi Chemical Co., Xinhua said. Company personnel responsible for the spill have been detained, it added, without giving details.

Beijing, Aug 24 — China has contained a chemical spill that threatened water supplies for millions and triggered panic buying of bottled drinking water, state media said today. The pollution occurred in the north-eastern province of Jilin in a tributary of the Songhua River. The Mangniu River was polluted with xylidine by a local chemical company, sending a five-km slick of bubbly, red water downstream, the China Daily said. The government bought in more than 1,000 soldiers and firefighters to stop the pollution drifting, the newspaper said. In Harbin, alarmed residents rushed to shops to stock up on bottled water, the newspaper added, though officials assured people there was no problem. — Reuters.

Weather & Navigation



CAMBODIA

London, Aug 21 — At least eight people have been killed by heavy floods in Cambodia as the Mekong River burst its banks due to heavy seasonal rains. Five people were killed in floods in the southwestern provinces of Kampot and Kampong Speu, said Nhim Vanda, head of the national disaster management committee. The floods have damaged roads and destroyed thousands of hectares (acres) of rice paddies and other crops, but the government has not released an official casualty figure.

CANADA

London, Aug 19 — A press report, dated Aug 18, states: Ontario Hydro and the Insurance Bureau of Canada estimate that the two big storms that raged through Ontario this summer cost about \$80 million. Hydro One spokesman Al Manchee says the power utility estimates replacing lines downed by the Jul 17 and Aug 2 storms cost an estimated \$40 million. The storms left hundreds of thousands of Ontario residents, particularly those in cottage country, without power for extended periods as six or more tornadoes took down trees and toppled power lines. Mark Yakabuski, of the Insurance Bureau of Canada, says preliminary estimates tally the damage at about \$40 million for insurance claims. Most of the damage was caused by high winds, or when trees fell on cottages or boats. Hydro One says the damage rates near the top of the list of bad storms for the utility.

CHINA

London, Aug 23 — A press report, dated Aug 22, states: A severe drought is affecting more than 670,000 hectares of crops in Liaoning Province, the provincial ecological monitoring center reported. Since mid-July, rainfall dropped 30 percent to 80 percent over the same period in normal years in regions west of the Liaohe River.

Beijing, Aug 24 — A drought in southwest China, the worst in 50 years, has led to the loss of five million tonnes of grain and damaged more than two million hectares (7,700 sq miles) of farmland, state media said today. Sichuan province was helping farmers plant crops like potatoes, sweet potatoes and yams which can be harvested later in the year to make up for the grain shortage, one provincial agricultural official told Reuters. Most of the damaged crops was rice, officials said. State media has estimated that the drought, which has also hit neighbouring Chongqing, has cost farmers more than \$1 billion. It

has not said whether there have been any deaths. More than half Sichuan's counties were drought-stricken and almost 10 million people had restricted access to drinking water, the newspaper said. The drought has been so severe that the government is helping 100,000 farmers move to the far-western region of Xinjiang to pick cotton after their own fields withered. The dry weather is also causing water levels in China's largest freshwater lake, the Poyang, in southeastern Jiangxi province, to fall as it is fed by the Yangtze which flows through Sichuan. — Reuters.

ETHIOPIA

London, Aug 18 — A press report, dated Aug 17, states: Search and rescue teams are scouring flood waters in southern Ethiopia as bad weather continues to hamper a round-the-clock hunt for survivors. The number of deaths has risen to 364 after the Omo river and tributaries burst their banks with fears the toll country-wide could now top 800. Local Ethiopian officials are appealing for assistance saying they can not cope with the scale of the flooding. A southern relief official told the BBC that at least 6,000 were at risk. Disaster co-ordinator in the Omo region, Deftalgne Tessema, told the BBC's Network Africa programme that despite help from the federal government and the UN, so far just 14 motorboats were trying to evacuate people from islands cut off by the swollen waters. Insp Daniel Gezahenge said that the situation in the south was "getting out of control." There are fears of a deadly cholera outbreak. "We are preparing ourselves for up to 1,000 dead bodies from this flood alone. We need additional helicopters and boats for rescuing," he said. In the far north, thousands of people in Tigray province are battling floods along the Tekezie river. In the eastern city of Dire Dawa, local and international agencies are still providing food and help to thousands of people and to communities further north along the Awash river. The national rescue services including the army and international agencies are said to be overstretched. The authorities in Dire Dawa have declared the area a disaster zone. There are 256 confirmed deaths from last week's flooding, but some 250 people are still missing and 10,000 were displaced. The UN's World Food Programme is distributing relief supplies there.

London, Aug 20 — A press report, dated today, states: Ethiopia has rescued thousands marooned by flash floods that have killed nearly 900 people this month, but tens of thousands remain homeless. State TV says Ethiopia has relocated 16,000 residents stranded by devastating floods after heavy rains caused rivers to burst their banks. More rivers are bursting their banks across the nation. Officials fear the death toll could still rise rapidly as bad weather and poor access hamper relief efforts. The floods have hit large areas

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

throughout the Horn of Africa nation, displacing about 48,000 people, according to UN estimates. Ethiopia has warned that more rivers across the nation are overflowing and its major dams are close to rupturing. Aid agencies say rains are likely to carry on until September and spread flooding to other areas. Aid agency Medecins Sans Frontieres said last week that the number displaced by flooding near Lake Tana, the source of the Blue Nile River, could rise to 35,000 in the coming weeks.

Addis Ababa, Aug 21 — The African Union (AU) today appealed to its member states and the rest of the international community to provide humanitarian assistance to thousands of Ethiopians affected by flash floods that followed heavy rainfall. The AU announced it was donating US\$100,000 to the government to help it respond to the floods, which have displaced an estimated 10,000 people and left hundreds dead. Flooding first hit Dire Dawa city in southern Ethiopia earlier this month, killing hundreds. Then the Omo River burst its banks at the same time as rivers in Tigray, Amhara and Oromia regions. Police Inspector Daniel Gezahegne, the public relations officer in the Southern Nations Police Commission, said that efforts were continuing to rescue thousands of marooned villagers along the Omo River. Rescuers had saved about 1,300 using boats and helicopters, he added. "The weather is good today and we hope to save more people," said Gezahegne. Some people were, however, reluctant to leave because they did not want to abandon their livestock. Floods are common during the June-September rainy season in Ethiopia. The country's National Meteorological Agency has forecast more heavy rains, indicating that more rivers could soon overflow. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said the immediate needs included search and rescue support, including boats, helicopters and life jackets. Helicopters could not fly most of the time due to bad weather, but they were essential to guiding boats to stranded people and dry land, the agency said in its latest update on the situation. The DPPA had also requested food and non-food items to fill the immediate humanitarian gap, according to OCHA. The DPPA was responding to both the food and non-food needs, with support from the UN World Food Programme and UN Children's Fund, it added. — Reuters.

Addis Ababa, Aug 24 — Malaria could become the major threat to thousands of people whose villages have been submerged in flood waters along the Omo River in southern Ethiopia, local officials said yesterday, calling for a more rapid distribution of bed nets to displaced people. "Outbreaks of malaria are becoming our major concern. We are distributing mosquito nets to the stranded and rescued people who are in various shelters in the area," said Kaidaki

Gezahegne, the administrator of the South Omo Zone. He said more malaria cases were being reported in the flooded villages in the zone, and as a result, about 4,000 mosquito nets had been distributed in the past five days. The most severe flooding occurred in South Omo Valley, affecting more than 14 villages in two remote woredas (districts) in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Regions. The Ethiopian government said 364 people had died in that region and an estimated 6,000-10,000 had been displaced. In total, severe floods have claimed the lives of 620 people around Ethiopia since the end of July, according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and 35,000 people have been displaced. About 118,000 people have been affected by the flooding, the agency said in its latest update on the Ethiopian floods released on Tuesday (Aug 22). Heavy rainfall caused the swelling of nearly all major rivers in Ethiopia and the five dams across the country were nearing their maximum capacity and the water still rising, OCHA said, adding that the soil in much of the central highlands was saturated. Weather forecasts indicated more rains, which could lead to more flooding. The Ethiopian government has appealed for emergency assistance, particularly search and rescue teams, food and non-food items to fill the immediate humanitarian gaps. — Reuters.

HUNGARY

London, Aug 21 — A press report, date today, states: Authorities in Hungary say at least three people were killed and 250 injured in Budapest at the weekend as a violent storm sent hundreds of thousands of panicked people fleeing for cover during a fireworks display over the river Danube. "The storm claimed three lives and there are some 250 being treated at hospitals according to the current information," Budapest Mayor Gabor Demszky said. Many of those being treated suffered serious injuries and one was struck by lightning, MTI national news agency reported, based on hospital sources. Several hundred thousand people had gathered on the banks of the Danube river to watch a fireworks display laid on for Hungary's national day. Then torrential rains and gale force winds of up to 100 kilometres per hour uprooted trees, blew out windows and smashed cars as thousands ran for cover to escape the downpour. Ships collided on the Danube river, throwing several people overboard in the storm with four people reportedly rescued from the river, while one was missing. Others were trapped under uprooted trees amid scenes of chaos in the Hungarian capital.

London, Aug 23 — The total insurance cost for the damage caused in Sunday's (Aug 20) storm in Budapest is expected to eventually reach Ft 1 billion (Euro 3.6 million), the Association of Hungarian

Insurance Companies (Mabisz) said today. Insurance companies have so far received 3,500 claims for damaged homes and buildings, totaling an estimated Ft 420 million, and 133 claims concerning cars amounting to Ft 64 million. According to previous experience, however, only a small proportion of clients contact their insurance companies in the first couple of days, the association said. The storm, in which four people were killed and hundreds suffered injuries, affected Budapest's inner districts most seriously.

HURRICANE "ILEANA"

London, Aug 23 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0900, UTC, today, the centre of hurricane "Ileana" was located near lat 17.5N, long 110.6W. The position is accurate to within 15 nautical miles. The present movement is towards the north-west, or 305 degs, at 14 knots. The estimated minimum central pressure is 960 mb. The eye diameter is 20 nautical miles. Maximum sustained winds: 100 knots with gusts to 120 knots. Radius of 64 knot winds: 30 nautical miles in all four quadrants. Radius of 34 knot winds: 150 nautical miles in the north-east quadrant, 120 nautical miles in the south-east quadrant, 100 nautical miles in the south-west quadrant and 110 nautical miles in the north-west quadrant. At 0600, UTC, Aug 24, the centre is predicted to be near lat 19.9N, long 114.4W, with maximum winds of 115 knots and gusts to 140 knots.

London, Aug 24 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0900, UTC, today, the centre of hurricane "Ileana" was located near lat 19.9N, long 114.2W. The position is accurate to within 15 nautical miles. The present movement is towards the west-north-west, or 300 degs, at 9 knots. The estimated minimum central pressure is 960 mb. The eye diameter is 25 nautical miles. Maximum sustained winds: 95 knots with gusts to 115 knots. Radius of 64 knot winds: 30 nautical miles in all four quadrants. Radius of 34 knot winds: 120 nautical miles in the north-east quadrant, 100 nautical miles in the south-east and north-west quadrant and 80 nautical miles in the south-west quadrant. At 0600, UTC, Aug 25, the centre is predicted to be near lat 21.3N, long 116.6W, with maximum winds of 85 knots and gusts to 105 knots.

HURRICANE "IOKE"

London, Aug 21 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0900, UTC, today, the centre of hurricane "Ioke" was located near lat 11.7N, long 165.0W. The position is accurate to within 25 nautical miles. The present movement is towards the west-north-west, or 300 degs, at 11 knots. The estimated minimum central pressure is 990 mb. Maximum sustained winds: 70 knots with gusts to 85 knots. Radius of 64-knot winds: 20 nautical miles in all four

quadrants. Radius of 34 knot winds: 120 nautical miles in the north-east and north-east quadrants, 95 nautical miles in the south-east quadrant and 90 nautical miles in the south-west quadrant. At 0600, UTC, Aug 22, the centre is predicted to be near lat 14.2N, long 168.9W, with maximum winds of 95 knots and gusts to 115 knots.

London, Aug 22 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: Hurricane "Ioke": A hurricane warning remains in effect for Johnston Island. At 0900, UTC, today, the centre of hurricane "Ioke" was located near lat 14.9N, long 168.1W. The position is accurate to within 25 nautical miles. The present movement is towards the north-west, or 316 degs, at 11 knots. The estimated minimum central pressure is 945 mb. The eye diameter is 10 nautical miles. Maximum sustained winds: 115 knots with gusts to 140 knots. Radius of 64-knot winds: 45 nautical miles in the north-east quadrant, 40 nautical miles in the south-east and north-west quadrants and 30 nautical miles in the south-west quadrant. Radius of 34 knot winds: 160 nautical miles in the north-east quadrant, 120 nautical miles in the south-east and north-west quadrants and 90 nautical miles in the south-west quadrant. At 0600, UTC, Aug 23, the centre is predicted to be near lat 17.3N, long 170.5W, with maximum winds of 120 knots and gusts to 145 knots.

London, Aug 23 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: Hurricane "Ioke": A hurricane warning remains in effect for Johnston Island. At 0900, UTC, today, the centre of hurricane "Ioke" was located near lat 17.2N, long 170.5W. The position is accurate to within 25 nautical miles. The present movement is towards the north-west, or 315 degs, at eight knots. The estimated minimum central pressure is 971 mb. The eye diameter is 15 nautical miles. Maximum sustained winds: 90 knots with gusts to 110 knots. Radius of 64 knot winds: 35 nautical miles in the north-east and north-west quadrants, 30 nautical miles in the south-east quadrant and 20 nautical miles in the south-west quadrant. Radius of 34 knot winds: 160 nautical miles in the north-east quadrant, 90 nautical miles in the south-east quadrant, 100 nautical miles in the south-west quadrant and 120 nautical miles in the north-west quadrant. At 0600, UTC, Aug 24, the centre is predicted to be near lat 18.7N, long 172.4W, with maximum winds of 90 knots and gusts to 110 knots.

London, Aug 24 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: aT 0900, UTC, the centre of Hurricane "Ioke" was located near lat 18.6N, long 172.3W. The position is accurate to within 15 nautical miles. The present movement is towards the west-north-west, or 290 degs, at six knots. The estimated minimum central pressure is 960 mb. The eye diameter is 15 nautical miles. Maximum sustained winds: 100 knots with gusts

to 120 knots. Radius of 64 knot winds: 35 nautical miles in the north-east and north-west quadrants, 30 nautical miles in the south-east quadrant and 20 nautical miles in the south-west quadrant. At 0600, UTC, Aug 25, the centre is predicted to be near lat 19.4N, long 174.4W, with maximum winds of 105 knots and gusts to 130 knots.

HURRICANE "KATRINA"

London, Aug 21 — A press report, dated Aug 19, states: The Port of New Orleans, which sustained heavy damage from Hurricane "Katrina", had regained nearly 94 percent of its pre-storm cargo by the end of May, according to figures released by the port last week. The port went through a dismal four-month stretch following "Katrina"'s strike, which included a 12-day shutdown, the loss of about one-third of its operating capacity and the rerouting of cargo to other ports by several shipping lines. However, figures compiled for the first four months of 2006, the latest available, showed that the tonnage of general cargo handled at the port was only 3.8 percent lower than the first four months of 2005. General cargo includes goods shipped in containers and breakbulk cargo, such as steel and rubber, that is transported on pallets. Bulk cargo such as grain and oil was down by eight percent over the same period. Overall cargo handled at the port for January through May totaled 12.4 million tons, off 6.5 percent from 13.3 tons for the first four months of 2005. Port spokesman Chris Bonura said the general cargo figure was the best indicator of the port's health, since most of the bulk cargo is handled by private, rather than port-owned facilities.

INDIA

London, Aug 21 — Heavy rains and floods have killed 33 people in the western Indian state of Rajasthan over the last three days. Over 1500 villages and several towns had been cut off by the rising waters, schools and colleges ordered shut in the lake city of Udaipur, and electricity and telephone networks disrupted across the region, local officials said today. Soldiers used motorboats to rescue those stranded by the floodwaters. Rajasthan's Relief Minister Kirori Lal Meena said the government had set aside 12 million rupees (\$340,000) to help flood victims. The rains were the heaviest in more than two decades, officials in the desert state said

ITALY

London, Aug 22 — A press report, dated Aug 21, states: The cost of the tangy green pasta sauce pesto, could increase or the sauce could be in short supply after unseasonable hailstorms in northern Italy destroyed much of the most prized variety of basil, the key ingredient in the Genoese specialty. Hailstones the size of tennis balls smashed glass panes on scores of greenhouses and pummelled fragile basil plants this month, wiping out entire crops near the town of Pra, west

of Genoa, the capital of the Liguria region in northwest Italy. "The heart of basil production has been hit," Andrea Sampietro, director of the Ligurian chapter of Confagricoltura, an Italian farmers' lobby, said today. Local authorities estimate that some 35 producers suffered a total of nearly \$6.5 million in damages. Farmers have asked the government to declare a state of natural calamity, so they can receive funds to repair the damage. Although the fragrant plant is grown throughout Liguria and most of the rest of Italy, the countryside surrounding Pra is the cradle of Genoese basil, the variety traditionally used by makers of the pesto sauce in the port city of Genoa. "It will not affect industrial production, but high-quality production will suffer," Sampietro told The Associated Press. Industrial production refers to the mass-produced pesto sauces that are found in Italian and foreign supermarkets. Large-scale producers don't depend on the upscale variety grown in the Pra area, which provides 20 percent of Liguria's basil production. Sampietro said it will take months before the greenhouses are repaired and the next crop grows. "The situation will be back to normal by the end of October," he said, adding that four harvests are done each year. Restaurants say they will swallow any increased price rather than pass on the cost to diners. They say they will continue to buy in Pra what little basil survived rather than lower their standards by getting the plant elsewhere in Liguria.

SUDAN

London, Aug 23 — A press report, dated today, states: Floods and heavy rain have killed at least 27 people and damaged about 10,000 homes in Sudan, the Interior Ministry and other sources said. The Blue and White Nile rivers, which meet in Khartoum, are threatening government ministries and the Republican Palace as the water in the capital rose to less than a metre below Nile street, home to the government's main buildings. Tens of thousands of square kilometres of farmland, in a country where most people depend on agriculture as a way of life, have been engulfed by the water.

THAILAND

London, Aug 22 — A press report, dated today, states: Floods have claimed three lives in Nan, the worst-hit among the northern provinces, with damage estimated at 600 million baht and likely to increase as heavy rains are expected to persist. According to Nan authorities, severe floods have left three local residents dead since downpours began in the northern province on Saturday evening (Aug 19). Many areas in the Wang Pha district and Phu Phiang sub-district were still isolated and affected residents were waiting for food and water. Muang Nan and Wiang Sa districts were heavily flooded yesterday, and there was severe

damage as locals were not prepared for what were later assessed as the worst floods in four decades. A number of vehicles were submerged. Most areas of Muang Nan municipality were 50cm to 2m deep water and at least 2,000 families were affected. Search and rescue missions were stalled in Muang Nan as most boats had earlier been sent to Tha Wang Pha district. Children and the elderly were believed to be stranded in their houses. Over 500 inmates at Nan provincial prison in Muang Nan district were moved to a temporary jail on Khao Noi mountain, the highest point in Nan. The local chamber of commerce and industrialists estimated damage to agriculture and commerce at 500 million baht and to tourism and businesses, mostly small ones and in the handicraft industry, at 100 million baht. The weather bureau of the North said rainfall had measured up to 200mm, the highest in 40 years. The Nan river water level was measured at 14m, the deepest in 43 years. The rain did not stop yesterday and floodwaters, especially in Tha Wang Pha and Wiang Sa districts, were rising. Suthep Chankhiaw, an academic at Burapa University, yesterday attributed the flash floods to clusters of heavy downpours instead of scattered showers and to excessive deforestation. There was still flooding in Doi Luang sub-district of Chiang Rai province yesterday but levels were subsiding. Over 500 houses and tens of thousands of rai of farmland were under water. In the meantime, new concerns focused on Phrae province as the level of the Yom river rose to 7.42m yesterday evening and continued to rise. Water run-off from far northern areas and further rains posed a threat. If levels reached eight metres, Sung Men, Long, Nong Muang Khai and Wang Chin districts as well as part of Muang Phrae district would be flooded. Riverside farmland along the Yom river in Song district was under water yesterday.

TROPICAL STORM "DEBBY"

Miami, Aug 22 — "Debby", a tropical depression in the far eastern Atlantic, strengthened into the fourth tropical storm of the 2006 hurricane season, the U.S. National Hurricane Centre said tonight. In its latest advisory, the Miami-based hurricane centre said "Debby" had maximum sustained winds near 40 mph and was about 300 miles west of the southernmost Cape Verde islands. It was moving toward the west-northwest near 18 mph and some more strengthening was forecast during the next 24 hours. The hurricane centre said earlier that top winds could hit 74 mph, the threshold for hurricane status, in four days. The most likely long-range track had the storm moving over the open Atlantic Ocean for the next five days in the direction of Bermuda. — Reuters.

London, Aug 23 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0900, UTC, today, the centre of tropical storm "Debby" was located near lat 15.9N, long 30.1W. The

position is accurate to within 30 nautical four knots. The present movement is towards the west-north-west, or 295 degs, at 14 knots. The estimated minimum central pressure is 1002 mb. Maximum sustained winds: 40 knots with gusts to 50 knots. Radius of 34 knot winds: 45 nautical miles in the north-east and north-west quadrants and 30 nautical miles in the south-east and south-west quadrants. At 0600, UTC, Aug 24, the centre is predicted to be near lat 18.2N, long 35.0W, with maximum winds of 50 knots and gusts to 60 knots.

London, Aug 24 — A press report, dated Aug 23, states: Tropical storm "Debby" has developed in the eastern Atlantic 300 miles west of the Cape Verde Islands, the Miami-based National Hurricane Centre said today, adding that it was the fourth named storm of the 2006 season. With wind speeds clocking near 40 miles per hour, "Debby" was not posing any immediate threat to populated areas and was moving west-northwestward at about 18 miles per hour. Weather forecasters have predicted "Debby's" path will take it over the Atlantic Ocean, far from the Caribbean Islands and the US mainland.

London, Aug 24 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0900, UTC, today, the centre of tropical storm "Debby" was located near lat 19.6N, long 36.3W. The position is accurate to within 30 nautical miles. The present movement is towards the west-north-west, or 300 degs, at 17 knots. The estimated minimum central pressure is 1003 mb. Maximum sustained winds: 40 knots with gusts to 50 knots. Radius of 34 knot winds: 35 nautical miles in the north-east and south-east quadrants and 45 nautical miles in the north-west and south-west quadrants. At 0600, UTC, Aug 25, the centre is predicted to be near lat 21.8N, long 41.6W, with maximum winds of 45 knots and gusts to 55 knots.

TROPICAL STORM "HECTOR"

London, Aug 21 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0900, UTC, the centre of tropical storm "Hector" was located near lat 21.2N, long 135.1W. The position is accurate to within 40 nautical miles. The present movement is towards the north-west, or 310 degs, at six knots. The estimated minimum central pressure is 1005 mb. Maximum sustained winds: 35 knots with gusts to 45 knots. Radius of 34-knot winds: 70 nautical miles in the north-east and south-east quadrants, 30 nautical miles in the south-west quadrant and 45 nautical miles in the north-west quadrant. At 0600, UTC, Aug 22, the centre is predicted to be near lat 22.3N, long 136.9W, with maximum winds of 25 knots and gusts to 35 knots.

London, Aug 22 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0900, UTC, today, the centre of tropical storm "Hector" was located near lat 22.4N, long 136.5W. The

position is accurate to within 30 nautical four knots. The estimated minimum central pressure is 1005 mb. Maximum sustained winds: 35 knots with gusts to 45 knots. Radius of 34 knot winds: 75 nautical miles in the north-east and north-west quadrants and zero nautical miles in the south-east and south-west quadrants. At 0600, UTC, Aug 23, the centre is predicted to be near lat 22.9N, long 139.1W, dissipating, with maximum winds of 25 knots and gusts to 35 knots.

TROPICAL STORM "ILEANA"

London, Aug 22 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0900, UTC, today, the centre of tropical storm "Ileana" was located near lat 14.0N, long 105.6W. The position is accurate to within 30 nautical miles. The present movement is towards the west-north-west, or 295 degs, at 12 knots. The estimated minimum central pressure is 1000 mb. Maximum sustained winds: 45 knots with gusts to 55 knots. Radius of 34 knot winds: 150 nautical miles in the north-east quadrant, 125 nautical miles in the south-east and north-west quadrants and 100 nautical miles in the south-west quadrant. At 0600, UTC, Aug 23, the centre is predicted to be near lat 16.3N, long 109.5W, with maximum winds of 70 knots and gusts to 85 knots.

TYPHOON "SAOMAI"

London, Aug 22 — A press report, dated Aug 21, states: Two vessels were salvaged today near the stricken Chinese city of Fuding in the southeastern coastal province of Fujian, bringing to eight, the number of vessels that were sunk by typhoon "Saomai", that have been raised/salved. No bodies were found on the newly-recovered boats, said Vice Mayor of Fuding Chen Yuyin. The death toll in China from typhoon "Saomai" stands at 441, including 246 in Fujian, 193 in eastern Zhejiang Province and two in Jiangxi Province. Thirteen salvage vessels are working in the waters off the Shacheng harbour in Fuding trying to retrieve sunken vessels. The typhoon sank 952 ships and damaged 1,594 others at the Shacheng harbor, Chen said.

TYPHOON "WUKONG"

London, Aug 19 — A press report, dated today, states: Typhoon "Wukong" made landfall early Friday (Aug 18) in Kyushu, bringing heavy rain to many parts of western Japan and paralyzing land, sea and air traffic. Three people have been killed and at least three were injured in accidents linked to the typhoon, while more than 500 people had to evacuate their homes. The typhoon swept over Kyushu, heading north Friday afternoon, and was expected to be off Kyushu's northern coast by Saturday. The Meteorological Agency urged residents of Kyushu and Shikoku to exercise caution, saying the typhoon is likely to continue bringing heavy rain to those areas Saturday. Up to 400 mm of rain was

forecast for Saturday in the Pacific coastal areas of Shikoku, 250 mm in Kyushu, and 120 mm to 150 mm in the Chugoku and southern Kinki regions, the agency said. Meanwhile, rescue workers in Kanagawa Prefecture on Friday found the body of Mitsuo Sugisaki, 66. Sugisaki was washed away the previous day along with 24 other people who were fishing in the Sakawa River when the Miho Dam was opened, releasing 23 tons of water per second, to prepare for the rain expected from "Wukong". Police are investigating whether the dam took the proper steps to warn the public before opening the dam's floodgates. On yesterday a man drowned off the town of Yasuda, Kochi Prefecture, police said. He was surfing alone in high waves caused by the approaching typhoon. The Meteorological Agency said heavy rain, 65 mm to 68 mm per hour, hit the town of Misato, Miyazaki Prefecture, and the cities of Usuki and Bungoono in Oita Prefecture on Friday morning. Gusts of 147 kph were recorded on the Mount Unzen volcano in Nagasaki Prefecture. Meanwhile, heavy rain also soaked northern Japan from Hokkaido to the northern Tohoku region, which is hundreds of kilometers away from the typhoon zone.

UNITED STATES

London, Aug 20 — A press report, dated today, states: Flooding and mud slides brought on by heavy rain closed the main highway and rail line Saturday (Aug 19) between Anchorage and Fairbanks, the state's two largest cities. At least 150 people were evacuated from their homes, not counting campers and fishermen who use numerous roadside campgrounds, said Dennis Brodigan, Matanuska-Susitna Borough Emergency Services director. A home and a cabin were destroyed in the flooding, while more than 100 houses were damaged, Brodigan said. No injuries were reported, but a dive team was making evacuations and swift-water rescues, he said. One car with two men inside was swept down Montana Creek near Talkeetna, but the men managed to escape when the car brushed against the bank. Rising water undermined two bridges on the Parks Highway, and the road could be closed for two days, officials said. Traffic between Anchorage and Fairbanks was diverted, adding about 75 miles to the 362-mile trip. Twenty-five feet of a bridge that crosses Troublesome Creek about 225 miles south of Fairbanks were washed out, and the span had dropped by a foot, state officials said. Nearly 7 inches of rain was recorded at Talkeetna, about 100 miles north of Anchorage, including 3.7 inches Friday, said Tom Dang of the National Weather Service. Engineers were overseeing the passage over a bridge of about 500 tourists who had been staying at a remote hotel, the state Department of Transportation said. Messages left with DOT officials Saturday night seeking more information were not immediately

returned. Gov. Frank Murkowski was briefed on the damage Saturday during a visit to Wasilla, about 40 miles north of Anchorage. He had earlier issued a disaster declaration, allowing state funds to be used for recovery. The Alaska Railroad suspended all freight and passenger traffic between Talkeetna and Denali National Park. The rail lines run roughly parallel to the Parks Highway. A mudslide washed out 55 feet of track north of Talkeetna, railroad spokesman Tim Thompson said. Crews began repairs Saturday. Steve Hicks of Willow, about 40 miles north of Anchorage, planned to spend Saturday night at a Red Cross shelter. More rain is in the forecast.

London, Aug 21 — A press report, dated today, states: High water that closed the main corridor between the state's two largest cities dropped steadily yesterday, though weary emergency officials kept a close watch on forecasts calling for more rain. "We have reports all over the valley of the rivers and streams subsiding," said Clint Vardeman, a deputy director of emergency services. Roads and bridges were still under water, he said. Both the Parks Highway and the Alaska Railroad remained closed between Anchorage and Fairbanks because of bridge damage and mud slides. High water forced at least 150 residents from their homes Saturday (Aug 19) and sent campers and fishermen scurrying for high ground, officials said. Residents could not return home for at least another day, Vardeman said. Heavy rain last week culminated with 3.7 inches falling Friday at Talkeetna, between Anchorage and Fairbanks, causing flooding and bridge damage. A home was destroyed Sunday along the Little Susitna River, after another home and a cabin had been destroyed a day earlier, Vardeman said. Low-lying subdivisions near Houston, a town of 1,500 along the Little Susitna, remained threatened Sunday, Vardeman said. Workers were waiting for water to recede before they could fully assess damage, he said. State troopers, National Guardsmen, and members of the State Defence Force and the Naval Militia blocked traffic or filled sandbags Sunday. Showers tapered off Sunday morning, but 2 to 4 inches of rain was forecast for the evening.

London, Aug 24 — A press report, dated today, states: A severe thunderstorm swept in from Lake Michigan Wednesday night (Aug 23) with high winds and large hail, leaving thousands of homes and businesses without power and causing some injuries. Heavy damage was also reported at a boat show scheduled to begin today at the Washington Park Marina on Lake Michigan, police said. Some injuries were reported in the county, but LaPorte County 911 Assistant Director Beth West said she did not have any details. The storm knocked out electricity to some 22,000 customers, mostly from Gary to about 30 miles east in the LaPorte, a utility

official said. Numerous trees were down and crews were faced with repairing many broken utility poles. Funnel clouds were reported midway between South Bend and Gary, but the National Weather Service was not able to immediately confirm that the storms touched down. West said the storm hit especially hard in Westville, where wind scattered a lumber company's entire stack of wood across railroad tracks.

VIETNAM

London, Aug 18 — A press report, dated today, states: The death toll from floods and landslides in Vietnam has climbed to at least 26, with several children among the victims, officials said today. Heavy rains causing flooding and landslides have been reported in various parts of the country since last weekend (Aug 19-20). In southern Binh Thuan province, eight people were found dead. Early today, a landslide in northern mountainous Cao Bang province killed at least eight others, including three children, an official said. The central provinces of Nghe An, Quang Binh, Lam Dong, Quang Tri and Dak Lak also reported some victims. A report from the central committee on flood and storm control said more than 8,400 houses and 35,000ha of rice were under water.

Hanoi, Aug 21— Flooding, landslides and lightning have killed at least 13 people since Friday night (Aug 18) in northern Vietnam, bringing the nationwide death toll in a week of rains to 40, a Government report said yesterday. Thousands have been evacuated to higher ground as water levels in the region's main rivers were expected to continue rising with more rainfall forecast for the coming week. Natural disasters kill several hundred people in Vietnam each year. Four people were killed in a landslide in the northern province of Yen Bai on Saturday. Four died on the outskirts of the capital, Hanoi, when they were struck by lightning and five were swept away in floods. — Reuters.

Earthquakes



EL SALVADOR

London, Aug 23 — A press report, dated Aug 22, states: A strong earthquake struck El Salvador today, but no injuries or serious damages were immediately reported. The 5.7-magnitude quake was centered about 20 miles off the country's Pacific coast, off Playa El Espino in Usulután province, according to the country's seismological service. The quake was felt by residents of the capital and in the eastern part of the country.

MEXICO

Mexico City, Aug 19 — A moderate earthquake rocked Mexico's Pacific

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

coast early today close to the popular beach resort of Huatulco and was felt as far away as Mexico City, but no damage was reported. The epicentre of the 5.5-magnitude quake was close to the surfing hotspot Puerto Escondido, but also shook the capital 240 miles to the northwest, Mexico's national seismological service said. "People have called to say they felt it but we haven't received any reports of damage," said Yanet Antayhua at the monitoring centre. — Reuters.

SAKHALIN ISLAND

London, Aug 18 — A press report, dated today, states: An undersea earthquake, measuring 6.5 on the Richter scale, has affected at least five towns on Russia's Pacific island of Sakhalin, local emergencies said today. Seismologists said the quake happened at 0240, local time (1540, UTC Aug 18), at a depth of five kilometres, to the south of Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, the island's administrative centre. "According to the head of Emergency Situation Ministry's Nevelsk district department, windows were shattered in some buildings" the spokesman said. "No injuries or serious damage have been reported so far."

SCOTIA SEA, ANTARCTIC

London, Aug 21 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: A powerful earthquake struck today in the Scotia Sea between South America and Antarctica, Japanese and U.S. officials said. No tsunami alert was issued by the Hawaii-based Pacific Tsunami Warning Center, said Dale Grant, a geophysicist with the U.S. Geological Survey's National Earthquake Information Center. The 6.9-magnitude quake struck at 0141, local time, the USGS said. Japan's Meteorological Agency put the preliminary magnitude at 7.2. The quake, with a depth of about six miles, was centred in the Scotia Sea, approximately 305 miles south-west of Bristol Island in the South Sandwich island group, the USGS said.



MOUNT MAYON, PHILIPPINES

London, Aug 18 — A press report, dated today, states: Mayon Volcano produced an explosion at 0512 today, making it the seventh since midnight. As of 1600 today, the seismic network detected four volcanic earthquakes and about 132 tremor episodes. The volcanic earthquakes presently indicate magma ascent whereas tremor activity are generally correlated with lava extrusion in the vicinity of Bonga gully and adjacent areas of the south-east slopes. Today's sulphur dioxide emission rate of the volcanic plume was 2,712 tonnes per day, which is similar to yesterday's

reading of 2,937 t/d. In summary, Alert Level 4 is still in effect, which means that a hazardous explosive eruption may occur anytime.

London, Aug 24 — A press report, dated today, states: The Albay Provincial Disaster Coordinating Council ordered a total of 868 families or 3,813 persons from two barangays, housed in evacuation centres, to return to their homes, which are situated outside the designated permanent danger zones. Cedric Daep, disaster council chief, has told evacuees from San Isidro and San Fernando to "decamp" starting today and prepare to return to their barangays. Daep told to the evacuees that they are quite safe from pyroclastic flow if Mayon Volcano blows up. The two villages are situated 9.2 to 9.5-kilometers away from Mayon's danger zone. They voluntarily evacuated to escape Mount Mayon's explosion. At least 2,389 or 11,583 persons from this town fled their home on Aug 7 after Mayon Volcano started rumbling. The government also ordered the mandatory evacuation of residents living within the 6-kilometre radius permanent danger zone and 8-kms extended zone to prevent panic. Ten volcanic quakes and 316 tremor episodes recorded in the past 24 hours signify that the volcano's restiveness remains still high and the possibility of an eruption is imminent.

MOUNT TUNGURAHUA, ECUADOR

London, Aug 18 — A press report, dated Aug 17, states: Mount Tungurahua volcano has erupted in Ecuador, blasting huge flows of lava out of its crater and sending ash into the sky. Appealing for help, a local mayor said one person had been killed and another 60 people were believed to be missing. The Tungurahua volcano, located about 130 km south of Quito, began erupting yesterday and activity intensified overnight. The Ecuadorean authorities, on alert since recent seismic activity, have managed to evacuate hundreds of people. Local mayor Juan Salazar said that the situation was "extremely grave." He said the villages of Bilbao and Penipe had suffered heavy damage and those of Chilibu, Chogloctuz and Palitagua had been "wiped out." Frightened villagers have been fleeing the area, protecting themselves as best they can from falling debris with blankets or buckets covering their heads as they make their way down the mountainside. President Alfredo Palacio is due to visit the area to assess the damage. Volcanologist Alexandra Alvarado said the volcano was emitting "a constant eruption with an abundance of ash and a great number of explosions." A scientist with the national geophysics institute said the volcano had calmed down in the past few hours but a new cycle could begin at any moment.

London, Aug 18 — A press report, dated today, states: The Tungurahua volcano eruption has wiped out three villages and killed at least five people.

The volcano was still unleashing a blast of gas and ash late yesterday that reached five miles into the sky. The ash cloud reached almost all the way from the Andes to the Pacific, forcing flights from Quito to Ecuador's largest city of Guayaquil to be suspended due to poor visibility, said Quito's airport chief, Rene Estrella. The volcano, which is 84 miles south of Quito, continues to shower incandescent rock and lava on nearby villages. The violent eruption began on Wednesday evening (Aug 16). An earlier report said that there are approximately 60 people missing in the highest-risk area, as well as seven injured, who were taken to the city of Riobamba, and six others wounded in Penipe, Penipe Mayor Juan Salazar told Ecuavisa television. One man's body was recovered after the overnight eruption. "Four of the bodies cannot be found because they are buried under the debris," Mr. Salazar said. They are presumed dead. Mr. Salazar added, "We suffered 18 continuous hours of fire." After remaining dormant for eight decades, Tungurahua rumbled back to life in 1999 and has been active ever since, registering booming explosions in May that shattered windows in outlying communities. About 3,700 people living on the volcano's slopes were ordered to evacuate in July after a sharp spike in the eruptive force, but many later returned.

London, Aug 22 — A press report, dated today, states: More than a million Ecuadorians have been affected by the eruption of the Tungurahua Volcano last Thursday (Aug 17), the government reported today. The government declared a state of emergency in the provinces of Bolivar, Chimborazo and Tungurahua, after the 5,029-metre volcano threw ash and burning rock into the stratosphere, affecting over one million people, almost 454,000 in Tungurahua and 403,632 in Chimborazo. The rescue agency said at least five people died and three more went missing. The latter were also presumed dead. The lava injured 65 people, of whom five suffered serious burns, it added. The bodies of four people have been found. A fifth person died in hospital, the agency said. The eruption has destroyed more than 40,000 hectares of crops in Chimborazo alone. In addition, 50,000 poultry were also killed in the disaster. Hugo Yepez, director of Ecuador's Geophysics Institute, told the media today that the volcanic activity was calming. But he warned that an increasing warp on the north face of the mountain showed that it was continuing to accumulate lava. It could lead to an even larger explosion than Thursday's eruption, he said. Tungurahua has not erupted or shown signs of seismic activity since Thursday, and the crater was showing signs of deflation. "Probably the volcano will continue like this until there is a new upthrust of volcanic material," he said.

Political & Civil Unrest

**AFGHANISTAN**

London, Aug 19 — A press report, dated today, states: At least four foreign soldiers and an Afghan soldier have been killed in two separate incidents in Afghanistan. Three soldiers with US-led forces died in clashes in the volatile eastern region of Kunar, a spokesman said. A Nato soldier and an Afghan soldier were killed in a gun battle with Taleban fighters in southern Uruzgan province, an official said. Militants have recently stepped up their insurgency against government and foreign forces in the south and east. Insurgents attacked a joint Nato-Afghan army convoy in southern Afghanistan, according to a force spokesman. Three other Nato soldiers were wounded in the attack, officials said. The identities of the victims had not yet been released. It was also not clear if there were casualties among the Taleban combatants. In recent weeks coalition troops have been pushing northwards into the remote mountains but the Taleban and their al-Qaeda allies have been hitting back. The US led coalition has been hampered by the rugged terrain and the ability of the insurgents to slip across Kunar's border with Pakistan into the tribal areas of the northwest frontier province to regroup.

Kandahar, Aug 20 — More than 70 Taliban guerrillas have been killed in fighting with NATO and Afghan forces in the southern Afghan province of Kandahar, a provincial police official said today. Four policemen were also killed in the battle in Panjwai district, southwest of Kandahar city, that erupted late yesterday, said Panjwai police chief Neyaz Mohammad Sarhadi. "So far, we've recovered the bodies of 72 Taliban," Sarhadi said. He said the battle began when hundreds of Taliban attacked government headquarters in the district where clashes have erupted regularly since May when hundreds of Taliban were found to have infiltrated. NATO aircraft were also involved in the fighting that raged through the night, he said. A NATO spokesman, Major Scott Lundy, said the Taliban had suffered significant casualties. He said the NATO force had not suffered losses. A Taliban spokesman said 12 Taliban were killed while at least 30 NATO and government troops had died. NATO aircraft had killed many civilians, the spokesman said. — Reuters.

London, Aug 20 — A press report, dated today, states: A British soldier has been killed in a gun battle with Taleban forces in southern Afghanistan. The soldier, who has not been named, was killed in the volatile Helmand province at about 0830 BST, the Ministry of Defence said. "The

soldier died as a result of injuries sustained during the contact. Three other British soldiers received minor injuries," said an MoD spokesman. The family of the soldier was in the process of being informed of the death, the MoD spokesman said. Afghanistan is going through its bloodiest period since the fall of the Taleban five years ago. Much of the fighting has been concentrated in the south. About 70 Taleban fighters have been killed in clashes with Nato-led troops and Afghan security forces there, according to local officials.

London, Aug 23 — A press report, dated today, states: Eighteen Taliban rebels and an Afghan soldier were killed in a clash that erupted overnight in southern Afghanistan after the militants attacked an army post, a commander said. A group of Taliban attacked the Afghan army outpost in the southern province of Zabul in the early hours of the morning (local time), General Rahmatullah Raufi said. "Fighting erupted during which 18 Taliban and one of our soldiers were killed," said Raufi, the commander for southern Afghanistan. Among the enemy dead were two men believed to be Taliban commanders, he said. Three Afghan soldiers were wounded in the attack 70 kilometres north of the provincial capital Qalat and two army vehicles were destroyed.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

London, Aug 20 — A press report, dated today, states: Congolese President Joseph Kabila's guards have fought gun battles with forces loyal to election challenger Jean-Pierre Bemba in the capital Kinshasa, after poll results showed the two would have to enter a run-off. Figures in from all but one constituency in the huge Democratic Republic of Congo showed the post-war vote was headed for a run-off between Mr Kabila and Mr Bemba. But shooting in the tense capital, in which one person was reported killed, forced the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) to abandon a planned results ceremony at its press centre as gun battles raged a few hundred metres away. "There is a lot of confusion but some of Bemba's protection detail appear to have clashed with the presidential guard," a senior official with the United Nations force said. White UN-armoured personnel carriers (APCs) deployed as gunfire and heavier explosions echoed through the city centre. Government spokesman Henri Mova Sakanyi accused Mr Bemba's forces of starting the fighting, some of which took place near the headquarters of Mr Bemba's MLC party. "Bemba's soldiers started shooting at policemen. We don't know what the reason is. Maybe they were trying to block publication of the election result," he said. He said three policemen had been wounded. But Mr Bemba's MLC party, which sprang from the Ugandan-backed rebel force he led in the war, accused Mr Kabila's

Republican Guard of attacking its headquarters in the city this afternoon. "The Republican Guard started shooting at us for no reason. They killed one of our men," an MLC spokesman told Reuters. Electoral commission head Apollinaire Malu Malu had been due to announce full provisional results at the CEI press centre at 2000, local time, but was forced by the fighting to cancel.

Kinshasa, Aug 21 — A second day of fighting between soldiers loyal to Congolese President Joseph Kabila and supporters of an election rival pinned down foreign envoys in Kinshasa today after the announcement of a run-off vote. Witnesses said presidential guards, using tanks and heavy machine guns, opened fire around a house in the capital where U.N. officials and ambassadors were meeting Kabila's main political rival, former rebel chief Jean-Pierre Bemba. A U.N. spokesman said those trapped by the gunbattles included the U.N. mission chief for Democratic Republic of Congo, William Swing, and ambassadors from a group of foreign donors known by its French acronym CIAT. The fighting erupted for a second day hours after electoral officials announced a presidential run-off vote between Kabila and Bemba following historic elections on Jul 30. — Reuters.

Kinshasa, Aug 22 — Gunbattles rocked the Democratic Republic of Congo capital Kinshasa for a third day today, witnesses said. Heavy gunfire was heard near the area where U.N. and European peacekeepers yesterday rescued a group of foreign ambassadors trapped by fighting between soldiers loyal to President Joseph Kabila and supporters of an election rival. A Reuters correspondent in Kinshasa heard both small arms fire and the occasional thump of heavier weaponry today and saw two Congolese army tanks moving in the direction of the latest fighting. Uruguayan troops using armoured vehicles and supported by Spanish legionnaires had yesterday escorted the U.N. and foreign envoys from the house of Congolese Vice President Jean-Pierre Bemba in Kinshasa where they were pinned down by gunbattles. The Spanish troops, part of a European Union military force in Congo, had been deployed during yesterday night to secure the city's main boulevard. They were seeing and hearing gunbattles going on around them today, diplomats said, following sporadic gunfire during most of the night. Several U.N. armoured vehicles had been put in position around Bemba's house. — Reuters.

London, Aug 23 — A press report, dated today, states: Police and peacekeepers are patrolling the streets of the capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kinshasa, after a deal to end factional strife. Eight people died in gun battles that erupted on Sunday (Aug 20), after results from July's first round of voting emerged. President Joseph Kabila fell short of 50% of the vote, prompting a run-off.

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

His main rival for president, Jean-Pierre Bemba, gained about 20%. The two signed a deal yesterday to withdraw forces from the city centre. Bodies of those killed in the violence remained strewn across the streets of Kinshasa as an uneasy calm returned to the capital today. There were some incidents of looting, and occasional shots were heard in the city. The police have orders to arrest anyone carrying a weapon illegally. Earlier yesterday, more than 200 soldiers from several European countries flew into Kinshasa from neighbouring Gabon, to reinforce about 1,000 EU peacekeepers already in Congo. A joint statement by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, the UN Mission in the Congo (Monuc) and CIAT said the conflict must be resolved through dialogue. Neither faction in DR Congo accepted responsibility for starting the recent fighting. Mr Bemba's spokesman Germain Kabinga said that the opposition leader was still committed to the run-off but that the UN should create a buffer zone between the two camps. Mr Bemba won most votes in the west of the country, while Mr Kabila gained most support in the Swahili-speaking east.

IRAQ

Baghdad, Aug 21 — Gunmen, some on rooftops, ambushed Shi'ite pilgrims walking in their tens of thousands to a sacred shrine for a major festival in Baghdad, killing up to 20 and wounding more than 300, Iraqi officials said. "Most of the attacks are taking place when pilgrims are crossing the neighbouring areas into Kadhimiya," a Health Ministry spokesman said, referring to the northern suburb where the shrine is the focal point of the two-day religious ceremony. Twenty pilgrims were killed and 300 wounded, spokesman Qasim Yahya Allawi said. Clashes were reported in the west and the north of the city and television pictures showed guards on the roof of a government ministry exchanging fire with insurgents. Iraqi police and the Interior Ministry gave lower death tolls. The ministry said eight pilgrims had been killed and 90 wounded, while a police source said four had died and 23 were hurt. Two policemen were also killed in firefights with gunmen. After dusk, police reported gunbattles in downtown Baghdad. Defence Minister General Abdul Qader Jassim said 30 suspects had been arrested, including at least five non-Iraqi Arabs, and that 14 police had been wounded in the violence. — Reuters.

London, Aug 24 — A press report, dated today, states: Two U.S. soldiers were killed south of Baghdad, the U.S. military said today. One soldier died today when his vehicle was struck by a roadside bomb and the other died yesterday after clashes. Meanwhile, British troops abandoned their base in Iraq's southern Maysan province at Camp Abu Naji near Amara, today, which has been under almost nightly attack, and prepared to head deep into the marshlands along the Iranian border to hunt gun smugglers. The

units will remain constantly on the move and be resupplied by air drops. British military spokesman Major Charlie Burbridge said the new-look battle group would consist of 600 fighting troops and "would disappear into the marshlands and desert" to disrupt smuggling from Iran. A further 600 members of the unit will back them up from Basra. He said Iraqi security forces would now be responsible for day-to-day security in Maysan but stressed that the British had not yet handed over complete control to them.

ISRAEL-LEBANON

London, Aug 18 — As financial aid begins to trickle in to deal with the oil spill affecting at least 100 miles of Lebanon's coastline, international officials leading the response have emphasised that a month after the bombing of the Jieh power plant caused the spill, the environmental threat has not diminished. "It remains a major environmental emergency," said Achim Steiner, executive director of the United Nations Environment Programme, yesterday, after an international summit in Greece agreed on a co-ordinated action plan for tackling the spill. "In normal circumstances a spill of this nature would have been brought under control," Mr Steiner noted, going on to say that UN charters had prevented any on-site work before a cessation of hostilities or guarantees of safety by the combatants. He said officials were still unable to gauge accurately the quantity of oil remaining offshore, or smearing the coast, and could not rule out the possibility of the spill spreading to other countries. "With every day that passes the costs of coping with this oil slick will increase," he warned, underlining the urgency of mobilising support. "It is not only an environmental disaster, it is a development that compounds the humanitarian and economic costs of this conflict." Mr Steiner also announced that Israel had assured UNEP that safe access corridors would be created in Lebanon for clean-up work to begin, a pledge he interpreted as further assurance on top of the general ceasefire implemented this week. Despite this, environmental officials said yesterday that aerial reconnaissance, which was a necessary first step to assess the spill, had so far proved impossible. So far, analysts have been relying on satellite imagery. Yesterday, participants at the meeting in Athens agreed to set Euros 50m (\$58.5m) as an initial target for funding this year. The Lebanese ministry of environment, however, has estimated that the overall costs could rise to \$137m-\$205m, based on model costs per tonne of oil spilled. Officials now say that they are satisfied the maximum quantity of oil spilled will have been 15,000 tonnes. So far the European Union has promised Euros 10m in aid, UNEP officials disclosed. The action plan agreed is based on computer models, which indicate that 20% of the oil released

has probably evaporated, close to 80% is likely to be on the coast, with only about 40 tonnes remaining at sea. It is hoped that helicopter surveys can quickly confirm these estimates.

ISRAEL-LEBANON

Beirut, Aug 18 — A press report, dated Aug 17, states: Beirut's badly bombed airport took a tentative step towards returning to normality today when two passenger flights landed, the first to do so since war broke out in Lebanon, airport officials said. An Airbus A321 belonging to Lebanese national carrier Middle East Airlines (MEA) and travelling from Amman landed at Rafiq Hariri International Airport at 1300, local time, with 149 passengers on board. Half an hour later, a Royal Jordanian plane from Amman also landed at the airport, which was put out of action by Israeli air strikes the day after the war broke out. An airport official said no more commercial passenger flights were scheduled before Monday. Israel, which maintained a punishing air and sea blockade on Lebanon since the outset of the Lebanon conflict, said it had authorised the flights. An army spokesman in Jerusalem said "the two passenger planes were co-ordinated with us" and received permission to land. The spokesman said three humanitarian flights and two Lebanese military flights would also be arriving from Jordan today. Later today, a plane belonging to British Airways franchise partner BMED is due to carry humanitarian aid to Beirut. The flight is due to carry supplies from Save the Children and other aid organisations as well as BMED chairman Lord Hesketh, the airline said. BMED "hopes to resume normal scheduled services between London Heathrow and Beirut early next week, initially offering four flights a week," a statement said. The first flights came on the fourth day of a ceasefire brokered by the United Nations that ended more than a month of fighting between Israel and guerrillas of the Lebanese Shiite movement had evacuated its planes from Beirut to neighbouring Jordan, Cyprus and Syria in the aftermath of the Israeli offensive, launched when Hezbollah fighters captured two Israeli soldiers. The newly renovated airport on the southern outskirts of Beirut was struck by Israeli missiles that caused massive damage to runways and also hit a hangar and fuel tanks. On Monday, Lebanese Transport Minister Mohamad Safadi said the airport could partly reopen within a week but needs two and a half months to be fully operational. He warned that this was linked "to a political decision; we will not carry out any repairs before we receive security guarantees." A UN aid official in the Cypriot port of Larnaca said his people still needed to ask for clearance from the Israeli Defence Forces to ship supplies to Lebanon by air or by sea. "It affects us because we are also co-ordinating flying aircraft into Beirut, which we also need clearance for, and

the ships can only use a specific sea corridor," said Philippe Martou, a UN logistics expert. "For others, like the Red Cross, it's more difficult to get in and out." Martou said the Beirut airport is only open during the day for limited traffic and small aircraft, which "serious limits our possibilities. "We've urged the Lebanese authorities to repair the airport for commercial traffic so everything can get in. We are only here to provide transport when there is none. If commercial operators come in, we move out." — Lloyd's Agents.

Beirut, Aug 18 — A press report, dated Aug 17, states: Armed only with shovels and plastic buckets, a few dozen volunteers struggled today to scrape oil-stained sand off a Beirut beach as environmental groups began the monumental task of cleaning up tons of oil spill across Lebanon's coast. "We're trying to move as much sand as possible today and tomorrow so we'll know how many days it will take" to clean Ramlet el-Bayda beach, said Nina Jamal of the Lebanese environmental group Green Line. Nearly 15,000 tons of leaked oil from the Jiyeh electric plant, bombed by Israel last month, has polluted some 140 kilometres of the Lebanese coast and spread north into Syrian waters, according to the UN Environment Programme. "This is the biggest environmental disaster in the Mediterranean basin, we can say that very easily," said Green Line's Wael Hmaidan. Young men and women working on the beach gathered oil-soaked debris into small piles while others tried to dig up sand that had been transformed into a thick, noxious gum by the spill. Others deployed oil booms in a bid to keep the pollution from washing back into the sea. The one-kilometre beach has been fouled by a vast black smear that has stained the sand dozens of metres inland and blackened stone breakwaters on either end of Ramlet el-Bayda. More shocking, volunteers said, was today's discovery that the pollution has reached nearly a half-metre into the beach. A hole dug near the waterline revealed at least five bands of thick fuel oil sandwiched between the sand like a toxic layer cake. "It makes it much harder to clean, every time a wave comes in it pushes the pollution deeper into the sand," Jamal said. "We've seen dead fish, dead crabs. The oil is more than one metre deep in some places and we've seen rocks so covered that they look like they've been painted black," she said. "It will be no less than six years before it gets back to normal." Co-operation with the government and private sector is key to the clean-up, Jamal said, adding that at least one private company has agreed to store the polluted sand until it can be properly disposed of. But bureaucracy is still hamstringing Green Line, which already has lost a month of work due to the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah fighters, she said. A bulldozer brought in earlier in the morning to help shift tons of sand was stopped by the

authorities from working, forcing the volunteers to go back to their shovels, she said, adding that the spill has endangered breeding sea turtles. "You can't have bureaucratic complications when you have an environmental disaster. This is the worst time ecologically," she said. On a wider scale, a continuing Israeli blockade is preventing heavy equipment from reaching other worse-hit stretches of coast, said Greenpeace's communications officer Basma Badran. "There are local groups making symbolic, temporary clean-up operations, but this requires larger-scale equipment and expertise which is not coming because of the blockade," she said. "This is definitely one of the most catastrophic environmental problems that the Lebanon coast has seen, there's been no proper assessment yet and its extent is unknown," she said. Officials from the United Nations, European Union and a maritime organisation are set to meet in Greece today to map out a strategy for containing the massive oil spill. More oil has already spilled from the Jiyeh plant than leaked from the *Erika* oil tanker into the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of France in 1999. Officials warn that if all the oil from the damaged facility, 50 kilometres south of Beirut, were to seep into the sea, the environmental fallout could rival the 1989 *Exxon Valdez* spill that devastated Alaska's Prince William Sound. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Aug 21 — A press report, dated today, states: The Lebanese war, which continued for one month and four days, has caused Lebanon \$9.5 billion damage; an Arab television channel reported on Sunday (Aug 20). According to the report, the head of Lebanese Council for Construction and Progress Al Fazal Shalq said that Lebanon had suffered the greatest ever damage in its infrastructure, residential, commercial and industrial buildings. "The estimated \$9.5 billion is a colossal damage in proportion to the size and population of Lebanon," he said. Al Fazal said, "If the reconstruction work instantly starts, only the infrastructure rebuilding will take at least one year, whereas the reconstruction of buildings will take at least three years." The political disparities could be a stumbling block in the reconstruction efforts, he added. Lebanon on Sunday warned it would punish any group which violated the uneasy truce ending the month-long war between Israel and Hezbollah, as Israel vowed more strikes against the guerrillas. Saturday's Israeli raid underscored the fragility of the seven-day-old truce accord as the United Nations struggled to put together a beefed-up peacekeeping force in war-battered south Lebanon. In an apparent bid to assure the international community of Beirut's commitment to the ceasefire, Defence Minister Elias Murr warned that anyone who breached the deal would face trial for treason. EU leaders plan to hold further talks this week on the composition of the force, amid

concerns over the rules of engagement for its troops on the volatile border between Israel and Lebanon. The raid against Hezbollah in the Baalbek region of eastern Lebanon, which saw one Israeli soldier killed in subsequent clashes, drew an angry response from Lebanon and a warning it could stop its troop deployment in the south.

Beirut, Aug 21 — A press report, dated today, states: Public Works and Transport Minister Mohammad Safadi said yesterday that more than 80 bridges had been destroyed during the 33-day Israeli offensive against Lebanon, adding that the reconstruction process would take between six months and two-and-a-half years. "The Public Works and Transport Ministry is keen on launching the reconstruction process as soon as possible," Safadi said while inspecting the Damour and Naameh bridges. "France will replace the Damour Bridge with an iron one in a week or so. It will also construct three more bridges," Safadi said. "Britain, Italy and Switzerland have also expressed their readiness to contribute to the reconstruction process," he said. The minister said the scale of the damage caused by the Israeli onslaught exceeded \$2 billion. A comprehensive study is expected to be prepared to assess the total damage. Safadi then moved to Sidon, where he met with the South's Governor Malek Abdel-Khaleq. "The ministry will co-operate with the Council for Development and Reconstruction to rebuild the area's roads and bridges," he said. "The ministry and CDR will sign an accord to this end." In Tyre, Safadi met with the region's mayors in the presence of Agriculture Minister Talal Sahili and Amal bloc MP Ali Khreis. The meeting focused on the need to unify efforts in order to rebuild damage in Tyre. Meanwhile, Sahili said the losses inflicted to the agricultural sector were estimated at half a billion dollars. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Aug 22 — The Israeli port of Haifa has been handling traffic since last week's ceasefire in neighbouring Lebanon and says it will be working as normal by the end of this week. The town and its port facilities were major targets of Katyusha rocket attacks from Hizbollah fighters during the recent conflict. As a result, the port was closed temporarily, with vessels diverted to Ashdod.

London, Aug 22 — Aerial surveys of the Lebanese oil spill are set to get under way after assurances of safe passage by Israel were given to the UN Environment Programme, writes Sandra Speares. Surveys by helicopter or plane are considered to be a top priority in order to establish how much oil is still at sea as this will impact on the next stage of the clean-up operations. The agreement should also facilitate the movement of cleaning equipment into Lebanon by sea. Between 10,000 and 15,000 tonnes of oil are believed to have spilled from a power plant south of Beirut which was damaged in an

Israeli missile attack. UNEP executive director Achim Steiner wrote to the Israeli minister for environmental protection, Gideon Ezra, seeking assurances that the flights would have safe passage. Aerial surveillance was identified as a priority at the international summit in Athens last week where E50m (\$64.6m) was pledged to deal with the pollution.

Gaza, Aug 22 — Israeli tanks entered the eastern Gaza Strip today and troops clashed with Palestinian fighters there, wounding at least three militants, witnesses and Palestinian sources said. Witnesses said several Israeli tanks, supported by unmanned drones in the sky, entered Gaza near the Karni crossing, the main terminal for goods entering and leaving the densely populated strip. Three Palestinian fighters were wounded in clashes that broke out when they resisted the Israeli incursion, Palestinian sources said. An army spokesman confirmed that Israeli forces were operating in the Karni area but declined further comment. Israeli tanks and bulldozers also entered a village east of Khan Younis. One Palestinian civilian was lightly wounded, witnesses said. Overnight, Israel carried out air strikes at houses in Jabalya, a district of Gaza City, in the northern part of the strip, and the southern Gaza town of Rafah after telling residents to leave their homes, witnesses said. They said the strikes were apparently aimed at the homes of members of Hamas and Islamic Jihad, two militant groups. Meanwhile, there has been no word on the whereabouts of two journalists from the Fox TV network, an American and a New Zealander, kidnapped a week ago by armed men, while working in Gaza, and no claim of responsibility for their abduction. — Reuters.

Frankfurt, Aug 22 — The German airline Deutsche Lufthansa will resume its five weekly flights to Beirut from August 23, the company said today. Lufthansa halted all flights to the Lebanese capital on July 20 because of the escalation of the conflict between Hizbollah and Israel. Lufthansa had originally planned to withdraw its Beirut flights until August 31, it said in a statement. — Reuters.

London, Aug 23 — A press report, dated today, states: Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said yesterday that Israel has no plans to lift its air and sea blockade of Lebanon takes up positions along the Syrian border and at Beirut's airport. Israeli officials said Olmert wasn't issuing an ultimatum. But the tough stance appeared to be an attempt to put pressure on the international community to send a powerful force willing to disarm Hezbollah, which fired thousands of rockets into northern Israel during 34 days of fighting. Olmert laid down his position in a meeting with U.N. envoy Terje Roed-Larsen, who is in the region to discuss implementation of a U.N.-brokered cease-fire that ended the war between Israel and Hezbollah.

Diplomats are still trying to hammer out final details, including the peacekeeping force's precise responsibilities. "Olmert said deploying the force at border crossings to Syria and at the airport will allow the lifting of Israel's sea and air closure and contribute to the implementation" of the cease-fire, the prime minister's office said. Roed-Larsen said the security situation in Lebanon would remain "vulnerable" for the next two or three months, but said Lebanon was working to secure its borders. He said he hopes the embargo will be lifted soon.

Gaza, Aug 24 — Israeli forces killed a Palestinian and detained a senior member of the governing Hamas movement in a raid in southern Gaza early today, witnesses and the army said. An Israeli army spokesman said Israeli troops clashed with Palestinian gunmen during the raid on a house in the southern Gaza village of Abasan near the town of Khan Younis. Witnesses said an Israeli helicopter fired two missiles. Family members said the dead man was Youssef Abu Daqqa, the brother of Younis Abu Daqqa, a prominent member of Hamas in southern Gaza who was previously detained. They army did not reveal the identity of the arrested man. In another incident on the border fence between the coastal strip and Israel, a tank fired a shell at two militants, wounding one, who was taken to hospital, witnesses said. The whereabouts of the second was unknown. The army said the men were crawling along the ground near the border fence and were fired on. Separately, in the West Bank town of Jenin yesterday night a senior Palestinian militant leader was shot from a car, local residents and medics said. The group said Hosam Jaradat, the leader of the Islamic Jihad militant group in the town, was shot by an Israeli undercover unit. Medics said he was taken to hospital and was in critical condition. The Israeli army declined comment on the incident. — Reuters.

PAKISTAN

Karachi, Aug 21 — The sabotage activities of tribes in two districts of Western Province of Pakistan are on going. The government claims that it has already washed out rebel tribes and increased security arrangements. In a latest attack, raw gas supply to the Sui gas purification plant in Balochistan province of Pakistan from the Loti gas field was suspended when a pipeline was blown up in the Dera Bugti district yesterday. According to local media the pipeline supplying gas to the Sui plant from well No-6 in Loti gas field area had been damaged. Around a seven-foot portion of the 16-in diameter pipeline was blown up, affecting gas supply to the plant. However, no gas utilities of country reported shortage of gas for their customers. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

London, Aug 23 — A press report, dated today, states: Unidentified

dissidents blew up a major pipeline supplying gas to the 500 megawatt Uch Power plant in Pakistan's Baluchistan Province, officials in the provincial capital Quetta said today. The pipeline was breached at Dera Murad Jamali, about 180 kilometres south of Quetta, and has disrupted power supplies in several areas of Baluchistan and Sindh provinces. No claims of responsibility for the attack have been received, the officials said. The area in which the pipeline was breached is near Dera Bugti where the Pakistan Army has been operating against Baluch insurgents opposed to megaprojects and the construction of cantonments in the province.

Karachi, Aug 24 — Sabotage by tribes in two districts of the western provinces of Pakistan are still going on despite government vigilance. Yesterday morning, the rebel tribes blew up a 22-inch-diameter main gas pipeline supplying Sui gas to the Uch power plant in Peero Pull, some 22 km from Jacobabad in Sindh Province. The explosion damaged a 25-foot portion of the pipeline and caused a 12-foot-deep crater at the site. Police have arrested two suspects on charges of sabotage. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

PHILIPPINES

London, Aug 24 — A press report, dated today, states: Six hijackers have been killed in a shootout in Tarlac. Operatives of the Tarlac Provincial Police Office killed the leader of a notorious highway robbery gang and five of his cohorts in a shootout late Tuesday night (Aug 22) in Tarlac City. Government troops raided a hideout of the militant group Abu Sayyaf in the island of Basilan and killed one of its leaders, officials said on Wednesday. The military confirmed that Otong Halipa Linungan, included in the military's order of battle, was killed. There were no reports of military casualties. Suspected New People's Army guerrillas raided a village in Zamboanga Sibugay Wednesday and took at least 14 people hostage for two hours before releasing them unharmed, officials said. The hostages were freed in a remote village called Buayan on the outskirts of Kabasalan town, according to Freddie Chu, the mayor. "All 14 hostages are already free. They were not harmed," he said. It was unknown why the rebels detained the civilians, who were mostly students and workers at the Baptist Bible Church in the town. But Chu said the gunmen had earlier asked for food. "They only wanted food," he said.

RUSSIA

London, Aug 22 — A press report, dated today, states: Part of an oil pipeline in Russia's North Caucasus republic of Ingushetia was damaged early today in a suspected terrorist attack. Two explosions went off simultaneously, causing an oil spill and fire, local police said. "[Suspected] criminals planted two powerful hollow-charge devices on the pipeline,

and both detonated almost simultaneously," a police spokesman said, adding that it took firefighters three hours to extinguish a 20-metre-high pillar of fire near the village of Voznesenskaya. He said authorities have opened a criminal case in the matter, which investigators consider a terrorist attack.

SENEGAL

London, Aug 24 — A press report, dated today, states: More than 4,000 people have crossed into The Gambia after fighting between Senegal's army and rebels in the southern Casamance region, the UN says. The chief of Gambian border village Gifanga said they were unable to house any more refugees and asked for help. A UN spokesman in The Gambia said food supplies had also run out. The Senegalese government launched an offensive against a splinter group of the MFDC rebels near the Gambian border last week. There are some 12,500 Senegalese refugees in The Gambia, the UN refugee agency, UNHCR, says. Separatists from a faction of the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC), led by hardliner Salif Sadio, began a new campaign against government forces earlier this year. Mr Sadio has refused to join other rebel factions in peace talks with the Senegalese authorities and continues to campaign for the independence of Casamance.

SOMALIA

Baidoa, Aug 21 — Somali Prime Minister Ali Mohamed Gedi today named a new 31-member cabinet, in a push to rejuvenate a government paralyzed for nearly two years by infighting and now threatened by powerful Islamists. It was not immediately clear whether Gedi included any Islamists or Islamist allies in the new, streamlined cabinet. President Abdullahi Yusuf on August 7, dissolved what he called a bloated and ineffective cabinet, and ordered Gedi to name a smaller one that would be reviewed on its performance in three months. Gedi missed Yusuf's seven-day deadline by a week. The announcement was made after Gedi consulted with Yusuf, parliamentary speaker Sharif Hassan Sheikh Adan, lawmakers and traditional elders, a government spokesman said. "After the meetings the prime minister reformed his government," spokesman Abdirahman Dinari told a news conference in the government's temporary base, Baidoa. Gedi's reshuffle was part of a deal brokered by government ally Ethiopia, after he narrowly survived a no-confidence vote on July 30 and saw half his cabinet resign in frustration over his reluctance to negotiate with the Islamists. The Islamists' rise is the single biggest threat to the interim government, formed at peace talks in Kenya in 2004 as a 14th attempt to bring central authority to a country in anarchy since the 1991 ouster of dictator Mohamed Siad Barre. The Islamists emerged in June as a new

political and military force after defeating U.S.-backed warlords and seizing control of Mogadishu and strategic areas around it. Some parliamentarians wanted to bring the Islamists — mostly from Gedi's Hawiye clan — into government through the new cabinet. — Reuters.

London, Aug 23 — The Islamic Courts Union, a Somali militia, has reopened the seaport in Mogadishu, Somalia's capital, for the first time in 11 years as the group continues to expand its control over the country. The port's public re-opening today is the latest sign that the city's new Islamist rulers are trying to demonstrate their ability to rule a country just emerging from more than a decade of anarchy. "From today on, the port is open and the world can send its goods here," Sheikh Abdulkadir Ali Omar, a deputy leader of the Islamic Courts Union, said. Mogadishu International Seaport has been badly damaged by years of fighting and neglect but it is now ready to receive commercial traffic, Omar said. The seaport has not been operational since 1995, when United Nations peacekeeping forces left Somalia amid rising political and clan-based violence. The country's last effective central government was toppled in 1991 by rival commanders who then fought each other for control of the country. The port's reopening came 10 days after the Islamists captured the port town of Haaradere, about 300km of Mogadishu, which had been home to pirates who hijacked vessels in the Indian Ocean.

SRI LANKA

London, Aug 19 — A press report, dated today, states: Sri Lankan troops have bombed an alleged Tamil Tiger sea base and traded fire with rebels in the northern Jaffna peninsula. The attacks come amid concerns about supplies for thousands of civilians who have fled fierce fighting. The airforce has bombed a boat yard in Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) territory, claiming it was used to build attack craft and launch attacks on the Sri Lankan Navy. It was reported that it was a civilian yard and that two people were injured when four bombs were dropped. But Defence Ministry spokesman Major Upali Rajapakse says the military has destroyed a large number of rebel boats. "There were 30 to 40 boats there and 90 per cent of the fleet is destroyed and damaged," he said. The military also says security forces consolidating their defence lines at Muhamalai town on the peninsula have exchanged small arms fire in a clash with rebels. The clashes have followed intense fighting that the political wing of the Tamil Tigers says has left 141 civilians dead across the country in the week from Aug 8. The military says it has also shelled suspected rebel positions in north-eastern Trincomalee district. There have been no reports of casualties from the shelling. Concerns for refugees Officials say the Government plans to send two

shiploads of essential food supplies to the Jaffna peninsula, where stocks are running low after fighting cut off access to the mainland when it erupted last week. The United Nations says more than 41,000 people on the peninsula - about 10 percent of its population - are believed to have fled their homes. It has warned that supplies in the area have reached "alarmingly low levels". Aid agencies say they are struggling to get to some of the largest groups of fleeing civilians, particularly in Jaffna and in the north-eastern area of Vaharai, where thousands have fled to escape battles in and around Trincomalee. The UN refugee agency says nearly 170,000 civilians have fled their homes since April, the United Nations refugee agency said yesterday. "Food, water and fuel are the key shortages at the moment and the main issue for us is access, particularly in Jaffna and Vaharai," UNHCR spokesman Lyndon Jeffels said.

Colombo, Aug 21 — Sri Lanka's foreign ceasefire monitoring mission will temporarily withdraw to the capital, it said today. The mission had been designed to monitor a 2002 ceasefire, but government troops and Tamil Tiger rebels have been on the offensive for weeks, and the monitors stuck in the middle. The Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) had already been due to lose more than half its 57 members after the Tigers demanded staff from European Union states Denmark, Finland and Sweden leave after the EU banned them as terrorists. The mission said the outgoing mission chief, Swedish Major General Ulf Henricsson, had decided that with both sides denying the monitors access to the battlefield, it was best to withdraw. "This will allow the SLMM to focus its full attention on ensuring that the scaled-down mission is safely and securely reorganized under new Norwegian and Icelandic leadership," a statement said. A Norwegian general will take charge. Meanwhile a first aid ship was due to sail under a Red Cross flag from Colombo today, for the northern Jaffna peninsula, but rain delayed loading and officials said she would hopefully depart tomorrow. Many Jaffna residents have registered with government and Red Cross officials to get out, but the current plan is to evacuate only a few hundred with foreign passports as well as some aid staff — probably on a Red Cross-flagged ferry later this week. More than 160,000 people have fled their homes, and basic commodities are running out in Jaffna after road, sea and air links have been cut by fighting. Exact body counts are non-existent, but diplomats and analysts say it is clear hundreds are dead. — Reuters.

Colombo, Aug 22 — Bomb squad officers defused explosives strapped to a vegetable-laden pushbike at a market in Sri Lanka's capital today, just hours after U.S. officials said they had arrested suspected rebel arms procurers. Officials said suspected

Tamil Tiger rebels had packed 15 kg of explosives around a Claymore fragmentation mine. Bomb squad officers said the device was found during a random check in Borella market in eastern Colombo, overlooking a busy road. The find comes after two bomb attacks and an assassination in Colombo this month and after a suspected Tiger front threatened to bomb civilian targets. Sporadic violence continued in the north and east, the fourth week of the worst fighting between government forces and the rebels since a 2002 ceasefire. The truce, international monitors say, is now dead in all but name. U.S. officials said overnight more than one dozen people were arrested on suspicion of trying to provide money and surface-to-air missiles to the Tigers, amid a probe across more than 10 countries. Analysts say the Tigers — who have been banned as a terrorist organization by countries including the United States, India, Britain and the European Union — have used the past four years of ceasefire to regroup and rearm, and have smuggled a lethal arsenal into the country. Several people who had agreed to pay more than \$900,000 for hundreds of AK-47 rifles and 50 to 100 Russian-made surface-to-air missiles to shoot down Israeli made jets like those used by the Sri Lankan Air Force were arrested in a New York Sting operation, according to U.S. court documents. Meanwhile, thousands of residents trapped by the fighting are waiting for aid to be shipped to the Tamil-dominated north. Officials said a ship laden with emergency supplies and flying a Red Cross flag was due to set sail today for Jaffna — a journey expected to take up to three days. Thousands of families have fled their homes on Jaffna peninsula, many taking refuge in churches or relatives' homes. Aid workers say more than 160,000 people have been displaced in the north and east because of fighting all sides estimate has killed hundreds. Shortages are also rising fast in the rebel-held heartland south of Jaffna, cut off for most of last two weeks after the army closed checkpoints. Some refrigerators in aid worker compounds have even been raided in the northern rebel base of Kilinochchi. The Tigers and the military accuse each other of being the aggressor, but both maintain they are honouring the ceasefire. Analysts and diplomats say both sides are flouting it, and see no commitment for an end to a two-decade war that has killed over 65,000 people. A return to peace talks is a dim and distant prospect and diplomats say it will likely be years at best before the Tigers, who have fought for two decades for a separate homeland for minority Tamils, are removed from any terror lists. — Reuters.

Colombo, Aug 23 — Fighting on Sri Lanka's besieged Jaffna peninsula appeared to have hit a lull after a 12-day battle with Tamil Tiger rebels, officials said. Witnesses heard the sound of artillery fire south of Jaffna

in the morning, but the military said they had no details. Tiger radio said in the last week they had pushed the army back. "Jaffna is calm and quiet," said an army spokesman. "But there are two incidents reported in the east. They have fired mortars at our camps." No one was hurt in either mortar attack, he said. One was aimed at an exposed camp in the eastern Batticaloa district, while the other was at a base in the northeastern Trincomalee district. While both sides say they want peace, diplomats believe both probably still have military objectives they want to achieve. The unarmed Nordic ceasefire monitoring mission has withdrawn most of its staff to the capital, although some remain stuck on Jaffna. "It is a little more quiet but there is still a lot of shelling," said outgoing chief truce monitor former Swedish Major General Ulf Henricsson. "I can't see any military gains on either side." Meanwhile, a Red Cross-flagged aid ship, carrying food and essential supplies left Colombo yesterday evening and will only arrive tomorrow. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) said they had given security guarantees both for the aid ship and for a smaller ferry that will begin evacuating expatriates from Jaffna with foreign residency or nationality, as well as some aid workers. The ferry, scheduled to leave tomorrow, will carry other emergency staff into Jaffna, which has changed hands several times during two decades of war and which is seen as the cultural center of the Tigers' fight for a Tamil homeland. "We have given the green light to evacuate the expatriates from the Jaffna peninsula," said head of the rebel peace secretariat S. Puledevan. "We are only taking defensive measures and responding to any new attack." — Reuters.

Colombo, Aug 24 — Sporadic artillery fire and air strikes continued along Sri Lanka's Jaffna peninsula today as an aid ship approached the besieged city for the first time in nearly two weeks, residents and officials said. The army said the peninsula was "calm and quiet", but admitted some exchange of gunfire, which was confirmed by residents. The military also said jets struck a rebel Sea Tiger base near their de facto capital of Kilinochchi today. No supplies have reached Jaffna since Tamil Tiger rebels and government troops began heavy fighting along the front line on August 11. A Red Cross-flagged cargo ship has sailed almost all the way around the island from the capital with security guarantees from both sides, while a second ship is preparing to sail from Trincomalee to begin the evacuation of some 500 foreigners. — Reuters.

SUDAN

London, Aug 21 — A press report, dated Aug 20, states: The African Union says two of its peacekeepers have been killed and three injured in an attack in the troubled Sudanese region of Darfur. The AU said armed men ambushed one of its fuel convoys

travelling to its headquarters in North Darfur. The AU said the leaders of the groups responsible for the "despicable attack" would be held personally accountable. The Sudanese government is under growing international pressure to allow a UN peacekeeping force in Darfur. Diplomats say the humanitarian situation in the region is deteriorating and there are mounting concerns over security. The AU did not say which groups it believed carried out the latest attack. Sudan's government and the pro-government Arab militias are accused of war crimes against Darfur's black African population, although the UN has stopped short of calling it genocide. Discussions have been taking place at the UN in New York about sending a major peacekeeping force to Darfur. Britain and the US have introduced a UN draft resolution authorising the deployment of at least 17,000 UN peacekeepers to supplement AU troops in the region. The British officials who drew up the resolution say they hope it can be adopted by the Security Council within a month, to enable troops to be deployed in January. But Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir has said he does not want UN troops in Sudan. Russia and China have some reservations and there is the question of who would supply troops, with UN peacekeeping operations looking increasingly stretched.

THAILAND

London, Aug 18 — A press report, dated today, states: Narathiwat and Pattani were hit by a series of bomb attacks during a four-hour span yesterday, injuring 19 officers and civilians. The first blast went off at 0730 outside Rattanachai gold shop in Tanyongmas town near the market in Rangae district in Narathiwat. The explosion injured five military officers and seven civilians and also shattered shop windows and doors. The scene of the blast was strewn with metal shards, motorcycle parts, gunpowder, parts of mobile phones, SIM cards and severed electrical wires. Police believe a home-made bomb weighing at least 10kg was hidden in a motorcycle in front of the shop. The bomb was timed to go off as the officers went shopping at the morning market. Two hours later, a home-made bomb buried near Taseh Nua-Tonmaisung road in Sungai Padi district blew up while a six-member patrol team was passing on motorcycles. They escaped unharmed. A mobile phone SIM card was found nearby, indicating the bomb was remotely triggered. In Yala, five civilians and two police were injured in a bomb blast around 0830 at a food shop opposite the provincial hospital in Muang district. The bomb exploded while police were having breakfast in the shop. The blast left a large crater and damaged nearby shops. Pieces of a mobile phone were found at the scene, suggesting the bomb was set off remotely. Around 11.30am, a bomb disposal squad neutralised a 15kg bomb placed at a roadside shelter near

Kanarat Bamroong 2 school in Muang district of Yala. Four people were killed in separate shootings in Pattani province. Boonchu Longprom, 47, a municipal official in Sai Buri district, was shot dead by two men on a motorcycle at 0720. One hour later, Ma Matahe, 30, was gunned down on his way to work at the Nong Chik district office by two men on a motorcycle. He died instantly. In Yarang district, rubber planter Noppadol Yamapat, 35, was shot dead by two assailants on a motorcycle around 11.45am. Around noon, Saroj Tantanawat, a 40-year-old pig trader, was shot and killed by a pillion-riding gunman in Khok Pho district while on his way home from a nearby market. The bombings took place as two senior officials responsible for tackling violence in the deep South remained at odds about how best to do it.

London, Aug 21 — A press report, dated today, states: One person is dead and another injured after four insurgents on motorcycles fired AK47 rifles at a Irrigation Department-owned vehicle carrying eight workers. The attack took place in front of a crowded tea shop in Pattani's Yaring district yesterday, killing one and injuring one construction worker. Elsewhere in Yala, a roadside bomb went off in Than To district. No one was hurt. Police said the bomb was probably triggered by a clock.

TURKEY

London, Aug 20 — A press report, dated Aug 19, states: A suspected Kurdish rebel attack caused an explosion and huge fire on a natural gas pipeline in eastern Turkey, the Energy Ministry said. The region's governor, Halil Ibrahim Akpinar, said separatist Kurds were suspected of carrying out an attack on the pipeline. He did not say if a bomb was believed to have caused the explosion. The blast shook houses in nearby villages, the private Dogan news agency reported. Gas flows to the nearby province of Erzincan were cut, Energy Ministry spokesman Bulent Ismen said. Paramilitary police sealed off the area and firefighting teams were dispatched to the region.

London, Aug 21 — A press report, dated today, states: The outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) has claimed responsibility for Saturday's (Aug 19) explosion which hit a natural gas pipeline in the eastern Turkish province of Agri. The pro-PKK Firat News Agency reported yesterday that the PKK terrorist organisation had claimed responsibility for the attack on the pipeline. The report went on to say that the attack was a "warning" to both Turkey and Iran, which it said were carrying out joint military operations against the PKK in northern Iraq. Late on Saturday, a major explosion had hit the natural gas transfer unit of the Turkish Natural Gas Pipeline Company (BOTAS), which carries natural gas from Iran to Turkey, near the village of Gecitalan. Firefighters fought for four hours to bring the fire that broke

out following the blast under control. The blast was so strong that it was heard nearly 40 kilometres away. The flames reached heights of up to 80 metres. Nearly 200 meters of the pipeline were blown up and almost eight million cubic meters of gas, worth an estimated \$2.5 million, was burnt. Repair works are still continuing. The fire also caused power lines in the vicinity to melt resulting in a blackout in the city of Agri.

London, Aug 22 — A press report, dated today, states: A natural gas pipeline in eastern Turkey which was blown up by the outlawed Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) on Saturday (Aug 19) has been repaired and will resume operations today, the semi-official Anatolia news agency reported. The report said that teams of experts from the provinces of Bursa, Ankara and Erzurum repaired the Iran-Turkey natural gas pipeline, adding that the flow of natural gas would resume today. The PKK has claimed responsibility for the pipeline explosion near Taslicay town in the eastern province of Agri. The PKK said the attack was a "warning" to both Turkey and Iran, accusing the two countries of carrying out joint military operations against the group in northern Iraq.



NIGERIA

Port Harcourt, Aug 19 — A German oil worker taken hostage at gunpoint in Nigeria was freed overnight unharmed after two weeks in captivity, a state government spokesman said today. The release of Guido Schiffarth was unconnected to a military raid, also yesterday night, on a suspected militant hide-out on the outskirts of Port Harcourt, the largest city in Nigeria's oil-producing Niger Delta, authorities said. "I was well treated and respected," Schiffarth was quoted as saying by a spokesman for the Rivers State government. The 62-year-old employee of Bilfinger and Berger was snatched from his car by armed men disguised as soldiers in Port Harcourt on August 3, one of seven separate abductions in Africa's top oil producer this month. There are now seven foreign workers in captivity — two Britons, an American, a German, a Pole, an Irish and a Lebanese — while 10 have been released. Royal Dutch Shell said today one of its employees, a Nigerian, had also been kidnapped by a community in neighbouring Bayelsa state on August 8 over a land compensation dispute. Nobody was killed in yesterday's raid in Port Harcourt, but several people were arrested and several others were beaten as troops and police combed the riverside slum area of Ilabuchi and Eagle Island.

There were still more than 100 soldiers and police in the area today, backed up by helicopter gunships overhead and four navy gunboats on the creek. The raid came in response to an order from President Olusegun Obasanjo to use "force for force" in the vast wetlands region of southern Nigeria, especially in the eastern delta around Port Harcourt where the latest abductions have occurred. The kidnappings follow a series of attacks on the oil industry in February which forced Shell to evacuate hundreds of workers from oilfields in the western delta, reducing the OPEC member nation's output by a quarter. Some abductions are motivated purely by ransom, while others are by communities trying to extract money or other benefits from oil companies operating in their area. Several recent kidnappings and attacks have taken on a more political tone, with demands reflecting a growing ethnic nationalism of the Ijaw tribe, native to the Niger Delta. In the case of Schiffarth, the kidnappers demanded the release of two jailed Ijaw leaders and more benefits for the community where the German company operates. It was not clear what led to his release. — Reuters.

Port Harcourt, Aug 24 — Six foreign oil workers, kidnapped from a nightclub in Nigeria, were released on Wednesday night (Aug 23) after 10 days in captivity, authorities said. The six men, two Britons, an American, German, Irish and Pole, were abducted at gunpoint from a nightclub in the southern oil city of Port Harcourt on Aug 13. "The hostages were released. All six of them. They are looking well," said Magnus Abe, a spokesman for Rivers State government, where they were abducted. The release means that only one Lebanese construction worker is still being held out of 17 mostly foreign oil workers seized this month in a string of seven separate kidnappings in the oil producing Niger Delta this month. At least 10 militants were killed in a gunfight with troops in a botched hostage release on Sunday. The captive, a Nigerian employee of Royal Dutch Shell, was also killed. — Reuters.



CHILE

London, Aug 18 — A press report, dated today, states: Managers at the Escondida copper mine, Chile, have suspended operations as a strike enters its 12th day. Escondida said it had shut down work because striking staff had blocked access roads to the mine for two days, causing a health and security risk. The firm also said it had broken off talks with the union. While their picketing is continuing, earlier this week the workers

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

appeared to soften their stand, cutting their pay rise demand from 13% to 10%. Managers are continuing to only offer 3%. Escondida, which had claimed that it was producing more than half its usual output during the strike, said it had no choice but to temporarily halt production.

London, Aug 21 — A press report, dated today, states: A strike at the world's largest privately-owned copper mine has entered its third week after staff rejected an improved pay and benefits offer. Workers at the Escondida site in Chile turned down an offer of up to \$32,000 (£17,000) in bonuses and a four percent pay rise over three years, late yesterday. Staff are currently demanding a 10% pay rise, down from their initial 13% call. Workers say the mine, majority owned by BHP Billiton, should pass on more of the current high global copper prices. On Friday (Aug 18) managers at Escondida shut down all work because striking staff had blocked access roads to the mine, causing a health and security risk. Escondida had earlier claimed that it was producing more than half its usual output during the strike. The Escondida mine produces eight percent of the world's copper. Copper prices have hit record highs this year due to strong global demand led by China.

London, Aug 22 — A press report, dated today, states: BHP Billiton Ltd. union workers in Chile extended a strike at the world's biggest copper mine for a 16th day after rejecting the company's latest offer. No new talks are scheduled. Union members at the Escondida mine are ready to continue talks with the Melbourne-based BHP, the world's biggest mining company, on their demands for higher pay and bonuses, union treasurer Pedro Fornazzari said by phone from Antofagasta. BHP spokesman Mauro Valdes didn't return a call for comment. Copper for December delivery fell 5.95 cents, or 1.7 percent, to \$3.4300 a pound on the Comex division of the New York Mercantile Exchange at 0850, New York time.

IRAQ

London, Aug 22 — A press report, dated today, states: Hundreds of oil company employees went on strike today for higher pay, officials said. The job action cut supplies to power stations and factories as Iraq faces its worst fuel shortage since Saddam Hussein's 2003 ouster. About 350 workers from the Iraqi Pipes and Lines Company in the southern city of Basra and another 200 in Nasiriyah, about 200 miles south-east of Baghdad, walked off the job Tuesday morning, according to the head of the workers' union. The workers want higher salaries, paid holidays and a share of the profits. Monthly salaries at the company currently range from \$130 to \$280. The company runs tankers and pipelines transporting oil and gas from the Shuaiba refinery in Basra to electricity stations, factories and companies in southern Iraq.

Although the strike was likely to add to the current fuel shortage, its effects would be limited, said Oil Ministry spokesman Assim Jihad.

London, Aug 23 — Striking oil workers in southern Iraq today ended action that closed the main pipeline supplying Baghdad with refined oil products a day after they had won higher pay, a union leader said. "We received a document from the ministry of oil. It is a document to increase our salaries and to pay us (a) share in seasonal profits," Hassan al-Asadi said. Asadi is the head of a workers' syndicate representing over 700 employees from the state-owned General Company for Oil Lines and Pipes in the southern cities of Basra and Nassiriya. Tuesday's action did not have any impact on oil exports, oil ministry and union officials had said. Asadi said the oil minister had agreed to meet with a union delegation in the next 48 hours.

MEXICO

London, Aug 21 — A press report, dated today, states: Volkswagen AG's Mexican plant faces the first full week of a strike after Europe's largest carmaker failed to reach an agreement with unions over the weekend (Aug 19-20). "There is no end to the strike right now," Christine Kuhlmeier, a Volkswagen spokeswoman, said in a telephone interview from the carmaker's headquarters in Wolfsburg, Germany. Volkswagen is offering a four per cent raise and 0.5 per cent food-coupon increase. The carmaker's 9,600 workers in Puebla, who build the Jetta and New Beetle models, went on strike Aug 18, after 54% of them voted to reject management's offer. The carmaker had hoped to reach a settlement by yesterday and resume production of about 1,450 cars per day, Volkswagen said when the strike started.

London, Aug 22 — A press report, dated today, states: The union representing striking workers at Volkswagen's Mexico factory has said it is prepared to reduce its wage demands to help end the dispute. As workers prepared to strike for a fourth day today, the union said it was ready to lower its 8.5% pay rise demand, but gave no exact details. Managers at the Puebla factory, which makes all VW's Beetle cars, have so far only offered a four percent.

London, Aug 22 — A press report, dated today, states: More than 2,300 workers at a Mexican steel mine are set to return to work after agreeing to end a four-month strike over pay and benefits. Strikers at the Sicartsa site in Lazaro Cardenas, which is owned by Grupo Villacero, have won an eight percent pay rise. They will also receive full pay for the time they have been on strike. In April, two men were shot dead by police and dozens were injured in attempts to disrupt the strike after it was declared illegal by the government. The mine, which is 210 miles south west of Mexico City, produces 5,000 tonnes of liquid steel each day and is one of the country's major steel producers.

London, Aug 23 — A press report, dated today, states: The union at Volkswagen's Mexico plant has accepted a 5.5% pay and benefits package to end a strike that began last week, the Labour Ministry said today. Under the deal, about 9,700 workers at Volkswagen's Puebla plant, east of Mexico City, will receive four per cent more cash, plus extra benefits worth 1.5%, the deputy labour minister said. "The most important thing is that the problem is resolved," said Deputy Minister Emilio Gomez Vives. They could be back at work as soon as the afternoon shift today, Gomez Vives said.

UNITED STATES

London, Aug 23 — A report, dated Aug 21, states: A walkout this morning by members of the Engineers and Architects Association temporarily shut down terminals at the Port of Los Angeles after longshore workers refused to work. The EAA represents 8,000 city workers, 227 of them at the Port of Los Angeles. Although the ILWU terminal workers stopped working when the EAA put up picket lines, an arbitrator later ruled the ILWU members had to return to their jobs. The terminals, which are operated by private companies, not the city, were closed for about four hours. Pickets remained in place at the harbour administration building and the port pilot station. Although the port pilots are city employees and members of the ILWU, operations there were not affected by the EAA walkout. The EAA is staying off the job today and Tuesday in a bid to win a more favorable contract. However, no problems are expected at port terminals on Tuesday. The City and Port of Long Beach were not part of the labour dispute.

Awards & Settlements



ASBESTOS-RELATED CLAIMS, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 23 — A press report, dated Aug 22, states: Congoleum Corp. today said Century Indemnity Co. will pay \$16.95 million to a trust set up for asbestos-related claims after the company signed a settlement agreement. Congoleum said the payment will be subject to various requirements and a motion for bankruptcy court approval of this settlement was pending. Congoleum filed a voluntary petition seeking relief under Chapter 11 of the United States Bankruptcy Code, to resolve claims asserted against it related to the use of asbestos in its products several years ago. The company has so far reached more than \$207 million in insurance settlements, and negotiations are pending with other excess insurance carriers.

**CLASS-ACTION SETTLEMENT,
UNITED STATES**

New York, Aug 21 — Mortgage finance company Freddie Mac said today that it had agreed to pay \$4.65 million to settle a class-action lawsuit over its employee retirement plans. The settlement, which does not include an admission of wrongdoing, is subject to final court approval. Freddie Mac, which was targeted by the suit after it restated financial results for 2000 through to 2002, also said that the U.S. Department of Labour has closed an investigation of the agency's Thrift/401(k) savings plan. — Reuters.

**ILLNESS DUE TO PAINKILLERS,
UNITED STATES**

London, Aug 18 — A press report, dated today, states: Merck & Co suffered two major legal setbacks over the withdrawn painkiller Vioxx yesterday when a federal jury ordered the drug maker to pay \$51 million to a 62-year-old Grand Strand heart attack victim, and a state judge in New Jersey overturned a November verdict favoring the company. In New Orleans, the jury found that Merck "knowingly misrepresented or failed to disclose" information about Vioxx to retired FBI agent Gerald Barnett's doctors. It said Barnett, of Myrtle Beach, should get \$50 million in compensatory damages, and it added \$1 million in punitive damages, saying Merck "acted in wanton, malicious, willful or reckless disregard for the plaintiff's rights." Barnett, who underwent a quintuple bypass after a heart attack at the age of 58, was careful to keep his risks as low as possible with daily exercise, a healthy diet and drugs to control his cholesterol, his attorney, Mark Robinson, said. He told the jury that the problem was Vioxx, which Barnett took for 31 months before his heart attack in July 2002. He continued to take the painkiller for another two years, stopping one week before Merck pulled it from the market in September, 2004, after a study showed it increased the risk of heart attacks and strokes. In New Jersey, state Superior Court Judge Carol Higbee ruled evidence uncovered since the November verdict showed that Merck withheld information showing heart attacks could come with use of Vioxx for less than 18 months, said attorney Christopher Seeger. Seeger represents Frederick "Mike" Humeston, of Boise, Idaho, who had a heart attack in September, 2001. "Merck consistently said throughout the trial that you had to be on Vioxx for 18 months to be at increased risk of a heart attack," Seeger said. "And that was false. They had data that people were having heart attacks within weeks." The lawsuits are among more than 16,000 Vioxx-related suits against Merck in state and federal courts. Discussing the New Orleans verdict, David Logan, dean of Roger Williams University School of Law in Bristol, RI, said it would put pressure on Merck to consider settling cases. He said both

the cost of litigation plus the management time devoted to overseeing the Vioxx cases takes resources away from Merck that should be spent on developing new products.

**JAIL STRIP SEARCHES,
MONTGOMERY COUNTY,
UNITED STATES**

London, Aug 24 — A press report, dated Aug 23, states: Montgomery County has agreed to pay \$2 million to settle a lawsuit filed by defendants who were strip searched in jail while facing only minor charges. In April, a federal judge barred authorities at the Montgomery County Jail from routinely requiring inmates charged with minor crimes to strip and shower in front of a guard. The judge concluded the procedure was tantamount to a strip search and unconstitutional. In a settlement filed this week, county officials admit no wrongdoing but agree to put \$2 million into a fund to pay claims from people strip searched between May 2000 and April 2005. An attorney involved in the settlement said that each person wrongly strip-searched could receive between \$2,000 and \$2,500.

**PATENT INFRINGEMENT,
UNITED STATES**

London, Aug 18 — A press report, dated today, states: An East Texas federal judge has ordered EchoStar Communications Corp, parent of the DISH satellite TV service, to stop selling and turn off about four million of its digital video recorders within 30 days. US District Judge David Folsom also yesterday ordered EchoStar, parent of the DISH satellite TV service, to pay \$89.6 million in damages. The decision comes after a federal jury in Marshall in April determined that EchoStar willfully infringed on TiVo Inc's "time-warp" patent, which applies to the way a DVR simultaneously records one program while playing back another. EchoStar, the country's second-largest satellite TV provider with about 12.5 million subscribers, said it will ask the 5th US Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans to block the injunction while it appeals the decision. The Englewood, Colorado, company also said it is working on modifications to its new DVRs so that they will not infringe on TiVo's patent. TiVo, the Alviso, California, company that is credited with introducing DVR technology, said it was "pleased" with the decision. "This decision recognises that our intellectual property is valuable and will ensure that moving forward EchoStar will be unable to use our patented technology without our authorisation," the company said in a prepared statement. Because EchoStar's infringement of TiVo's patent was seen as "willful," the judge could have tripled the amount of damages, but chose not to. TiVo is pondering whether or not to appeal that part of the decision, Elliot Sloane, a TiVo spokesman said.

Railway Accidents**ARLINGTON AREA, KANSAS,
UNITED STATES**

London, Aug 23 — A press report, dated Aug 22, states: A train travelling through Reno County jumped the tracks near Arlington tonight. A connector between cars broke sending 10 of the cars off the track. Six of the cars landed on their side, four others jugged into the air. The train had been heading west from Kansas City to Los Angeles. The trip was cut short for 80 brand new Toyotas now left mangled. This isn't the first time a train has derailed at this location. Six years ago, a train dumped 48 cars off the tracks. No one was hurt in Tuesday's derailment. It did shut down the highway overnight. Crews are loading up the wrecked trucks. They'll be taken to Kansas City to be crushed. It will take at least another day before the derailment is all cleaned up.

CAIRO AREA, EGYPT

Cairo, Aug 21 — Two trains collided in the Nile Delta north of the Egyptian capital Cairo today and there were many casualties, police and health ministry sources said. The accident took place about 0700, local time, near the town of Qalyoub, about 12 miles north of Cairo, they said. One of the trains derailed and overturned, one of the health ministry sources said. Ambulances and rescue workers are on the way to the site, the sources added. — Reuters.

Qalyoub, Aug 21 — A train crash killed scores of people and injured more than twice as many today in a Nile Delta town north of Cairo. Early casualty figures varied widely. A security source said 80 people had died and 163 were injured, while the state news agency MENA said 51 people were killed, and the pan-Arab Al Jazeera satellite television news reported 65 dead. There was no formal word on the cause of the crash, but an official at the scene said an investigation was under way. MENA said the accident happened early in the morning when a train driver apparently ignored a signal and one commuter train ploughed into the rear of another. "The first train was stopped. We looked and saw the other train coming from behind, screeching," said Khalil Sheikh Khalil, who had disembarked from a minibus nearby just before the crash happened. "We kept saying: 'Driver, driver, a train is coming.' So the train driver moved up 15 metres, and while he was moving, the two trains impacted," he said. Khalil said the engine of the faster-moving train burst into flames on impact. A witness at the scene said one of the trains had derailed and was

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

lying on its side. It had split into four parts and appeared to have burnt. Rescue workers scrambled to evacuate the casualties, loading them onto some two dozen ambulances. By midday, rescuers were still recovering bodies, using a bulldozer to pull apart a metal side panel to reach a body lodged in one of the carriages. About 1,000 bystanders and passengers' relatives anxious for news converged on the wreckage, which lay in a semi-rural area about 20 km north of Cairo, sandwiched between fields and apartment buildings. — Reuters.

DANIA BEACH, FLORIDA, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 22 — Two trains carrying building supplies collided at a low speed around noon today, derailing several railroad cars near Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport. The Broward Sheriff's Office said the derailment took place on the Florida East Coast Railway (FEC) tracks near the entrance to the airport from U.S. 1. No injuries have been reported, BSO said. Some of the cargo tumbled from the box cars, but as of 1400 hrs there was no indication that anything hazardous is on the trains, BSO said.

London, Aug 23 — A press report, dated today, states: Two Florida East Coast Railway freight trains collided near Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport yesterday, derailing 36 cars and forcing a temporary shutdown of an FEC rail line from Jacksonville to Miami. There were no injuries or hazardous materials spilled in the midday collision. But the derailments created an extensive cleanup problem expected to keep the rail line shut down in South Florida well into this morning. FEC spokesmen said the cause of the collision has not been determined. Authorities said a northbound train carrying 136 hopper cars of rock was travelling about 30 to 35 miles per hour when it glanced against the side of the train on the southbound track. There were 32 derailed cars from the northbound train, which spilled rock and created most of the cleanup problem. There were also four intermodal cars with 11 containers derailed from the southbound train, reports said. The Broward County Sheriff's Office confirmed there were no injuries and no hazardous materials involved.

VILLADA AREA, PALENCIA, SPAIN

London, Aug 21 — A press report, dated today, states: A train carrying 426 passengers derailed today in northern Spain, killing five people and injuring about 30, authorities said. The six-carriage long-distance train derailed shortly before 1600 hrs near the town of Villada in Palencia province, about 95 miles north-west of Madrid, according to a spokeswoman for the state rail company RENFE who spoke on condition of anonymity because rules forbid her from being identified publicly. The cause of the accident was not immediately known

but there was no indication of terrorism or other foul play, said Civil Guard spokesman Ruben Marcos. The train was heading from the north-west Galicia region through the Basque region toward the border with France when it derailed in the station in Villada. Three of the injured were hospitalised and the rest were treated on the scene, Marcos said.

WAUKESHA, WISCONSIN, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 23 — A press report, dated Aug 22, states: A freight train about 2,600 feet long derailed downtown Waukesha tonight, tearing up track and indefinitely blocking traffic at major street crossings. Two engines and eight cars derailed late today in downtown Waukesha, stalling traffic and forcing evacuations. The derailment knocked wheels off some of the freight cars, damaged the rails and left the tracks a jumble of equipment. Workers begin the clean-up process at the tracks. Its unclear how long it will take to repair the damage. Two engines and eight cars of the Wisconsin and Southern train jumped the track not far from the Phoenix Heights subdivision. Authorities at the scene reported a minor spill of diesel oil, but no other problems with dangerous material although authorities evacuated several homes. Damage from the derailment, on Canadian National Railway tracks, closed crossings at the Arcadian and Hartwell avenues and the Main Street crossings, and damaged the Broadway and White Rock Ave. crossings, all of which had rehabilitation work on them within recent weeks. A railroad worker at the scene said he was unsure a how long it would take to clear the trains from the tracks and repair the damage. The first three engines were traveling without a problem when several cars begin to bounce. The first couple of cars then bowed out, pulling the third engine completely off the track and the second engine halfway off, causing its nose to dig into the dirt. When the train came to a halt, at least six cars were generally upright but were leaning to one side. At least three or four wheels had been torn off of some of the cars, and the track was damaged enough to have caused the rail ties to be completely sheared off. Waukesha fire officials were still at the scene late today and said the train cars were carrying paper and plastic, but no dangerous materials. No cause for the incident was apparent, officials said.



COLLAPSE OF MINE, SHIMEN COUNTY, HUNAN PROVINCE, CHINA

London, Aug 23 — A press report, dated Aug 21, states: A gypsum mine

collapse killed six workers and left four missing on Saturday (Aug 19) in Shimen County, central China's Hunan Province. Eighteen miners were underground when the mishap at the Tiande mine occurred about 1830. Eight men escaped. Rescuers evacuated dozens of residents in the area. Investigation into the mishap is underway.

ORIZONT RIG

Bucharest, Aug 22 — Romanian oil firm Grup Servicii Petroliere (GSP) said today one of its offshore drilling rigs in the Gulf came under attack by an Iranian military helicopter. "We were called by one of our employees at 0615, GMT who told us a military helicopter opened fire against the Orizont rig, and by 0645, GMT, Iranian troops got on board," GSP spokesman Radu Petrescu told Reuters. "Since then, we haven't heard anything from them." The 13,000-tonne Orizont rig has 26 people on board and has been in Iranian waters since October last year. GSP said Dubai-based Oriental Oil Company accused it last week of illegally withdrawing another rig from Iranian waters. The Romanian firm says the contract regarding that rig, Fortuna, was cancelled legally. — Reuters.

London, Aug 23 — Iranian forces reportedly fired on, then boarded, an offshore rig in the Gulf yesterday, although there are conflicting reports of exactly what happened The Orizont platform, owned by Romania's Grup Servicii Petroliere, is on charter to the Dubai-based Oriental Oil Company. A contract dispute exists between the two parties, with Oriental seeking to prevent GSP withdrawing Orizont and another rig from Iranian waters. GSP spokesman Radu Petrescu told Reuters: "We were called by one of our employers who told us a military vessel opened fire against the Orizont rig and Iranian troops got on board. Since then, we haven't heard anything from them." However, the news agency quotes Oriental as claiming a vessel that sailed to the rig was non-military and there had not been any shooting. Some 26 people are on board the unit.

POWER FAILURE TO REFINERY, ROTTERDAM, NETHERLANDS

Amsterdam, Aug 22 — A power failure hit the 400,000-barrels-per-day Nerefco oil refinery in Rotterdam this afternoon, affecting several units, the Rotterdam environment protection agency said. "As a result (of the power failure), several units were out of order," the agency said in a statement on its website. It did not give other details but added that it was investigating. A spokeswoman for the agency said that other refineries at the Rotterdam port — home to five oil refineries — were not affected by the power failure. She did not have information on which units at Nerefco, one of Europe's biggest refineries, were hit. A spokesman for Nerefco said the refinery was investigating the incident and declined to say which units were affected. "We still don't

know what caused the failure, we are carrying out an investigation. There was also a power failure at the neighbouring municipality of Oostvoorne, which might be a coincidence but it might be linked," he said. — Reuters.

POWER LINES DAMAGED BY CRANE BARGE, TOKYO, JAPAN

London, Aug 18 — A press report, dated today, states: Tokyo Electric Power Co said yesterday it has completed repairs on damaged power cables that caused a major blackout in Tokyo and Chiba and Kanagawa prefectures for about three hours Monday (Aug 14) morning. With the completion of the repairs late Wednesday, Tepco's key electricity supply route linking its thermal power plant in Chiba Prefecture and Yokohama via central Tokyo has been restored, Japan's top power company said. Tepco began repair work on the two power cables after they were hit Monday morning by a crane on a barge as it was being moved on the Old Edo River, which runs between Tokyo's Edo Ward and Urayasu, Chiba Prefecture. The repairs were initially scheduled to be completed by Tuesday but were delayed due to such factors as bad weather, the company said. The outage Monday left about 1.4 million households and offices without electricity and disrupted rail and road traffic. The impact of the blackout on the metropolitan area was limited, however, as many people were away over the Bon summer holidays.

Fires & Explosions



BUILDERS STORES, ABERDARE, WALES, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Aug 18 — A press report, dated today, states: About 60 firefighters have spent the night tackling a blaze at a builders' merchant in the Cynon Valley. At one point, the electricity supply to Cwmbach in Aberdare was cut off due to the size of the fire at Mendhams store. No-one was injured, although there were fears for fire crews about a number of gas canisters inside the building. Eyewitnesses said the flames could be seen for several miles around in south Wales after the alarm was raised at around 2100, BST yesterday. South Wales Fire Service said a lack of water supplies in the area meant 12 fire appliances were needed at the height of the blaze. Divisional officer Lyndon Moreton, who was in charge of the operation, said: "The fire was already well established with the building well alight. A lack of water supplies led to a dozen fire appliances being used "Due to the nature of the business, there was a large amount of combustible and flammable materials within the building which added to the intensity of the fire. "There were also

a number of propane cylinders situated throughout the premises which posed a further problem and risk." An investigation has begun into the cause.

CORTLANDT YACHT CLUB, MONTROSE, NEW YORK, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 24 — A press report, dated today, states: Three yachts were destroyed yesterday afternoon after they went up in flames while docked at the Cortlandt Yacht Club, fire officials said. About 50 firefighters responded about 1400 hrs to the club to help extinguish the towering blaze, which had already spread to three boats docked on the shore, said Montrose Fire Chief Jack R. Kingston Jr. No one was hurt in the incident and the remaining 20 or so boats on the dock were undamaged as the wind was blowing away from them and did not change directions, he said, adding that the non-change helped contain the fire quickly. Upon arrival, Kingston said he saw a "big wall of fire" and "flames about 20 or 30 feet in the air." Heavy plumes of black smoke were also visible, he said. The fire was contained within an hour and the damaged boats were removed from the water to avoid contaminating the Hudson River, he said. The cause of the fire is still under investigation, but is most likely accidental and from an electrical short, Kingston said. Firefighters from Peekskill, Verplanck, Croton-on-Hudson, Stony Point and Buchanan assisted.

ELECTRONICS FACTORY, DONGGUAN, GUANGDONG PROVINCE, CHINA

London, Aug 23 — A press report, dated Aug 22, states: A fire at a warehouse of an electronics factory injured more than 10 workers and forced evacuation of at least 2,000 employees in Dongguan, Guangdong Province, on Sunday evening (Aug 20). The 1,000-square-metre warehouse and plastic products were destroyed, rescuers said.

FIRE ON LORRY IN CHANNEL TUNNEL, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Aug 22 — A press report, dated today, states: Services through the Channel Tunnel are getting back to normal after a fire broke out on a lorry being carried on a freight train yesterday afternoon. Thirty-four people had to be led to safety, rail services were suspended and Kent Police closed part of the M20. Thirty firefighters from both sides of the Channel tackled the blaze in the north-running tunnel. No-one was hurt. Thousands of rail passengers were delayed after services were suspended on both freight and passenger shuttles. Eurostar services from London to Brussels and Paris were badly affected. Lorries waiting to cross the Channel had to be kept on the M20 near Dover to avoid congestion. Thirty passengers and four crew on board the freight train were evacuated into the service tunnel at

about 1230 BST, after a smoke alarm was activated 7.5 miles from the UK terminal in Folkestone. A Kent Fire and Rescue Service spokesman said the power supply was isolated before firefighters spent 15 minutes extinguishing the small blaze. French fire crews also attended the incident. Limited rail services resumed at 1700 BST. This morning, Eurotunnel said freight services were subject to 90 minute delays, although the passenger service and Eurostar were running normally.

FOREST, FINLAND

London, Aug 24 — A press report, dated today, states: Large fire in Finnish Lapland brought under control. A demarcation dispute among Russian officials has hindered efforts to put out a forest fire near Vyborg. Under rigid regulations in force in the area, putting out forest fires is the task of firefighters employed by forestry districts, while fire brigades employed by rescue services are called in only if the fire threatens residential areas. Finnish fire officials visiting the area overheard an argument between two officials from the different firefighting organisations at a landfill that had also caught fire. Firefighters of the forestry district said that burning trash from the landfill had spread the flames into the surrounding forest. The fire at the landfill appeared less serious than feared; the material at the dump comprised mainly household waste and construction debris, whose combustion did not pose a threat to Finland. The situation in the Karelian Isthmus appeared to have eased somewhat. Yesterday evening, there were 47 forest fires in the Vyborg District. There are also serious fires at the border with Estonia. It is those fires which are the source of the smoke which darkened Helsinki recently. Meanwhile, in Finnish Lapland, firefighters have managed to contain a large forest fire that has been burning in Kemijarvi. The fire, which was detected yesterday, had destroyed more than 60 hectares of forest. Firefighting efforts had been encumbered by the remote location of the blaze. Forestry machinery were used to clear away trees so that firefighting equipment could be brought closer. Conscripts have also been mobilised in the effort.

FOREST, GREECE

Athens, Aug 21 — Hundreds of Greek and foreign tourists were evacuated from two hotels in northern Greece because of a forest fire, authorities said today. The blaze, fanned by strong winds and soaring temperatures, was coming close to vacation homes and hotels in the Polychronos area of the tourist Halkidiki peninsula. "We have evacuated two hotels as a precaution," a police official said. "If it spreads further, we will evacuate five more hotels." About 120 firefighters and 50 fire engines were battling the blaze, which had a front line of 9 km, although fire-fighting planes could not

be used because of the night, the official said. The 300 Greeks and foreigners evacuated so far were placed in other hotels and the nearby northern Greek city of Thessaloniki. — Reuters.

London, Aug 22 — A press report, dated today, states: At least 1,000 Britons have been forced to spend the night on a beach in northern Greece because of a forest fire burning out of control. The blaze is said to be raging on several fronts on the Halkidiki peninsula, south of Thessaloniki. Homes, hotels and campsites have been evacuated but there are no reports of British casualties. A Foreign Office spokeswoman said a consular team was in contact with local authorities and the fire brigade. A consular team from Athens is travelling to the area in an attempt to offer further assistance. Ian Whitting, deputy head of mission at the British Embassy in Athens, told the BBC the situation was being brought under control. He said: "People are returning to their hotels after spending a night on the beach. As far as we understand none of the hotels have been damaged. There is a problem with power, but the local authorities are doing their best to restore that, but the hotels all have water. The Foreign Office believes there are no British casualties, but the Greek coastguard confirmed a German man had drowned as he tried to get on a boat evacuating people to safety. UK tour operators are working to account for their customers staying in the region.

London, Aug 22 — A press report, dated today, states: A forest fire in the northern Greek peninsula of Halkidiki today was brought under control in a massive firefighting operation using aircraft and helicopters, Greek Civil Defence chief Panagiotis Furlas said on Greek state radio. "We are optimistic that we will have put the fire out completely within the next few hours," he said. "Hundreds of houses, dozens of hotels and guest houses have been destroyed. Hundreds of pets and wild animals have perished," the prefect of Thessaloniki, Panagiotis Psomiadis, told Greek television. The interior ministry declared the area affected by the wildfires an emergency zone; troops have been ordered to assist the overstretched fire services. Six fire-fighting aircraft and three helicopters were deployed after daybreak to drop water on the fires. "We hope to be able to bring the fire under control in the next few hours with the airborne help," the local fire chief said on Greek television. Police said the forest fire broke out after lightning struck the area in several places, but there have also been claims by residents that the cause was arson instigated by land speculators. (See issue of Aug 23.)

London, Aug 23 — Firefighters in northern Greece are battling to control forest fires that have been raging since Monday (Aug 21) on the Halkidiki peninsula. Hundreds of holidaymakers from the UK and other countries have cut short their holidays

and are returning home. One German tourist drowned while trying to reach one of the fishing boats and coastguard vessels involved in an evacuation on Monday night. Greek police says the pattern of the blaze suggests it may have been arson. In Kassandra, the western point of the peninsula, more than 260 firemen, along with troops and volunteers, are struggling to extinguish the fires, AFP news agency reports. The fire is threatening the resorts of Polychrono and Hanioti. The authorities are beginning to assess the damage among fears that the dense pine forest ravaged over the past two days will take decades to grow again. About 3,500 hectares of pine forest, at least 15 buildings and scores of farm animals have been destroyed in the blaze. Some 2,000 British tourists are estimated to be among the holidaymakers in the region.

FOREST, TURKEY

London, Aug 21 — A press report, dated Aug 20, states: A raging fire has destroyed nearly 100,000 acres of forest in the southern Turkish province of Antalya. The fire erupted in a hilly region situated in the National Park in the town of Kas on Saturday. Only four firefighting helicopters could intervene in the blazes as there is not any land entrance to the region. Nearly 100,000 acres of forest were already burnt. Thick smoke hampered the effectiveness of the helicopters. Local officials said that extinguishing the fire would take two days since the firefighters could not reach the region due to the hard topography. The wind has also been hampering the efforts to bring the fire under control.

London, Aug 22 — A press report, dated Aug 21, states: An enormous forest fire which broke out yesterday near the historic town of Selcuk in Izmir has ravaged nearly 200 hectares and is approaching the Turkish resort of Kusadasi. Electricity and water supplies to certain parts of Kusadasi have been severed by the rapidly spreading flames. The villages of Yenikoy and Ecekoy have been evacuated, with tourists also fleeing the region as the fire came within 15-20 meters of the house of the Virgin Mary. The flames destroyed TV transmitters in the region, cutting broadcasts in the city of Selcuk. Nearly 1,000 workers, 103 firefighting vehicles and 18 bulldozers backed by 12 helicopters and seven aircraft have been fighting the flames amid strong winds. Turkish Environment and Forestry Minister Osman Pepe arrived in Kusadasi to observe the firefighting efforts.

PREMISES, BAYSIDE, NEW YORK CITY, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 21 — A three-alarm fire in Bayside destroyed a row of businesses and injured four civilians and sixteen firefighters this morning, officials said. The fire broke out at 0109 hrs at the row of three-story buildings on the corner of 42nd

Avenue and 213th Street, and took nearly two hours to place under control, fire officials said. More than 100 firefighters responded to the blaze, and sixteen of them were briefly hospitalized for minor injuries including smoke inhalation, officials said. Four people living in apartments above the business were treated at the scene for minor injuries, officials said. Among the business that suffered extensive damage were a furniture shop and a bakery, according to officials. The fire started in an upper floor of one of the buildings, but a cause has not been determined, fire officials said.

PREMISES, JAMAICA

London, Aug 24 — A press report, dated today, states: The fire that destroyed a real estate office in Jamaica Plain and damaged three other businesses on Monday (Aug 21) has been ruled an arson, a Boston Fire Department spokesman said yesterday. But Mayor Thomas M. Menino said that investigators do not believe a serial arsonist is responsible for the four fires that have hit businesses in the neighborhood in the last 13 months and have fueled fears among commercial property owners that someone is targeting Jamaica Plain. Officials said a witness saw a tall, thin man running from the scene on Centre Street early Monday morning, when the blaze started at Pondsides Realty and spread to a nail salon and a clothing shop that shares space with a hair-braiding shop. Investigators still do not know how the blaze was started, but they believe that an accelerant was used, said Scott Salman, spokesman for the Fire Department. Investigators have also ruled as arsons the March fire that destroyed five businesses along South Street and the July 2005 fire that destroyed El Oriental de Cuba, a popular eatery on Centre Street. The Aug 17 fire in Forest Hills that destroyed a dentist's office and damaged at least three other businesses has been ruled suspicious, Salman said. City officials said they plan to hold a meeting Monday with business owners to help them learn more about what insurance is available and how to improve security at their stores. Other Jamaica Plain businesses have already hired employees of destroyed establishments while the owners rebuild.

TRAIN, SECUNDERABAD STATION, INDIA

London, Aug 21 — A press report, dated today, states: Passengers of the Chennai-Hyderabad Express had a miraculous escape as five bogies of the train were completely destroyed in a fire, which broke out in one of the compartments minutes after the train left Secunderabad Railway Station yesterday morning. Luckily, there were no casualties as many of the passengers got down at Secunderabad itself following an official announcement that the train's departure for Hyderabad, 15 minutes

away from Secunderabad, would be delayed by an hour. The derailment of a goods train at James Street in the early hours between the stations led to the delay. Fire reportedly broke out in S9 coach and spread to the adjoining S6, S7, S8 and S10 coaches. As the bogies went up in flames, the train came to a halt when an alert passenger in S10 coach pulled the chain and the 25-odd passengers in the coach jumped to safety. The other four compartments were empty, as all the passengers of the ill-fated coaches had already got down. Meanwhile, railway personnel delinked the train from the burning coaches and prevented further damage. Five fire tenders from Secunderabad, Panjagutta, Moula Ali and Musheerabad rushed to the spot and battled with the fire for three hours. South Central Railway (SCR) General Manager D. N. Mathur said it was difficult to confirm whether it was a case of sabotage or an accident. He put the property loss at an estimated Rs.2.5 crores.

WILDFIRES, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 18 — A press report, dated Aug 18, states: A wildfire that has burned four mountaintop cabins, threatened hundreds of other houses in Wyoming today. The blaze was more than 30% contained, although it grew overnight to well over 11,000 acres, more than 17 square miles, by this evening. In Utah, a firefighter died while battling a 250-acre fire in a rugged canyon above Oak City. The fire was started by lightning just before midnight Tuesday (Aug 15) in the Canyon Mountains and burned pinon, juniper and brush across more than a third of a square mile. The other firefighters were pulled off the mountain after the death, officials said. Sheriff Robert Dekker said investigators still were at the scene late today and the body was still on the mountain. In southern Oklahoma, a wildfire forced authorities to close 15-mile sections of two highways near the Arbuckle Mountains. Officials estimated the fire in the sparsely populated area had burned more than 100 acres in about six hours. In Wyoming, people in hundreds of homes on Casper Mountain, located in the central part of the state, and surrounding areas have been told to evacuate, since the lightning-sparked fire was reported Monday (Aug 14). There were no reports of injuries. Gov. Dave Freudenthal, who toured the fire with State Forester Bill Crapser, said today would likely be a critical day, citing how quickly winds can whip up on the mountain this time of year. Crapser said the fire burned around some homes, but officials were concerned that if it gets into canyons, it would be able to hook around and start new runs in developed areas. Crapser said weather forecasters were calling for cooler conditions on Friday, which should help battle the blaze.

London, Aug 20 — A press report, dated today, states: Drought-parched grass and gusting winds fueled

wildfires in western Texas yesterday that destroyed at least one home, threatened several others and burned a swath of land more than five miles long. Authorities said no injuries have been reported from the fires, which began Friday (Aug 18) and have engulfed more than 4,300 acres in Palo Pinto and Stephens counties, about 85 miles west of Fort Worth. A hunter's cabin was destroyed, but firefighters saved six homes, Texas Forest Service spokeswoman Traci Weaver said. No evacuations were ordered. Parts of Stephens County lost power early Saturday, and firefighters were still protecting the town of Caddo, which has about 40 residents. Wildfires have burned nearly 2 million acres across Texas since January, killing 17 people and destroying more than 1,000 structures. Meanwhile, another day of good weather in Wyoming enabled firefighters to do some mop-up work on a fire that has burned about 11,700 acres, or more than 18 square miles, about five miles from Casper, the state's second-largest city. Lightning sparked the fire Monday. It quickly spread in dry forest, destroying four cabins and threatening hundreds of homes. Residents of about 60 homes have been told they can return, but about 300 remain under evacuation orders. In northcentral Washington, firefighters burned fuel in the path of two wildfires that covered more than 170 square miles, trying to slow their growth as another wave of thunderstorms was forecast. The fires grew by 8,000 acres, or about 13 square miles, after merging Friday. They have now charred about 111,200 acres between the towns of Winthrop and Conconully, said John Townsley of the interagency fire center in Portland, Ore. The fires were started by lightning in July.

London, Aug 23 — A press report, dated Aug 22, states: Firefighters constructed fire breaks and attacked hot spots today as they battled a series of fires burning in West Texas. The Caddo II Complex fire in Stephens and Palo Pinto counties has been burning since last week, consuming about 7,500 acres. Rugged and rocky terrain dotted with canyons makes it difficult to contain the fire, said Texas Forest Service spokeswoman Traci Weaver. Helicopters and firefighters today doused the flames with water, built breaks to stop the fire and burned pockets of fuel that could feed the blaze. The Caddo II Complex, which is made up of four fires, remains about 50 percent contained, Weaver said. The Caddo II Complex fire is believed to have been sparked by a truck with a blowout riding on its rim. "Everything is just so crispy dry right now, you have a spark and there you go," Texas Forest Service spokeswoman Laura Polant said. Lightning sparked another fire in Palo Pinto County that has consumed more than 1,780 acres. It was about 95 percent contained by today, the Texas Forest Service said. Lightning also caused several small fires in East

Texas, officials said. This is the worst year on record for wildfires, which have already claimed more than 1.9 million acres across the state since January.

London, Aug 23 — A press report, dated today, states: Red flag warnings were posted for wide areas of the Northwest today, indicating extreme fire danger as crews battled spreading wildfires. A group of wind-driven fires near Dayton in southeast Washington had raced across more than 15,000 acres, or more than 23 square miles, of grass, brush, trees and wheat fields. Some 35 residents of a nursing home were evacuated Tuesday (Aug 22) because of heavy smoke, and as many as 300 other people were urged to leave their homes. The fires near town were sparked by lightning on Monday and fanned by wind gusting to 30 mph. No homes had burned as of late Tuesday but some outbuildings and a couple of vehicles were lost, said Ray Steiger, a spokesman for the management team on the fire. No injuries were reported and the main fires were burning away from this town of about 2,700 people. Meteorologists predicted scattered thunderstorms, wind and low humidity in the area Wednesday. Red flag warnings or fire weather watches also were posted for parts of eastern Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Nevada and Utah, the National Fire Information Center said. An evacuation order was issued Wednesday for 25 to 30 homes in a subdivision east of Billings, Mont., as a nearby wildfire grew to at least 3,300 acres, said Mary Apple, fire information officer with the Billings Dispatch Center. The blaze destroyed two homes, a barn and several outbuildings Tuesday. About 190 homes in the Emerald Hills subdivision were ordered evacuated Tuesday but "not everyone evacuated," Apple said. The fire, fueled by timber and grass, was reported Tuesday morning; the cause was not yet known. Oregon's largest wildfire had covered 20,000 acres, or 31 square miles, since it was started by lightning on Monday in the state's remote southeast corner. Crews were bulldozing a line to protect the town of Fields, Ore., population 20. The fire was about 6 miles east of town Wednesday morning. South of Burns, Ore., two campgrounds on Steens Mountain were evacuated Tuesday and campers in a third were advised to leave, all precautionary measures, said Tara Wilson, spokeswoman for the firefighters. She said the fires were miles from the campgrounds but could block evacuation routes later. The National Fire Information Center said wildfires were reported Tuesday in Arizona, California, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas, Utah, Washington and Wyoming. Fires also broke out during the night in the northwest corner of Nebraska. So far this year, wildfires have blackened 6.8 million acres, or 10,600 square miles, compared to 6.7 million acres at this same time last year, the center said.

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

London, Aug 24 — A press report, dated Aug 23, states: The Puzzle Fire on the Willamette National Forest grew to more than 5,200 acres today and was still zero per cent contained, but officials said favorable weather was having a positive impact on that and the other fires in the Cascade Crest Complex. The Puzzle Fire has grown almost as large as the earlier Lake George Fire, which has grown to 5,534 acres and is now 80% contained, officials said. The Black Crater Fire, which broke out a month ago today, was contained days ago at 9,400 acres. All told, the three fires have now blackened more than 21,000 acres in the Mt. Jefferson and Mt. Washington wilderness areas and nearby areas of the Deschutes and Willamette national forests. Favorable weather conditions allowed “hotshot” crews to make a direct attack today on the west side of the Puzzle Fire, in rugged, remote terrain two miles north of Marion Lake, officials said. Crews also were building fire line near Marion Lake, from an old fuel break on the 2003 B&B Fire to the Pacific Crest Trail. Bulldozer lines are being built outside the wilderness, using old roads and fire lines from that 90,000-acre blaze three years ago. Warm temperatures and gusty north-west winds are expected to boost the potential for extreme fire behavior, but officials said the winds also will slow the fire’s westward advance from Bingham Ridge toward Puzzle Creek. On the Lake George Fire, mop-up in the interior and control-line strengthening continued today. The Black Crater Fire was under aerial patrol. Forest closures are still in effect, but state Highway 22 remains open and Highway 242, over the McKenzie Pass, was reopened this week.

YACHT CLUB, SYDNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA

London, Aug 20 — A press report, dated Aug 19, states: Fire crews have spent the morning trying to contain a diesel spill in Gunnamatta Bay near Cronulla in Sydney’s south. The spill was the result of a fire which destroyed three luxury boats at the Royal Motor Yacht Club at Woolooware late last night. Fire crews put out the blaze quickly but the cause of the fire is unknown. The Fire Brigade says the damage bill is estimated to be more than A\$2 million.



C-FKDS

London, Aug 22 — Delta Helicopters Aerospatiale AS350 BA, C-FKDS, was departing from a drill site with a 60-foot long line, on a local flight. On departure, the long line hook snagged a tree, and then broke free, flew up and fouled the tail rotor and tail boom.

The helicopter lost tail rotor authority and rotated several times before the pilot made a forced landing in a wooded area at 1745, Aug 21. The pilot suffered minor injuries. The helicopter sustained substantial damage.

C-FWHP

London, Aug 17 — North-Wright Airways Ltd. Cessna 337C, C-FWHP, was operating flight NWL316 and departed from Fort Good Hope, NT to Norman Wells, NT at 1230, MDT, Aug 16. The company reported the aircraft overdue to FSS at 1435 hrs and an aerial search was begun. At 1650 hrs the aircraft wreckage was located approximately 26 nautical miles east of Fort Good Hope. The pilot and five passengers were killed and the aircraft was destroyed. The TSB has deployed two investigators to the scene.

C-FYUN

London, Aug 23 — Eurocopter AS 350B-2 (Ecureuil) C-FYUN, operated by Prism Helicopters Ltd, crashed near Nuiqsut, Alaska, at 2021, Aug 22, while on a flight from Deadhorse, AK. The aircraft was destroyed. The one person on board was killed.

London, Aug 23 — Eurocopter AS 350 B2, C-FYUN, operated by Prism Helicopters, was performing sling-load operations from one remote camp to another in the North Slope area of Alaska at 1920, local time, Aug 21. The helicopter did not arrive at destination, and searchers found the wreckage the next day. The helicopter was partially submerged in a small lake and the pilot was fatally injured.

C-GNMT

London, Aug 21 — Bell B206-B3, C-GNMT, operated by Vancouver Island Helicopters Ltd, had landed on a log pad in the muskeg and, after a settling check, the throttle was turned down to idle at 1445, Aug 5. After about 30 seconds the aft fuselage dropped and the pilot placed the cyclic in the forward position. Mast bumping was felt, and the engine was shut down immediately. The tail rotor did not contact the ground, but there was considerable damage to the dynamic components. There were no injuries.

C-GOBC

London, Aug 23 — Shortly after the Cessna 150, C-GOBC, took off from runway 15 at the Red Bluff airport in California, at about 200 feet above ground level, the engine lost power at 1642, Aug 18. The pilot attempted to land, however the aircraft landed hard and came to rest inverted. Only the pilot was on board and he was not injured, however the aircraft was substantially damaged.

C-GXWH

London, Aug 22 — Piper PA-28-180, C-GXWH, was departing a private strip at Munroe Lake, MB, en route to Brownstone Lake at 1100, CDT, Aug 21. During the take-off run, the nosegear collapsed. There were no injuries, but the aircraft sustained

substantial damage to the propeller, engine, engine mounts, and cowlings.

CRASH, DEADWOOD AREA, ALBERTA, CANADA

London, Aug 21 — A press report, dated Aug 20, states: A plane has crashed in northern Alberta, killing the pilot and all three passengers. RCMP spokesman Cpl. Al Fraser says that the plane crashed about half a kilometre south of the hamlet of Deadwood at around 2200 hrs, yesterday. The passengers have been identified as three males and one female. All four passengers are from Manning, about 15 kilometres northwest of Deadwood and 70 kilometres north of Peace River. Fraser said the plane was a single-engine Cessna 177. Regional manager for the Transportation Safety Board of Canada, John Lee, says two investigators have been sent to the scene.

CRASH, NORTH WEST TERRITORIES, CANADA

See C-FWHP.

EMERGENCY LANDING, BOURNEMOUTH, DORSET, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Aug 24 — A press report, dated today, states: An aircraft has made an emergency landing in Dorset after the pilot reported smelling smoke in the cockpit. The flight from Edinburgh was en route to Palma de Mallorca today when it was forced to land at Bournemouth International Airport. The Boeing 737 Flyglobespan aircraft, which had 144 passengers, was evacuated while engineers and airport fire services investigated the problem. Dorset Fire and Rescue also attended the scene as a precautionary measure. Sally Windsor, spokeswoman for Bournemouth International Airport, said: “The plane diverted into us, landed safely, and passengers are in our departure lounge waiting for engineers to check the aircraft out.”

EMERGENCY LANDING, MONCTON AIRPORT, NEW BRUNSWICK, CANADA

London, Aug 23 — A press report, dated today, states: An air ambulance with five people aboard, including a patient, made an emergency landing at the Moncton airport this morning. The aircraft touched down safely and there were no injuries. It took off from Moncton early this morning to pick up a patient from Bathurst. When a landing gear indicator light malfunctioned on the way back to the Saint John Regional Hospital, the pilot had to land in Moncton instead of Saint John. Steve Hanley, manager of air ambulance services, said there wasn’t anything wrong with the landing gear. He said the emergency landing was a precautionary measure.

EMERGENCY LANDING, SEATTLE-TACOMA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 22 — A press report, dated today, states: An American

Airlines MD-80 made an emergency landing at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport early this morning. The aircraft was bound for Chicago when an engine compressor stalled. Pilots shut down the engine and returned to Sea-Tac. No one among the 136 people on board was hurt. Passengers were put on another flight to Chicago.

EMERGENCY LANDING, SIOUX FALLS, IOWA, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 22 — A Delta Flight from Minneapolis to Utah made an emergency landing yesterday in Sioux Falls after the pilot reported he'd lost power to an engine. No one was injured in the incident.

GROUNDING OF AIRBUSES OWNED BY BIMAN

Karachi, Aug 23 — Bangladesh Civil Aviation Authority said five airbuses of state owned airlines-Biman were grounded at Zia (Dhaka) International Airport yesterday on technical grounds. As result numbers of international flights were cancelled. Local media reported that hundreds of passengers staged demonstration at Zia International Airport yesterday in the wake of the delay of seven international flights of Biman Bangladesh Airlines following the grounding of five airbuses. Biman sources said the flight (BG-027) of Abu Dhabi-Dhaka route was delayed by 94 hours since its engine developed trouble. On the same way, Dhaka-Jeddah flight (BG-049) was delayed by 48 hours, Dhaka-Kathmandu flight (BG-703) by 24 hours, Dhaka-Doha flight (BG-025) by nine hours and Dhaka-Dubai-London flight (BG-001) by six hours. Besides, Dhaka-Bangkok-Singapore flight (BG-084) and Dhaka-Jeddah flight (BG-035) were delayed by 24 hours and 23 hours respectively. It said five, out of 13 Airbuses of the national flag carrier had been grounded and the authority was trying hard to maintain the time schedules of the flights. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

INCIDENT AT DURHAM TEES VALLEY AIRPORT, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Aug 23 — A press report, dated Aug 22, states: An aircraft about to take off had to be evacuated at Durham Tees Valley Airport when one of its engines caught fire yesterday evening. The BMI service to Heathrow was carrying 47 passengers at the time. The aircraft was taxiing down the runway when a "loud bang" was reported to cabin crew. Airport emergency services were scrambled and a resulting fire was quickly extinguished. Alternative arrangements were made for passengers.

INCIDENT AT GRAIN VALLEY AIRPORT, MISSOURI, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 18 — A press report, dated Aug 17, states: Hazmat crews are cleaning gas off the runway at the

Grain Valley Airport after a turbo-prop Merlin aircraft landed so hard that its gas tank ruptured at 1545 today. Authorities say only a pilot and co-pilot were on board the aircraft. Both of them exited the aircraft without injuries. Grain Valley Police say the rough landing was due to the aircraft's landing gear collapsing during landing. Authorities say the freight aircraft flew in to the Grain Valley airport to pick up aircraft parts.

INCIDENT AT LONG BEACH AIRPORT, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 21 — A press report, dated today, states: The cabin of an Alaska Airlines MD-80 aircraft originating from Seattle began to fill with smoke shortly after landing in Long Beach, Calif, yesterday evening, prompting the evacuation of 140 passengers and the five-member crew on the aircraft's emergency slides. Three passengers and a flight attendant reported slight injuries after the evacuation of Flight 338 at Long Beach Airport shortly after smoke first was reported at 1809 hrs, said Caroline Boren, a spokeswoman for Alaska Airlines. "Some smoke developed in the cabin," Boren said. "The crew felt (the smoke) was at a level that they needed to get people off the aircraft right away." Paramedics met the flight on the taxiway and treated and released two of the passengers and the flight attendant. The third injured passenger was taken to an area hospital for additional treatment. None of the injuries was believed to be serious, Boren said. The origin of the smoke in the MD-80 remained unknown late yesterday evening. Investigators with the National Transportation Safety Board will be examining the aircraft to determine the cause.

INCIDENT AT SEATTLE-TACOMA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 21 — A press report, dated today, states: On Friday (Aug 18), an Alaska flight from Vancouver, BC, to San Francisco was diverted to Seattle-Tacoma International Airport when the cabin lost air pressure while in flight. The Boeing 737 with 122 passengers landed safely. Four people were treated for ear and sinus pain in area hospitals.

INSPECTION OF AIR NEW ZEALAND BOEING AIRCRAFT, NEW ZEALAND

London, Aug 24 — A press report, dated today, states: A number of Air New Zealand domestic flights were delayed tonight as Air New Zealand engineers inspected eight of the airline's fleet of Boeings. Air New Zealand says the inspections were on rudder components on Boeing 737s, at the request of the manufacturer in Seattle. A few hundred passengers were delayed, although all were expected to reach their destinations later in the evening.

N31911

London, Aug 19 — A press report, dated Aug 18, states: Two people were killed this morning when a small aircraft they were travelling in crashed in Darlington County. According to the FAA, the aircraft, a Piper Cherokee Lance, went down this morning in a field near the Darlington Airport. The victims have been identified as the pilot, 61-year-old William C. Hurt, and passenger, 72-year-old George W. White. Both are of Cordele, Georgia. The aircraft was travelling from Cordele to Darlington for an auto auction. Hurt was a car dealer. Officials say the last radio contact made with Darlington Airport was at 0840 this morning. Press reports said that the aircraft clipped pine trees and flipped several times. Wreckage was strewn across the area and officials said the bodies were thrown several hundred feet from the aircraft. Officials from the Federal Aviation Administration and the National Transportation Safety Board are investigating.

London, Aug 22 — Piper PA-32RT-300 (Lance II) N31911 crashed near Darlington Airport, Dovesville, South Carolina, at 1241, Aug 18, while on a flight from Cordelle, Georgia, to Darlington. The aircraft was destroyed. The two persons on board were killed.

N559D

London, Aug 22 — Kaman HH-43F N559D crashed near Metaline Falls, Washington, at 2300, Aug 18. The one person on board was killed.

N620PA

London, Aug 21 — At 1535 hrs, Aug 17, Swearingen SA.227AC Metro III, N620PA, operating for Business Aviation Courier, struck a fence at the approach end of the runway, after the undercarriage collapsing on landing, at Grain Valley-East Kansas City Airport, MO. The aircraft was substantially damaged. There were two people on board. Both survived.

PORT HARCOURT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, NIGERIA

London, Aug 19 — A press report, dated today, states: As a result of a sudden fire outbreak that occurred at the power house of the Port Harcourt International Airport, Omagwa, Aug 17 which plunged the airport into darkness, the management of the Federal Airport Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) has shut the airport indefinitely. The closure of the airport which was announced yesterday by the Director of Airport Operations, FAAN, Mr John E. O. Ezenwankwo while briefing journalists, said the authority cannot guarantee power to the runway. Mr Ezenwankwo explained that the authority had earlier planned to undertake a major refurbishment of the airport come October, this year. The director of airport operations, however said, the authority would use the opportunity to resurface the runway, refurbish the power supply

system and other navigation installations at the airport. According to him, the authority will also change all the switch gears in the switch room, stressing that this was to ensure automatic change over from NEPA to generator. As a result of the fire outbreak, it is impossible for the authority to resume and continue flight operations at the airport, he said. Ezenwankwo explained that FAAN had held meeting with Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) and a decision was reached to close down the Port Harcourt Airport at 1800 yesterday. Said he: From night fall today yesterday, there would be no more flight operations. He said all domestic flights would be diverted either to Owerri or Calabar airports while international flights would be diverted to Lagos and Abuja. Ezenwankwo on behalf of FAAN, expressed regrets and said the decision to close the airport was taken for the safety and in the interest of everybody. He also noted that the reconstruction of the runway, refurbishing of the lighting system and the fencing work would commence immediately, but declined to comment on when the work would be completed. The director of airport operations however did not make any comment on the expansion of the terminal building.

RA-85185

Kiev, Aug 22 — An airliner flying from southern Russia to St. Petersburg crashed in flames in eastern Ukraine today, the Ukrainian Emergencies Ministry said. The ministry said helicopters circling the site about 45 km north of the regional town of Donetsk saw the Tupolev Tu-154 in flames. Russia's Emergencies Ministry said 160 passengers and 10 crew were on board the aircraft belonging to Pulkovo Airlines. — Reuters.

London, Aug 22 — The Tupolev 154M, RA-85185, en route to St. Petersburg at an altitude of FL360 when the pilot reportedly radioed a mayday call at 1539, Aug 22. Another call was received when the aircraft was descending through FL100. The aircraft crashed and burned in a field. All 170 occupants were killed.

London, Aug 23 — A press report, dated today, states: Ukraine is holding a national day of mourning for 170 people killed in a Russian plane crash yesterday. The plane was flying from the Russian Black Sea resort of Anapa to St Petersburg when it crashed near Donetsk, Ukraine, killing all on board. Most of the passengers were thought to be Russians, including 45 children. Officials say bad weather or a possible fire may have caused the crash. Investigators have now recovered the flight data and voice recorders. Relatives of the victims are travelling to the crash site in eastern Ukraine. Russian President Vladimir Putin said his country would declare tomorrow a day of mourning for the victims. The crew of the Pulkovo Airlines flight FV 612 sent a distress signal at 1537 hrs,

(1137, UTC), and the plane - a Tupolev-154 - disappeared from radar screens two minutes later, Russian officials said. It crashed into a field about 45km north of the Ukrainian city of Donetsk. The plane was carrying 160 passengers, 45 of them children under 12, and 10 crew, Pulkovo Airlines said. Foreign nationals, including some Dutch passengers, were also on board, officials said. The fuselage of the plane was entirely destroyed and a thick pall of white smoke hung in the air, an AFP journalist reported from the scene. There have been conflicting reports of the cause of the crash. Ukraine's emergencies ministry said the crew had decided to make an emergency landing after a fire broke out, but Russian officials told the Itar-Tass news agency that the plane had encountered severe weather conditions before it came down. Russia says terrorism has been ruled out as a possible cause. St Petersburg-based Pulkovo Airlines is one of Russia's largest carriers.

Space Vehicles



ATLANTIS

London, Aug 20 — A press report, dated today, states: NASA workers at the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida began a risky repair job overnight to replace faulty bolts on the US space shuttle Atlantis a week before its scheduled launch. Technicians set up work platforms to reach into the forward portion of the shuttle's 18-metre-long payload bay as Atlantis stood upright on its launchpad. Atlantis is due to blast into orbit on Aug 27 on the first shuttle mission aimed at resuming construction of the \$US100 billion International Space Station since the 2003 Columbia disaster. Two shuttle missions carried out since the Columbia accident have tested safety upgrades. NASA decided to swap two of the four bolts holding Atlantis' main communications antenna in place because they were found to be dangerously short, and liable to pop out during lift-off with potentially catastrophic results. The mistake was made 25 years ago when Atlantis was built and the spacecraft has safely flown 26 times. The repair itself is tricky. A sole technician, lying on his or her side on a narrow gangplank attached to a work platform, will replace the suspect bolts. Access is difficult because of the shuttle's vertical position. Shuttles Endeavour and Discovery also were found to have faulty bolts, but since they were in horizontal positions in processing hangars, the repair work on them was relatively simple. NASA expects the work on Atlantis to finish later today. The space agency says the repairs should not delay Atlantis' Aug 27 launch.

Product Recalls



FLUORESCENT LIGHTS, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 21 — A press release, issued by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, dated Aug 16, states: The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in co-operation with Lutron Electronics Co. Inc., of Coopersburg, Pa., today announced a voluntary recall of approximately 28,000 Tu-WireÆ ballasts used with dimmable compact fluorescent lights. These ballasts, if not properly grounded in accordance with the National Electrical Code, can present a risk of electric shock to persons who come in contact with the ballast or with a light fixture that incorporates the ballast, such as when a consumer changes a fluorescent lamp bulb. No incidents/injuries have been reported. The recalled ballast is used to dim compact fluorescent lighting fixtures. The ballasts are not visible once installed. The ballasts were included with light fixtures sold under numerous brand names. Consumers should not touch these fixtures, since they could pose a shock hazard. The fixtures with these ballasts have a 120 VAC application, the fixture housing is for a 26W or 32W four-pin plug-in compact fluorescent lamp installed after July 1998. Most of the lights were sold for commercial use, though some were sold for consumer use. This recall does not involve light fixtures containing incandescent or halogen lamps or fixtures with screw-in compact fluorescent lamps or straight tube (linear) fluorescent lamps. Manufactured in Puerto Rico, the lights were sold by light fixture manufacturers, electrical distributors and electrical contractors nationwide from July 1998 through to May 2006 for about \$120.

FOLDING PICNIC TABLES, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 21 — A press release, issued by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, dated Aug 16, states: The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in co-operation with Atico International USA Inc., of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., today announced a voluntary recall of approximately 209,000 folding picnic tables. The legs on the picnic table can buckle or break during use, causing the table to collapse or fold unexpectedly. The firm has received 26 reports of the tables collapsing, including 18 reports of injuries including a broken foot and muscle strains. The recalled picnic tables have a green plastic top, four green plastic seats that are permanently attached, and silver/steel aluminum legs. Model numbers involved in this recall are W50B2268 and W50H0284. The model

numbers are located on the packaging. Manufactured in China, the tables were sold only at Family Dollar, Rite-Aid, Kerr Drug, Happy Harry's, Mays, Community Distributors, Farmacias El Amal, Eckerd, Snyder Drug, Navarro Discount Pharmacies, and Duane Reade stores nationwide from January 2001 through to December 2005 for between \$20 and \$40.

PUMPS, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 24 — A press release, issued by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, dated Aug 23, states: The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in co-operation with Water Technology Inc., of Auburn, N.Y., today announced a voluntary recall of approximately 18,300 Goulds PumpsÆ, Bell & GossettÆ and Red Jacket Water Products Brand Pumps for Fire Suppression Systems. A mechanical part on these pumps was not fully tightened, which can lead to the pump failing during use. If pumps sold with fire suppression systems fail, the risk of fire damage increases. The pump itself does not pose a fire hazard. ITT Water Technology Inc. has received one report of a pump failing to start during a system test. No injuries have been reported. The recalled pumps are general in purpose, but are sometimes used in fire suppression systems. The pumps were sold under the Goulds Pumps, Bell & Gossett and Red Jacket Water Products brands. The pumps can be identified by having Model NPE, NPO, MCC, MCS, SM or Series 3530 on their nameplate. Recalled pumps were manufactured between December 2005 and July 26, 2006. They have date code M05, A06, B06, C06, D06, E06, F06 or G06. The date code is the first three digits of the serial number on the pump nameplate. Manufactured in the United States, the product was sold at pump distributors nationwide from December 2005 through July 2006 for about \$800.

TOY SCOOTERS, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 21 — A press release, issued by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, dated Aug 17, states: The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in co-operation with Target, of Minneapolis, Minn., today announced a voluntary recall of approximately 185,000 Firestreet Scooters. The handlebars, wheels and wheel brakes can break and detach, causing the rider to lose control, fall and possibly suffer injuries. Target has received five reports of incidents and injuries resulting from breaking or collapsing parts. Injuries resulting from falls include: a fractured arm, cracked teeth, bruises to the head, face and arm, a report of a lacerated toe, and scratches. This recall involves F Forward Firestreet scooters. The red or blue aluminum scooters have a fold-down frame and model number BZ 020 SP. The "F Forward" logo is noted on the stem, wheel or base deck of the scooter. Manufactured by Triple Win Sports, of Taiwan, the scooters were

sold at Target stores nationwide from February 2004 through to July 2006 for about \$24 each.



ITALY

Genoa, Aug 21 — Port situation/berthing delays: Genoa: One bulk carrier is waiting for a berth. Average delay in berthing: one half to one day. Savona: No vessels are waiting for normal or special berths. La Spezia: No vessels are waiting for berths. — Lloyd's Agents.

PANAMA CANAL

Balboa, Aug 17 — The delays at the Canal continue to increase as maintenance work at Gatun Locks progresses. The work is anticipated to complete on schedule, 1800, Aug 24. The projected queue as of 2400, Aug 19, 85 vessels and anticipate this increasing in days to come. Present delays: Panamax three to four days, both directions and increasing. Regulars/unrestricted vessels three to four days delay, in both directions and increasing. — Lloyd's Agents.

Balboa, Aug 22 — Both lanes at Gatun locks are back in service since late afternoon Sunday (Aug 20), but capacity is still lower than normal due to additional dry work in progress. Full capacity is expected to be restored late on Aug 24, when we hope to see some improvement in general conditions. Latest numbers are as follows: Vessels due: Aug 22, 37, Aug 23, 33, Aug 24, 28. Vessels scheduled: Aug 22, 33. Aug 23, 38. Backlog: Aug 22, 89, Aug 23 91(Projected), Aug 24: 86 (Projected) Delays: Panamax: five to six days northbound, seven days Southbound. Regulars/unrestricted vessels: four days northbound, four to five days southbound. The booking slot offered via auction for Aug 24 was awarded to a southbound container vessel at a premium of US\$ 200,100.00. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Aug 24 — A press report, dated today, states: The situation at the Panama Canal is showing definite signs of improvement since both lanes have been back in operation at Gatun Locks, with restrictions, as from 1908 hrs, Sunday (Aug 20). The balance of maintenance work is not now scheduled to finish until 1800 hrs Friday, Aug 25. This is basically on account of the weather. Impact to traffic is anticipated to be minimal.

PHILIPPINES

Manila, Aug 18 — Cargo operations at the Poro Point Port in La Union province in northern Philippines remained suspended since Aug 14 when security officials from the state-Bases Conversion Development Authority took control of the port's main gate and refused entry to port stevedores. Upto today, no workers

have been able to enter the port, paralyzing operations in Northern Luzon's largest port. The port stoppage has forced foreign cargo vessels headed for Poro Point Port to divert to Subic Bay Freeport and the Manila port terminals of South Harbor and Harbour Centre. Poro Point Port officials say that at least four ships have been diverted to these ports. The government represented by the Bases Conversion Development Authority, the Philippine Ports Authority and the Department of Natural Resources and Environment have been battling to wrest control of the state-owned port away from Poro Point Industrial Corp. which holds a contract to operate the port. Poro Point Port used to be part of the former US Air Force base of Wallace Air Station. The 216-hectare facility has since been returned to the Philippines and has now been transformed into a special economic zone. It's port is now a major facility specializing in breakbulk cargo. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Manila, Aug 24 — Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo has ordered the temporary closure of Poro Point Port in La Union province, northern Luzon until such time as the courts decide who the rightful operator of the facility should be. With the closure of the state-owned port all vessels docked and headed for the port are being diverted to the Subic Bay Freeport. At least 70 domestic and international vessels call at the port every month. Operations at the port have been paralysed since August 5 as the government, represented by the Bases Conversion Development Authority, the Philippine Ports Authority and the Department of Natural Resources and Environment, have tried to take control of the port away from Poro Point Industrial Corp., the private contractor operating the facility. Sporadic violence has broken out at the port as security personnel and employees of the Poro Point Industrial Corp. have barricaded the port's gates and fought back attempts by government personnel to enter the facility. The government has justified its attempted take-over by citing Poro Point Industrial Corp.'s lack of an environmental compliance certificate and alleged violation of environmental laws. Poro Point Industrial Corp., on the other hand, claimed that since it holds a valid 50-year contract to operate the state-owned port, the government has been resorting to all sorts of charges to oust it from the facility. Poro Point Industrial Corp. officials said, that the attempts to remove the company is being orchestrated by a powerful political ally of the President Arroyo, who wants to take over the lucrative port operation. To prevent its expulsion, Poro Point Industrial Corp. has gone to court and obtained a temporary restraining order against these government agencies. It has also asked the court to compel the government to respect its contract to operate the port. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

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

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	28-Aug-2006	Coal: One vessel loading at berth; 12 vessels due by 19/9.
Brisbane	28-Aug-2006	Coal: Fisherman Island coal berth; Four vessels due by 15/10.
Dalrymple Bay	28-Aug-2006	Coal: Three vessels loading at berth; 14 vessels arrived; 21 vessels due by 25/9.
Dampier	28-Aug-2006	Iron ore: Parker Point A berth: One vessel loading at berth; 3 vessels arrived; 9 vessels due by 9/9; Parker Point B berth: 1 vessel loading at berth; 2 vessels arrived; 10 vessels due by 14/9; Parker Point C berth: 1 vessel due 25/8; East Intercourse Island: Maintenance shutdown 22/8-6/9: 4 vessels due by 7/9.
Esperance	28-Aug-2006	Grain: Two vessels due by 22/8 (1 lupins, 1 wheat); up to 5 days delay expected.
Geraldton	28-Aug-2006	Iron ore: One vessel at anchor; 3 vessels due by 6/9.
Gladstone	28-Aug-2006	Coal: R.G. Tanna coal terminal: Three vessels loading at berth; 7 vessels arrived; 30 vessels due by 2/12; Barney Point: 1 vessel loading at berth; 1 vessel arrived; 8 vessels due by 15/10.
Hay Point	28-Aug-2006	Coal: Two vessels loading at berth; 1 vessel arrived; 15 vessels due by 7/9.
Newcastle	28-Aug-2006	Coal: Kooragang 4, 5 and 6: One vessel loading at berth; 12 vessels arrived; 42 vessels due by 20/9; 6-10 days delay expected; Dykes 4+5: 9 vessels arrived; 23 vessels due by 20/9; 6-9 days delay expected.
Port Hedland	28-Aug-2006	Iron ore: BHP Iron Ore Pty. Ltd., Mt. Newman (Nelson Point), "A" berth: Three vessels arrived: 3 vessels due by 5/9; "B" berth: 1 vessel loading at berth; 3 vessels arrived; 4 vessels due by 6/9; 7 other vessels due by 16/9 at A or B berth 2/4; BHP Iron Ore Pty. Ltd., Goldsworthy (Finucane Island "C" berth): 1 vessel loading at berth; (Finucane Island "D" berth): 1 vessel loading at berth; 1 vessel arrived; 5 vessels due by 5/9; Cockatoo Island: 1 vessel due 4/9.
Port Kembla	28-Aug-2006	Coal: Fifteen vessels due by 27/10.
Port Walcott	28-Aug-2006	Iron ore: Two vessels loading at berth; 7 vessels arrived; 15 vessels due by 29/9.
Azerbaijan		
Apsheiron	28-Aug-2006	Oil products: Three vessels discharging at berth (1 crude oil, 2 fuel oil); 1 vessel due 28/8 to discharge.
Baku	28-Aug-2006	Oil products: Azertrans terminal: Nobel Avenue: port open; 1 vessel discharging gasoil at berth; Sangachal District: port open; no vessels.
Bulgaria		
Bourgas	28-Aug-2006	Eleven vessels in port of which 6 loading (3 coils, 2 wheat, 1 copper annodes), 5 discharging (1 metal, 1 coal, 1 zinc concentrate, 1 copper concentrate, 1 salt); 1 empty vessel in roads to load; 14 vessels due of which 7 to load (1 barite concentrate, 4 coils, 1 containers, 1 concrete iron), 7 to discharge (1 coal, 1 kaolin, 1 iron concentrate, 1 container, 1 copper concentrate, 1 clinker, 1 iron ore).
Varna	27-Aug-2006	Varna East, Varna West, Balchik: Nineteen vessels in port operating of which 5 loading (1 scrap, 3 bulk wheat, 1 container), 7 discharging (1 bulk coal, 3 raw phosphate, 1 clinker, 1 bulk sugar, 1 clay), 7 discharging/loading containers; no vessels waiting in roads.
Cyprus		
Larnaca	29-Aug-2006	Three conventional vessels discharging at berth; 1 conventional vessel due 30/8; no delays expected.
Limassol	29-Aug-2006	Three conventional vessels discharging at berth; 1 conventional vessel due 30/8; no delays expected.
Egypt		
Adabiya	28-Aug-2006	Five vessels at berth (loading/discharging) of which 3 general cargo, 2 container vessels.
Alexandria	28-Aug-2006	Thirty vessels at berth (loading/discharging) of which 21 general cargo, 3 bulk carriers, 3 tankers, 3 container vessels; 11 vessels at inner anchorage, 8 at outer anchorage.
Damietta	28-Aug-2006	Eighteen vessels at berth (loading/discharging) of which 15 general cargo, 2 bulk carriers, 1 tanker; no vessels at inner anchorage, 10 at outer anchorage.
Dekheila	28-Aug-2006	Ten vessels at berth (loading/discharging) of which 2 general cargo, 7 bulk carriers, 1 tanker; 2 vessels at outer anchorage.
Port Said	28-Aug-2006	Five vessels at berth (loading/discharging) of which 2 general cargo, 3 container vessels.
Suez	28-Aug-2006	Eight vessels at berth (loading/discharging) of which 5 general cargo, 3 passenger vessels; 4 tug boats; 2 vessels dry-docked.
Suez Canal	28-Aug-2006	Twenty-four vessels transiting Northbound, 29 Southbound.
Israel		
Ashdod	29-Aug-2006	One vessel loading general cargo at berth, 10 discharging at berth (6 general cargo, 4 bulk cargo), 5 loading/discharging at berth (4 containers, 1 car carrier); 17 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (10 general cargo, 7 bulk cargo), 1 waiting at anchorage to load/discharge containers; 17 vessels due, with 2-3 days delay expected.

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

Port Conditions

Eilat	29-Aug-2006	One vessel due, with no delays expected.
Haifa	29-Aug-2006	Six vessels discharging at berth (4 general cargo, 2 bulk cargo), 4 loading/discharging at berth (2 containers, 1 car carriers, 1 tanker); 2 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (1 general cargo, 1 bulk cargo), 2 vessels waiting at anchorage to load/discharge (1 container, 1 passenger vessel); 4 vessels under repairs/dry-docked; 18 vessels due, with 2-3 days delay expected.
Pakistan		
Karachi	28-Aug-2006	Two vessels loading at berth (1 cement, 1 rice), 5 discharging at berth (1 C oil, 1 palm oil, 1 general cargo, 2 sugar), 3 loading/discharging containers at berth; 1 vessel waiting at anchorage to discharge soybean meal; 2 vessels under repairs dry-docked; 1 vessel awaiting orders; 8 vessels due (3 containers, 2 general cargo, 1 sugar, 1 wheat, 1 ethanol), with no delays expected.
Port Qasim	28-Aug-2006	Three vessels loading at berth (1 rice, 2 cement), 2 discharging at berth (1 palm oil, 1 HSD oil); 4 vessels waiting at anchorage to load (1 cement, 3 containers), 7 waiting at anchorage to discharge (3 containers, 1 wheat, 1 peas, 1 sugar); QICT berth: 2 vessels loading/discharging containers at QICT berth.
Poland		
Gdansk	28-Aug-2006	Eight vessels in port operating of which 5 loading at berth (1 coal, 3 bulk cargo, 1 tanker), 3 discharging at berth (2 grain, 1 tanker); 12 vessels under repairs/dry-docked; 20 vessels due.
Gdynia	28-Aug-2006	Ten vessels in port operating of which 4 loading at berth (1 coal, 2 general cargo, 1 bulk cargo), 6 discharging at berth (1 bulk cargo, 1 general cargo, 4 grain); 28 vessels under repairs/dry-docked; 53 vessels due.
Russia		
Novorossiysk	28-Aug-2006	Eleven vessels in port operating, all loading (1 cement, 1 bulk urea, 1 H-beams, 1 slabs, 4 wheat, 1 steel billets, 1 aluminium 1 D/O); 2 vessels in roads, both to load (1 pipes, 1 steel sheets); 68 vessels due of which 63 to load, 3 to discharge (1 maize, 1 equipment, 1 coils), 2 to discharge/load containers; Oil terminal: 4 tankers loading at berth (3 crude, 1 diesel oil); 3 tankers in roads of which 2 to load crude oil, 1 fuel oil; 5 tankers due, all to load crude oil.
Slovenia		
Koper	28-Aug-2006	Port working normally; Eight vessels at berth of which 3 loading (1 bulk cargo, 2 sawn timber/general cargo), 1 discharging bulk cargo, 4 discharging/loading (2 containers, 2 vehicles); 13 vessels due over the next 2 days of which 4 to load (3 sawn timber/general cargo, 1 bulk cargo), 4 to discharge bulk cargo, 5 to discharge/load
Spain		
Bilbao	28-Aug-2006	Fifteen vessels in port operating (3 tankers, 12 others), of which 1 loading, 8 discharging, 6 loading/discharging.
Sagunto	28-Aug-2006	Twelve vessels in port operating of which 10 discharging (7 steel products, 1 gas, 1 fruit, 1 vehicles), 2 discharging/loading general cargo; Outside commercial wharf: no vessels; no delays expected.
Sri Lanka		
Colombo	28-Aug-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 berthing at breakbulk berths if there is container congestion; conventional cargo vessels at BQ 1 & 2 are facing delays in navigation after commissioning of SAGT 1 & 2 berths (former QEQ 1 & 2). Seven container/feeder vessels loading at berth, 18 vessels discharging at berth (13 container/feeders, 1 bagged fertiliser, 1 bulk clinker, 1 bagged maize, 2 Ro/Ros); no vessels waiting at anchorage to load, 2 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (1 container/feeder, 1 bagged sugar); 4 vessels dry-docked; 8 vessels due (7 container/feeders, 1 bulk cement), with no delays for general cargo/bagged cargo/containers/feeders expected.
Turkmenistan		
Turkmenbashi	28-Aug-2006	Oil products: Port open; Three vessels loading at berth (2 gasoil, 1 gasoline); 1 vessel in roads to load; 2 vessels due by 28/8 of which 1 to load gasoil, 1 other.
Ukraine		
Illichevsk	28-Aug-2006	Ten vessels in port operating of which 9 loading (5 steel products, 1 sunflower oil, 1 coal, 1 iron ore concentrate, 1 sulphur), 1 discharging/loading containers; 6 vessels in roads of which 5 to load (1 rapeseed, 3 sunflower oil, 1 ferronickel); 13 vessels due of which 9 to load (5 steel products, 2 coal, 1 barley, 1 sunflower oil), 4 to discharge/load containers.
Mariupol	28-Aug-2006	Thirteen vessels in port operating of which 12 loading (5 steel, 2 fire-clay, 1 sunflower beans, 2 barley, 2 coal), 1 discharging/loading feldspar/clay; 18 vessels in roads of which 17 to load (8 steel, 7 coal, 1 barley, 1 wheat), 1 to discharge/load containers; 58 vessels due of which 54 to load, 2 to discharge, 2 to discharge/load.

A complete online archive covering the last 10 years of Lloyd's Casualty Week. For further information please call +44 (0) 20 7017 4482.

Port Conditions

Odessa	28-Aug-2006	Sixteen vessels in port operating of which 8 loading (7 metal, 1 pig iron), 5 discharging (2 passenger vessels, 2 baggage, 1 general cargo), 3 discharging/loading containers; 6 vessels in roads of which 1 to load metal, 5 to discharge/load containers; 65 vessels due of which 38 to load, 5 to discharge, 22 to load discharge containers.
 USA		
Beaumont	29-Aug-2006	No new restriction in draft (40 ft. 0 ins. FW max. channel draft enforced); Louis Dreyfus terminal: no delays expected.
Galveston	29-Aug-2006	Channel open under normal traffic. Normal 39 ft. 6 ins. BW max. channel draft enforced - 40 ft. 0 ins. with ideal conditions. ADM-Farmland terminal: 2-3 days delay expected. .
Houston	29-Aug-2006	Channel open. Shoaling to 42 feet is confirmed in the inner bar channel. Vessels drawing over 42 feet are advised to give due regard to the state of the tide. Vessels drawing over 40 feet are advised to avoid meeting like vessels between lighted buoys 9/10 and 11/12. (Normal Max channel draft is 45 ft 0 ins. to Shell, 40 ft. 0 ins. above Shell to 610 Bridge area) LDC Dreyfus terminal: no delays expected; Cargill terminal: up to 2 days delay expected.
New Orleans	29-Aug-2006	Mississippi River terminal berthing delays: Cenex-Harstates/Myrtle Grove: 5-6 days delay expected. Cargill-Westwego: 2 days delay expected. ADM/Ama: performing maintenance until 3/9. Bunge/Destrehan: 1 day's delay expected. ADM/ Destrehan: 4-5 days delay expected. ADM/Reserve: 4-5days delay expected. Cargill/Reserve: 2 days delay expected. ADM/Paulina: 4-5days delay expected. Zen-Noh/Convent: 1-3 days delay expected. Cargill/Baton Rouge: no delays expected. Mississippi River mid-stream buoys - estimated berthing delays based on new vessel presented as load-ready and weather permitting: Mile 121.5 ADM (Gemini) - Destrehan: 2 days delay expected; Mile 158.0 Myrtle Grove Midstream terminal: 3 days delay expected; Mile 180.0 Cooper (America) - Darrow: no delays expected. Nine-day forecast for Carrolton Gauge/New Orleans: expected to decrease to 2.2 ft. above sea level by 7/9
Kalama	29-Aug-2006	Kalama export terminal: 2 days delay expected; United Harvest terminal: no delays expected.
Portland	29-Aug-2006	Columbia Grain terminal: 2 days delay expected; CLD Irving terminal: no delays expected; CLD, O Dock terminals: no delays expected.
Seattle	29-Aug-2006	Louis Dreyfus (Pier 86) terminal: 2 days delay expected.

Published by Lloyd's MIU, Sheepen Place, Colchester, Essex CO3 3LP.

Lloyd's MIU does not guarantee the accuracy of the information contained in this publication, nor accept responsibility for errors or omissions or their consequences.

Copyright © Lloyd's MIU, an Informa business This casualty information is copyright. Unauthorised copying prohibited by law.

ISSN 0047 4908

If subscribers wish to purchase records for networkable or shared use within their company they can contact Andrew Luxton on +44 (0) 20 7017 4625.

Lloyd's is the registered trademark of the Society incorporated by the Lloyd's Act 1871 by the name of Lloyd's

A complete online archive covering the last 10 years of Lloyd's Casualty Week. For further information please call +44 (0) 20 7017 4482.