

Tugowners divided over oil pollution response programme

Doubts raised about practicality of having vessels on call to attend incidents and budget described as too small, writes Helen Hill in Amsterdam — Thursday June 02 2005

THERE was mixed reaction at the annual meeting of the European Tugowners' Association to the European Maritime Safety Agency's plans concerning its oil pollution response initiative.

Fion Molloy, EMSA project officer, said the agency was essentially looking for owners to provide capacity for a reserve oil spill response fleet and was inviting tenders.

He stressed that any assistance from EMSA had to be requested from member states and added: "We are there to top up member states' response capacity."

While some tugowners felt it might be worthwhile to work with EMSA, others seemed more sceptical.

Incidents

Doubts were raised about how practical it was to have vessels on call to attend incidents. Contractors might not be impressed if tugs were leaving contracted jobs to attend incidents. Others felt the EMSA budget was far too small.

Oil spills of 10,000 tonnes or more occurred every two or three years, Mr Molloy said, and EMSA considered that using vessels to collect oil at sea was the best method to prevent pollution rather than use dispersants or monitor the shoreline and then clean up.

The agency did not have the money to buy the vessels and there was a limited supply of vessels with onboard storage capacity of 1,000-3,500 cu m particularly, so EMSA was looking to the owners for the supply of these larger-capacity vessels. Owners would have a retainer for the use of their vessels and EMSA would pay for any modifications that were needed for oil spill response.

Then, once there was an incident, a contract would be between the operator and the member state.

Awarded

Although one round of tenders had taken place Mr Molloy would not reveal the level of interest. Contracts were expected to be awarded in the autumn.

He said there was another chance for owners to come forward for the next round.

A budget of €4.5m (\$5.9m) was available in the Baltic area, € 6m for the Atlantic coast, €4.5m for the East Mediterranean and €2.5m for the western approaches of the Channel.

Contracts would be for a minimum of three years.

Mr Molloy said EMSA would like to have a pool of three or four vessels available.

But one question which worried the tugowners particularly concerned liability.

If something went wrong when responding, would EMSA or the owner be held responsible?

The ETA was extremely concerned with increasing criminalisation of the maritime industry.

Its deputy chairman Andrew Dalrymple said the day when a salvor or tug operator refused to attend a vessel in distress was coming closer.

Responder immunity was not available outside the US and members were worried about their position when they attend such incidents, he stressed.

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

| Vessel | Type | Flag | Class | GT | DWT | Bit | Casualty |
|--------------------------|------------------|------|-------------|---------|---------|------|--|
| <i>ALASKAN EXPLORER</i> | crude oil tanker | USA | AB ABS | 110,693 | 193,049 | 2005 | Reported May 20 laid up in a Port Angeles shipyard due to cracks in rudder. ETC one week. |
| <i>ALASKAN FRONTIER</i> | crude oil tanker | USA | AB ABS | 110,693 | 193,050 | 2004 | Reported May 20 laid up in a Port Angeles shipyard due to cracks in both rudders. Expected to be out of service for several weeks. |
| <i>ALEKSANDR NEVSKIY</i> | bulk/ container | RUS | RS | 14,141 | 19,885 | 1978 | In collision with c.c. <i>MSC Eyra</i> in the Great Belt, in lat 55 22.7N, long 11 01.1E, May 22. Sustained damage above waterline and anchored in lat 55 43N, long 10 58E, Kalundborgfjord for inspection. |
| <i>ASTRO LUPUS</i> | crude oil tanker | GRC | LR | 137,893 | 257,589 | 1989 | In collision with ro/ro <i>Safari</i> in the Gulf of Oman, 15 miles off the Iranian coast on May 23. Fractured No.3 port cargo tank and spilled about 800cm of oil. Leakage stopped. |
| <i>AVILA STAR</i> | refrig | BHS | NV | 11,590 | 12,519 | 1990 | In collision with general cargo <i>Karin Lehmann</i> while leaving Kallosluis, Antwerp, May 22. Damage sustained. Anchored at Sod. |
| <i>CHRISOPIGI LADY</i> | product tanker | LBR | | 41,000 | 70,500 | 2005 | In collision with bulk <i>Yue Shan</i> about 3.5 km south-west of St. John's Island, in the Singapore Strait May 25. Damage to starboard side. |
| <i>HORIZON 9</i> | general | KNA | — | 2,750 | 3,930 | 1967 | Had fire and subsequently not under command 15 miles south-west of Karachi May 21. Crew removed and vessel towed to Fair Buoy anchorage, Karachi. Under repair off Karachi May 25. |
| <i>JAVA SEA</i> | general | SGP | LR | 2,854 | 4,871 | 1988 | Had fire in engine-room and accommodation, due burst oil line, at Trinity Inlet, Cairns, May 24. Extinguished after three hours, but extensive damage caused. |
| <i>KARIN LEHMANN</i> | general | ATG | BV | 2,820 | 4,071 | 2000 | In collision with ref <i>Avila Star</i> while leaving Kallosluis, Antwerp, May 22. Damage sustained. Anchored at Meestooft. |
| <i>LIBRA RIO GRANDE</i> | container | DEU | GL | 16,801 | 22,900 | 1996 | Had engine-room fire, while docked at New Orleans, May 23. Area sealed and fire extinguished by ship's system. |
| <i>MSC ELENI</i> | container | PAN | (AB) ABS GL | 54,881 | 68,254 | 2004 | In collision with ro-ro <i>Kaduna</i> near the south-west Akkaert buoy, Zeebrugge, May 23. Holed above waterline. Anchored awaiting inspection. Towed to Antwerp. |
| <i>MSC EYRA</i> | container | PAN | BV | 21,586 | 21,370 | 1982 | In collision with bulk <i>Aleksandr Nevskiy</i> in the Great Belt, in lat 55 22.7N, long 11 01.1E, May 22. Sustained damage above waterline and anchored in lat 55 43N, long 10 58E, Kalundborgfjord for inspection. Arrived Helsingborg May 24. |
| <i>YUE SHAN</i> | bulker | PAN | BV | 86,192 | 169,159 | 1999 | In collision with bulk <i>Yue Shan</i> about 3.5 km south-west of St. John's Island, in the Singapore Strait May 25. Front part damaged. |

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The following reports are reprinted from Lloyd's List



AGENA (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, May 23 -- Following received from Malta RCC, timed 0855, UTC: General cargo Agena (2528 gt, built 2001), from Gibraltar, arrived Valletta, in tow of tug Brucoli at 1111, UTC, May 19 and is now at Malta Shipyards. (Note -- Agena sailed Wilmington, NC, Apr 23, arrived Gibraltar 2046, May 11 and sailed 0030, May 12 for Poti.)

AGNES G (Bahamas)

See Mobro 128.

ALANDIA (Finland)

London, May 23 -- Following received from Turku MRCC, timed 1811, UTC: Passenger ro/ro Alandia (6850 gt, built 1972) grounded near Eckero, in lat 60 13.57N, long 19 31.7E, at 1512, UTC, May 23. The vessel refloated at 1602, UTC, and continued on voyage. No injuries or serious damage were reported.

Gothenburg, May 23 -- Passenger ro/ro Alandia, operating between Eckero, Aaland SF and Grisslehamn, north of Stockholm, grounded 200 metres outside the port of Eckero today, but refloated with the assistance of a small tug, and entered Eckero. No injuries were reported to the 192 passengers and 63 crew on board. Divers and surveyors will attend the vessel this evening to check for any serious damage to the vessel's bottom structure. -- Westax Marine Services AB.

Turku, May 24 -- Passenger ro/ro Alandia grounded approximately 200 metres outside Berghamn port in Eckero, Aland, at 1755, local time, May 23. Vessel was departing for Grisslehamn, Sweden. At around 1900, local time, it was assisted afloat by one tug and one Coast Guard vessel. Vessel was able to return to Berghamn quay without assistance. All passengers and vehicles discharged without problems. Vessel not leaking. At time of incident there were 192 passengers and 63 crew members. Reason for grounding not known. A Maritime hearing will follow to establish the circumstances for grounding at maritime court in Turku. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Helsinki, May 24 -- Passenger ro/ro Alandia grounded off the port of Eckero, Aland Islands, at 1755 hrs, May 23. The vessel was sailing from Grisslehamn, Sweden, when the accident occurred. The 192 passengers and the 63 crew members on board were not in any danger and no injuries were reported. A Finnish Coast Guard vessel and a small tug immediately proceeded to the scene to assist in the refloating operation. After refloating the vessel sailed to the harbour, using its own engines. No leaks were

reported. The cause of the accident is yet unknown. Because of the accident a marine declaration will be required. The vessel did not have a pilot onboard as the first mate has a pilots license. -- Lloyd's Agents.

ALASKAN EXPLORER (U.S.A.)

See "Cracks Found in Rudders of BP Tankers, United States" under "Miscellaneous."

ALASKAN FRONTIER (U.S.A.)

See "Cracks Found in Rudders of BP Tankers, United States" under "Miscellaneous."

ALEKSANDR NEVSKIY (Russia)

London, May 23 -- Following received from Aarhus MRCC, timed 0945, UTC: Bulk/c.c. Aleksandr Nevskiy (14141 gt, built 1978) and c.c. MSC Eyra (21586 gt, built 1982), both northbound, were in collision in the Great Belt, in lat 55 22.7N, long 11 01.1E, at 2258, UTC, yesterday. Both vessels sustained damage above the waterline and are now both anchored in approximately lat 55 43N, long 10 58E, Kalundborgfjord, for inspection.

London, May 23 -- Information received states: Bulk/c.c. Aleksandr Nevskiy and c.c. MSC Eyra were in collision a few miles north of The Great Belt Bridge at 0100, local time, today. Both vessels were northbound when MSC Eyra was overtaking Aleksandr Nevskiy, when the bulk carrier allegedly suddenly took a turn to port and sailed in front of MSC Eyra. There were no injuries or oil spill. Both vessel were ordered to proceed to Kalundborgfjord for inspection and interrogation of Danish Maritime Authorities. Apparently damage was only minor.

ALEX GORDON (Canada)

London, May 25 -- Anchor handling tug/supply Alex Gordon (1190 gt, built 1975) reported a fire in the engine-room May 24 while at Pier 11, St. John's, Nfld, and requested assistance. The St. John's Fire Department responded and extinguished the fire. No injuries or damage reported.

AMORELLA (Finland)

Gothenburg, May 20 -- A car on board passenger ro/ro Amorella (34384 gt, built 1988) caught fire around 2200 hrs, yesterday. Passengers were evacuated from the deck and the vessel's crew successfully extinguished the fire. No passengers or crew were injured. The cause of fire is unknown. The vessel had earlier left Stockholm at around 2030 hrs with over 1,000 passengers on board and after the incident continued on passage to Turku, Finland, with no delay to its ETA. -- Westax Marine Services AB.

Turku, May 20 -- A car on the car deck of passenger ro/ro Amorella, Stockholm for Turku with 1,000 passengers and 160 crew, caught fire at approximately 2200, Swedish time, May 19. The crew were able to extinguish the fire, and the vessel

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continued its voyage to Turku, arriving at 0735, local time, May 20. No injuries reported. -- Lloyd's Agents.

ANIARA (Singapore)

Piraeus, May 23 -- Vehicle Aniara is still at Ikonion Terminal awaiting orders. No repairs are currently in hand. -- Lloyd's Agents.

ARABIAN BREEZE (Singapore)

Vigo, May 24 -- Vehicle Arabian Breeze (28116 gt, built 1983) which sailed May 22 returned pm, May 23 with engine damage. Vessel is now repairing with local help on the lee of Cies Islands at entrance of Vigo Bay. According to ship's agents repairs expected to be completed 0200, tomorrow and vessel expected to sail thereafter. -- Lloyd's Agents. (Note -- Arabian Breeze was reported due Flushing May 24.)

Vigo, May 25 -- Vehicle Arabian Breeze resumed voyage at 0200 today. -- Lloyd's Agents.

ARION (Panama)

Rio de Janeiro, May 25 -- General cargo Arion arrived at Renavi-Enavi repair yard on 23 May, having lost a rudder blade. Repairs have commenced and are expected to take 15 days. -- Lloyd's Agents.

ARTEAGA (Madeira)

London, May 25 -- Crude oil tanker Arteaga is reported to be still under detention in Dalian. It is further reported that the delay in releasing the vessel is due to the high number of claims submitted by local fisherman against the vessel. It is understood that once released, the vessel will proceed to Qingdao for permanent repairs.

ASL SANDERLING (Canada)

Halifax, NS, May 26 -- Ro/ro ASL Sanderling (21849 gt, built 1977) arrived at the port of Halifax, May 20, having sustained a crank pin bearing failure of the starboard main engine. The voyage, Halifax to Newfoundland, continued uninterrupted on one engine, at reduced speed, and repairs are anticipated to be conducted at next Halifax turn around, on May 27. -- Lloyd's Agents.

ASTRO LUPUS (Greece)

London, May 24 -- Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: Crude oil tanker Astro Lupus (137893 gt, built 1989), Kharg Island for Sikka, cargo 224,000 tons crude oil, and ro/ro Safari (5086 gt, built 1974) were in collision in the Gulf of Oman, 15 nautical miles from the Iranian coast, at 2200 hrs, May 23. From the collision Astro Lupus sustained a fracture to No.3 port cargo tank and there was leakage into the sea of about 800 cubic metres of cargo. The leakage was attended to by transfer of cargo from the damaged tank. Astro Lupus remains in the area awaiting orders. The 27 crew on board Astro Lupus are in good health.

London, May 24 -- Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 0855, UTC:

Crude oil tanker Astro Lupus and ro/ro Safari were in collision in lat 25 32N, long 57 20E, at 2030, UTC, yesterday. Astro Lupus sustained a 40 cm hole approximately five metres above the waterline and as a result 800 cubic metres of oil was lost. Astro Lupus is waiting in the area of the collision awaiting inspection. Damage to Safari not known.

London, May 25 -- Tanker operator Kristen Navigation was last night hoping for the all-clear for its crude oil tanker Astro Lupus to proceed on a voyage to India, after being damaged in a collision with ro/ro Safari off Fujairah. Sources close to the Angelicoussis Group company said the vessel was awaiting a safety certificate from her classification society in order to continue its voyage. From the cargo safety point of view it is fine. An estimated 640 cubic metres, or about 500 tonnes of cargo, Kuwaiti medium crude, is reported to have leaked from the tanker after the impact. A port lifeboat was also damaged in the incident. A temporary repair has already been carried out, with inert gas being pumped into the damaged tank to give it positive pressure. The company's clean-up contractor, Fujairah-based Fairdeal, has reported that most of the heavier oil has been dispersed, leaving only a light sheen, that should disappear in a day or two. If class approval is received, Indian receivers of the cargo have signalled they will accept discharge. Kristen said yesterday that the damage to the tanker was very minor, but declined to discuss the causes of the collision, saying it was too early. (See issue of May 25.)

London, May 25 -- A press report, dated today, states: The 700 tonnes of oil that leaked from a Greek oil tanker (crude oil tanker Astro Lupus) when it collided with a vessel carrying the Panama flag (ro/ro Safari) outside the UAE territorial waters has not reached the shores of the country, according to Captain Mousa Murad, Director of Fujairah Boat. He said that the incident which occurred yesterday in Khasel area outside the UAE territorial waters, some 57 miles off Fujairah shore and 14 miles from the Iranian Khasel area, had not affected the Eastern Coast shores "and it is unlikely to do so, due to the far distance." Except for the leakage of oil, the collision has not resulted in any casualties. However, according to Captain Murad, the authorities at Fujairah Ports moved fast to contain the incident soon after they were informed about it. He explained that the Greek oil tanker was carrying a load of 190,000 tonnes of light Arab oil from Kuwait when it collided with the vessel carrying goods and cars. "We immediately intervened and contained the oil leakage which was restricted to the area where the collision happened. We deployed modern methods known internationally to contain the spread of the oil using chemicals and equipment that dissolve it. We also, with the co-operation of the marine agent and the supervision of the

insurance companies concerned, kept a close watch on the siphoning off of the remaining oil to another container, and the process was completed successfully with no further leakage or accident," Captain Murad said. The incident had not disturbed daily life in Fujairah where fishermen went out yesterday morning to get their daily catch. The desalination plant close to Fujairah also functioned as normal and did not close down, Captain Murad said, stressing that Coast Guard boats and helicopters are surveying the country's shores as a precautionary measure to prevent the oil slick from contaminating the waters.

ATLANTIC WIND (Cyprus)

Falmouth, May 25 -- Chemical/oil carrier Atlantic Wind is still undergoing repairs at Falmouth. -- Lloyd's Agents.

AURA (Cambodia)

Istanbul, May 24 -- General cargo Aura is still lying "as is" and there is no progress regarding the situation. -- Lloyd's Agents.

AVILA STAR (Bahamas)

Maassluis, May 22 -- At 0325, local time, today, while leaving Kallosluis Schelde port of Antwerp, a collision occurred between ref Avila Star (11590 gt, built 1990) and general cargo Karin Lehmann (2820 gt, built 2000). No casualties. Both vessels damaged. Karin Lehmann at anchor at Meestooft. Avila Star at anchor at Sod. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents.

AZURE (Panama)

Cape Town, May 23 -- Bulk Azure is due to arrive at Cape Town later today and will probably berth during the course of tomorrow. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Cape Town, May 26 -- Bulk Azure berthed at Cape Town on May 25, at which time evaluations were conducted in respect of damages sustained to the steering gear. We understand that inspections are presently conducted and that part of the rudder was found to be missing. Repairs are estimated to take about six-eight weeks. -- Lloyd's Agents.

B. No.120 (U.S.A.)

See "Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts, United States" under "Pollution."

BARGES ON FIRE, SAN JOAQUIN RIVER, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES

See under "Fires & Explosions."

BASTO III (Norway)

Gdynia, May 24 -- Passenger Basto III is still in a shiprepair yard in Stocznia Polnocna, Gdansk, where arrived May 4. The finish of repairs is estimated to be in about two weeks. -- Correspondent.

BROEDERTROUW XVI (Netherlands)

Falmouth, May 25 -- Tug Broedertrouw XVI (103 gt, built 1957) towing barge Lastdrager 26 from

Falmouth to Truro May 18, assisted by workboats Bonito and Grey Bear, Broedertrouw XVI grounded off "Sunny Corner". Vessel refloated with assistance but fouled its propeller and was towed back to Falmouth by Bonito and berthed at Kings Wharf. Vessel entered No.3 dry-dock at Falmouth for inspection at 1630, May 24. -- Lloyd's Agents.

CALIFORNIA (Panama)

London, May 20 -- Bulk California sailed Gibraltar May 18.

Gibraltar, May 24 -- Bulk California finally arrived in port on May 22, following repairs to the anchor winch. Port surveyors boarded the vessel and at 1300 hrs, today, they released it from detention and ships papers have been handed back. The vessel is expected to sail to Puerto Ordaz in Venezuela, this evening. -- Lloyd's Agents. (The report in the issue of May 23, that bulk California had sailed Gibraltar on May 18, was erroneous.)

Gibraltar, May 24 -- The release of bulk California, following temporary repairs, is based on a single voyage to Puerto Ordaz to carry out permanent repairs on arrival, under class supervision. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, May 26 -- Bulk California sailed Gibraltar May 24 for Puerto Ordaz.

CANADIAN PROVIDER (Canada)

London, May 25 -- Bulk Canadian Provider sailed Toronto May 20, subsequently arriving Hamilton (CAN) same day.

CHIOS SAILOR (Greece)

London, May 19 -- Bulk Chios Sailor (17832 gt, built 1984), while reberthing, struck the south-west knuckle of the Redpath Sugar dock, Toronto harbour, at 1245, May 3. Both the vessel and dock sustained significant damage. (Note -- Chios Sailor subsequently arrived Thunder Bay May 8 and sailed May 11 for Spain.)

CHRISOPIGI LADY (Liberia)

London, May 26 -- Following received from Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore, dated today: At about 2003, hrs, May 25, a collision between product tanker Chrisopigi Lady (41000 gt, built 2005) and bulk Yue Shan (86192 gt, built 1999) took place at about 3.5 kilometres south-west of St John's Island. At the time of the incident, Chrisopigi Lady was transiting westbound, in the Singapore Strait, and Yue Shan was transiting eastbound, in the Strait, on its way to the bunkering anchorage off Changi. Both vessels were warned by the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) Vessel Traffic Information System, prior to the collision. Chrisopigi Lady was empty and Yue Shan was loaded with 166,000 tonnes of iron ore. Chrisopigi Lady sustained damage on its starboard side. The front part of Yue Shan was damaged. Both vessels are anchored in the port waters and are in stable condition. There was no report of any

injury to crew members of both vessels and no oil pollution. Port operations and vessel traffic remain unaffected. Navigational broadcasts have been issued to inform vessels in the vicinity of the incident to keep clear. As a precaution, anti-pollution craft will continue to monitor and clean up oil, if any. The MPA will be investigating the incident.

CHRISTOPHER (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, May 24 -- On May 20, while general cargo Christopher (2292 gt, built 1990), Parnu for Wicklow, laden with wood, was transiting the Kiel Canal, the pilot noticed smoke coming from the cargo hold. The cargo hold was isolated and the vessel proceeded to Rendsburg where the fire was quickly extinguished, with minimal damage. The cargo was taken off and the undamaged cargo was reloaded onto the ship, which was then permitted to continue its voyage. A damaged halogen light was apparently the cause of the fire.

COLUMBIA (U.S.A.)

Anchorage, May 19 -- Passenger ro/ro Columbia sailed Ketchikan May 18. -- Lloyd's Agents. (See issue of May 11.)

COMOROS STREAM (Netherlands)

London, May 24 -- Ref Comoros Stream sailed Santa Marta May 11. Vessel subsequently arrived Santa Marta May 15 and sailed May 16.

COOL LADY (Panama)

Vigo, May 24 -- Ref Cool Lady (2206 gt, built 1979) at Pontevedra Bay, Marin, while landing cargo of frozen squid, local sources reported some cargo allegedly damaged due high temperatures found during discharge. -- Lloyd's Agents. (Note -- Cool Lady arrived Marin May 18)

DURESSI (Albania)

Bari, May 19 -- General cargo Duresi sailed Bari May 18 for Durres. -- Lloyd's Agents. (See issue of Feb 25.)

EL SAFA (Panama)

Hodeidah, May 21 -- Passenger ro/ro El Safa is still at Hodeidah anchorage. Owners representative is currently in Hodeidah dealing directly with the Port Authority and liaising with the Egyptian Embassy in Sana'a with a view to the vessel sailing in the imminent future. A departure date is not currently known. -- Lloyd's Agents.

EMC 423 (U.S.A.)

London, May 23 -- A press report, dated May 22, states: U.S. Coast Guard hearings to determine the cause of a fatal barge (tank barge EMC 423) explosion might resume in June now that the barge has been raised and taken to a repair centre. A crewman was killed in the explosion Jan 19, and barge traffic on the Chicago Sanitary & Ship Canal was affected for months after the incident. Since the explosion, salvage crews have been working to pump out the oil and raise the barge,

which was towed last week to Service Welding and Shipbuilding in Lemont. The company is owned by Egan Marine Co, which also owns the barge. Tom Neumann, incident commander with Philadelphia-based Meredith Management Co., said 3,000 barrels of the oil remained in the vessel when it was raised. The cause of the explosion has not been determined. Investigators originally focused on a boiler used to heat the 14,000 barrels of slurry oil and pump it out of the cargo holds. But the boiler was later found intact. During a two-week hearing last month, investigators shifted their focus to a propane torch that may have been used to heat the lines that pump out the cargo. Neumann said the salvage effort took a little longer than expected. Neumann said the cost of the salvage and cleanup effort was \$4 million, which is double the original estimate. That cost will be paid for by Egan Marine's insurance company. Neumann said the barge will be repaired and then "all interested parties will have a chance to inspect it." "Once it's stabilized and cleaned up, the owner will decide what he wants to do with it," he said. "It certainly won't be used as a tank barge." (See issue of Apr 27.)

FAST INDEPENDENCE (Malta)

See "Brittany, France" under "Pollution".

FEIXA (Argentina)

Buenos Aires, May 23 -- Fishing Feixa has already completed the pump injection repairs. The vessel passed the Coast Guard inspection, and was able to resume operating. -- Lloyd's Agents.

FRANKLIN STRAIT (Antigua & Barbuda)

Trinidad, May 19 -- General cargo Franklin Strait sailed Port of Spain May 14, in tow of tug Temeraire, bound Curacao. -- Lloyd's Agents.

FREY (Malta)

London, May 23 -- Following received from Corsen MRCC, timed 1045, UTC: General cargo Frey (3839 gt, built 1981) was towed into Brest May 21 by tug Abeille Bourbon following main engine problems. (Note -- Understood salvage services were rendered to Frey, in ballast, under Lloyd's Open Form.)

Brest, May 24 -- General cargo Frey, Acores for Rouen, in ballast, sustained main engine failure May 21. Vessel taken in tow by tug Abeille Bourbon and towed to Brest, arriving at 2350, May 21. No information presently obtained regarding repairs. -- Lloyd's Agents.

GIDEON

London, May 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: A Latvian-flagged trawler sank yesterday night on the Flemish Cap, about 550 kilometres east of St. John's. The 15 crew members of fishing Gideon were rescued hours earlier, after a fire

broke out in the ship's engine room. The crew managed to put out the fire, but the ship began taking on water. "She was definitely in serious trouble," says Christine Giard, who works with the Coast Guard rescue centre in Halifax. Several ships and search-and-rescue aircraft responded to the Coast Guard's call. An Icelandic trawler picked up the crew and transferred them to the European fisheries patrol vessel Jean Charcot. The Jean Charcot stayed on the scene to recover life rafts and is now headed for St. John's. The Coast Guard state that the Jean Charcot is expected to arrive midday tomorrow.

GIDEON (Latvia)

London, May 25 -- Following received from Halifax RCC, timed 1839, UTC: Fishing Gideon reported a fire on board off Flemish Cap, in lat 47 55N, long 45 31W, at 1614, UTC, May 25. All 15 crew were safely taken off by fishing Peter Johanssen. The vessel is presently reported to be sinking.

London, May 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: The crew of Latvian fishing Gideon that caught fire off Newfoundland yesterday was rescued by an Icelandic vessel that responded to a call for help. "The 15 personnel on board have been evacuated and they are now safe on board the Icelandic fishing vessel," said Lieut. Sue Stefko of the Rescue Co-ordination Centre in Halifax. Stefko said the crew appeared to be OK, and no one received serious enough injuries to require medical evacuation. The Latvian fishing vessel caught fire on the Flemish Cap, about 400 kilometres east of St. John's, Nfld. The fire was put out, but Stefko said the boat appeared to be sinking. She said a nearby French fishing vessel would transport the crew to St. John's, Nfld.

London, May 26 -- Following received from Halifax RCC, timed 0745, UTC: Fishing Gideon, YLAO, MMSI No. 271081000, length 69 metres, owner Gideon Baltic, sank in lat 47 52N, long 45 18W, at 2200, UTC, May 25. All 15 crew were rescued by fishing Peter Johanssen and are now being taken to St. John's, Nfld, by oceanographic research Jean Charcot.

GREAT LAKES (U.S.A.)

London, May 25 -- At 0432, EST, Feb 22 the National Response Centre received a report from K-SEA Transportation of a diesel spill from their product tanker Great Lakes (2813 gt, built 1963), while awaiting berth in Carteret, NJ. At 0415, EST, the same day the vessel struck a dock and punctured a fuel tank causing an unknown amount of diesel to spill into Kill Van Kull. The damaged tank has a capacity of 29,000 gallons but initial reports did not indicate how much was being carried at the time of incident.

HORIZON 9 (St. Kitts-Nevis)

Karachi, May 24 -- Pakistani Port Authority said today that the Pakistan Navy (PN) and Maritime Security Agency (MSA) have, in a joint

operation, rescued 12 crew members of general cargo Horizon 9 (2750 gt, built 1967) which caught fire in the Arabian Sea, about 15 miles south-west of Karachi, on May 21. The vessel left an Indian port for Iraq, after loading cement on May 21 and the incident occurred some time during the evening of that date. The vessel has been towed by the Pakistani Authority and is now anchored south-east of Fair Buoy, 1.3 nautical miles off Karachi Port, an official of the Port Authority added, also saying that the local agent has hired technicians to repair the fault. Earlier, Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) issued a press release which says, the propulsion system and electric power of the vessel completely broke down and the vessel became "not under command" in the open sea with its crew-members trapped and waiting for assistance. Upon receiving request from the MSA, the Pakistan Navy immediately responded and initiated a rescue operation. Initially, a helicopter was tasked for damage assessment and to rescue critically injured crewmen. Later, Pakistan Navy's fast patrol craft PNS Larkana and two ocean going tugs Rustam and Delair were sent. After a successful operation, the lives of 12 crew-members were saved and the damaged vessel was towed back to the Karachi anchorage area. The vessel was handed over to the local representatives of the owner who lauded the prompt efforts of the Pakistan Navy. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Karachi, May 24 -- The owner of "North Korean flag" general cargo Horizon 9 and a technical inspection team is scheduled to arrive in Karachi tomorrow, from Dubai, to establish the cause of the fire on the vessel and check ongoing repair work before the vessel can resume its voyage to Iraq. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Karachi, May 25 -- Understand from the local shipping agent of general cargo Horizon 9 that repair work is taking place on the vessel, off Karachi port. All crew are on board and waiting for repair work to be completed. Meanwhile, the owner of the vessel and a technical inspection team which was scheduled to arrive in Karachi today from Dubai, to establish the cause of fire and check on the ongoing repair work before the vessel can resume its voyage to Iraq, have not yet arrived. Hopefully they will arrive tomorrow, an official of Argonaftis said. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Karachi, May 26 -- Understand from the local shipping industry that sea water has been drained out from engine-room of general cargo Horizon 9 and repair work is still taking place on the vessel, off Karachi port. Engineers/technicians are trying to restart the engine. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

HUI LONG (Hong Kong)

London, May 19 -- Understand salvage services are to be rendered to general cargo Hui Long, bound

Mumbai and Kandla, cargo zinc ingots, machinery, and sunflower seeds, by Tsavlis Salvage (International) Ltd under Lloyd's Open Form.

Colombo, May 20 -- General cargo Hui Long was abandoned by its crew in lat 05 57N, long 84 22E, at 1204, UTC, May 18, after the vessel listed 25 deg to port. All 23 crew were rescued by another vessel which is proceeding to Colombo. A Lloyd's Open Form has been agreed between the owners and Tsavlis Salvage International. Tsavlis has despatched tug SB-408 from its salvage station at Colombo to the site of the casualty. At 0600, UTC, May 19, SB-408 reported its position as lat 05 44.2N, long 81 44.2 E, ETA at the casualty's last known position 0001, local time, May 20. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Piraeus, May 22 -- General cargo Hui Long: Salvage tug was initially dispatched by Tsavlis Salvage from Colombo. Vessel sank May 20 in area where sea depth is 2,000 metres. -- Tsavlis Salvage (International) Ltd.

INDEPENDIENTE (Panama)

Freeport, Bahamas, May 20 -- Bulk Independiente is still at Freeport awaiting a decision by owners. It looks as if the vessel will be settled as a constructive total loss. -- Lloyd's Agents.

ISARGAS (Liberia)

London, May 23 -- Lpg Isargas sailed Antwerp 2111, May 19, for Tees.

London, May 26 -- Lpg Isargas arrived Gdansk May 23 from Antwerp.

IVAN NAZAROV (Russia)

Istanbul, May 21 -- General cargo Ivan Nazarov sailed Diliskelesi May 12. -- Lloyd's Agents.

JAVA SEA (Singapore)

London, May 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: Fire authorities say a burst oil line was responsible for a blaze on general cargo Java Sea (2854 gt, built 1988) at Trinity Inlet in Cairns, in north Queensland, this morning. The vessel had 13 crew on board when a fire started in the engine-room and engulfed the living quarters in the stern. Fire Commander Alan Hogg says no one was injured in the blaze which took three hours to contain "The fire occurred in the fire room at approximately 0540, this morning, with a burst oil line going across the boilers and then consuming the engine-room," he said. "The fire has spread up through the living quarters of the ship and has caused extensive damage. "The fire was extremely difficult to put out because it was in confined spaces. "It was a very difficult fire to fight because of the tightness inside of the vessel with lots of nooks and crannies, and high temperatures - so extremely hard going for our crews." Regional disaster coordinator Michael Keating says an investigation has begun into what caused the oil line to rupture. "The Australian Transport Safety Bureau

are sending marine inspectors to Cairns and they will conduct an investigation," he said. The vessel was carrying building and vehicle supplies to the Freeport mine in Indonesia and was due to leave this afternoon.

London, May 24 -- Following received from Australia RCC, timed 0610, UTC: Java Sea had an engine-room fire while alongside at Cairns this morning. Fire has been extinguished but understand damage is considerable.

London, May 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: Firefighters battled intense heat, fumes and the threat of explosions after a blaze erupted on general cargo Java Sea in Cairns port today. Java Sea was moored in Trinity Inlet at Cairns when a burst oil line ignited when it hit the surface of a boiler about 0530, AEST. Queensland Transport said vessel traffic service officers in Cairns noticed flames shooting from the ship's funnel and rear deck and raised the alarm. Police closed several streets in the Portsmouth industrial area of Cairns and ambulance crews were put on standby, but the 12 crew and the ship's master were safely evacuated. Queensland Fire and Rescue Service area director Alan Hogg said the fire spread quickly to the engine-room and crew quarters. "It was an extremely difficult fire to put out because it was in the bottom of the ship and there was burning bunker oil," Mr Hogg said. About 25 firefighters donned breathing apparatus, protective clothing, gas and explosives detectors and went into the bowels of the vessel, their job hampered by a language barrier between firefighters and the Asian crew. Assessors from Lloyd's of London examined the vessel after control was handed back to the ship's owners, Gulf Shipping, at 1230, AEST, Mr Hogg said. Investigations were under way but initial estimates put the damage bill about \$1 million, he said.

JIN PACIFIC (Panama)

Dar es Salaam, May 24 -- Bulk Jin Pacific (15272 gt, built 1983), Takoradi for Jubail, cargo believed to be coal, is understood to have experienced engine problems 400 miles east of Tanzania. If the vessel's crew cannot carry out repairs we have been requested to seek tug assistance to tow the vessel to a repair port. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, May 24 -- Following received from the owners of bulk Jin Pacific timed Seoul 1315, UTC, today: The crew of the vessel are trying to repair the vessel at the moment and hope to restart the engine shortly. At 1200, UTC, today the vessel was in lat 05 46S, long 45 10E.

London, May 25 -- Following received from the Seoul owners of bulk Jin Pacific, timed 0040, UTC: Jin Pacific engine repaired and vessel proceeded at 1500, UTC, May 24.

JOHN D.LEITCH (Canada)

London, May 25 -- Bulk John D.Leitch (20343 gt, built 1967) lost an

anchor off Port Cartier, in lat 50 00 01N, long 66 46 36W, May 20.

KAAWA (Uganda)

See Kabalega.

KABALEGA (Uganda)

London, May 21 -- A press report, dated May 20, states: The Parliamentary Committee on Works and Transport has started preparations to investigate the circumstances under which ro/ro Kabalega sank in Lake Victoria. The committee chaired by Mr John Byabagambi (Ibanda South) yesterday drafted the terms of reference under which they would investigate the management of Uganda Railways Corporation (URC), the Minister of Works, Mr John Nasasira and his officials. The inquiry begins on Monday (May 23). Mr Nasasira said he would set up a commission of inquiry into the sinking of the vessel, while Mr Byabagambi said the committee would exercise its mandate to establish why it sank.

London, May 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: The officer who was in-charge of ro/ro Kaawa at the time of its collision, has no qualification in marine training, Parliament heard yesterday. Stephen Kaliisa, the third officer of the Kaawa which collided with ro/ro Kabalega recently, told the works parliamentary committee probing the cause of the accident that, "I was appointed a cadet in 1999 but I have never gone for professional marine training. After my Senior Six studies in Ibanda, I wanted to develop a career in marine services. I joined the Uganda Railways Corporation and in 1993, I was appointed a sailor and got on-job training to 1999. In March 2002, when the corporation was phasing out cadets, I was appointed third officer in-charge of Kaawa," the timid Kaliisa told the legislators. The Port Bell-bound Kabalega sank in Lake Victoria after colliding with the Kaawa bound for the Tanzanian port of Mwanza on May 8. The first officer, Samuel Kyabukulu, said Kaliisa was not qualified to steer the vessel. The Kaawa chief, Captain Albert Ocaya, said, "When I handed over the ship, I did not expect anything strange. I was posted from Kabalega to Kaawa two months ago and had only worked with Kaliisa who was under training for that short period." "There was poor communication between the officers of Kaawa and Kabalega. If Kaliisa had notified me about the trouble, the accident would have been averted," Ocaya said. The committee chaired by Nathan Byanyima asked Ocaya whether allegations that he was asleep were true. "I was not asleep. I was very alert because I even heard the bang of the two ships." He said the navigation lights and one of the radars for steering were missing. Kaliisa said, "With the training I had, I was confident that by adjusting, I would pass Kabalega by use of the red light as we had

earlier agreed." "Kaawa lacked the green light used for crossing but for a long time we used to cross without it."

KADUNA (Panama)

Maassluis, May 23 -- Ro/ro Kaduna (6722 gt, built 1972) was in collision with c.c. MSC Eleni (54881 gt, built 2004) near the south-west Akkaert buoy, Zeebrugge at 1015, local time, this morning. The cause of the collision is not clear at the moment. Both vessels were inward bound for Antwerp. There is no severe damage on Kaduna. After inspection the vessel will proceed to Flushing roads, ETA 1350, today. MSC Eleni has a hole above the waterline, is not taking on water or leaking oil. MSC Eleni has dropped anchor near the Wandelaar pilot vessel for inspection. Understand it will proceed to Antwerp later in the afternoon. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents.

London, May 24 -- C.c. MSC Eleni and ro/ro Kaduna were in collision off Ostend, near the anchorage Westhinderbank yesterday morning. Both vessels were bound for Antwerp and were going to take a pilot at the Wandelaar pilot station. MSC Eleni was slowing down to get a pilot on board at the Westpost. At that time Kaduna proceeded also towards the pilot vessel and ran into the port side of MSC Eleni. Both vessels were damaged above the waterline. The bow of Kaduna was pushed in and it was unable to use its anchors. A pilot was put on board and it sailed around, until it got permission to sail for Sloe harbour, Flushing, after an inspection by the authorities. According the pilots the weather was good and the Belgian river police will investigate the cause of the collision. Kaduna is still moored in Sloe harbour. MSC Eleni is still at anchor at Wandelaar Anchorage but has permission to proceed to Antwerp today with a tug escort.

Maassluis, May 25 -- Ro/ro Kaduna has been inspected for its seaworthiness and has been given approval to go to Flushing, with a tug escort. The vessel will then go directly into drydock. C.c. MSC Eleni has damage at its bow and has been towed towards Antwerp. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents.

KALININGRAD (Russia)

London, May 21 -- Following received from Cap Gris Nez MRCC, timed 0825, UTC: Product tanker Kaliningrad (13767 gt, built 2001) had engine breakdown off Boulogne at about 0533, UTC, yesterday. Vessel is currently in tow of tug Banckert, bound Rotterdam.

London, May 23 -- Product tanker Kaliningrad arrived Rotterdam 0210, May 22.

Maassluis, May 26 -- Product tanker Kaliningrad is still in drydock in the Frisohaven. According to the agency repairs have commenced, duration is not known. --Lloyd's Sub-agents.

KAPITONAS A.LUCKA (Lithuania)

London, May 19 -- Bulk Kapitonas A.Lucka (9965 gt, built 1980), while proceeding upbound, struck the Snell

Lock (lat 44 59N, long 74 46 30W) approach wall when its main engine failed at 0930, EDST, May 18. (Note -- Kapitonas A.Lucka was last reported to have sailed Odessa May 4 for Toledo.)

London, May 23 -- Bulk Kapitonas A.Lucka arrived Toledo, Ohio, May 21.

KARIN LEHMANN (Antigua & Barbuda)

See Avila Star.

KARINA K. (Georgia)

London, May 23 -- Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 0855, UTC: General cargo Karina K. (2240 gt, built 1975) is currently at Thessaloniki awaiting class inspection after taking a list of 12 deg while loading cargo there May 20. Vessel is still listing and experiencing stability problems.

London, May 23 -- Understood Lloyd's Standard Form salvage contract was signed with Gigilinis Salvage & Towage May 21 in respect of general cargo Karina K. experiencing list at Thessaloniki May 20.

London, May 24 -- Following received from Gigilinis Salvage & Towage, timed 1100, UTC, today: Salvage services to general cargo Karina K. are still ongoing. At the moment a full assessment of the vessel is being carried out.

LIBRA RIO GRANDE (Germany)

London, May 24 -- A press report, dated May 23, states: A two-alarm fire broke out today on c.c. Libra Rio Grande (16801 gt, built 1996) docked at the Nashville Avenue wharf. Everyone on board the vessel escaped to safety after a fire was reported in the engine-room around 1045 hrs. The engine-room was sealed, and the ship's fire extinguishing system put out the fire. Two crew-members who were transferring fuel when the fire broke out were treated for non-life-threatening injuries. "They had a malfunction in the fuel filter line, during which the diesel fuel came in contact with the crewmen and caused them some injuries or burns, not fire burns, but they had diesel fuel get in contact with them," said New Orleans fire Capt. Terry Hardy. Harbour Police, Coast Guard members, New Orleans firefighters and a hazardous materials team responded to the scene. "The New Orleans Fire Department has sealed the two compartments doors to the engine-room, and we've using the ship's system to pump in carbon dioxide," Hardy said. "Once the carbon dioxide has been in place for 24 hours, that's when we are going to make sure the fire is out." The fire remains under investigation. (Note -- Libra Rio Grande arrived New Orleans at 1925 hrs, May 22 from Salvador.)

New Orleans, May 25 -- A local press report, dated May 24, states: Two members of the crew of c.c. Libra Rio Grande anchored at the Nashville Avenue wharf sustained minor injuries yesterday morning when a fuel filter line malfunctioned in the ship's

engine-room, causing a fire, authorities said. The fire was reported at 1039 hrs and was contained in the ship's engine-room, which was sealed by firefighters who arrived six minutes later, Fire Department Captain Terry Hardy said. The U.S. Coast Guard and the New Orleans Fire Department responded to the blaze. The ship had arrived about 0330 hrs from Houston and was unloading and loading cargo before its scheduled departure later yesterday for Miami when the accident occurred. It was unclear whether the accident happened during refuelling, Hardy said, but when the fuel filter line malfunctioned, it sprayed hot diesel fuel over the two crew members, burning their arms and legs, and started a fire, Hardy said. The two crew-members were taken to Charity Hospital and treated for minor injuries, hospital spokeswoman Diane Angelico said. About 20 other crew-members, most of whom were on board at the time, were not hurt, Hardy said. Firefighters helped ship's crew to close the doors to the engine-room so that the ship's carbon dioxide system could be activated, Hardy said. Libra Rio Grande will remain on fire watch until about 1030 today. Only then can damage be assessed and the fire confirmed to be out, officials said. An NOFD crew was to stand by overnight with two fire hoses at the ready, in case the fire is still smoldering and is stoked up again when the engine-room doors are opened, Hardy said. The Coast Guard was monitoring to make sure no pollution results as a result of the fire, but none had been reported. The ship's departure for Miami is unknown until any fire damage is evaluated, ship's agent Eddie Atherton said. It is unclear whether the fire will affect the movement of other ships at the Nashville wharf.

LISSOS (Greece)

Piraeus, May 19 -- Passenger ro/ro Lissos stranded in shallow waters at Argostoli port, Cephalonia Island, on May 15. The vessel was refloated on May 16 but stranded again the same day near the area. All 129 crew members and 620 passengers were reportedly healthy and secure. No pollution or damages were reported. The vessel was refloated, inspected and finally sailed May 16 for Igoumenitsa. -- Lloyd's Agents.

LYKES VOYAGER (Isle of Man)

Yokohama, May 19 -- C.c. Lykes Voyager arrived Yokohama May 18 and sailed the same day. -- Lloyd's Agents.

MOBRO 128 (Bahamas)

Freeport, Bahamas, May 20 -- Bahamas tug Agnes G towing spud barge Mobro 128 (269 gt), which has a 200-ton crane on board, ran into difficulties while approaching Nassau harbour entrance inbound May 13. The tug and barge ran aground on the breakwater. The tug was refloated but the barge, which is badly holed, still remains aground with the crane on board. Owners are making

arrangements for salvage operations. - Lloyd's Agents.

MSC ELENA (Panama)

See under "Pollution."

MSC ELENI (Panama)

See Kaduna.

MSC EYRA (Panama)

See Aleksandr Nevskiy.

London, May 26 -- C.c. MSC Eyra arrived and sailed Helsingborg May 24 for Antwerp.

MURMAN 2 (Russia)

Bergen, May 23 -- Fishing Murman 2 is presently at the small shipyard of Fitjar Mek. Verksted, south of Bergen. It was towed in, arriving on May 9. Repairs have not yet commenced and accordingly no date for its departure has been decided. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents.

MYLINGUR (Faroe Islands)

Torshavn, May 23 -- Fishing Mylingur is presently at a shipyard. No decision has yet been made as to whether repairs will be undertaken, due to the very heavy damage sustained. -- Lloyd's Agents.

NANA (Bolivia)

Istanbul, May 21 -- Passenger ro/ro Nana passed Dardanelles east at 1650, May 19, Bar for Bourgas. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Istanbul, May 24 -- Passenger ro/ro Nana completed necessary repairs by its own means and upon inspection/formalities sailed from Canakkale at 1658, local time, May 19. -- Lloyd's Agents.

NARRABEEN (Australia)

London, May 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: An investigation is under way after ferry Narrabeen (1184 gt, built 1984), with about 180 people on board, crashed into the Circular Quay ferry terminal this afternoon. A 29-year-old American tourist is in hospital with a facial injury and commuters are likely to experience delays this afternoon as a result of the accident, Sydney Ferries said. Three other passengers received minor injuries. The vessel, the Narrabeen, "made contact" with Wharf 5 at Circular Quay about 1210, today, Sydney Ferries said. It has been secured at the terminal awaiting an assessment of damage to its exterior. Wharf 5 was also damaged and will remain closed until further notice. The cause of the accident has yet to be established. The office of Transport Safety Investigations and the NSW Maritime Authority are investigating the matter.

NONA MARY (Greece)

London, May 24 -- Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: Passenger ro/ro Nona Mary departed from Lavrion at 0110, today, for Ag.Efstratios-Limnon-Alonissos-Skopelos-Skiathos-Volos following repairs and survey by the marine inspectorate.

NORDSUN (Cyprus)

Durban, May 19 -- C.c. Nordsun arrived Durban May 18. -- Lloyd's Agents.

NORWAY (Bahamas)

London, May 24 -- A press report, dated May 23, states: After nearly two-years at Bremerhaven passenger Norway left today in tow of tug De Da for Port Klang via the Cape of Good Hope. The tug and tow should arrive in Port Klang in approximately 70 days.

OURO DO BRASIL (Liberia)

Port Elizabeth, May 18 -- Fruit juice tanker Ouro do Brasil sailed Port Elizabeth May 18. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents.

PHOENIX BETA (Hong Kong)

Zeebrugge, May 23 -- Crude oil tanker Phoenix Beta is now at Shiprepair M11, Antwerp. Work is to be carried out to try to fix the hole, which measures six by six metres. Departure is expected in around 20 days. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents.

PRIDE OF AMERICA (U.S.A.)

Bremen, May 20 -- Passenger Pride of America sailed Bremerhaven May 19. -- Lloyd's Agents.

RAIPURA

London, May 20 -- A press report, dated today, states: At least 33 people died and 120 are still missing after ferry Raipura sank in the river Jamuna, Bangladesh, during a storm earlier this week. The vessel went down with 200 passengers in the Jamuna river at Aricha, about 100 km west of the capital Dhaka, in a tropical storm on Tuesday (May 17). "Barring a miracle, it is quite unlikely that anyone would survive so long under water," Mohammad Abu Yusuf, a police officer monitoring the rescue, said. Efforts to refloat the ferry began yesterday after a rescue vessel, delayed by bad weather, arrived with divers.

Dhaka, May 21 -- Fierce river currents frustrated attempts by navy divers in Bangladesh to raise ferry Raipura, which sank four days ago with about 200 people on board, rescuers said today. Efforts by the navy, police and volunteers to refloat the ferry have failed since the ferry went down in the Jamuna River at Aricha, about 100 km west of the capital Dhaka, during a tropical storm on Tuesday (May 17). Strong currents and stormy weather have repeatedly stalled rescue efforts and hampered the retrieval of scores of bodies thought to be trapped in the sunken ferry. Police said 50 people survived the sinking and rescuers had retrieved 50 bodies by today. About 100 passengers are still missing, also feared drowned. Officials still hoped to finish the rescue and salvage operation in a day or two but divers said part of the ferry was covered by sand, making it too heavy to be lifted. M.Reaz Hasan Khondakar, chairman of the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority, said from Aricha today: "It's not sure when, or if at all,

the ferry can be refloated. Divers are sweeping the river bed in adverse conditions but so far have been unable to hook it (ferry) up. We are still hopeful ... with a 50-50 chance of being successful." Four bodies the rescuers pulled out of the river today were badly decomposed and beyond identification, officials on the scene said. -- Reuters.

Dhaka, May 22 -- Bangladesh has abandoned efforts to salvage river ferry Raipura, which sank with about 200 people on board during a tropical storm five days ago, officials said today. The end of the rescue attempt left the bodies of around 100 victims believed trapped inside the ferry still in the water. "Continuing bad weather has compelled us to take such an unfortunate decision..." Captain M.Shafiqullah, director-general of the Department of Shipping, said. Police said 50 people survived the sinking and rescuers had retrieved 50 bodies by yesterday. No bodies had been found since yesterday, they added. Navy, police, firefighters and volunteers tried hard, defying rough weather and strong river currents but made no headway. -- Reuters.

London, May 24 -- A press report, dated May 23, states: Rescue workers yesterday called off the salvage operation of a twin-deck ferry (Raipura) almost a week after it capsized leaving 50 people dead and as many as 40 others missing, officials said. The ferry went down in a storm on the Padma river, 100km west of Dhaka, on Tuesday (May 17) but strong currents and silt have prevented repeated attempts to search the vessel for trapped bodies. "We've just called off the salvage operation as strong currents and the siltuation ended all our hopes to lift the vessel from river bed," salvage vessel commander Syed Mainuddin Haider said. Yesterday a fire brigade diver braved strong currents and dived to the river bed to inspect the state of the sunken ferry. "He was able to attach a rope to the sunken ferry. But he reported that two-thirds of the ferry was already silted up, leaving little hope for pulling it upward," he said. "We made last attempt to drag it to the shore. But it hardly moved, forcing us to abandon the operation," Haider added. Several hundred relatives remained at the scene yesterday, waiting agonisingly for news of missing family members. Last week, the crowd numbered several thousand. Some said they were so frustrated at the slow pace of the official search that they hired small boats to scour the river themselves. But many began to leave on Friday, saying that even if the bodies were recovered they would be impossible to identify. The authorities have buried 23 unidentified corpses in a government-owned graveyard near the accident site. Survivors said at least 100 people were on board and that about 50 passengers managed to swim to the shore. Officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said on Saturday they believed around 40 people have not

been unaccounted for. Lieutenant Commander Mahbudur Rashid, the head of the salvage operation, however, said he doubted many bodies were trapped in the sunken vessel. "The windows would not have been able to withstand the force of the currents. They would have broken by now any bodies trapped would have floated to the surface of the river," he said. Police have deployed patrol boats 30km downstream in the hope of recovering more corpses.

RIFGAT (Netherlands)

Lonon, May 23 -- Following received from Coastguard Humber MRSC, timed 2114, UTC, May 22: Humber MRSC received a call on VHF radio at 2045, UTC, May 22, from tug Lady Laura, stating it was proceeding to the River Humber, bound Immingham, with general cargo Rifgat (2450 gt, built 2000), with a cargo of wooden pallets, in tow. Estimated time of arrival River Humber 0230, UTC, May 23. All was well. Rifgat had sustained a machinery failure, approximately 48 miles east of Spurn Point in lat 53 39.7N, long 01 32.3E and Lady Laura had been tasked to take it in tow.

London, May 23 -- Following received from Coastguard Humber MRSC, timed 0505, UTC: General cargo Rifgat, under tow of tug Lady Laura, arrived in River Humber at 0230, UTC, and tow presently waiting for tide to proceed to Immingham.

London, May 25 -- General cargo Rifgat arrived Immingham May 23.

SAFARI (Panama)

See Astro Lupus.

SEA BEAUTY (Bahamas)

London, May 25 -- A press report, dated May 24, states: Scrap metal inside bulk Sea Beauty (28647 gt, built 2001) in the Port of Long Beach caught fire today, halting port sea traffic for nearly 30 minutes. The fire began at about 1620 hrs on board the vessel docked at Berth 118 on Pier T, said Long Beach Fire Captain Jim Arvizu. Firefighters helped the ship's crew extinguish the flames using water pumps on board the vessel. The fire had apparently ignited when foam insulation and oil from discarded refrigerators, washing machines and dryers caught fire inside the ship's three holds, Arvizu said. The fire emitted toxic smoke, but nobody was injured, Arvizu said. (Note -- Sea Beauty arrived Long Beach May 17.)

STARLUCK (Cyprus)

Buenos Aires, May 24 -- Our sub-agents in Necochea reported that bulk Starluck (16754 gt, built 1976), while sailing from the port of Necochea, has grounded approximately 200 metres away from port's breakwater. They are currently awaiting tide in order to refloat it with the assistance of a tug. - Lloyd's Agents.

SUDRINGUR (Faroe Islands)

Torshavn, May 25 -- Trawler Sudringur (671 gt, built 1977) had a fire on board last night while in

Runavik harbour. The vessel sustained considerable damage. -- Lloyd's Agents.

SUPERFLYTE (New Zealand)

London, May 25 -- A press report, dated today, states: A fire on board catamaran tug Superflyte in the Hauraki Gulf last year has led to calls for improved safety procedures. The findings were released in a report today by the Transport Accident Investigation Commission (TAIC) in regard to an incident on the Fullers Group vessel, which was carrying 311 passengers to Auckland city from Waiheke Island on August 22. The vessel's master issued a distress call when a fire was discovered in one of the engine-rooms and the call resulted in other vessels coming to its aid and evacuating all its passengers. Some suffered from minor abrasions and smoke inhalation. The report said a fracture in part of an engine allowed hot oil to escape and ignite on a manifold. The report said carbon dioxide smothering equipment was used by crew to try and extinguish the fire, but failed because of a system fault. Issues identified by TAIC included the method and scope of distributing information concerning safety, the content of instructions to be followed in emergencies and the need for trained crew to provide guidance and support to passengers. It advised amending safety manuals throughout the company's fleet. The report also outlined the need for ongoing surveys of carbon dioxide smothering equipment.

THIA CHRYSOULA (Cyprus)

Piraeus, May 22 -- Bulk Thia Chryssoula is still aground. A lightering vessel is due on scene in the next few days. Lightering of the vessel should commence by the end of the week. -- Tsavlis Salvage (International) Ltd.

THOMSON CELEBRATION (Netherlands Antilles)

London, May 24 -- Passenger Thomson Celebration sailed Southampton May 22 for Dublin.

TRINKET (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, May 26 -- General cargo Trinket arrived Reykjavik May 21 from Norrkoping.

VINCENZO FLORIO (Italy)

London, May 23 -- Ro/ro Vincenzo Florio arrived Naples May 21 from Palermo.

VOLCAN DE TACANDE (Canary Islands)

Santa Cruz de Tenerife, May 23 -- The insurance company of ro/ro Volcan de Tacande has still not decided what to do in respect of the future of the vessel. Therefore the vessel is still berthed at the port of Las Palmas. -- Lloyd's Agents.

WALNUT EXPRESS (Panama)

London, May 23 -- Information received from Halifax, dated today,

states: Product tanker Walnut Express has arrived at the port of Halifax and is berthed at the Halifax Shipyards.

Halifax, NS, May 26 -- Product tanker Walnut Express had departed Boston, May 6, en route to northern Europe and sustained a main engine main bearing failure on May 8. Vessel's attempts to rectify the situation were unsuccessful and towage was arranged with the tug Atlantic Oak. The vessel arrived at the port of Halifax, under tow, morning of May 18, and was placed alongside the layby berth of Halifax Shipyard, where repairs are being conducted, grinding the main bearing journal. Repairs are expected to require approximately one month. -- Lloyd's Agents.

YUE SHAN (Panama)

See Chrispigi Lady.

ZIM HOUSTON III (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, May 24 -- C.c. Zim Houston III sailed New Orleans May 20.



SOMALIA

London, May 24 -- A press report, dated May 23, states: Reports from the Harardhere district of Mudug Province, in Somalia, say two armed boats attacked and later kidnapped a German cargo vessel at sea near Gaan, 25 km east of Harardhere. Eye witnesses said the kidnapping took place midnight last night. Unconfirmed reports add there were some casualties and district officials unsuccessfully tried to persuade the attackers to release the ship and the crew.



GIBRALTAR

See California under "Marine".



AGIOS SPYRIDON K. (Greece)

London, May 20 -- A report in the May 20 issue of "Newsfront" states: Ro/ro Agios Spyridon K. has been listed for auction on May 25. Lying at Salamina, the vessel carries a reserve of Euros 35,000.

BRUNO SALAMON (Panama)

Odessa, May 19 -- Bulk Bruno Salamon sailed Nikolayev 0930, local time, today. -- Lloyd's Agents.

CAN GIO (Vietnam)

London, May 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: General cargo Can Gio, unreasonably detained in Tanzania since mid-2004 will have to wait until Jun 10 to know its fate as the Tanzania high court has announced it needs more time to make a final decision. Although the final hearing of the case convened May 18, the high court has asked plaintiff Mohammed Enterprises Company to submit more proof about a trade dispute, unrelated to the detained Can Gio, with Vietnamese Thanh Hoa Company by May 31. Thus, the high court will issue its final decision Jun 10, said Pham Ngoc Son, deputy director of Sea Saigon Shipping Company, owner of the vessel. If the vessel is sold by court order, five remaining sailors onboard will be brought home immediately, said Mr. Son. Seven out of the 12 sailors on board have already returned home. Unjust seizure On Jul 27, 2004, the Can Gio was seized on orders from the Tanzanian Supreme Court when it docked in the African country. The vessel and its 12 sailors were held hostage for business fraud allegedly committed four years ago by Thanh Hoa, which had no relation with the Can Gio and its crew. In 1999, Mohammed Enterprises paid Thanh Hoa 1.7 million USD in advance for a shipment of 6,000 tons of rice and four rice-husking machines. But, another vessel rented by Thanh Hoa never arrived at its destination to deliver the shipment and Mohammed Enterprises then took legal action with relevant Vietnamese agencies. With the case still not settled, Mohammed Enterprises filed a suit in Tanzania against the Vietnamese company and Vietnamese government, alleging that Vietnam had failed to handle the case fairly.

DIAGORAS (Greece)

London, May 20 -- A report in the May 20 issue of "Newsfront" states: Passenger ro/ro Diagoras has been listed for auction on May 25. Lying at Drapetzona, the vessel carries a reserve price of Euros 9 million.

FISHING VESSELS SEIZED BY AUSTRALIA

Fremantle, May 24 -- Fishing Volga is still at Jervoise Bay. -- Lloyd's Agents.

MAYA V (Uruguay)

Fremantle, May 24 -- Fishing Maya V is still at Jervoise Bay. -- Lloyd's Agents.

PATMOS (Greece)

Piraeus, May 26 -- Passenger ro/ro Patmos still remains under arrest and is scheduled to be auctioned on Jul 13. -- Lloyd's Agents.

RODOS (Greece)

Piraeus, May 26 -- Ro/ro Rodos remains under arrest and is scheduled to be auctioned on Jul 13. -- Lloyd's Agents.

SANTORINI SKY (Greece)

London, May 20 -- A report in the May 20 issue of "Newsfront" states: Ro/ro Santorini Sky has been listed for auction on Jun 8. Lying at Keratsini, the vessel carries a reserve of Euros 175,000.

VOLGA

See "Fishing Vessels Seized by Australia."

Pipeline Accidents

**KANSAS CITY, UNITED STATES**

London, May 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: A Magellan Pipe Line Co. gasoline pipeline burst around 0200, today, spilling almost 19,000 gallons of gas in Kansas City, Kan., near the Missouri River. Some gas spilled into the river, but officials don't know how much, said Don Denney, a spokesman for the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kan. Officials don't know what caused the break, which occurred near 12th and Esplanade streets, Denney said. The Mid-America Regional Council issued an air-quality health advisory around 1100 hrs that remains in effect for the area around the spill, said Jody Ladd Craig, MARC's public affairs director. MARC is advising people in the immediate vicinity of the spill to avoid going outside.

KRASNODAR, RUSSIA

London, May 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: About 20 tonnes of oil have been spilt from the Khadyzhensk-Krasnodar pipeline in Russia's Krasnodar territory near the Goryachi Klyuch town overnight as a result of an emergency, the emergency situations and state environmental control department of the regional administration said today. The emergency occurred at the 51st kilometre of the oil pipeline. The nearest populated locality Prirechensky settlement is 2.5 kilometres away. The oil spill was caused by a small crack in the worn-out pipe that has been used for 50 years without repair. Large-scale pollution has been evaded only thanks to the fact that planned repairs were conducted on a pipeline section not far from the spill site. It took several hours to dispatch an emergency brigade to the spill site. The team consisted of 24 specialists and 15 machinery units. The Krasnodar department of main pipelines has started the contaminated soil remediation.

SINDH PROVINCE, PAKISTAN

Karachi, May 26 -- A gas pipeline was damaged when a fire broke out near Quetta Road in Jacobabad in Sindh Province of Pakistan. A local company's officials told local media that the fire erupted in a 4-inch pipeline and they suspended the supply to the whole city as a precaution. Official Imdad Ali said that somebody after lighting the cigarette threw a matchstick, which caused the fire. He said the fire also damaged Pakistan Telecommunication Company (PTCL) optical wires, disconnecting hundreds of telephones in Sindh and Balochistan provinces as well. A team from Larkana had been summoned to repair the pipeline, he said and rejected that this was an act of terrorism. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Pollution

**BRITTANY, FRANCE**

London, May 20 -- Understood ro/ro Fast Independence (10245 gt, built 1984) encountered engine problems and dropped anchor approximately 37 nautical miles from the Hook van Holland breakwaters and was towed to Schiedam by tug Fairplay 22 assisted on the river by tug Fairplay XIV. (Note -- Fast Independence, from Hamburg, and Fairplay 22 arrived Rotterdam 0715, May 18. Fast Independence had sailed Hamburg 1715, May 13. Fairplay 22 sailed Rotterdam 1725, May 17.)

London, May 24 -- Ro/ro Fast Independence sailed Rotterdam 1235, May 20 for Beirut.

Brest, May 24 -- Ro/ro Fast Independence, Rotterdam for Beirut, was off Brittany at 1330, May 22 when it was flown over by a French Navy aircraft which noticed the presence of oil residue lying over 20 kilometres in the vessel's wake. The Public Prosecutor's Department of Brest was advised accordingly and required immediately the vessel divert towards Brest. The vessel obeyed the orders from the French Navy and arrived Brest May 23. A guarantee of Euro 400,000 was claimed by the High Court of Brest against the authorisation for the vessel to depart Brest. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, May 26 -- French Secretary of State for Transport and the Sea, Francois Goulard, yesterday, congratulated the French navy, customs service and judiciary for the arrest of ro/ro Fast Independence on suspicion of causing pollution at sea. The vessel, which was on its way from Rotterdam to Beirut with a cargo of construction plant, was spotted by a French navy aircraft on Sunday afternoon (May 22), allegedly at the head of a pollution slick measuring 20 kilometres by 50 metres. The French prosecutor's office in Brest ordered the

vessel to present itself in the port of Brest. Mr Goulard said that Fast Independence was the sixth vessel to be brought into port on suspicion of pollution since the start of the year and the 31st since June 2002. Seventeen of the vessels concerned had been found guilty by the courts. The public prosecutor in Brest, FranAois Nicot, subsequently ordered the owner of Fast Independence to pay Euro 400,000 (\$521,800) bail to have the vessel released. He said that the high level of the bail payment reflected not the length of the pollution slick but its brown colour, which he claimed was an indication that the pollution had been particularly heavy.

BUZZARDS BAY, MASSACHUSETTS, UNITED STATES

London, May 25 -- A press report, dated today, states: A tug operator who caused an oil spill in Buzzards Bay two years ago that contaminated 90 miles of shoreline and killed hundreds of birds pleaded guilty yesterday to violating federal environmental laws. Franklin Robert Hill, 53, of Jacksonville, Fla., who left the helm of the Evening Tide unattended on Apr 27, 2003, while tending to a tow line, pleaded guilty in US District Court in Boston to violating the Clean Water Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. A plea agreement filed in court yesterday by Assistant US Attorney Jonathan F. Mitchell and signed by Hill indicates that prosecutors will recommend prison time for Hill of between 10 and 16 months. But Hill's lawyer may seek a shorter sentence or probation. US District Magistrate Judge Robert B. Collings delayed sentencing until Sep 21 at the request of Hill's lawyer, Peter Ball, who said Hill is preparing to leave for a 90-day assignment in the Gulf of Mexico, where he will captain a boat ferrying crew members to oil rigs. Collings released Hill on his personal recognizance, but ordered him to tell the court if he runs afoul of the Coast Guard. Neither Hill nor Ball would comment on the case yesterday. The tug was towing a barge (B. No.120), owned by Bouchard Transportation Co. of New York and carrying 4.1 million gallons of fuel oil, from Philadelphia to a plant in Sandwich when it drifted out of the marked channel and smashed into rocks. Some 98,000 gallons of oil spilled into the bay, killing 450 migratory birds, closing shellfish beds, and polluting beaches in the worst oil spill in Buzzards Bay since 1969. Bouchard, which is footing the clean-up bill for the oil spill, pleaded guilty last year to violating environmental laws and paid a \$9 million criminal fine to resolve the case against the company. By pleading guilty yesterday, Hill acknowledged the government's claim that he was in charge of the Evening Tide at the time of the spill and left the wheelhouse unattended for 15 minutes while checking the tow line as the tugboat neared the Cape

Cod Canal. Hill failed to take a hand-held radio with him when he went to the stern and so didn't hear a warning call that the Evening Tide had strayed out of the channel.

MSC ELENA (Panama)

London, May 23 -- A press report, dated May 21, states: The master and eight crew of c.c. MSC Elena docked in Boston Harbour must remain in the city after their vessel leaves port, a federal magistrate judge ruled yesterday, requiring them to be available to testify before a federal grand jury investigating whether the ship dumped untreated oily sludge into the ocean. The Coast Guard boarded the vessel on Tuesday, and several of the crew members allegedly admitted that the pump system had been rigged to discharge oily sludge, according to a court affidavit. On Thursday, the Coast Guard took the nine men from India into custody, citing concern that they may not return to testify, once the ship left South Boston's Conley Terminal. "None of these men have been charged with a crime; they're being held because they are material witnesses," Assistant US Attorney John Mitchell said in court yesterday. The Coast Guard's inspection and interviews indicated that the ship had been making improper discharges over the past six months, the affidavit says. US Magistrate Judge Marianne Bowler released the men from custody, but ordered them not to leave Boston. The vessel was waiting for a replacement crew yesterday and planned to leave port after it received approval from the Coast Guard. Boston lawyer Frank Libby, who represents seven of the men, said that the government has not told them how long they must stay in Boston and that it could be weeks or months.



AUSTRALIA

London, May 19 -- A press report, dated today, states: Perth and the south-west of Western Australia appear to have escaped further major damage as a storm front passed over last night. With forecasts of another storm system heading towards the WA coast, residents battered by Monday's (May 16) mini-tornados were bracing themselves for another rugged night. But while heavy rain fell on Perth and country centres such as Bunbury, there was no repeat of the savage winds that flattened buildings and blacked out 100,000 homes earlier in the week. Falls in excess of 60 millimetres were recorded in several centres including Bunbury which had 63mm up until midnight. There were also some strong squalls in Perth's northern suburbs with gusts of up to 100-kilometres-per-hour at Ocean

Reef. Bruce Buckley, a senior forecaster with the Bureau of Meteorology, says it was little more than a normal winter storm. "It was more typical in terms of the wind gust severity of the sort of system we see a probably half a dozen times in the course of the winter," he said. A dozen State Emergency Service crews spent the night patching leaking roofs but there were no reports of major damage.

London, May 20 -- A press report, dated today, states: The weather bureau is warning Brisbane could be hit with another severe storm this afternoon. Mopping up is continuing after yesterday's freak hail storm, which damaged homes and buildings throughout the city. Up to 50 mm of hail fell in many areas with ice still melting on the ground this morning. Over 7,000 homes lost power during the storm. Senior forecaster Gavin Holcombe says the conditions are there for another one later today. "We've still got cold levels around and while that air is so cold it's going to remain very unstable," he said. "And as a result we could easily see a severe storm like we had yesterday again this afternoon."

London, May 23 -- A press report, dated May 20, states: The cost of damage from the ferocious storms that battered Western Australia earlier this week has reached nearly Aus\$25 million, the Insurance Council of Australia said today. As the last of the homes left without power following Monday's (May 16) wild weather were reconnected this afternoon, the Insurance Disaster Response Organisation (IDRO) said 9000 insurance claims had now been lodged. The IDRO WA Co-ordinator, Daryl Cameron, said the rate of insurance claims was beginning to slow, with insured damage estimates now reaching Aus\$24.6 million. "Insurers have directed additional resources to claims assessment and claims handling to ensure that policyholders are being assisted as quickly as possible," Mr Cameron said. Bicton in Perth's south, and Bunbury in WA's south-west, were the worst hit. Estimated damage at the Bicton Primary school has been put at Aus\$6 million.

AZORES

London, May 26 -- Heavy rain and strong winds lashed Portugal's mid-Atlantic Azores archipelago yesterday, causing several flight delays, diversions and cancellations, national news agency Lusa reported. Two flights from mainland Portugal involving over 200 passengers which were scheduled to land on the island of Horta were diverted to other islands in the nine-island chain, a spokesman for Portuguese airline SATA which is based in the Azores said. Another flight with 38 passengers which took off from Sao Miguel, the largest and most populated island in the archipelago, headed for Horta was forced to return to the island due to heavy fog, he added. The rough

weather also led to cancellations of all flights between three central islands in the archipelago, Graciosa, Terceira, and Sao Jorge, leaving 95 passengers stranded. The local weather office said wind gusts of up to 75 kilometres an hour were felt across most of the archipelago.

BANGLADESH

London, May 23 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: The schedule of 12 international and domestic flights at Zia International Airport (ZIA) was hampered yesterday due to stormy weather, causing sufferings to the passengers. Airport sources said, the 0640 hrs flight (GA 456) of Muscat-Dhaka route of Gulf Air had to be diverted to Kolkata and was forced to an emergency landing because of inclement weather. The flight then landed at the ZIA at 1030 hrs. Another flight of GMG Airlines of Dhaka-Kolkata route was delayed by 45 minutes. The flight took off for Kolkata at 1115 hrs instead of 1030 hrs. Besides, all domestic flights of Biman Bangladesh Airlines and GMG were delayed due to stormy weather. At least 10 people were killed and six were injured by lightning in Bangladesh as storms and heavy rains swept much of the country at the weekend, police said today. The victims included five people in southeastern Cox's Bazar district, three in southern Lakshimpur district and two in central Rajbari district, regional police officials said. Torrential rains and strong winds uprooted trees, damaged houses and brought down power lines in more than a dozen districts over the weekend, the officials said.

London, May 25 -- A press report, dated today, states: Two rain-swollen rivers in north-eastern Bangladesh burst through mud embankments, inundating more than 200 villages and marooning about 100,000 people, officials and media reports said Wednesday. Two days of torrential rains caused the flash floods in the Moulvibazar and Habiganj districts, local government official Moazzem Hossain said. No casualties were reported in the flooded region, 160 kilometres north-east of the capital, Dhaka. The official did not provide further details. In Moulvibazar, a river broke through its embankment, flooding more than 100 villages, the Jugantar and Sangbad newspapers reported. About 100 other villages were swamped in neighbouring Habiganj district, the reports said.

BAY OF BENGAL

London, May 20 -- A press report, dated today, states: A boat with about 100 people on board has sunk in a river in southern Bangladesh during a severe storm. Police say the boat has disappeared in the turbulent Meghna river estuary to the Bay of Bengal, about 325 km south of Dhaka. They say most of the people on board have either been rescued or swam to safety, but nearly 40 people are missing.

BRAZIL

London, May 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: Southern parts of Brazil are experiencing some of the heaviest rainfall and flooding on record. The country's commercial capital, Sao Paulo, has been worst hit with flash floods leaving many roads impassable and some parts of the city under water. At least five people are known to have died, mostly as a result of mudslides triggered by the rain in the city's huge shanty-towns or favelas. The city's rapid growth, outstripping its natural drainage, has been blamed. City planners warned that flash floods could become increasingly common in the future. Sao Paulo's city authorities said yesterday that 14cm of rain had fallen in Sao Paulo in the space of 24 hours. The downpour is a record for this time of year, and is double the usual amount of rainfall for the entire month of May. At one stage, the main river burst its banks, flooding a busy ring road and submerging cars and even buses. Hundreds of thousands of people in outlying areas were unable to reach work in the city centre. In the sprawling shanty towns that surround Sao Paulo, the rain caused fatal mudslides. At both city and state level, Brazil's politicians are scrambling to assist the worst-hit areas and promising better drainage and flood relief channels. But similar promises have been made in the past and more often than not, the funding has quickly dried up.

CANADA

London, May 26 -- A press report, dated May 25, states: Dozens of homes surrounded by water in the Bridgewater, Nova Scotia, area were evacuated tonight as officials braced for more of the rain that has flooded parts of southern Nova Scotia. The order for residents to leave about 60 homes around Fancy Lake followed the declaration of a state of local emergency in the area earlier in the day. Officials issued the evacuation order because they feared that emergency personnel would not be able to reach the homes in the event of a health emergency or a fire, said Doug Quinn, the district's chief administrative officer. Quinn said that as of late tonight, the evacuation was "going well," (but) part of it's gone a little slower than we had anticipated. The water's a little deeper and we had to call for slightly bigger vehicles, and a boat in one area. Premier John Hamm was expected to travel to the Bridgewater area early tomorrow to get a first-hand look at the damage. While the premier has said it's too early to talk about compensation, he's suggested the cost of the cleanup could top \$1 million. Road crews were in the midst of repairing numerous washouts, particularly near the LaHave River, which flows through Bridgewater. As well, inspectors were checking dams in the Fancy Lake area to make sure they are structurally sound.

ETHIOPIA

London, May 22 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: At least 20 people, including six children, were killed in flash floods overnight yesterday after an intense, sudden downpour pounded Ethiopia's southeastern town of Dire Dawa, officials said today. Hospital officials in the town, about 520 kilometres from the capital, said they had received 17 bodies, six of which were children, but police said the death toll was higher. "We are still recovering bodies and we cannot give exact figures, but our initial report indicates that 20 people were washed away and have all died," said Derege Betru, a police official in Dire Dawa.

HURRICANE "ADRIAN"

London, May 23 -- A press report, dated May 21, states: Hurricane "Adrian" fizzled yesterday over Honduras after slamming into El Salvador's coast and forcing the evacuation of 23,000 people, officials said. The hurricane, the first of the eastern Pacific season, caused relatively little damage and no reported deaths in El Salvador. It struck west of El Salvador's capital overnight with maximum sustained winds of almost 75 mph. By midday, the rapidly moving storm had largely broken up over neighbouring Honduras, leaving scattered showers, some flooding, blocked roads and the loss of a few shacks. Officials linked one death to the storm. Rodrigo Flores, deputy chief of civil defence in Nicaragua, said a person drowned Thursday night (May 19) during flooding in that country's capital, about 240 miles from the storm's centre. In Honduras, "there were no deaths or damage," President Ricardo Maduro said. Salvadoran President Tony Saca said that officials were evaluating the damage, but said activities were returning to normal after the first hurricane on record to directly hit El Salvador. He said most of the 23,000 people evacuated in El Salvador had returned home. In Honduras, schools were closed as a precaution, and many public workers were on a half-day schedule. Officials in Guatemala and Nicaragua also reported some evacuations and flooding.

KENYA

London, May 25 -- A press report, dated May 24, states: At least four people have been killed while hundreds left homeless in western Kenya after flash floods caused by torrential rains destroyed their homes over the weekend, officials disclosed today. An official in charge of National Disaster Operation Centre, Col. Shem Amadi, said 300 people in several districts in western Kenya were homeless after several rivers breached their banks and flooded the plains near the shores of Lake Victoria. "We have confirmed four deaths as a result of flash floods and at least 300 families have been displaced throughout the country," Amadi said.

But relief officials said the actual death toll may be much higher due to the remoteness of the regions affected by above normal rainfall and inaccessibility with relief supplies. Flooding also had wreaked havoc in Nyando, Rachuonyo, Migori and Nyatike districts, where many homes had been submerged in raging water but it was not immediately clear, however, how many people were affected in the four districts. Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) spokesperson Anthony Mwangi said his organisation had distributed non-food items, including shelter material, blankets and water containers to areas affected. Early this month, at least five people were killed by floods in northern Kenya that left about 25,000 Somali refugees at UN camps in Dadaab district homeless.

NEW ZEALAND

London, May 19 -- A press report, dated today, states: Hundreds of people have been evacuated and houses have collapsed amid flooding and landslides caused by heavy rain on New Zealand's North Island. A state of emergency continued today in the Bay of Plenty region as authorities began to count the cost of flood devastation, expected to be in the tens of millions of dollars. Evacuations continued this morning with the army clearing a caravan park and a retirement village with 100 residents in the town of Papamoa. Hundreds more have been evacuated in the past 24 hours after several houses collapsed and more were damaged between the coastal towns of Tauranga and Whakatane, in the north-east of the North Island. More than 20 schools have been closed and roads blocked, but so far no injuries have been reported. About 400mm of rain fell over a 36-hour period, about one-third of the region's average annual rainfall, and another 40 mm was forecast to fall today. Authorities evacuated 173 people from the town of Matata last night after about 100 mm of rain fell in an hour. The Tauranga and Western Bay of Plenty Emergency Management Office said floodwaters were decreasing today in most urban areas. The Western Bay of Plenty District Council said 15 houses in Tauranga had been badly affected by slips and four had been written off. Houses were also lost in other towns.

London, May 19 -- A press report, dated today, states: A helicopter has flown over Tauranga to assess the damage caused by flooding. Civil Defence spokesman Peter Hennessey says there is considerable flooding in the Papamoa area and four slips at the base of Mt Maunganui have closed the walking track. Slips have also destroyed four houses and badly damaged 15 others in the Welcome Bay area and Mr Hennessey says the affected homeowners were evacuated but now want to look at their properties to file insurance claims. Road damage is still a big problem and Tauranga residents are being asked

not to drive unless absolutely necessary. The damage to the region is likely to amount to several million dollars.

London, May 20 -- A press report, dated today, states: Hundreds of families across the Tasman remain in emergency accommodation this morning after severe flooding destroyed their homes yesterday. The Bay of Plenty region on the east coast of New Zealand's North Island has felt the worst of the flooding. Seventy homes in the town of Matata have been badly damaged. One even floated 300 metres up the road. Some residents in the towns of Whakatane and Tauranga have also been evacuated. Local councils say it is probably the worst deluge of rain in a century. The Insurance Council estimates the damage bill will climb to \$100 million.

London, May 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: Rain hampered clean-up efforts and put residents back on alert in flood ravaged Matata yesterday. The Bay of Plenty town's volunteer firefighters were standing by as heavy rain lashed the district in the early afternoon and eventually residents, who had gone in to try to salvage possessions, were ordered back out. A dedicated team led by Civil Defence has been co-ordinating the clean-up of Matata, where last Wednesday's flooding led to a state of civil emergency and left a trail of destruction amounting to tens of millions of dollars. Chief fire officer Brian Dobson said the volunteer firefighters had been helping residents clean up but had to wait until silt and debris was cleared before washing down properties. "There's so much mud, sand and stuff on their sections and on the kerbs ... we can't wash it away because we don't want to add to the problem with water." The brigade was taking requests from residents and assigning crews to help. Mr Dobson said the community was using tractors, front-end loaders and small diggers to clear properties. Work at Murphy's Holiday Camp, where a number of caravans were washed out to sea, was halted by rain yesterday. Two tractors had been brought in to clear mud and water that was pumped out on Saturday was being replaced in the fresh downfall yesterday. Mud, rocks and trees were being moved to a huge hole at one end of the camp, created by the flood. Matata's 22 volunteer firefighters have been working almost around-the-clock since last Wednesday, said Mr Dobson. Part of their job had involved helping police to patrol road blocks and keep an eye out for looters. Mr Dobson said people had been seen scavenging through property that washed up across the lagoon. There is \$50 million estimated damage in the Bay of Plenty. Tauranga flood damage: 412 homes inspected, 25 uninhabitable, 25 can be repaired. Landslip damage: 92 homes inspected, 84 uninhabitable, 76 can be repaired, 16 irreparable/condemned. Sixty-one people are in temporary accommodation. Matata flood damage:

93 homes inspected, 47 homes uninhabitable, 20 repairable, seven homeowners can return today. A state of civil emergency exists in Matata, although Civil Defence hopes to lift it at 0900 hrs today. Water is safe to drink in Tauranga, but must be used sparingly. The Mt Maunganui reservoir is still not working. There is still no water supply in Matata, but residents can obtain water from two tankers at the Matata Fire Station, where there are also portaloos and a generator. Matata residents still in their homes are asked to boil all drinking water. Edgcombe residents are asked to restrict their use of toilets and not use dishwashers, washing machines or have baths and showers. The Insurance Council has moved extra teams of assessors into the Bay of Plenty. They ask that affected people file claims as soon as they can, and keep damaged property in a safe place as far as possible, for assessment. A joint mayoral relief fund has been set up for the Whakatane, Tauranga and Western Bay of Plenty districts. More than \$250,000 has already been raised.

RUSSIA

London, May 22 -- A press report, dated today, states: Rivers that overflowed banks in the Primorye Territory, flooded today 107 dwelling houses in the villages of Koksharovka, Antonovka and Novo-Mikhailovka, Chuguyev district. Koksharovka was the hardest hit. Spring waters flooded 81 houses, and water reached the floor level in two homes. Around 400 people live in the inundated area, but only five aged persons were evacuated to a safe place from the village of Novo-Mikhailovka. The Far Eastern regional centre of the Ministry for Emergencies reported that powerful torrents of water in the Krasnoarmeisk district washed away two bridges, one of them is a highway and the second a suspension pedestrian bridge, leading to the village of Dalny Kut. Another two highway bridges were damaged. Water overflowed highways in many places. In the meantime, it is expected that water level will rise to 720 centimetres in the Bolshaya Ussurka River, running across the Krasnoarmeisk district, while the critical level there stands at 520 centimetres. The state of emergency was clamped down on the district.

London, May 24 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Some 800 houses in which more than 3.3 thousand people live were flooded in Russia, the press service of the Emergencies Ministry said yesterday. In particular, the difficult flood situation emerged in the Primorye territory and Dagestan. Many settlements are flooded in the Krasnoarmeisky district of the Primorye territory. All in all, 235 houses were flooded. The water level on the rivers has increased from seven to 20 centimetres and keeps growing over the past day, the press service emphasized. Meanwhile, the water

level on the rivers in the Chuguyevsky district of the Primorye territory is falling down sharply. 101 houses are in the flood area in Novomikhailovka and Koksharovka. "The flood peak is expected in the Yakovlevsky, Dalnerechsky and Kirovsky districts before May 26," the press service remarked. Emergency specialists forecast emergency situations of the territorial level triggered by the flood, he added. The dams that have been destroyed in the flood are being restored in Dagestan. A total 320 of 400 metres of the damaged dam were restored in the Babayurt district of the republic, 75 of 100 metres of the dam on the Aksaiskoye water reservoir were restored in the Khasavyurt district. More than 450 houses and fields on the area of about 53,500 hectares are still flooded in Dagestan. Meanwhile, 12 houses are flooded in Praskan in the Usinsky district of the Komi Republic. Twenty-four people had to leave their houses.

SLOVAKIA

London, May 23 -- Weather on Thursday (May 19) wreaked havoc in the natural region of Zemplin, eastern Slovakia as cellars were inundated by torrents of floodwater and fierce gusts of wind blew trucks off the road. Most of the damage was caused by brooks. One brook near the village of Sobrance swamped the basements and gardens of 21 homes, as well as local roads. In Vysna Mysla, near the eastern centre of Kosice, food supplies had to be brought in by firefighters, as trucks were unable to enter the village in the morning. According to Oliver Kovacs from the Kosice County Environmental Office the problem will now be the largest rivers Uh, Latorica and Bodrog bringing a lot of rainfall water from Ukraine. These will dam streams in the east Slovak territory so water will have no way to flow away. East Slovakia has been suffering from floods due to heavy rains since mid March. Land has been soaked wet and underground water filled in drains.

THAILAND

London, May 19 -- A press report, dated May 18, states: Heavy rains in southern Thailand has derailed a cargo train and forced railway officials to suspend train services between the capital Bangkok and the country's South. Ten train wagons were derailed in Ban Chong Khao in Nakhon Si Thammarat's Ron Phibun district on the Bangkok to Padang Besar route. There were no reported casualties. Rail officials have already investigated the cause of the accident and believe it was the result of heavy rain, the State Railway of Thailand (SRT) spokeswoman, Sukumarn Sritula, told TNA. The accident has forced the authority to suspend southern-bound services to and from Bangkok, she said.

London, May 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: Hail storms caused extensive damage in Lampang and Nan provinces on Saturday night (May 21). In Lampang, damage to two

tambons, in Muang district, was estimated at more than 10 million baht, with homes, state offices, restaurants, power lines and hotels hit. There were no injuries. The storm, which lasted for about two hours, ruined roofs and damaged more than 300 houses in tambons Pichai and Sadej and knocked down several kilometres of power lines. Trees fell on houses, health stations and the northern anti-cancer centre. Government offices, including the tambon Pichai patrol unit, were damaged. The storm swept through five housing estates along the Lampang-Ngao highway and caused extensive damage to the JB Park Hotel and a golden teak hotel. The director of the provincial disaster prevention and mitigating centre, Sajjalech Khamjai, said mobile relief teams were assessing damage and lending what assistance they could. In Nan, the storm brought down many big trees and damaged several lychee, longan and mango orchards in Muang district. Fallen trees damaged the roofs of two houses in Ban Nam Khong of tambon Sanian, Muang district, but caused no casualties. Several others blocked the Nan-Wang Pha road. The disaster prevention office yesterday asked village headmen in the hailstorm-ravaged areas to conduct careful surveys to find ways to assist the affected people.

MALAYSIA

London, May 25 -- A press report, dated May 24, states: Northbound and southbound train services between Kuala Lumpur and Singapore that were disrupted following the collapse of a railway bridge in Kulai yesterday, will be back to normal on Saturday (May 28). Keretapi Tanah Melayu Bhd managing director Datuk Mohd Salleh Abdullah said workers were working round the clock to erect a temporary bridge over Sungai Skudai at Batu 21, Taman Nam Tak in Kulai. Heavy rains caused Sungai Skudai to burst its banks and erode the concrete embankments supporting the bridge at Km724.4 of the Kulai-Sedenak line at 1630 hrs, yesterday. The incident severed all rail links between the north and south. An average of eight train services ply the route daily. Yesterday, disaster was averted when villagers informed police of the collapsed bridge. Trains heading south had to offload their passengers at the Kluang station, from where buses transported them to their destinations. Speaking after visiting the erosion site, Salleh said a new bridge costing RM3 million (\$789,000) will be built, with completion expected in 10 months. He said until Saturday, passengers would be transferred between Kluang station and Kempas Baru station by bus.

TROPICAL STORM "ADRIAN"

London, May 19 -- A press report, dated today, states: Central American governments summoned boats from the sea and prepared evacuations as

the season's first tropical storm headed for the countries' Pacific coasts on today. The US National Hurricane Centre in Miami said that Tropical Storm "Adrian"'s centre could strike near the Guatemala-El Salvador border, bringing torrential rains to an area where past flooding has often been devastating. El Salvador's government declared a tropical storm warning and a state of emergency for the entire country. "Adrian" had maximum sustained winds of 60 mph as of early today. "Adrian" was headed east-north-east, toward the coast, and forecasters said it could reach hurricane force strength of 74 mph before making land. A Salvadoran military pilot died in the crash of a small aircraft he was ferrying out of the storm's path. The executive secretary for Guatemala's disaster prevention agency, Hugo Hernandez, said that officials were getting set for evacuations and to set up shelters for some of the 400,000 people living in high-risk parts of southern Guatemala. Many rural Central Americans live in flimsy houses on hillsides or near rivers, so storm-caused flooding can cause disasters. The Hurricane Centre said there was some chance the storm could survive a passage across Central America and emerge, weakened, in the Caribbean as a tropical depression.

London, May 20 -- A press report, dated May 19, states: Salvadoran officials evacuated some 10,000 people and closed schools today as tropical storm "Adrian" headed towards the country's coast. El Salvador and Guatemala declared emergencies as the eastern Pacific's first named tropical storm of the season, gained force and headed directly for the coast, carrying heavy rains that forecasters said could cause devastating flooding. Forecasters said the storm was only about 35 miles from the Salvadoran coast, and would likely hit land tonight. In Puerto La Libertad, the beach resort and seafood centre closest to El Salvador's capital, San Salvador, streets were nearly deserted as rains sprayed across an increasingly agitated surf and waves pounded at the pier. The US State Department warned the storm was expected to cause severe flooding and urged US residents and tourists in Central America to stay alert. Salvadoran President Tony Saca broadcast an appeal for his citizens to obey evacuation requests. Authorities evacuated about 10,000 people from low-lying coastal areas near the city of Zacatecoluca, east of La Libertad. The storm was moving towards the north-east at about nine mph, and appeared likely to hit land somewhere between the cities of Acajutla and Zacatecoluca, both south of San Salvador. The region, where many people live in shacks clinging to sharp ravines, is particularly vulnerable to flooding and landslides.

London, May 20 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office: Tropical storm "Adrian": At 0900, UTC, all coastal warnings for

Guatemala and Honduras have been discontinued by their respective governments. The hurricane warning for the entire coast of El Salvador has been replaced with a tropical storm warning. The tropical storm warning will probably be discontinued later this morning. Storm centre located near lat 13.8N, long 88.9W, at 0900, UTC, May 20. Position accurate to within 60 nautical miles. Present movement towards the north-east, or 050 deg, at 10 knots. Maximum sustained winds 55 knots with gusts to 65 knots. Radius of 50-knot winds nil north-west quadrant, 20 nautical miles elsewhere. Radius of 34-knot winds 30 nautical miles north-west quadrant, 40 nautical miles north-east quadrant, 60 nautical miles elsewhere. Radius of 12-foot seas 200 nautical miles south-east quadrant, nil elsewhere. Forecast for 0600, UTC, May 21: Position lat 15.8N, long 85.5W. Dissipating. Maximum sustained winds 30 knots with gusts to 40 knots.

TURKEY

London, May 25 -- Northbound traffic in the Istanbul Strait was suspended at 0900 hrs, this morning, due to poor visibility caused by dense fog.

Earthquakes



ECUADOR

London, May 22 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: A strong earthquake measuring 6.1 on the Richter scale jolted several cities in Ecuador early today, but there were no immediate reports of injuries, authorities said. The tremor at about 0010, local time, was located off the coast beneath the Pacific Ocean, the Geophysics Institute said. Meanwhile, authorities in neighbouring Colombia raised the alert on the Galeras volcano, near the border with Ecuador, which they said could erupt "in days or weeks."

INDIA

London, May 22 -- A moderate quake measuring 5.5 on the Richter scale hit Great Nicobar early this morning. The epicentre in lat 5.3N, long 93.5E, was recorded off the South coast of Great Nicobar, the Met office said. There were no reports of any loss of life or property.

INDONESIA

London, May 19 -- A press report, dated today, states: An earthquake measuring 6.8 on the Richter scale has shaken parts of Indonesia's Sumatra island, but there are no immediate reports of casualties or property damage. The offshore quake hit at 0854, local time, with the epicentre 240 km west of the town of Sibolga in North Sumatra, at a depth of 33 km.

London, May 19 -- Following Navigation Warning issued today: Australia MRCC announced today there was an earthquake in lat 02 00N, long 96 54E, at 0155, UTC, today. The quake had a magnitude of 6.8 and potentially could generate tsunami. Providing information for vessels operating along north-west and western Australian coastline.

London, May 23 -- A press report, dated May 22, states: A powerful earthquake measuring 5.6 points on the open-ended Richter scale was registered at the northern tip of Indonesia's Sumatra Island today at 0600, local time. According to the National Earthquake Information Centre, Colorado State, the quake's epicentre was located only 65 kilometres west off the administrative centre of Aceh province, at a depth of 30 kilometres. There were no immediate reports about a tsunami threat. In the meantime, "high tidal waves" were registered near the coastline of the Indian State of Kerala, according to information of local mass media. Local authorities urgently evacuated 15,000 residents and organised 16 tent camps for refugees on nearby hills. Seismologists believe that the today's earthquake on Sumatra was merely an aftershock of a heavier quake that occurred in the north-eastern part of the Indian Ocean.



Volcanic Activity

COLIMA, MEXICO

London, May 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: Mexico's so-called "Fire Volcano" erupted today spewing lava and glowing rocks in its biggest explosion since 1999, a director of the country's civil protection agency said. A huge grey column of smoke billowed into the evening air from a crater of the 3860m volcano in the western state of Colima, according to television images. The "Fire volcano" is in a sparsely populated rural area about 500km from the Mexican capital. There were no immediate plans to evacuate any of the tiny villages that lie around the volcano, Luis Salazar, operations director of the Civil Protection agency in Colima, said.



Political & Civil Unrest

AFGHANISTAN

Kabul, May 19 -- Gunmen ambushed an aid agency vehicle in Afghanistan today killing six Afghan workers in a hail of bullets, a provincial official said. It was not immediately clear

which aid organisation the six worked for, but they appeared to be affiliated with the United Nations, the official said. "Six Afghan volunteers ... were killed at around 0400 hrs (2330, UTC, May 18) in an attack on the main highway," said Gulab Shah Alikhel, spokesman for the governor of Zabul province in the south, referring to a main road to Kabul. The six had been travelling in a white four-wheel drive vehicle marked with a U.N. sign, he said. U.N. spokesmen were not immediately available for comment. Five Afghans, three of them working on an opium crop substitution project, were killed yesterday in a Taliban ambush in Helmand province, also in the troubled south. -- Reuters.

Kabul, May 22 -- Insurgents crossed into Afghanistan from Pakistan and attacked a U.S. patrol, and 12 rebels were believed killed when U.S.-led forces retaliated with the help of an aircraft, a U.S. military spokeswoman said today. One U.S. soldier was wounded in the clash last night, said Lieutenant Cindy Moore. "Four insurgents crossed into Afghanistan from Pakistan and attacked a U.S. patrol with small-arms fire," Moore said. A U.S. war aircraft attacked the four and eight of their comrades as they fled back towards the nearby border with Pakistan, she said. The 12 were reported killed, she said. An Afghan provincial official said the gunmen were Taliban. -- Reuters.

Kabul, May 22 -- Afghan authorities are in constant contact with the kidnappers of an Italian aid worker and she is fine, a government spokesman said today. Clementina Cantoni, 32, a worker for the CARE International aid agency, was kidnapped on Monday (May 16) by four gunmen who stopped her vehicle on a Kabul street and bundled her into a car. The spokesman declined to reveal details of her condition or efforts to free her. A man the government said abducted the woman has spoken to media several times, giving a baffling series of accounts, demands and threats. He said on Friday he had killed Cantoni but later told others she was fine. "We are in constant contact with them," Interior Ministry spokesman Lutfullah Mashal said. Cantoni's kidnappers are believed to be criminals. Mashal last week identified the leader of the gang as Timoor Shah, the man who has spoken to media claiming to be holding the woman. Today Mashal declined to discuss the kidnappers' identity, referring to them as "alleged kidnappers." He said: "We have not fully identified them." He declined to say how they knew Cantoni was alive. "Our people who are in contact with the alleged kidnappers, they are sure that she is well and fine," he said. The Italian embassy and CARE International have declined to comment on the kidnap. -- Reuters.

London, May 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: At least 12 people, believed to be members of the Taliban, have been killed in a clash involving Afghan and United States forces near

the Pakistan border. Reports say the dead were insurgents who crossed into Afghanistan before attacking a US patrol. The violence comes as Afghan President Hamid Karzai prepares to meet US President George W Bush in Washington. His four-day official visit comes amid reports of disagreements over military operations, drug eradication and the alleged mistreatment of Afghan prisoners.

Kabul, May 24 -- Securing the release of a kidnapped Italian aid worker in Afghanistan will take time, an Interior Ministry official said today, more than a week after gunmen snatched her from a Kabul street. Clementina Cantoni, 32, a worker for the CARE International aid agency, was kidnapped by four armed men who stopped her vehicle on a Kabul street on May 16. "We are hopeful that she will be released ... it takes time," Lutfullah Mashal said. He said authorities believed Cantoni was still in Kabul and negotiators were still in contact with the kidnappers. Mashal said officials had spoken to Cantoni on Saturday (May 21) and she was fine, but he refused to say what demands the kidnappers were making for her release. Mashal declined to discuss the kidnappers' identity and referred to the group in contact with the negotiators as "alleged kidnappers." Officials of the Italian embassy and Care International have declined to comment on efforts to secure Cantoni's release. -- Reuters.

BANGLADESH

London, May 21 -- A press report, dated today, states: Main cities across Bangladesh came to a standstill today as part of a day-long strike called by the opposition Awami League in protest at the gunning down of a party member. Lawyer Khorshed Alam, legal secretary of the Awami League's Dhaka section, was shot dead at close range on Tuesday (May 17) by unidentified assailants, sparking a rampage by up to 400 party activists. Editor's Choice Bangladeshi Opposition leader shot dead In Dhaka, shops, businesses and schools were closed today and private vehicles were off the roads. There were similar scenes in the southeastern port city of Chittagong and in Sylhet in the north-east, police said. Today is a normal working day in Bangladesh. The strike is the latest called by the main opposition Awami League party to highlight a series of attacks on lawmakers and party members.

BOLIVIA

London, May 24 -- A press report, dated May 23, states: Bolivian workers have mobilised to prevent a widely rumoured military coup against the government of President Carlos Mesa. Throughout last week the country has been under a general strike by miners, oil workers and other unions to demand the nationalisation of Bolivia's oil and natural gas industries. While the unions oppose Mesa, they fear that a military coup would push through

right-wing pro-business measures, including handing over natural gas to foreign companies. Miners also plan to join a civic protest this week by citizens of El Alto, north of La Paz, who have declared their intention to campaign for the nationalisation of the energy sector. On May 18, 500 miners and El Alto residents who were engaged in a protest march in La Paz fought the Bolivian police, who were equipped with tear gas and rubber bullets. The miners had decided to suspend a congress of the Bolivian Miners Syndicalist Federation (FSTMB) in the city of Oruro to join the social mobilisations over the nationalisation of the energy industry.

BURUNDI

London, May 26 -- A press report, dated May 25, states: The Burundian army has announced it will resume attacks on FNL rebels, who signed a ceasefire a week ago. Five people were injured, including three soldiers, after at least 11 mortar shells were fired on Bujumbura yesterday night. The army said the attack proved the FNL, the last rebel movement still fighting, was not committed to peace. A presidential spokesman says renewed conflict will not stop the government from pursuing talks with the FNL. The attack on Bujumbura started just after midnight when mortar shells were simultaneously fired in Kanyosha and Mutanga, south and north of the capital. A number of homes and cars were also damaged as mortars landed on their roofs. This is the second incident since President Domitien Ndayizeye and FNL leader Agathon Rwasa signed an agreement committing their troops to stop hostilities on May 15. The FNL say they are firing back in self defence against attacks by the Burundian armed forces.

COLOMBIA

London, May 20 -- A press report, dated May 19, states: Colombian rebels ambushed a police convoy and fought government forces along the border with Ecuador in separate attacks today, killing at least 13 police, authorities said. The latest violence came as the air force announced today that its warplanes had bombed a column of leftist guerrillas trudging through southern jungles over the weekend (May 14-15), killing at least 16 insurgents. The convoy was travelling on a remote jungle road in Choco state, a strategic corridor for arms and drug trafficking through Panama, when hit with a hail of gunfire and explosions, said Choco Deputy Governor Freddy Lloreda. Lloreda blamed the attack on guerrillas of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, which has been battling to topple Colombia's government for 40 years. The group funds itself through drug trafficking, kidnapping and extortion. At least 10 police were killed and three wounded in the ambush near Tado, some 220 miles north-west of Bogota, Lloreda said. Only three police survived.

Elsewhere, FARC rebels killed three police officers in fighting along the border with Ecuador. A police unit, responding to explosions they heard along an oil pipeline near the border town of San Miguel, encountered FARC rebels and two hours of combat ensued, said Capt. Carlos Insuasti, police spokesman for the region. He said two other police officers were seriously injured, while the FARC rebels escaped without casualties. Since the start of the year, the FARC has launched some of its boldest attacks on the military in two years, killing nearly 100 soldiers and undermining government claims the rebels are being defeated. The ferocity of the FARC attacks has led many observers to question President Alvaro Uribe's claims that the rebels have gotten weaker since he ordered a costly, US-backed military buildup upon coming to office more than two years ago. Army officials maintain the FARC is made up of 12,000 fighters now, down from 18,000 a year ago, due to deaths, captures and desertions brought on by the government offensive.

Bogota, May 22 -- Colombian troops killed 23 Marxist rebels in fierce fighting in three provinces over the weekend, the army said today. Soldiers killed 21 members of the the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, and two guerrillas from the smaller National Liberation Army in firefights in the provinces of Antioquia, Meta and Arauca, the army said. Five soldiers were killed by FARC rebels, it said. -- Reuters.

Bogota, May 24 -- Marxist rebels today burst into a town meeting in southern Colombia and killed five council members with grenades and assault rifles, police said. Two more council members, two police officers and a local resident were wounded when the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, opened fire in the town hall of Puerto Rico in the province of Cauqueta, police said. The killings were carried out by a small group of FARC members wearing camouflaged uniforms, according to witnesses who said the attackers arrived and fled in a pickup truck. -- Reuters.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

London, May 25 -- A press report, dated today, states: Militia fighters have shot or hacked to death 18 people and kidnapped about 50 others in an attack on a group of villages in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, a provincial governor said today. "This was a deadly attack: 18 villagers were killed, lots of others were injured, 11 of them seriously, and about 50 people have been kidnapped and taken into the forests," said Didace Kaningini, interim governor of South Kivu province. "These people were killed after they were shot or hacked to death by machetes and knives. But most of the injured were hurt by the latter," Kaningini said. He said the attack late yesterday was in a group of

villages called Bihira, 80km north-west of Bukavu. No further confirmation could immediately be made.

GUINEA-BISSAU

London, May 25 -- A press report, dated today, states: Guinea-Bissau's ousted former President Kumba Yala occupied the presidential palace for a few hours overnight with a group of armed men, the army says. The army announced the move on national radio and issued an appeal for calm, before announcing he had left. Ten days ago, Mr Yala declared himself leader again, two years after the coup. Elections are due in June to replace the transitional administration which has ruled since his removal - and he is due to stand. Mr Yala is believed to have some support in the army, which is dominated by members of his Balanta ethnic group. He was chosen last month by the largest opposition group, the Social Renovation party, as its presidential candidate.

INDIA

New Delhi, May 22 -- At least 44 people were injured when two crude bombs exploded today in New Delhi cinemas screening a film considered as offensive by some Sikhs, police said. No one was killed when the bombs exploded mid-evening when the city's movie theatres are normally packed. Several other cinema halls across the city were evacuated immediately after the blasts, which also came on the first anniversary of the coalition government's rise to power. At least 44 people were hurt at one of the theatres, where shattered glass and debris littered the ground, police said. Witnesses said there was no major damage to the building. Indian television said several people were injured at the second cinema. Witnesses said both blasts appeared to be relatively minor. Police said both explosions appeared to be caused by "crude bombs." -- Reuters.

New Delhi, May 24 -- Separatist rebels from India's troubled state of Assam are to sign a ceasefire with the government for the first time in two decades, the Indian news agency PTI reported today, quoting unidentified sources. The National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) will sign a ceasefire tomorrow with both the federal government in New Delhi and the state government of Assam, in northeastern India, PTI said in a report. PTI said NDFB leaders were expected to meet Federal Home Minister Shivraj Patil tomorrow before signing the ceasefire accord. The breakthrough follows a peace offer from Assam's chief minister, Tarun Gogoi, about eight months ago, after which the NDFB called a unilateral ceasefire and put out peace feelers to the federal government, leading to talks in New Delhi, PTI said. -- Reuters.

INDONESIA

London, May 21 -- A press report, dated today, states: Indonesian troops

have killed five separatist rebels in the latest violence in tsunami-ravaged Aceh province, the military said today. The Free Aceh Movement (GAM) rebels were killed in a clash in the Jantho area of Aceh Besar district yesterday, a local military officer told reporters. The five guerillas were the latest casualties after Jakarta lifted last week a year-old state of civil emergency in the province that had given authorities the power to impose curfews and other security measures in the province.

London, May 25 -- Three civilians, including a woman who was abducted and strangled, have died in new violence in Indonesia's tsunami-hit Aceh ahead of talks to end a long-running rebellion, police said today. The body of a 25-year-old woman was found in the east of the Sumatra island province, where separatist guerrillas have been fighting a three-decade independence war, early yesterday, residents said. East Aceh district police chief Muhammad Hasbi accused members of the rebel Free Aceh Movement of the killing, saying she was abducted because she had associated with government security personnel. In separate incidents, a rubber plantation worker was found dead with a knife wound in his neck in the same district while a farmer in a neighbouring area suffered similar fatal injuries, residents and police said.

Banda Aceh, May 26 -- Four people were killed in a clash between Indonesian forces and rebels in the volatile Aceh province today, police said, hours before the two sides were to begin a fresh round of negotiations. Indonesian negotiators and officials of the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) reached Helsinki on Wednesday for the fourth round of peace talks to end a 30-year armed struggle. "The incident occurred ... between Brimob and GAM, leaving one Brimob officer and three GAM members dead," said Aceh police spokesman Djoko Turohman. Brimob is the Indonesian police's elite mobile brigade. The latest round of the negotiations is scheduled to last to May 31. -- Reuters.

IRAQ

Baghdad, May 19 -- Gunmen killed a Iraqi Oil Ministry official in Baghdad today, the latest assassination in escalating guerrilla violence that threatens to push the country towards sectarian civil war. Ali Hameed was killed outside his home as he was leaving for work, a police official said. A roadside bomb also killed two policemen in Baquba, north of Baghdad, today, police said. In the northern town of Samarra, local police said a police officer and his father were shot dead travelling in their car. Four soldiers from the Iraqi army were kidnapped at dawn in the northern town of Baiji, the authorities said. In addition, four more bodies were found today, this time just south of Saddam's hometown of Tikrit. Police said they had been shot dead. Iraqi security forces are still not capable of fighting

the insurgents on their own, putting pressure on the government to seek a political approach to ending the carnage. Most of the attacks have been blamed on Al Qaeda's leader in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, who has been accused of trying to spark civil war. Zarqawi called for suicide attacks against U.S. forces to be stepped up in an audiotape message attributed to him yesterday. He also defended the killing of "innocent Muslims" in suicide bombings, saying it was legitimate for the sake of jihad. -- Reuters.

Baghdad, May 22 -- Three Romanian journalists kidnapped in Iraq were freed today after two months in captivity, one of the few security breakthroughs since insurgents launched an upsurge in deadly attacks last month. "It was an operation handled 100 per cent by the Romanian secret services, which co-operated in an excellent way," Romanian President Traian Basescu told reporters. He did not elaborate. "They will arrive tomorrow in Bucharest from Baghdad with a military plane." The abductors had set a deadline for their execution of Apr 27 unless Romania, a staunch supporter of the United States, withdrew its 800 troops from Iraq, where about 150 foreigners have been kidnapped over the last two years. Prima TV reporter Marie Jeanne Ion, cameraman Sorin Miscoci and reporter for Romania Libera daily Ovidiu Ohanesian, along with their translator Mohamad Munaf, were kidnapped in late March. Romania said they were now under the control of Romanian authorities. Munaf has U.S., Romanian and Iraqi citizenship. Arab TV channel Al Jazeera aired part of a tape it said it received from the group holding the Romanians in which a masked man sits next to the three while reading from a statement explaining why they were about to free the hostages. The group decided to release the hostages in response to calls by influential Saudi preacher Salman al-Odeh and Muslims in Romania, Jazeera said. Other foreign captives remain unaccounted for at a time when insurgents and militants are stepping up violence and exerting more pressure on American allies in Iraq to withdraw their troops by threatening to kill their abducted nationals. Militants holding Australian citizen Douglas Wood, 63, have threatened to kill him unless Australia starts withdrawing its troops from Iraq. Their deadline has passed, with no word on Wood's fate. An Islamic militant group says it captured a badly wounded Japanese citizen -- Akihiko Saito, a 44-year-old security consultant and veteran of the French Foreign Legion -- in an ambush near a U.S. base in Iraq earlier this month. The group showed a video of an ambush of a convoy that it said led to the capture of Saito. Others who were also captured and condemned as "agents of the crusaders" were dragged out of their vehicles, lined up on the ground and shot repeatedly. Gunmen shot dead a senior official in Iraq's

trade ministry as he was being driven to work in Baghdad today, police said, the latest in a series of assassinations of senior government employees. Ali Mousa Salman, a director general at the ministry, was killed after leaving his home in central Baghdad. His driver was also killed and three other people were wounded. At least five Iraqi commandos were killed late yesterday in an ambush in the town of Baiji, 180 km north of the capital, Iraqi police said. -- Reuters.

London, May 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: The commander of a new unit set up to fight insurgents in Iraq has been shot dead in Baghdad. Iraqi officials say Wael Rubaie, head of operations at the Ministry for National Security, and his driver were killed on their way to work. Also in Baghdad, US and Iraqi troops carrying out searches say they have arrested nearly 300 insurgents. Elsewhere, car and suicide bombings killed at least 11 people and injured more than 100. A recent surge in violence across Iraq is estimated to have killed more than 550 people in less than a month. Maj Gen Rubaie was appointed to command a special operations room recently set up to coordinate the fight against insurgents across all Iraqi ministries and with the US-led multi-national force. Today, a car bomb exploded outside a popular restaurant in the Shia-dominated Talibiya area of Baghdad. The attack hit during a busy time for the Habayibna restaurant. Several cars parked on the street outside were set ablaze. Four people were killed in the blast and about 100 injured. In Tuz Khurmatu in northern Iraq, a car bomb exploded killing five Iraqi civilians and wounding 13 others. The attack happened near the council offices in the town, 88 kilometres south of Kirkuk, police said. In Samarra in central Iraq, an attack by three suicide attackers on a US military base appears to have been thwarted, but two Iraqis were killed and nine people injured, including three US soldiers. Two suicide bombers detonated car bombs outside the base in the centre of Samarra, 95 kilometres north of Baghdad. A third attacker approached the base carrying explosives and was shot by soldiers, the US military said. Iraqi police said two Iraqi men were killed and six wounded, including women and children. The US military said three soldiers sustained injuries that were not life threatening. US military officials say 285 suspected insurgents have been detained in the joint American-Iraqi operation in western Baghdad. Iraqi officials said police commando units backed by US forces cordoned off the road leading to Baghdad's international airport and the Abu Ghraib district, areas from which numerous insurgent attacks have been launched. "This is the largest combined operation with Iraqi security forces to date," said US military spokesman Lt Col Clifford Kent. "The Iraqi Security Forces have the lead in this operation while we

perform shaping and supporting roles." Seven Iraqi battalions backed by US forces launched the offensive late yesterday. No specific troop numbers were given. News agencies report witnesses saying the operation appeared to be winding down early today. In a separate development, radical Shia cleric Moqtada Sadr has been mediating between Sunni clerics and a Shia militia in an attempt to ease tensions caused by a recent spate of sectarian killings.

London, May 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: A series of deadly car bomb attacks in Iraq has killed more than 50 people and wounded many more. In the latest attack in the northern Iraqi town of Tal Afar, two car bombs exploded, reportedly killing 30 people. Police say the attack outside a building housing a Shiite organisation appeared to target a Turkman-Shia sheikh, Hasan Bagdash. It was the second failed assassination attempt on the sheikh in recent days. The force of the blast caused the building to collapse. "I don't have a final number for the dead or wounded but it's between 20 and 30," said a police source in Tal Afar, adding that "some are still trapped". The Tal Afar blasts followed a car bomb explosion outside a Shiite mosque south of the Iraqi capital, Baghdad. Witnesses say the blast caused the building to collapse, killing seven people and wounding 23. A few hours earlier, insurgents targeted a restaurant in a Shiite district of northern Baghdad. At least eight people were killed and more than 100 injured in the blast. Elsewhere, five people were killed when a truck driven by a suicide bomber exploded in the northern city of Kirkuk. In Samarra, insurgents attacked a US base, killing four Iraqis and wounding four US soldiers.

Baghdad, May 24 -- Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the leader of al Qaeda in Iraq and one of Washington's most wanted men, has been wounded, a web posting said today in an announcement that could mark a breakthrough against the two-year insurgency. The statement, which U.S. officials said could be a ruse, was posted on an Islamist site that often publicises Zarqawi's group. It was released on another day of violence in Iraq, with three U.S. soldiers and two Iraqis killed in car bombings. The announcement follows unconfirmed reports this month that Zarqawi, a Jordanian for whom the Americans have offered a \$25 million bounty, was wounded in fighting in western Iraq and had sought treatment at a hospital in Ramadi, west of Baghdad. Those reports followed the capture of one of Zarqawi's drivers, an aide and his laptop computer during raids in western Iraq, when the U.S. military said it almost also caught Zarqawi. Zarqawi and Osama bin Laden, al Qaeda's overall leader, are Washington's two most-wanted men. Today's web posting did not say how or where Zarqawi was wounded, but urged his followers to pray for his

recovery. The language used indicated his injuries could be severe. If Zarqawi were captured or killed it would mark a significant breakthrough for U.S. and Iraqi forces, although analysts also warn it would not put an end to the insurgency. The U.S. military in Iraq and the Pentagon in Washington said they had no new intelligence on Zarqawi's status. "He's still our number one target to be captured or killed and until that happens the hunt is still on," said Lieutenant Colonel Steve Boylan, a U.S. military spokesman. He said similar reports had been heard in the past and were almost impossible to verify. Meanwhile, attacks on Shi'ite mosques and tit-for-tat killings of Shi'ite and Sunni Muslim clerics have raised concerns that Iraq could be sliding toward civil war. One of Zarqawi's stated aims has been to sow sectarian strife and provoke civil war in Iraq. The upsurge in violence has sparked a confrontation between the Muslim Clerics Association, an influential Sunni Arab group, and the Badr organization, the armed wing of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, one of the main parties in the Shi'ite alliance that won the Jan 30 polls. The Muslim Clerics Association has accused Badr militiamen of being behind the recent killings of some Sunni Arab clerics. Badr leaders denied the charge. Radical Shi'ite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, who has led two uprisings against U.S.-led troops, says he is in talks with all sides to try to mediate. -- Reuters.

London, May 25 -- Iraq has suspended oil exports to the Turkish port of Ceyhan because of a production shortage in the northern fields of Kirkuk, an Iraqi official said yesterday. The northern pipeline and facilities regularly are sabotaged by insurgents. In the south, Iraq's oil output has fallen by nearly 190,000 barrels a day since Monday (May 23) because of technical problems, said the Oil Ministry official, who asked not to be named for security reasons. "There has been no pumping from Kirkuk to Ceyhan since Saturday and the pipeline won't be pumping until probably Thursday," the official said, adding that there was not enough crude to pump. He said pumping has continued sporadically for the past two weeks. On Friday and Saturday, the pipeline pumped a total of 200,000 barrels, bringing stores of Kirkuk crude at Ceyhan export terminal to 2.2 million barrels. Iraqi officials say the country's northern oil production has been averaging 500,000 barrels per day, of which about 380,000 barrels are being pumped to nearby refineries for domestic use. The remaining 120,000 barrels a day are kept in storage tanks at the pumping stations or at Beiji refinery. Persistent sabotage of the pipeline network and facilities has kept Kirkuk exports shut in for most of this year. Meanwhile, production from the oil-rich south has fallen from 1.85 million barrels a day to 1.66 million barrels because the gas

separation stations at the southern oil fields have failed, the official said. Oil exports from the south have been averaging 1.4 million-1.5 million barrels a day.

London, May 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: Seven people were killed early today in a drive-by shooting and a suicide car bombing in the Iraqi capital, an interior ministry source said. "The car driven by a suicide bomber exploded around 0730 hrs next to a stationary police patrol in the (north-western) Shola district, killing two policemen and a civilian," he said. Four policemen and two civilians were wounded in the attack. University lecturer Mussa Salum Abbas and three men travelling in his car died in a drive-by shooting in the capital's southern Al-Aalam district, the source said, adding that the other men were believed to be Abbas's bodyguards. In the capital's southern Qadissiah district, a member of the Islamist Dawa party, Fakhri Abd Amiri, was found dead with his throat slit, said the source, quoting relatives. It was not known when he died. In the western Ghazaliyah district, four policemen were wounded when gunmen opened fire on the residence of an undersecretary to the interior ministry, Hiqmat Mussa Salman, who was not at home at the time. Also this morning, a joint convoy of SUV cars generally used by security contractors and US Humvees was hit by a homemade bomb near Shaab stadium in the south-east of Baghdad. "American soldiers sealed off the area and we don't know if there were dead or wounded. The soldiers left behind a burnt-out SUV," said the interior ministry source. (See issue of May 26.)

Baghdad, May 26 -- Iraq's defence minister announced a massive security operation today that will see more than 40,000 Iraqi troops deployed in the capital to hunt down insurgents and their weapons. Sadoun al-Dulaimi said the force would include troops from the interior and defense ministries. It would be by far the largest anti-insurgent operation carried out in Baghdad by Iraqi security forces. "We will divide Baghdad into seven main areas, and the number of the forces who will take part in the operation from the interior and the defense ministry will be more than 40,000 security men," he told a news conference. He said it would be the first phase of a security crackdown that could eventually cover the whole country. "We will also impose a concrete blockade around Baghdad, like a bracelet around an arm. No one will be able to penetrate this blockade," Dulaimi said. "You will witness unprecedentedly strict security measures." Interior Minister Bayan Jabbar, appearing at the same news conference, said the operation was designed to change the government's stance when it came to the two-year-old insurgency. "These operations will aim at turning the government's role from defensive to offensive," he said. -- Reuters.

ISRAEL

Gaza, May 19 -- Palestinian militants in Gaza fired three rockets into Israel today, causing no casualties but further straining a truce already tested by the worst flare-up of fighting since it took effect in February. The rockets aimed at Israeli communities south-east of the fenced-off Gaza Strip landed in open fields, Palestinian officials and the Israeli army said. Militants also fired 10 mortar bombs at Jewish settlements in Gaza, injuring no one. Yesterday, militants launched scores of mortars into settlements in the territory after a Hamas gunman was killed in disputed circumstances. In the fighting that followed, Hamas militants fired a barrage of mortar bombs on Jewish settlements in Gaza and the Israeli army responded by launching a missile from an unmanned drone on a mortar squad, killing one gunman. Hamas officials threatened to abandon a ceasefire before Israel's planned withdrawal from occupied Gaza in August. The group said its gunmen fired 52 mortar bombs and 31 rockets on Jewish settlements and Israeli communities near the Gaza Strip. One settler was lightly wounded in the strikes. Other Palestinian groups claimed separate rocket and mortar attacks. Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon was to consult security chiefs later today to decide on a further response to the mortar and rocket attacks, Israeli radio stations reported. They quoted officials close to Sharon as saying that Israel would do its utmost to ensure that the withdrawal from all 21 settlements in Gaza and four in the West Bank this August did not take place under fire. Meanwhile, Israel temporarily shut an Israeli-controlled industrial zone on the edge of the Gaza Strip, preventing thousands of Palestinian labourers from reaching jobs in Israel and in the factory zone, Palestinian officials said. The army cited security concerns but declined to elaborate. -- Reuters.

Jerusalem, May 20 -- Israeli forces killed at least one Palestinian gunman who opened fire on a Jewish settlement in the southern Gaza Strip today, the Israeli army said. The clash further strained a shaky three-month truce and came one day after Israeli Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz ordered the army to use "all necessary means" to strike militants firing rockets and mortars at Jewish settlements in recent days. The Israeli army said three gunmen took over a house near the Kfar Darom settlement and that at least one of the three had been killed in a gunbattle. Israeli radio said there were no Israeli casualties. Israeli military sources said a second gunman had been wounded and was taken away by a Palestinian ambulance. A third gunman was believed to have escaped, the sources said. The three men had opened fire with guns and anti-tank weapons at houses from outside the heavily fortified settlement, the sources said. The ensuing gunbattle with Israeli forces lasted several minutes. A Hamas

leader in Gaza said yesterday that the militant Islamic group remained committed to the de facto ceasefire but would respond to any Israeli attacks. Israeli security sources said any Israeli military action would be measured to avoid a serious escalation in Gaza that could complicate a planned Israeli withdrawal from the coastal territory in mid-August. Since the truce, the army has been under strict orders to hold its fire without authorisation from senior officials. Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, determined to implement the Gaza pullout on schedule, wants the army to send a warning that it will not tolerate mortar and rocket attacks in the run up to the evacuation of Gaza's 21 settlements. -- Reuters.

IVORY COAST

Abidjan, May 24 -- Racketeering by police and soldiers at roadblocks in the Ivory Coast's cocoa growing regions is costing exporters millions of dollars and delaying cocoa bean arrivals at ports, exporters and buyers said today. Major exporters in the West African nation said bribes paid at roadblocks that have sprung up across cocoa growing regions since civil war broke out in 2002 had eaten up much of the money they advanced to buyers at the start of the season. "A large part of the pre-financing given to our cocoa suppliers in the bush has been absorbed by the racketeering by police and soldiers," said the manager of a major European exporter in Abidjan, the main city in the world's top grower. "This comes to between 500 million CFA francs (\$959,300) and one billion CFA for each major (exporter)," he said. The 15 top exporters, who are known as majors and who control up to 90 percent of cocoa arrivals at ports and exports, provide loans to buyers at the start of the season. But now buyers have used a lot of that money in kickbacks at the multiple roadblocks on roads and bush tracks and exporters still have not received the amount of beans they were expecting. "The racketeering ... is behind the poor arrivals at ports since the beginning of the mid crop because the tight margins are immediately absorbed by extortion," the manager said. He said only 120,000 tonnes of cocoa had arrived at ports since the beginning of the mid crop in April, compared to around 200,000 tonnes last year during the same period. The major exporters say they have lost some 12 billion CFA francs (\$23 million) already this season in money paid as loans to buyers for which they have not yet received the equivalent amount of cocoa beans. Some exporters have seized trucks and warehouses belonging to buyers. Normally, the pre-funding is paid back at the end of February or beginning of March. Cocoa arrivals in Ivory Coast reached 1,041,987 tonnes between October 1 and May 8, down 10.9 percent from the same period in the previous season, an estimate from major exporters showed. Ivory Coast's 2004/05 main crop, which ended in

March, was down 13 percent from a year ago. Despite hopes that the shortfall would be made up by a big mid crop, arrivals have been patchy in April and May and the gap has only narrowed slightly. "We .. estimate our losses so far this season at more than 12 billion CFA because of racketeering," said the managing director of another European company based in Abidjan. It costs five CFA per kg in kickbacks to get the cocoa out of the bush and bring it to the port and another five CFA francs per kg to export it. In total, we are paying 10 CFA per kg." Cocoa transporters have always been prone to racketeering in Ivory Coast but the war, which erupted when rebels tried to oust the president and seized the north, has exacerbated the problem and the payments have become a regular burden. Soldiers have been deployed to increase security in cocoa growing regions, where the conflict has fuelled ethnic clashes. "The start of the war ... multiplied by 12 or even 14 the number of roadblocks in the cocoa-producing towns," said Michel Yehoun, vice president of the FDPCC fund for development and promotion of coffee and cocoa producers. Noel Kabore, a buyer in the southwestern town of Meagui, said there were sometimes six to eight roadblocks on the trails used to get cocoa from the bush. "You have to pay on the way out ... and on the way back when the trucks are full," he said. Exporters are looking to change the pre-financing system. "We are trying to find large buyers with whom we can work in the future without major pre-financing because they are capable of financing themselves," said a buyer at a European company based in the south-western port city of San Pedro. "The risk with this solution is that we will get less cocoa at the ports than in previous years," he said. Buyers do not agree with this proposed solution. "Without pre-financing, there'll be no cocoa at the ports. We must all share the risk," a Lebanese buyer in San Pedro said. "The solution is simply to put an end to this corruption which has become legal and official," he said. -- Reuters.

Guiglo, May 25 -- Pro-government militia groups in western Ivory Coast pledged today to lay down their weapons as part of a deal supposed to end a civil war in the world's top cocoa grower. More than a thousand fighters from four militia groups, some of them dressed in combat fatigues and others wearing black T-shirts bearing the name of their faction, attended a ceremony in the western town of Guiglo to mark the start of disarmament. "We are going to lay down our arms but we need security for our fighters, who need to be taken care of," said Denis Maho Glofieh, head of the FLGO militia which has regularly fought alongside the Ivorian army in the lawless west. Rebel and army chiefs of staff signed an accord earlier this month saying their fighters would start laying down their weapons from Jun 27, boosting hopes of an end to a conflict that has split

the country in two and killed thousands. "The people of the west are those who have suffered most from the war," Ivorian army chief Philippe Mangou told the ceremony, also attended by officials from the West African country's national disarmament commission. "Close to 21 villages no longer exist in the west because of the war. I invite all those who have weapons to put them down for the sake of the reunification of the country," he said, before a fighter handed him a Kalashnikov in a symbolic gesture. The latest disarmament agreement grew out of a peace deal signed last month in South Africa, raising hopes of a breakthrough in a conflict which has ebbed and flowed for years. Presidential elections are now scheduled for Oct 30. A string of peace deals have never been fully implemented in the former French colony and previous disarmament deadlines have passed without any weapons actually being handed over. The pro-government militia who have fought in the west of the country near the border with Liberia are ill-defined and prone to splits but they are all sworn enemies of the rebels. The rebels themselves have since cast doubt on the latest disarmament deal, saying they had not yet agreed on a date. Pierre Schori, the United Nations envoy to Ivory Coast, had been expected to sit down with rebel leaders in their stronghold Bouake today to discuss the disarmament process, but instead met only briefly with one of their representatives. "It is not up to Pierre Schori to come and talk to us about disarmament ... He was badly informed when he said that we had signed up to a timetable," a senior rebel official said. "We never signed the timetable," the official added. -- Reuters.

NEPAL

London, May 19 -- A press report, dated May 18, states: At least 50 Maoists and nine security personnel have been killed in a major clash between the two sides in south-eastern Nepal, a state-run daily reports. "At least 50 Maoists and nine security persons were killed in a clash at Taple area of Udayapur district Monday (May 16) afternoon," the Nepali language Gorkhapatra daily reported, quoting the Royal Nepal Army Eastern Unit in Itahari, far south-east of here. State-run radio Nepal today said that "eight bodies of rebels were found scattered at the clash site, while over 40 bodies were recovered from the Gohari area adjoining the site." "In the land and aerial attacks launched by security forces in the area, over 100 terrorists had also been injured," the newspaper said. "According to locals, the injured rebels were carried away by their colleagues," it said, adding that 17 security personnel were also injured. Security forces clashed with the Maoists for several hours Monday afternoon, continuing late into the night. A source close to the rebels said

only six rebels had been killed in the clashes, including their eastern area commander.

London, May 21 -- A press report, dated May 20, states: Communist rebels today stormed and ransacked a private radio station whose programming was critical of their efforts to overthrow Nepal's government, an official said. Armed rebels attacked the Ghodaghodi FM station in Kailali, about 600 kilometres west of the Nepalese capital, Katmandu, said Ram Prasad Sharma, a local official. No one was hurt in the attack but the guerrillas made off with much of the station's broadcasting equipment, Sharma said. The station had been critical of the Maoist rebels, who have a strong presence in the area. Leaders from Nepal's largest political parties met today to organise new protests in an effort to pressure the king to restore democracy in the kingdom. The seven major parties who have opposed King Gyanendra since his seizure of power in February, met to plan co-ordinated protests scheduled to begin next week. "All of us are working together on a strategy to gather massive support for our movement to restore democracy," said Shobhakar Parajuli, a spokesman for the Nepali Congress party. "We are using all the resources available in stepping up the movement." The parties said the planned protest rallies on May 22 and May 27 over the country would be massive.

PAKISTAN

London, May 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: Five tribesmen have been killed in an attack by US helicopters in the Lawara Mandai area of Pakistan's North Waziristan agency. Authorities in tribal area said that five men of the Madakhel Wazir tribe were killed Saturday (May 21) night after two US helicopters fired rockets. They said that the US helicopters had intruded into Lawara Mandai up to one kilometre, and two fighter jets flying at a high altitude also violated Pakistani airspace. Another 20 shells fired by the coalition forces from Afghanistan's Paktika province Saturday night landed near Lawara Mandai, but did not cause any damage, eyewitnesses were quoted as saying. Pakistani military spokesman Major General Shaukat Sultan confirmed that several shells and rockets fired by the coalition troops had landed near Lawara Mandai, but he said no report on the casualties was available and the matter would be taken up with the coalition authorities.

London, May 26 -- A press report, dated May 25, states: Six people, all of them women and children, were killed in a bomb blast in a remote tribal region in Pakistan near the Afghan border where al Qaeda militants have been taking refuge, witnesses said today. The bomb, planted near the outer wall of the house of a tribal family, exploded late yesterday. The incident took place in Makeen, a market town in South Waziristan,

about 400 km south-west of the capital Islamabad, where a large number of al Qaeda-linked militants are believed to be hiding. An official of the local administration said two women and four children were killed while a resident said one woman and five children died. Local officials and residents said the blast appeared to be the result of tribal rivalry rather than militant related.

PHILIPPINES

Manila, May 24 -- Three armed men hijacked a bus in the southern Philippines today and were holding 13 passengers hostage, an army general said. Brigadier-General Gabriel Habacon, a regional army commander, said the gunmen had demanded to be given another vehicle after seizing control of the bus near an army checkpoint. "We are still trying to determine the motive behind the hijacking," Habacon told reporters. He said the men, who were passengers on the bus, appeared to have panicked as it approached the army checkpoint in Misamis Occidental province in southern Mindanao island. Habacon said the gunmen had freed a 6-year-old girl after hours of negotiations and had allowed a new driver to board the bus. He said communist New People's Army rebels are active in the province, but could not say whether the gunmen belonged to that group. -- Reuters.

SOMALIA

Nairobi, May 19 -- Somalia's interim government risks a fight if it tries to make its temporary home in Baidoa, the warlord and MP whose militia controls the city said today. "I have a strong force now and advise the government not to come to Baidoa," Mohamed Ibrahim said. "I have over 700 heavily armed militia. Last week 50 armed militiamen and two battlewagons joined my force after switching sides," said the warlord known by the nickname "Habsade" and who captured Baidoa earlier this year. MPs and ministers allied with President Abdullahi Yusuf want to move to the Somali cities of Baidoa and Jowhar, and then Mogadishu once the anarchy there is tamed. More than 150 MPs voted in favour of the plan, but other members rejected the vote as illegal. The fight over where the government should make its initial home when returning from Kenya has produced a deep rift in its ranks and represents a major obstacle to returning an effective central authority to the lawless country. A faction including Speaker Sharif Hassan Sheikh Adan and powerful Mogadishu warlords in the government insist Mogadishu must be the capital as stipulated by their constitution. Adan flew to Mogadishu on Sunday (May 15) to try to install the assembly in the capital. Warlord and Agriculture Minister Hassan Mohamed Nur, known as "Shatigadud" and allied with Yusuf, dismissed Habsade's statements. He said only five soldiers and one battlewagon, a flatbed truck mounted with a heavy

weapon, had left his side. "Habsade is in Baidoa while our forces are everywhere in (the surrounding) provinces," Shatigadud told Reuters from Nairobi. "Nobody can deny the government entry into Baidoa." Militias allied to Yusuf have been gathering in the area around Baidoa, according to humanitarian sources. Presidential spokesman Yussuf Baribari said Habsade should respect the parliamentary vote. "The president welcomes his remark. However, the government has already reached a decision to relocate to Baidoa and Jowhar," Baribari said. -- Reuters.

SPAIN

Madrid, May 22 -- A small bomb believed to have been planted by the Basque separatist group ETA exploded next to the home of a Basque businessman today, causing no injuries, police said. A second bomb was defused in a park, also in the town of Zarautz, near San Sebastian, Basque regional police said in a statement. The bomb that exploded damaged a wall separating the home from the railroad tracks but the man's family escaped unhurt, police said. It was the second time in eight days ETA had planted bombs with both incidents linked to its charging of a "revolutionary tax," a form of extortion against businesses in the Basque region of northern Spain, state radio said. Today's blast was similar to the last attack blamed on ETA on May 15 when four bombs exploded at businesses in the Basque region. Both incidents have soon followed a government offer to hold talks with ETA if it renounces violence. Under a proposal later endorsed by parliament on May 17, ETA would have to "disband and put down its arms" before the government would accept negotiations. The right-of-centre Popular Party fought the measure, labelling it a surrender to terrorists. -- Reuters.

London, May 25 -- A press report, dated today, states: A car bomb has exploded in Madrid after a warning was given to a newspaper in the name of the Eta Basque militants. Three people are reported to have been injured in the blast in the north of the Spanish capital at 0730, UTC. Police had been able to clear most of the area after the Basque Gara paper - often contacted before such attacks - passed on the warning it had received. Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero condemned the attack during a speech in the Senate shortly after the blast, reiterating the government's goal to combat and end terrorism. Opposition Popular Party spokesman Pio Garcia Escudero expressed support for the government, according to Efe, adding that the latest attack "does not seem to show a desire to negotiate, rather an attempt to apply pressure". The Gara newspaper reported that the caller said a device had been left in a Renault Express vehicle parked in Rufino Gonzalez Street, in the San Blas area of Madrid, and was going to explode at 0730, UTC. Reports say the

explosives were packed in backpacks inside the van. Police were able to cordon off the area before the explosion.

London, May 25 -- A press report, dated today, states: A car bomb has injured at least 34 people in the Spanish capital in an apparent rebuff by Basque separatist guerrillas ETA to Government peace overtures. The bomb, in a stolen car, blew up in an industrial zone in north-eastern Madrid 45 minutes after a Basque newspaper received a warning in the name of ETA, officials said. The warning gave police time to seal off the area, but dozens were hurt by flying glass or the force of the blast. Black smoke rose into the air as fire engines and police vehicles blocked the street in the San Blas district. The blast wrecked about five cars and smashed windows in nearby buildings, including a car dealership, witnesses and news reports said. An emergency services spokeswoman told state radio that 34 people had been treated so far, mostly for cuts and hearing damage, but only one required hospital treatment. The blast appeared to be a defiant response by ETA to a vote by the Spanish Parliament last week granting the government permission to open peace talks with the group if it laid down its arms. Spanish Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero condemned the bombing as an "act of terror".

THAILAND

London, May 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: Four soldiers have been wounded in the latest violent incident in Thailand's southern border province of Narathiwat, the Thai News Agency reported today. Suspected insurgents exploded two separate bombs, injuring the four soldiers on yesterday. The first bomb was triggered in the parking lot of the disaster prevention office in Narathiwat's Si Sakhon district. The blast damaged two fire engines. Local police investigating the incident believe the insurgents planted a five-kg explosive device and used a mobile phone to detonate it. Two hours later, another bomb exploded, injuring four soldiers.

TURKEY

Diyarbakir, May 25 -- Kurdish rebels killed four members of the Turkish security forces in an ambush on their vehicle today, a provincial governor said, amid warnings that violence is on the rise in the troubled south-east. Two soldiers and two village guards -- members of a state-armed militia -- were killed when Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) guerrillas attacked their vehicle, said Haluk Imga, the governor of Batman province. Security forces had launched an operation to apprehend the guerrillas, Imga said in a statement. The military warned this month the PKK could step up attacks in Turkey after a large number of them were detected smuggling in explosives from northern Iraq, where the PKK is based. -- Reuters.

UGANDA

Kampala, May 18 -- The World Bank has given Uganda US \$4.2 million to fund a project to resettle an estimated 11,000 former rebel fighters, an official said yesterday. Moses Draku, spokesman of the Uganda Amnesty Commission, told IRIN that 4,000 other ex-combatants had already been integrated into communities of their choice. "We give them a minimum resettlement package that includes a mattress, a jerry can, seeds and some farming implements, and we implement the programme with other partners who have been handling the psychosocial counseling of these people since they came out of the bush," said Draku. A statement by the head of the commission, Justice Peter Onega, urged members of the Lord's Resistance Army rebel group, which has fought the government and terrorised civilians in northern Uganda for nearly 19 years, to engage in a genuine and meaningful dialogue with the government to bring the conflict to an end. In 2000, the Ugandan government enacted an amnesty law that granted unconditional amnesty to any Ugandan engaged in armed rebellion who surrendered and denounced violence. -- Reuters.

Kidnappings



AFGHANISTAN

See under "Political & Civil Unrest."

Labour Disputes



ARGENTINA

London, May 24 -- A press report, dated May 23, states: Argentine bank employees paralysed banking activity across the country on May 19 in a strike to press for a 30 percent wage increase and a 7.5-hour working day. The strike began in the wake of deadlocked negotiations between the Bank Association (AB) that represents the workers and representatives of management. AB leaders have declared that if negotiations continue at an impasse, another strike will take place on May 26 and 27. The strike took place despite a binding arbitration order from the Labour Ministry. To press their demand the workers also marched and protested in Buenos Aires and other cities, paralysing the stock exchange and other financial markets.

BOLIVIA

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

FINLAND

Helsinki, May 25 -- The latest round of labour talks between Finnish paper workers and employers ended without result today, and a lockout in the key export sector will continue at least until new talks on Monday (May 30). "The parties will meet again on Monday at 1100 hrs (0800, UTC)," a spokeswoman for the state labour mediator told Reuters, giving no further details. The Finnish Forest Industries Federation enforced a four-week lockout last Wednesday (May 18) following a two-day strike by workers. The industry has estimated total daily losses at 40 million euros (\$50.28 million). -- Reuters.

FRANCE

London, May 21 -- A press report, dated May 19, states: The strike at Total SA's refineries, which began on Monday (May 16) at the Donges refinery in Loire-Atlantique, in protest at the cancellation of the Pentecost holiday, went into its fourth day today, with four other refineries moving gradually towards a stoppage today, Total management said. Management said the Total group is making efforts to ensure that there are no supply problems. Total owns six of France's 12 oil refineries. The group has 50 pct of the country's refining capacity, and 22 pct of the distribution market. The group's leading trades union, the CGT, said this morning that the strike is being supported by 'more than 98 pct of the staff'. The CGT added that 'the network's petrol stations are surviving on their last drops of petrol, as the depots are no longer being supplied by the refineries'. The CGT said that besides fuel, all activities linked to oil are affected, including the lubricants factory at Rouen, which will cease functioning within a few hours, due to lack of oil coming from the Normandy refinery. CGT central delegate Charles Foulard warned yesterday that there would be 'fuel shortages' within 24 to 48 hours, notably at petrol stations. The CGT, joined by the CFDT, FO or the Sud in some sites, called the strike on Monday to denounce the management's 'unilateral decision' to cancel Monday's Pentecost holiday.

London, May 22 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Most employees of French oil giant Total called off a five-day strike that had paralyzed the company's refineries and helped push up world oil prices. The employees voted to return to work after Total agreed to pay them for working on Pentecost Monday, a holiday cancelled by the government to raise public funds for the elderly and disabled. Employees at one refinery were to vote Monday (May 23) on the agreement reached between Total and union officials, in which the company also agreed to pay four of the five strike days and hold talks on labour conditions. "Three refineries are being restarted. This will be done progressively and could take a few days," a spokesman for the workers said. "There will be no actual production until Monday, but in any

case we have stocks and distribution will begin again on Monday at 0300 GMT," trade unionist Michel Lavastron said. Total refineries produce half of France's petrol.

London, May 23 -- French oil major Total said today that all refineries affected by a workers' strike last week were in the process of restarting operations. The strike, which started last Monday (May 16) over the scrapping of a public holiday in France as well as salary demands, closed five out of six Total refineries in France, taking out almost a million barrels per day (bpd) of crude processing capacity. A company spokesman said the 231,000 bpd Donges plant, the last of the five affected refineries to take a vote on restarting, was also resuming operations. He added that it usually takes a few days to reach full capacity. He wouldn't say at what stage the refineries were at now, only that two at least came up on Saturday (May 21). The company said yesterday it had reached an agreement with the workers' union, agreeing to give an extra day's leave after last Monday's Pentecost holiday was scrapped. Other than Donges, the 328,000 bpd Gonfreville plant, the 119,000 Feyzin refinery, the 99,000 bpd Grandpuits and 115,000 La Mede were affected. La Mardyck was not impacted. The five plants accounted for over 90 percent of the 1.092 million bpd that Total refines at its French plants. The strike news had sent oil product prices soaring on European spot markets with gasoline prices rising about \$5 a ton on supply worries. -- Reuters.

GREECE

London, May 19 -- A press report, dated May 18, states: A four-hour strike by Greek air traffic controllers in support of broader labour action called by the country's civil servants union grounded more than 40 flights and forced airlines to reschedule up to 50 more. The wider 24-hour strike was launched by the 200,000-member civil servants union (ADEDY) against the government's economic policies, and also disrupted the operation of schools, hospitals and ministries. National carrier Olympic Airlines cancelled 15 domestic return flights and modified departure times for another 26 flights, including services to New York, London, Paris and Rome. Greece's number two carrier, Aegean Airlines, cancelled six domestic return flights and one international flight to Cyprus' Larnaka airport, and rescheduled departure times for a further 19 services. Four foreign companies also had to cancel services to Athens International Airport as a result of the strike, an airport spokesperson said.

PAKISTAN

Karachi, May 19 -- A local press report, dated today, states: About 70,000 fishermen will go on strike today against the arrest of their leaders and implementation of contract system over inland waters in Sindh. This was announced by the

leaders of Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum (PFF) during a token hunger strike, led by Deputy Secretary of PFF and Chief of Ladies Wing Tahira Ali, in front of the Press Club in Karachi yesterday. Nearly 50 members participated in the hunger strike. There are nearly 7,000 fishing boats in the coastal areas of Sindh from Karachi to Badin. -- Lloyd's Agents.

SOUTH AFRICA

London, May 25 -- A press report, dated May 23, states: Employees at Volkswagen SA's Roodekop warehouse on the East Rand returned to work today after a two-week strike over the outsourcing of the company's packaging department, officials said. The strike started when the National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa) accused VWSA of unilaterally outsourcing the firm's packing department to a labour broker. Nineteen people would have been affected by the move, NUM spokesperson Dumisa Ntuli said last week. Today, Ntuli said his union and the company reached an agreement on the outsourcing, ending the strike at the Roodekop warehouse. "The striking workers have returned back to work today (Monday). We think that it was a good end, workers are entirely satisfied that their concerns are fully covered," he said. "That was done on Friday (May 20), and they (workers) are back to work today (Monday)," said Bill Stevens, VWSA's spokesperson. Ntuli said the union and the company agreed that the workers would not be negatively affected for the next two years from the date of the agreement. "Any employee or group of employees may tender for company business on an equal basis with any other tender as long they meet all the tender requirements in terms of guarantees, service level agreement and they can show they have the expertise and financial backing to submit a serious tender," Ntuli said. Last week, Ntuli said Numsa's members insisted on the inclusion of a clause that "gives the affected 19 workers the right to tender upon the expiry of the contract. This should form part of the BEE initiatives".

UNITED STATES

London, May 24 -- A press report, dated May 23, states: More than 2,000 workers at plants in California and Connecticut that bottle Coca-Cola soft drinks went on strike today, just before the start of the summer season. The workers, mostly production workers and delivery drivers, were in contract negotiations with Coca-Cola Enterprises. The workers walked out over the company's proposal that they pay more for health benefits, the union said. Chris Roos, the leader of Teamsters Local 1035 in East Hartford, Conn., said the strike was planned the week before Memorial Day to pressure the company to negotiate or jeopardise summer sales. "Within a day or two, you probably won't see too much Coke on the

shelves," he said. Despite the strike, the Connecticut plant was still running today. Asked if the strike would disrupt summer Coke deliveries, company spokesman Bob Lanz said, "absolutely not." Lanz said the contract offer was fair and wouldn't raise health care costs for workers. "We don't know why they're striking," he said. "We offered them a very, very competitive contract." Union leaders say the workers have been arguing with management over health care costs since last fall. The bottling company has regional, not national, contracts with workers, which is why the strike was only in the two bottling plants. The two strikes are over separate contracts. David White of Teamsters Brewery & Soft Drink Conference said the 400 striking workers in Connecticut and 1,700 striking workers in Los Angeles were especially upset about health care plans for executives that White called "lavish." The workers, whose average pay is \$15 to \$20 an hour, can't afford higher health care costs, White said. A company spokeswoman, Lauren Sayeski, said the summer soft drink season isn't in danger. "We're business as usual right now. We prepared for this, and our customers won't be affected," she said.

Awards & Settlements



ALLEGED MISLEADING INFORMATION, UNITED STATES

London, May 19 -- A press report, dated May 18, states: Morgan Stanley will have to pay \$850m in damages to Revlon boss Ron Perelman after being found guilty of conspiring to defraud the financier. A Florida court concluded that the US investment bank had acted improperly in relation to a 1998 deal in which Mr Perelman sold Coleman Inc. for \$1.5bn. Sunbeam, which bought Coleman, filed for bankruptcy in 2001 after a huge accounting fraud was uncovered. Morgan Stanley, which advised Sunbeam, said it would appeal the verdict. The bank is facing a total payout of \$1.45bn, having previously been ordered to pay \$604m in compensation to Mr Perelman, who is chairman of cosmetics giant Revlon. Mr Perelman, who sought \$1.8bn in punitive damages, had argued that Morgan Stanley had played a vital role as Sunbeam's advisors in attracting him to the company. The financier acquired more than 14 million shares in Sunbeam as a result of the deal, shares which subsequently became worthless once the scale of the fraud at Sunbeam emerged. Lawyers for Morgan Stanley argued that Mr Perelman had benefited financially from the Coleman deal, by receiving \$160m in cash as well Sunbeam shares. They claimed that the \$604m award was adequate compensation.

Morgan Stanley said it had also been a victim of the Sunbeam fraud, losing \$300m.

DEATH OF FISH, UNITED STATES

London, May 19 -- A press report, dated May 18, states: AmerenUE, Missouri's largest electric utility, said today that it had reached a settlement with state and federal regulators to help win relicensing of the Osage power plant and Bagnell Dam at the Lake of the Ozarks. The utility, a unit of St. Louis-based Ameren Corp, also agreed to pay \$1.3 million to settle lawsuits over the death of more than 43,000 fish at the plant and dam three years ago. The Missouri Department of Conservation and Ameren sued each other in 2002 over the fish kill. The conservation department sought \$3 million in damages for the fish, including rare paddlefish, which died when they got trapped on plant water intake racks on the upstream side of the dam. Ameren's lawsuit sought to prevent the department from seeking reparations.

INSIDER TRADING, UNITED STATES

London, May 19 -- A press report, dated May 18, states: A former hedge fund manager agreed today to pay \$1.45 million to settle civil charges that she engaged in insider trading and fraud in 2001 by using information she received from Arlington investment firm Friedman, Billings, Ramsey Group Inc. about a pending stock deal. Securities regulators allege that Hilary Shane, a former First New York Securities LLC hedge fund manager, used inside information about an upcoming private stock placement by Annapolis security company Compudyne Corp. to profit for herself and for a fund she managed. Friedman, Billings, Ramsey arranged the private investment in public equity transaction, known as a PIPE. FBR has not been charged. The company previously disclosed an agreement to pay \$7.5 million to settle its part of the case and has said three executives associated with the company are negotiating individual settlements. Investigations into Compudyne trading by the Securities and Exchange Commission and the NASD, the securities industry's main self-regulatory body, led to the abrupt retirement last month of FBR co-founder Emanuel J. Friedman. After Friedman announced his retirement, two other FBR executives, Nicholas J. Nichols, the firm's head of compliance, and Scott E. Dreyer, the head of trading, also resigned. Shane, 37, did not admit or deny wrongdoing as part of her joint settlement with the SEC and the NASD. She agreed to pay \$673,785 in fines and to repay \$652,000 in improperly obtained profit and \$125,000 in interest. Shane also agreed to a lifetime ban on association with any NASD-registered firm and to a one-year suspension from serving as an investment adviser. According to regulators, Compudyne hired FBR in 2001 to help find qualified investors to

buy 2.45 million restricted Compudyne shares in a PIPE transaction. In such transactions, "accredited" investors, those with assets of \$1 million or more, are offered the opportunity to buy unregistered shares in a public company at a fixed price. Once a PIPE deal is publicly announced and the SEC registers the shares, holders are free to sell them on the open market. Because issuing PIPE shares dilutes the value of a company's existing shares, the public announcement of a PIPE deal can send a company's stock downward. Thus, knowledge of an upcoming PIPE transaction is viewed as inside information that cannot be legally traded upon. Regulators said that on Oct 8, 2001, Shane and FNY Millennium Partners, a hedge fund she managed, obtained the right to buy 475,000 shares in the Compudyne PIPE. On the morning of Oct 9, according to regulators, before the PIPE was publicly announced, Shane executed a short sale for 122,000 Compudyne shares. Short selling occurs when an investor borrows shares in a company and sells them, betting the price of the shares will drop. The investor can then buy the shares at the lower price and return them to the lender, pocketing the difference. Regulators said that by Oct 29, when the SEC approved the Compudyne PIPE, Shane had sold short 455,000 Compudyne shares. Once the deal was approved, regulators said, Shane received the Compudyne shares at \$12 each, below the then-current market price, and used the shares to cover her short position. Regulators said Shane made an illegal profit of \$652,938.

MEDICAL MALPRACTICE, UNITED STATES

London, May 23 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: The family of a boy whose bladder was severely damaged in a surgery at Vanderbilt University Medical Center was awarded nearly \$16.5 million dollars in damages. Hospital officials acknowledged the doctor made a mistake when he cut out most of Joseph Palanki's bladder in January 2000 and said they offered to compensate the child's family. But the case went to trial after both sides could not settle on the amount the family should get, and the jury returned its verdict Wednesday. The boy and his mother, Michelle Palanki, of Paris, Tennessee, sued the hospital in 2003. Court documents say the child was 11 months old and had no previous bladder problems when he underwent the surgery. He was supposed to have a procedure performed to eliminate swelling in his scrotum. An attorney for Vanderbilt says the hospital disagrees with the amount of damages awarded by the jury and will appeal.

PATENT INFRINGEMENT, UNITED STATES

London, May 20 -- A press report, dated May 19, states: Dimplex North America Limited announced today

that the US District Court for the Northern District of Illinois in Chicago had ruled in its favour on several post trial motions and had entered final judgment for damages in the amount of US\$12.4 million in favour of Dimplex in its patent infringement suit against CFM and Vermont Castings. The jury in the case previously found in March, 2005, that CFM willfully infringed Dimplex's US Patent No. 5,642,580 by manufacturing and selling electric fireplaces and stoves that use Dimplex's patented technology, and awarded Dimplex compensatory damages of US\$8.3 million. By its order of May 11, 2005, the court awarded Dimplex enhanced damages of US\$4.1 million citing CFM's willful conduct by continuing to manufacture and sell the infringing products for four years after first having been put on notice of infringement. In addition, the court issued a separate order denying CFM's claim that the '580 patent is unenforceable and entered a Permanent Injunction precluding CFM from selling more than 165 models of electric fireplaces and stoves that infringe the '580 patent. Dimplex has filed suit against CFM on the same patented technology in Canada, and that case is due to go to trial in September, 2005, in Toronto. Dimplex also has filed suit against Twin-Star International, Inc in the United States and Canada.

POLICE CORRUPTION, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES

London, May 26 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: A jury today awarded \$6.5 million to a man who was shot and framed by corrupt Los Angeles Police Department investigators. Javier Francisco Ovando, the central figure in the Rampart police corruption scandal, won his case against a Los Angeles County lawyer who defended him. Ovando was paralyzed when he was shot by former officers Rafael Perez and Nino Durden in 1996. Ovando was convicted and imprisoned after the two officers testified that he had attacked them. The conviction was overturned after the two officers emerged as key figures in the scandal, which has cost the city of Los Angeles more than \$70 million, caused more than 100 criminal convictions to be overturned, and forced more than a dozen officers to leave the force. Ovando already has collected \$15 million from the city in damages for his injuries and imprisonment. Today's verdict was against Los Angeles County and Deputy Public Defender Tamar Toister, who represented Ovando in the criminal trial. The Los Angeles Superior Court jury found that Toister was negligent in her defense and that she was aware of the police misconduct. Ovando claimed that she failed to check the backgrounds of the officers, interview witnesses who could have contradicted their stories and properly explore the facts of the case, including the

circumstances of the shooting. Ovando spent 20 years in prison based on the false testimony.

PRICE-FIXING, UNITED KINGDOM

London, May 20 -- A press report, dated May 19, states: Manchester United and several leading sportswear firms have been ordered to pay more than £16m in fines for fixing the price of football shirts. The decision by the Competition Appeal Tribunal follows an earlier ruling by the UK Office of Fair Trading. The OFT had imposed fines on 10 firms following a probe into the price-fixing of replica football shirts. Manchester United, JJB Sports, Umbro and Allsports appealed against the fines, imposed in August 2003. Ruling on the OFT's decision, the competition tribunal increased the fine levied on retailer Allsports to £1.42m, from £1.35m. However, it reduced the fines handed down by the OFT to Manchester United, retailer JJB Sports and sportswear maker Umbro. JJB Sports' fine, the largest single penalty originally imposed by the OFT, was cut to £6.3m from £8.37m; Umbro's fine was reduced to £5.3m from £6.6m; and Manchester United's fine reduced to £1.5m from £1.6m. JJB Sports said it was disappointed the reduction in its fine did not go further. The company said it planned to appeal against the tribunal's ruling. But OFT chairman Sir John Vickers welcomed the decision.

"Anti-competitive agreements to fix the prices of replica kit exploited the loyalty of fans," he said. "The (tribunal) has confirmed that such serious breaches of competition law call for penalties with serious deterrence." The OFT investigation began in June 2001, following complaints over the price of England and Manchester United shirts. Six other organisations were fined by the OFT but did not appeal. They were the Football Association (£158,000); Blacks (£197,000); Sports Soccer (£123,000); JD Sports (£73,000); Sports Connection (£20,000); Sportsetail (fine reduced to nil by leniency).

PRODUCT LIABILITY, UNITED STATES

London, May 24 -- A press report, dated May 23, states: The widow and adult sons of a West Deptford volunteer firefighter, who died of burns he suffered in a fire on New Year's Day 2001, agreed today to accept \$2.8 million to settle a product liability case against the manufacturer of the fireman's gear. James Heenan, 37, was trapped for about 20 minutes under debris in the basement of a house in the township's Verga section. He died 84 days later. In a lawsuit filed on behalf of his survivors, attorneys claimed the design and construction of Heenan's "turnout" gear - the protective coat and pants worn by firefighters and manufactured by Securitex Inc. - allowed heat to build up inside the suit when he became immobile, leading to burn damage more similar

to that caused by steam than by fire. The \$2.8 million settlement, approved by U.S. Magistrate Judge Joel B. Rosen, includes a \$625,000 settlement with Hartford Insurance Co., which was the worker's compensation and medical carrier for West Deptford. Attorney William Tambussi, representing the family, said Hartford Insurance had paid \$2.54 million in medical benefits for Heenan and workers' compensation payments to his family. Patricia Heenan said her monthly survivor's benefit payment will cease until November 2009, when she would be eligible for a payment of \$645 a month if she does not remarry. Her share of the settlement is \$1 million. Each of her sons will receive \$200,174.

RAILWAY ACCIDENT, UNITED STATES

London, May 21 -- A press report, dated today, states: An Orange County jury yesterday ordered BNSF Railway, formerly known as Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway, to pay \$2.8 million to the parents of a Riverside commuter who died in a 2002 Metrolink accident in Placentia. BNSF operated the mile-long freight train that smashed into the double-decker commuter train on April 23, 2002, killing Lawrence Sorensen, 48, and two others and injuring hundreds. The Sorensens' suit is one of more than 150. Federal investigators concluded that the accident was caused by a BNSF crew who missed a warning signal and the lack of an automatic braking system on the freight train.

VIOLATION OF TRADE REGULATIONS, UNITED STATES

London, May 20 -- A press report, dated May 19, states: OfficeMax Inc. has agreed to pay \$9.8 million to settle claims that it violated U.S. trade regulations by selling the federal government products made in countries that don't have proper trade agreements, the Justice Department said today. Federal regulators said the Itasca-based office supply company submitted false claims when it sold to federal agencies foreign-made products that were not permitted under its contract with the General Services Administration. "We remain vigilant in our efforts to ensure that federal contractors abide by the terms of their contracts and not violate U.S. trade regulations," U.S. Attorney Kenneth Wainstein said in a statement. OfficeMax spokesman Bill Bonner said the company did not admit any wrongdoing as part of the settlement and said it fully cooperated with the Justice Department's investigation. The case was filed in January 2003 by Houston-based Safina Office Products and two of its executives. They will receive a total of \$1.47 million under the settlement. Whistleblower provisions under the False Claims Act allow private parties who file actions on behalf of the U.S. government to share in the proceeds of settlements, the Justice Department said.

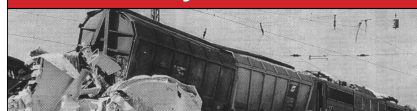
**WRONGFUL DEATH,
UNITED STATES**

London, May 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: A Bergen County woman whose daughter was killed during a trip to India two years ago has been awarded \$8 million in a wrongful death lawsuit she filed against her daughter's fiance, who was charged in the death. Madeleine Swiderski of Glen Rock was notified yesterday that Superior Court Judge Isabel Stark in Hackensack had awarded her \$4 million in punitive damages against New York City restaurateur Pragnesh Desai, according to her attorney. The award is in addition to a \$4 million judgment Stark awarded Swiderski on May 13, after finding Desai liable for compensatory damages in the death of Swiderski's daughter, Leona.

**WRONGFUL DISMISSAL,
UNITED STATES**

London, May 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: A former top-ranked radio host, who claims she was sickened by a colleague's use of a perfume described as "romantic, sensual, emotional," won \$10.6 million in a federal court lawsuit yesterday. Erin Weber, who was on the air at WYCD-FM (99.5), contends in her suit that she was fired in 2001 after she complained about being exposed to Tresor perfume, which sells for \$45.50 a bottle and is described by Lancome as a combination of ingredients such as rose and lilac. She said she was sickened by the fumes, a condition that began when a co-worker exposed her to spilled nail-polish remover in the country music station's Southfield studio. The perfume was worn, her suit said, by another radio personality, Linda Lee, whose legal surname is Bullock. The verdict awarded her \$7 million in punitive damages, \$2 million in mental anguish and emotional distress and \$1.6 million for past and future compensation after a six-woman jury in U.S. District Court in Detroit spent eight days deliberating. Weber claimed exposure to Tresor caused her to lose her voice and take lengthy absences from work. She also said she once "felt an electric shock quell through my entire body" and required heavy medication to combat the effects. Weber says she been unable to get another job in radio since she was fired in 2001 and claims Infinity Broadcasting "blacklisted her" -- a claim the company rejects. She now works as a freelance voiceover specialist. Weber, who began work in March 1999, claimed that soon afterward, co-workers spilled "toxic chemicals" in the radio studio and she suffered "raw chemical burns to her airways and sinuses." Her doctor, Martin Charles, "warned (Weber) that further exposure to perfume could even result in death," a brief from her lawyers said. Her doctor said Weber shouldn't be exposed to co-worker Lee's Tresor perfume. Weber claimed Lee, who is co-host of the Edwards & Lee afternoon show, intentionally exposed her to her perfume. WYCD

said it specifically required Lee to stop wearing any perfume in response to Weber's complaints. The station said in its response that it modified Weber's schedule so they wouldn't come into conduct during shift changes. In a May 2001 e-mail to the station manager, presented as evidence, Weber said Lee's perfume caused her to lose her voice and that Lee intentionally walked by her at the Downtown Detroit Hoedown -- a popular annual country music festival. "To have brought the perfume with her suggests forward planning. This appears to be a premeditated attack which was entirely unprovoked by me in anyway," Weber wrote. "Please tell me what steps you plan to take to ensure my safety." Weber's lawyer, Raymond Sterling, said his client doesn't have problems with "natural smells" but does with the chemical basis of the perfume -- a fact he says was confirmed by three doctors at the weeklong civil trial. "The real reason she was fired is that management didn't make her stop wearing the perfume," Sterling, a Troy lawyer, said. "There are co-workers in all walks of life that don't get along for one reason or another, but it's up to management to handle the situation." Weber was fired in September 2001. The station is owned by Infinity Broadcasting. Infinity lawyer Daniel Tukel said in a court filing that the toxic chemicals in the studio were Glade Air Freshener and acetone, used once for manicures during a morning-show "bit." In October 2000, Weber took a three-month medical leave and returned to work in January 2001. A spokeswoman for Infinity said the company planned to appeal. "We're disappointed in the verdict and intend to make all the appropriate post-trial motions," said Karen L. Mateo. Mateo also said the company's lawyers believe the \$7 million punitive damages verdict will be reduced to \$300,000. Federal law generally caps punitive damages at \$300,000 for the claims that Weber brought. Weber's lawyer said that's likely, but they will try to convince the judge to uphold the full verdict. Weber's lawyer also said they will ask the judge to order Infinity to pay Weber's legal bills, which could increase the verdict.

Railway Accidents**AMAGASAKI, JAPAN**

London, May 19 -- A press report, dated today, states: Some train drivers with West Japan Railway Co have said they thought speed limits are set with latitude and going beyond them would not cause derailments, following the fatal derailment and crash of a JR West train in April in Amagasaki, Hyogo Prefecture. "When I was an apprentice, a teacher at drivers training school told me that speeding

by 5 to 10 kilometres-per-hour is all right," said a driver in his 40s serving on the Fukuchiyama Line, on which the Apr 25 derailment took place.

BAN CHONG KHAO, THAILAND

See "Thailand" under "Weather & Navigation."

**BOURBON AREA, INDIANA,
UNITED STATES**

London, May 23 -- A press report, dated May 22, states: Police are trying to figure out why a train derailed in Marshall County early this morning. It happened at around 0400 at the intersection of Lincoln Highway and Elm Road near Bourbon, Indiana. When police arrived on the scene, they discovered ten train-cars off the tracks. The train, operated by the Chicago, Fort Wayne and Eastern Railroad, was heading westbound. There were no injuries caused by the derailment. "I saw eight or nine cars laying upside down and sideways," said Terry Depoy who heard the derailment. No hazardous materials were involved in the derailment.

**GRANITEVILLE, SOUTH
CAROLINA, UNITED STATES**

London, May 25 -- A press report, dated today, states: Graniteville residents affected by the deadly train crash at the beginning of the year stand to get thousands of dollars from Norfolk Southern. The train crash back in January caused a chlorine leak that killed nine and forced more than 5,000 people to evacuate. The settlement, which was filed late yesterday, offers \$2,000 for being evacuated and \$200 per day, per person. It would also pay property damages. A judge must still approve the settlement.

**LABUHAN RATU KEDATON,
LAMPUNG PROVINCE, SUMATRA,
INDONESIA**

London, May 19 -- A press report, dated today, states: Two trains collided today in Indonesia, killing at least 10 people and injuring dozens, a radio report said. A passenger train crashed into a freight train carrying coal in Labuhan Ratu Kedaton in the Sumatran province of Lampung at 1810, local time, El Shinta radio said. Rescuers were trying to evacuate dozens of passengers who were still trapped in the wreckage, it said.

**RIDGETON, KANSAS,
UNITED STATES**

London, May 20 -- A press report, dated May 19, states: A Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway train derailed last night near the Osage County community of Ridgeton, about 87 miles west of Kansas City. Nobody was injured. Railroad spokesman Steve Forsberg says investigators believe the cars were blown over by high winds. There were a total of 44 double-stacked freight containers on the cars that left the tracks. Forsberg says the cars were all over on their sides on the same side of the tracks. The train was on its way from New

York to Los Angeles. The derailment did not affect the other main line track through the region so rail traffic has continued. Forsberg says the track on which the derailment took place should be clear by noon.

RODOPOLIS, GREECE

London, May 20 -- A press report, dated May 19, states: Four people injured in a collision of two trains in Rodopolis this morning were taken to the Serres Hospital. The cargo train engine driver is in the most serious condition with leg injuries. Three employees of the passenger train have lighter injuries. They are the engine driver, the supervisor and a female security guard. Also, 5 of the 16 train passengers were taken to the Rodopolis Health Centre to receive first aid. According to estimates, the crash was the result of human error and specifically, a traffic light violation. A Greek Railways Organization committee of specialists arrived in the region this morning to investigate the exact causes of the accident. Trains from Thessaloniki to Serres run as scheduled and the two damaged trains were removed from the railway tracks.

SHERWOOD AREA, FRANKLIN COUNTY, TENNESSEE, UNITED STATES

London, May 21 -- A press report, dated today, states: Seventeen cars of a southbound CSX train derailed early yesterday morning near the community of Sherwood in southern Franklin County. The derailed cars included two that were carrying hydrochloric acid, but emergency officials said there was no spill. The train, three locomotives and 69 cars, derailed about 0930 hrs, about one-half mile from a tunnel that connects Sherwood to Cowan.

WEST BOTTOMS, MISSOURI, UNITED STATES

London, May 19 -- A press report, dated May 18, states: Crews in the West Bottoms worked to clean up a train derailment early this morning. Ten freight cars derailed about 0200 hrs near 25th Street and Mercier. Two cars tipped over. KMBC reported that one contained asphalt and the other methanol. Crews said there was no chemical leak and no one was hurt. It is not yet certain what caused the derailment.

Robberies & Thefts



TELEVISION SETS, CLAY COUNTY, GEORGIA, UNITED STATES

London, May 26 -- A press report, dated May 25, states: Clay County deputies are investigating the theft of \$1 million worth of televisions and

high-end radios from an Orange Park warehouse last weekend. According to reports, an employee of Pyramid Sound on Industrial Loop arrived Monday (May 23) morning to find the lights on and the alarm and phones disabled. The owner and the Clay County Sheriff's Office were called, and they found pallets of brand new televisions were gone and an entire room of the company's most expensive equipment was missing. Deputies found the alarm box opened and the contents ripped out. They found the locks cut off and alarm wires cut from the loading dock doors, but no sign of forced entry from outside doors. Police estimate the value of stolen merchandise at \$1,010,000.

Miscellaneous



AUSTRALIAN WHEAT SHIPMENTS UNDER INVESTIGATION BY IRAQ

London, May 25 -- The ongoing dispute over Iraqi allegations of contaminated Australian wheat is costing up to \$100,000 in demurrage, the Australian Wheat Board (AWB) confirmed today. AWB managing director Andrew Lindberg said independent teams are presently testing the wheat to prepare a report for the relevant Iraqi authorities. "We hope it will be resolved in the next few days," Mr Lindberg said. AWB believes the issue over its wheat quality will be favourably and speedily. The difficulties had as much to do with the changes in Iraq, the new government for example, as with anything else, he said. The company has three vessels with a total of 120,000 tonnes of wheat sitting off the port of Umm Qasr.

London, May 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: Australia's wheat export regulator will investigate claims a dispute in Iraq involving three shipments of grain, could be costing growers many thousands of dollars. The ships, holding around 120,000 tonnes of Australian wheat, have been stopped from unloading for more than a month after Iraq claimed the grain was contaminated with iron dust. Although the wheat has been paid for, Liberal Senator Jeannie Ferris has raised concerns shipping charges could be costing growers around \$US100,000 a day. The Wheat Export Authority's (WEA) says it is doing whatever it can to minimise shipping charges but it cannot make any definitive estimate on the cost of holding the ships while the situation is still unfolding. It says the new test results taken by the new Iraqi Government have been completed, but the Australian Wheat Board is still awaiting a final decision from Iraq about the unloading of the ships.

CARGO OF MAIZE IMPOUNDED AT DUBLIN, IRELAND

Brussels, May 25 -- A United States consignment of genetically modified corn gluten feed tainted with an illegal strain has been impounded upon arrival at an Irish port, the European Commission said today. The feed was contaminated with the banned Bt-10, a genetically modified (GMO) maize made by Swiss agrochemicals group Syngenta. The shipment was tested in the United States and the positive results for Bt-10 were sent to Ireland to allow Dublin to stop the cargo on arrival, the EU executive said. "The Irish authorities are taking necessary measures to ensure that the contaminated consignment does not enter the food chain," Commission spokesman Philip Tod told a news conference. Last month the European Union blocked imports of maize from the United States unless shipments carried proof that they were free of Bt-10, which is not authorized for use either in Europe or the United States. The curb will be reviewed at the end of October but the EU's food safety chief said last month the conditional ban may be extended if more contaminated products were discovered. Syngenta said the impounding of the maize shipment in Ireland showed that the testing system for Bt-10 was working. "The testing and certification implemented by the European Union is doing exactly what it is supposed to do," said a Syngenta spokesman. U.S. exporters send 3.5 million tonnes of corn gluten feed to Europe each year, a trade worth some 350 million euros (\$440 million). In March Syngenta said some of its maize seeds sent to the EU from the United States were mistakenly mixed with Bt-10. This insect-resistant strain is similar to Bt-11, a different GMO strain that is approved for distribution in the EU. The maize mix-up occurred between 2001 and 2004. -- Reuters.

COLLAPSE OF BUILDING, PORT HARCOURT, NIGERIA

London, May 25 -- A press report, dated today, states: At least 10 people were killed and several others trapped when a building collapsed in Nigeria's southern oil city of Port Harcourt, police said today. The four-storey building under construction on Sani Abacha road in the city centre suddenly caved in yesterday, killing at least 10 construction workers, police spokesperson Barasua Ireju said. "A number of others are still trapped under the rubble. More bodies may still be found as rescue operations are continuing," she added. State governor Peter Odili visited the scene shortly after the incident and has ordered an inquiry. Ireju said rescue efforts were hampered yesterday because of the swampy nature of the area. "One of the cranes sent to assist evacuation efforts sank because the place was muddy," she explained. She said the owner of the building would be prosecuted if it was discovered he had used sub-standard materials.

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

CRACKS FOUND IN RUDDERS OF BP TANKERS, UNITED STATES

London, May 20 -- A press report, dated today, states: Two new double-hulled tankers that haul Alaska crude oil for BP are laid up in a Puget Sound shipyard with cracks in their rudders, including one fissure measuring 9 feet long. The head of BP's shipping company, Alaska Tanker Co. of Beaverton, Ore., said the cause of the cracks remains a mystery. One of the ships, crude oil tanker Alaskan Frontier (110693 gt, built 2004), is expected to be out of service for several weeks pending repairs to cracks in both its rudders. Alaskan Frontier was the first in a fleet of four new double-hulled tankers that BP is building to carry North Slope crude oil from Valdez to West Coast refineries. The ship went into service last August. A second and newer ship, crude oil tanker Alaskan Explorer (110693 gt, built 2005), is expected to be out of service through this week. It has smaller cracks in only one of its twin rudders, the company official said. Alaskan Frontier, during its career so far, has hauled about 25 loads of crude oil out of Alaska, while Alaskan Explorer has carried only one load, said Anil Mathur, president of Alaska Tanker. "It's disappointing," Mathur said. "But when you come up with brand new designs, you can have new problems. The important thing was, this was not a catastrophic failure. This is embryonic. The problem has been caught very, very early." National Steel and Shipbuilding Co. of San Diego, a subsidiary of General Dynamics, built both vessels. The company now is building BP's final two "Alaska Class" tankers, due to come into service by the middle of next year. Divers discovered the rudder cracks during a scheduled inspection of Alaskan Frontier last Saturday (May 14), Mathur said. The inspection turned up several cracks in its rudders, the largest measuring 9 feet long. A subsequent check of the newer sister ship, Alaskan Explorer, turned up three cracks on one of its rudders, the longest measuring 15 inches. Both ships are docked at a shipyard in Port Angeles, Wash. Alaskan Explorer is expected to return to service by week's end, once the cracks are repaired, Mathur said. As a precaution, he added, a tug will escort the empty ship when it enters Prince William Sound. Normally, only tankers loaded with oil and headed out of the Sound get tug escorts. Divers also will inspect the rudders on every voyage, he said. Fixing Alaskan Frontier is a bigger challenge. Mostly likely, that ship will need to go to a shipyard with larger ship-handling cranes in Vancouver, BC. There, workers will tip the vessel to better expose the rudders. They will remove the rudders for repairs, and the tanker likely will be out of service until July, Mathur said. Alaska Tanker has a stable of eight ships, including the two new double-hulled tankers, and the company plans to use two older ships that had been slated for retirement to avoid interrupting crude oil deliveries, he said. The company has put together

a team of shipbuilders, engineers and inspectors to try to determine what caused the cracks. Mathur declined to speculate, but said problems can be expected in a new class of ships. "It's really important to understand how this happened, so that the fix takes care of the underlying cause," he said.

INFESTATION OF LOCUSTS ACROSS NORTH AND WEST AFRICA

Yaounde, May 20 -- Swarms of locusts have descended on Cameroon's arid Far North province, exacerbating fears of food shortages in a region where low rainfall has already hit crop yields, officials said today. "Migratory locusts have invaded all the six divisions of the Far North," a statement from Agriculture and Rural Development Minister Clobert Tchatat said. He gave no further details. Radio reports from the region said locusts darkened the skies and ate any green leaves they could find. Arid, semi-desert Niger and Mauritania were among the hardest hit. Yesterday, the United Nations said drought and the locust infestation had left 3.6 million people in critical need of food aid in Niger. Tchatat said a light aircraft from the Aerial Pest Control Unit was in the Far North to find out where the locusts came from and where they were reproducing. Some 7,000 litres of pesticides are available in the region to combat the insects. Tchatat said in March the Far North faced food shortages because of low rainfall coupled with the advancing desert and the destruction of crops by migratory birds and elephants. Millions of hectares of land in West Africa have been sprayed with pesticides to prevent another locust attack. On Tuesday (May 17), U.N. officials said West Africa had cut the risk of another plague but warned there was no room for complacency. -- Reuters.

OUTBREAK OF "BIRD FLU"

Hanoi, May 20 -- Vietnam, the country hardest hit by Asia's bird flu with 37 deaths, has ordered farmers in Ho Chi Minh City to stop raising poultry later this year when the threat of outbreaks is highest. The Agriculture Department of Ho Chi Minh City said today avian influenza was likely to strike again between November and February even though the city has had no human cases since December 2004. The Department instructed the city's animal health and agriculture officials to tell farmers to stop raising chickens, ducks and geese for four months starting in November. Yesterday, the World Health Organisation said the spate of human bird flu cases in Vietnam this year suggested the H5N1 virus may be mutating in ways that are making it more capable of being passed between humans. The Health Ministry said Vietnam has 76 people infected by bird flu since the disease first hit in late 2003, among them 37 people had died. The virus has also killed 12 people in Thailand and four in Cambodia. Last week doctors said the virus had infected two men in northern Vietnam. Both were in stable condition

at a Hanoi hospital. Vietnam, which hopes to contain the virus only in 2007 and eliminate it by 2010, last month extended a ban on the hatching of water fowl eggs until February 2006. Experts said the birds can carry the virus without showing any sign of illness, making them a reservoir for the H5N1 virus. While Indonesia has had no reports of people being infected by bird flu, it made an alarming discovery this month after detecting the virus in pigs that can already carry human flu viruses. The finding has heightened health experts' fears that the virus could spread to humans as the human flu viruses in pigs can combine with the bird flu viruses to create virulent strains. -- Reuters.

London, May 22 -- A press report, dated today, states: China has introduced emergency measures to prevent the spread of bird flu after discovering that migratory birds were killed by the virus earlier this month. The measures included basic quarantine and disinfection steps, the state-run Xinhua news agency said. China also banned people from entering migratory birds' habitats and urged them to limit contact with domesticated birds, such as poultry. The virus has killed at least 53 people in south-east Asia since late 2003. The Chinese ministry of agriculture said the dead migratory birds were found in the remote western province of Qinghai in early May. It said they were all killed by the deadly H5N1 strain of bird flu that has jumped from avians to humans. The ministry urged the country "to pay keen attention to the new confirmed cases of migratory birds and to take effective measures to curb possibly spreading the epidemic," Xinhua said. China's most recent confirmed case of bird flu occurred last July in the east of the country.

London, May 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: Bird flu has killed another person in northern Vietnam, bringing the Southeast Asian death toll to 53, local Tuoi Tre newspaper reported today. The latest victim from Hung Yen province was hospitalised at the Institute of Tropical Diseases in Hanoi May 16 and diagnosed with lung and kidney damages. Tests showed the victim had the H5N1 virus strain, Tuoi Tre said. The institute is also treating two other bird flu patients from northern provinces Thanh Hoa and Vinh Phuc. One doctor said the patients were in stable condition.

OUTBREAK OF EBOLA VIRUS, CONGO

London, May 19 -- A press report, dated May 18, states: Tests have confirmed an outbreak of the deadly Ebola virus in Congo, the World Health Organization says. Nine people have died and two more are sick in the Cuvette West province, scene of at least three Ebola outbreaks in recent years. WHO Congo representative Amadou Yada said a family of hunters contracted the disease after picking up the body of a dead chimpanzee in the forest. There is no known cure for the Ebola hemorrhagic fever. Samples were

sent to the International Medical Research Centre in neighbouring Gabon, which has confirmed that the deaths were caused by Ebola, Dr Yada said. He said villagers in the Etoumbi district, some 700 km north-west of the capital, Brazzaville, had gone to the forests to hunt elephants, when they came across the body of a dead chimpanzee, which they took home to eat, before becoming sick. He says that after previous Ebola outbreaks in the area, the authorities have told people not to touch dead animals they find but few people take any notice. Dr Yada said that a medical team was about to leave for Etoumbi to set up an isolation unit and warn people about the risks of touching dead animals and avoiding contact with those infected.

POWER OUTAGE, MOSCOW, RUSSIA

London, May 25 -- A press report, dated today, states: Power supply to hundreds of households and public facilities was interrupted today following a breakdown at a power plant in southern Moscow, Russian news agencies reported. The reasons for the blackout have yet to be established, a source in the Moscow government told the Interfax news agency. The city's emergency bodies are taking measures to establish what led to the power cut, he said. Earlier the agency was told by a city official that the blackout had brought trains in the Moscow metro system to a standstill in tunnels. RBC news agency says three metro lines have stopped working, with lighting and escalators also not working. Hospitals, traffic lights and mobile telephone providers have also been affected. Many households are experiencing problems both with electricity and water supply. Parts of the Moscow region and the Tula region have also been affected.

London, May 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: Moscow emergency services continue liquidating the consequences the energy crisis. Spokespeople for the Moscow city government said that electric power would be resumed completely in the city by 1400, today. There is still no electricity, water and telephone connection in several southern districts of Moscow. When the blackout occurred, it originally disconnected 11,706 buildings, including 8,814 apartment blocks. About 70 educational institutions, including schools and kindergartens of Moscow are still disconnected from electricity. Hospitals still use mobile electric stations. "The situation in Moscow is being stabilized slowly but surely," a spokesman for the Moscow government, Vladimir Resin said. The situation in the Moscow region is a lot more complicated. Many towns of the region are still deprived of electric power and water supplies. The traffic in the Moscow metro was resumed completely today in the morning, although trams and trolleybuses are not prepared to carry passengers yet. It was decided to restrict the entrance

of car traffic in Moscow on account of the energy crisis. The biggest blackout in recent memory occurred in Russia's capital yesterday, leaving 34 districts of the city disconnected from electric power supply. The blackout seriously affected Moscow, the Moscow region, as well as the Kaluga and the Tula regions. Thousands of passengers were trapped in the stuffy metro; crowds of people were trying to hide from record-high pre-summer temperature of 30 degrees Centigrade in the streets of the city. Road traffic went to a standstill because of disabled traffic lights. There was no illumination in Moscow's highways in the evening. The Office of the Prosecutor General has already instituted criminal proceedings against the administration of the Russian energy giant RAO UES of Russia (United Energy Systems). The massive blackout paralyzed about a half of Moscow, including shopping malls, enterprises and firms. Three Moscow meat and dairy factories stopped working yesterday. The damage has been preliminary evaluated at about one billion dollars.

POWER OUTAGE, VIETNAM

London, May 21 -- A press report, dated today, states: A power outage triggered by record-low water levels at reservoirs that feed hydroelectric power plants in northern Vietnam has affected millions of families, state-controlled media reported today. The water level at the Hoa Binh hydro power plant, which accounts for about 20 per cent of the country's electricity output, was at the lowest level in 50 years, the Liberated Saigon newspaper quoted Dao Van Hung, general director of state-owned utility monopoly Electricity of Vietnam Corp., or EVN as saying. Hung said the surge in power consumption over the past two weeks due to hot weather also put more pressure on the supply. "It means millions of households will have electricity outage," he said. The power outage is expected to last until at least until the end of the month, when flooding is forecast at the Hoa Binh reservoir, some 70 kilometres north-west of Hanoi.

VIARSA I (Panama)

Fremantle, May 24 -- Fishing ViarSA I is still at Jervoise Bay. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Fires & Explosions



BARGES, SAN JOAQUIN RIVER, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES

London, May 25 -- A press report, dated May 24, states: Authorities are investigating a fire that burned eight barges floating just off the Delta shoreline near the Antioch Bridge, diverting some boaters and forcing an Oakley elementary school to keep

pupils indoors because of smoke. Eight of 12 barges in Mayberry Slough, which were primarily fiberglass and roped together, had burned to the water line by Monday afternoon (May 23), destroying two mobile homes, automobiles and solar panels, the US Coast Guard said. One barge broke free, drifted away and was found on a nearby island; another was towed ashore. Investigators did not know Monday how or where the fire started. Authorities declined to name the vessels' owner. The fire was reported before 0600, Monday, and was contained at about 1100, according to the Coast Guard. A Sacramento hazardous materials team and the California Department of Fish and Game both reported that the air around the fire was safe to breathe. Locals think the fire was intentionally set, because over the last year and a half there has been animosity over the barge owner's plan to eventually live here. But fire officials said it was too early to determine if it was arson, or where the fire started. No injuries were reported.

COAL MINE, CHENGDE CITY AREA, HEBEI PROVINCE, CHINA

London, May 20 -- A press report, dated today, states: The death toll in a coal mine blast in Chengde City of north China's Hebei province has risen to seven, as five more bodies were found this afternoon, said sources with the rescue headquarters. The blast occurred at around 0300 hrs, yesterday, when 85 miners were working underground at the Nuan'erhe Coal Mine in Chengde City. Thirty-four of them were lifted out of the shaft, and 51 others were trapped underground. The bodies of two miners were discovered this morning, and rescuers found another 5 bodies in the afternoon. The fate of the other 44 trapped miners is still unknown, and rescue work is going on.

Beijing, May 22 -- Chinese rescuers found the bodies of 40 coal miners killed in a mine explosion last week, official media reported today. Ten miners remained missing after the explosion Thursday (May 19) at the Nuanerhe colliery in Chengde county, Hebei Province, about 200 km north-east of Beijing, Xinhua news agency said. -- Reuters.

COAL MINE, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

London, May 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: Fire over the weekend has disrupted production at Minara Resources NL's Murrin Murrin nickel operation in Western Australia. Minara said the small fire, in the facility's acid plant, was quickly brought under control and no injuries or serious damage occurred. However, the plant will not restart before Wednesday (May 25) and will operate at 60 per cent of rated capacity until a heat exchanger can be replaced or repaired. Spares are held on site. Minara said the incident would cost it between 500 tonnes and 1000 tonnes in lost production.

FACTORY, DOHA, QATAR

London, May 22 -- A press report, dated today, states: A major fire gutted the production unit of the Doha Modern Factory for Carton Manufacturing, located on Street No-42 of the Industrial Area yesterday afternoon. There were no casualties but equipment worth millions of riyals was destroyed in the blaze. According to officials from the Department of Civil Defence at the Ministry of Interior, the blaze is believed to have erupted at around 1500, yesterday, after the production unit had closed for the day. The ensuing inferno completely gutted the production section of the factory, including all machinery and equipment. However, a warehouse of the company, where paper rolls and other inflammable material was stored, had a miraculous escape. Civil defence officials explained, the storage facility was spared by the blaze due to a small gap that divides it from the workshop. The fire was brought under control by 1930 hrs but Civil Defence forces were continuing to ensure that there was no burning debris left behind. The entire area was engulfed in thick smoke and the acrid odor emitted by the burning material was perceptible even at a distance. Civil Defence officials meanwhile said, it was too premature to pinpoint the exact cause of the fire that gutted the reputed company which provided packaging to several major local firms. Investigations into the blaze, they said, were already underway.

FACTORY, LINDSAY, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES

London, May 23 -- A press report, dated May 20, states: Firefighters toiled at the site of a cardboard box factory today about 24 hours after it went up in flames. Although California Department of Forestry/Tulare County Fire Department officials announced the cause of the blaze to be from equipment use, specifics on the cause were not to be released until Monday (May 23) based on an outside investigator's instruction, said Battalion Chief Mike Davidson. The blaze struck a building of the Harvest Container Co. in the 24400 block of Road 216, about a mile north of Lindsay. It was called in to fire officials at 1710 hrs, yesterday, Davidson said, and firefighters arrived shortly thereafter. "One of the workers, a forklift operator working on the scene, discovered the fire," Davidson said. "The fire started outside of the building in some cardboard stacks, actually, bales of recyclable cardboard material, near the south-west corner of a building." The cardboard factory fire was contained at 2145 hrs, Davidson said. It was estimated that the site would be turned completely back over to the land-owner sometime late this evening. Davidson said there was an estimated \$2 million loss caused by the fire, \$600,000 to the cardboard product and the remainder to the

equipment, buildings and improvements. "It was not a total loss; there was very little damage to the actual structure itself ... one south wall received damage," Davidson said. "We did have a fire inside the building, adjacent from the south wall, but we were able to control the spread from inside the building to the rest of the product. "There was a large savings. There's a lot of cardboard product we were able to protect, and some of the equipment was saved." There were engines from the county's Lindsay, Exeter, West Olive and Doyle Colony stations; one truck from the county's Exeter and Tulare stations; water tenders from the county's Lindsay, Doyle Colony and Pixley stations; a breathing support unit out of the county's Visalia station; and, assisting the county was an engine from the Lindsay fire department, Davidson said. Davidson said a grass fire, caused from pieces of burning cardboard flying through the air, started about a mile away from the factory location in a two-acre portion on Todd Hill. "It started at 1900 hrs and was contained at 1957 hrs," Davidson said. Davidson said, as of late-afternoon day, firefighters continued to monitor smoldering piles of wet cardboard at Harvest Container. "We, as a fire department, will stay in order to be there to mitigate any potential hazards," Davidson said.

FACTORY, TAICHUNG CITY, TAIWAN

Taipei, May 24 -- A pre-dawn fire engulfed a plastics factory in central Taiwan and killed at least nine people, including two children, police said today. They were sleeping on the second floor of the sheet-metal building in Taichung city when the fire broke out at around 0400 hrs. The cause of the fire was not known. "Most people died of suffocation as they tried to escape," a prosecutor at the scene told reporters. The owner of the factory said he did not know how many people stayed in the building on Monday night as it was open to employees, as well as their relatives and friends. Police were still searching the collapsed building to see if any more bodies were buried inside. -- Reuters.

FOREST, CHINA

London, May 23 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: A raging forest fire has demolished about 600 hectares of woodland in a county of south-western Sichuan Province, with no casualties reported. A forest fire broke out at the Muli Tibet autonomous county of the Liangshan Yi autonomous prefecture in Sichuan at 2000, last Tuesday (May 17), according to the provincial forest control authority. Over the past five days, the fire was not controlled totally, as the forest was located at a precipitous mountain about 3,200 metres above the sea level with complex terrains. Hot and dry weather conditions also add to the difficulties

in fire fighting, the local authority said. More than 1,200 firefighters have been working hard night and day to extinguish the fire. And meteorologists were dispatched to the scene Friday morning to direct efforts to induce artificial rainfall. In addition, a special working team from the State Forestry Administration reached Liangshan prefecture yesterday morning to direct the fire combating operation and rescue effort.

FOREST, SICHUAN PROVINCE, CHINA

London, May 25 -- A press report, dated today, states: A blaze in the Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture in southwest China's Sichuan Province has destroyed about 800 hectares of forests. The fire started in two townships in Muli County, Sichuan's largest forest zone, last Tuesday (May 17), but due to the lack of communication facilities, the fire was not reported to the county government until the next day. There have been no casualties. The Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture Forestry Bureau immediately sent a helicopter to find the exact site of the fire. Using smoke from the fire to guide him, the pilot judged the site to be between Hengbo and Hongqi townships, which is about 3,000 metres above sea level. Although the cause of the fire is still under investigation, the dry weather could have been a factor, said Zhang Lianzhong, deputy chief of the Forest Fire Prevention Headquarters under the prefecture's forestry bureau. No rain has fallen in the area since last November and there is a layer of dry, rotten material about one metre thick on the forest floor, he said. The prefecture has sent 2,195 people, including 196 forest policemen, to form a 25-kilometre ring around the blaze to prevent it from spreading. It has assembled another 700 people from nearby counties and towns as possible reinforcements. A team of experts from the Sichuan Provincial Meteorology Bureau have also arrived at the scene and could induce artificial rainfall to put out the fire, according to the General Office of the Sichuan Provincial Forest Protection and Fire Prevention Headquarters. Zhou Junming, a leading official with the prefecture's forestry police said the fire has now been brought under control.

GOLD MINE, TELFER, WESTERN AUSTRALIA, AUSTRALIA

London, May 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: Newcrest Mining, Australia's biggest independent gold miner, said a fire broke out at its Telfer Mine in Western Australia early today. It said all workers have been accounted for, but seven remain underground and evacuation efforts are underway. The blaze occurred in a tunnel off the main access at the mine's underground development, on which Newcrest has spent more than Aus\$1 billion to redevelop.

LABORATORY, NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY, DEKALB, ILLINOIS, UNITED STATES

London, May 23 -- A press report, dated May 22, states: Firefighters from at least three departments were needed to contain an electrical fire inside a machine at Northern Illinois University that caused \$1.5 million in damage late yesterday. No injuries were reported. The DeKalb Fire Department responded to a fire alarm at the engineering building, 590 Garden Road, at 2337 hrs. They found a fire in an electrical lab that had been kept in check by a sprinkler, firefighters said in a news release today. Aid was called in from Sycamore and Cortland, and fire crews kept the blaze contained to the machine. Water damage was reported in other parts of the lab. Thirty-two firefighters were on scene at one point during the blaze, which was brought under control in about 45 minutes. The cause of the fire was listed as electrical.

OIL WELL, WHITTIER, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES

London, May 21 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: The owner of an oil well that exploded and sparked a fire in Whittier has warned that the area should be cleared because the 106-foot rigging above the well is damaged and could collapse. Two people suffered burns in the explosion that was reported around 1440, yesterday afternoon. Authorities say one person was critically injured, the other had moderate injuries. Los Angeles County fire spokesman Ed Osorio says a fire is still burning in the well, but firefighters are keeping it in check with foam. He says the valve to turn off the source of the fire is submerged in water. The fire spread to brush, at one point threatening nearby homes, but no homes were damaged.

PETROCHEMICAL PLANT, TEXAS CITY, TEXAS, UNITED STATES

London, May 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: BP has revised its statement that workers were primarily to blame for the Texas City refinery blast that killed 15 people and injured 170 others. Now, BP officials are saying that worker error was a critical factor in the Mar 23 explosion, but not the deeper cause. A BP spokesman says the company "simply used the wrong language" to describe the findings of an interim report on the explosion released last week. BP spokesman Hugh Depland says the mischaracterization was the company's fault. He says the true causes haven't yet been identified. Since the report, BP has taken heat from union leaders and victims. They say BP is blaming low and mid level workers and ignoring management responsibility. A union official says safety management had overlooked major safety issues for years.

PREMISES, GATINEAU, QUEBEC, CANADA

London, May 20 -- A press report, dated today, states: Gatineau

firefighters found their resources stretched to the limit last night as they fought to contain a major blaze in a Hull industrial building. Fire crews were called at about 1830 hrs, 166 de Varennes after witnesses said flames broke out in the NAPA Autopro garage, one of five businesses housed in the complex. Much of the interior of the building was gutted by the fire, but no damage estimate was immediately available. There was also no confirmation of the cause, but one witness said it might have been some machinery inside the auto shop. As flames spread throughout the two-storey complex, fire crews from across Gatineau raced to the scene. Ottawa fire crews were called across the river to help man Gatineau stations for several hours as all its units were tied up at the fire. Firefighters were still battling the blaze into the early hours this morning, said Daniel Albert, the Chief of Operations at the Gatineau Fire Dept. There were no injuries. Smoke still filled the sky four hours after the blaze began as crews cut into the roof to try to reach hot spots.

London, May 20 -- A press report, dated today, states: It took firefighters almost 11 hours to extinguish a major fire in Gatineau's industrial sector. Police reported that the blaze erupted shortly before 1900 hrs, yesterday. Environment officials have been called in because of concerns the fire may have involved dangerous materials. The fire caused an estimated Can\$1-million damage to three businesses. Police say it appears the fire was accidental. There are no reports of any injuries.

PREMISES, KENSINGTON, LIVERPOOL, UNITED KINGDOM

London, May 25 -- A press report, dated May 24, states: More than 60 firefighters were tackling a huge fire at Kensington Market in Liverpool today. Businesses on nearby Lockerbie Road and Farnham Road were evacuated as six crews from Liverpool and Wirral fought to control the blaze. Prescott Road was closed between Green Lane and Sheil Road. A fire service spokesman said a number of goods caught fire as well as tyres. Some traders were in the building but none were hurt. Councillor Frank Doran, who represents Kensington and Fairfield, said there had been concerns about the site. He said the city council had previously written to the market's owner, who lives in the Isle of Man, about safety.

PREMISES, WILLISTON, NORTH DAKOTA, UNITED STATES

London, May 20 -- A press report, dated May 18, states: GeoResources, Inc. today reported that its Leonardite operations have been suspended indefinitely due to fire damage sustained to its Leonardite plant in Williston, North Dakota on May 17. The fire was discovered by a Company employee at 0530 hrs, and contained by the Williston Rural Fire Department by 1300 hrs. No one was injured in the mishap. The fire

appears to have occurred in an area of the plant that contains offices, an electrical room and the plant process control room. The full extent of damage has not been determined, but the Company believes it is likely that significant damage was done to the electrical systems that control the operation of the plant equipment, although the actual processing equipment was relatively unaffected. The Company has begun to assess the damage in order to begin repairs to the plant. The Company has a policy with St. Paul Fire and Marine Insurance Co. to insure the plant and contents for up to \$2.1 million, but does not have business interruption insurance. GeoResources President, J. P. Vickers, said, "Although Leonardite operations have not been a substantial portion of our cash flow or profit in recent years, the fire is disappointing nonetheless. At this time the amount of damage and the cost of cleanup and lost production are not known, but we expect to provide updates as they occur."

RECYCLING PLANT, EL PASO, TEXAS, UNITED STATES

London, May 20 -- A press report, dated today, states: About 100 firefighters, including off-duty personnel, were using about 10,000 gallons of water a minute to battle a massive, raging blaze yesterday at a recycling site in an industrial area just south of Cielo Vista Mall in El Paso. Three firefighters were injured in the three-alarm fire, which was being fought by more than 25 vehicles. "This is one of the largest fires in recent history," fire Lt. Mario E. Hernandez said. Firefighters battled hours after the fire began about 1830 hrs, at El Paso General Recycling, 6807 Industrial south of Cielo Vista Mall. The burning materials included paper and possibly propane tanks.

REFINERY, TEXAS CITY, TEXAS, UNITED STATES

London, May 26 -- A press report, dated May 25, states: The energy company BP PLC has backed off its earlier report that workers were primarily to blame for a March refinery explosion that killed 15 people a report criticized by union officials. BP officials said that while worker error was a critical factor in the Mar 23 blast in Texas City, it was not the deeper cause. The company said it had not yet identified the cause. "We simply used the wrong language to describe the report's findings," BP spokesman Hugh Depland said Monday (May 23) of the interim report released last week. "Our fault." Most of the 15 who were killed worked for J.E. Merit Constructors Inc., a subsidiary of Jacobs Engineering Group Inc. in Pasadena. Since the initial report, BP has taken heat from union leaders and victims, who said BP was blaming low and midlevel workers and ignoring management responsibility. "As far as I'm concerned they tried to put the blame on lower-level workers and

make them scapegoats,' said Gary Beevers, region director of the United Steelworkers. "We are going forward with our own investigation.' Last week, Ross Pillari, president of Houston-based BP Products North America, said the core issue was workers not following procedures, and that supervisors and hourly workers face discipline.

RESTAURANT, FLORIDA, UNITED STATES

London, May 24 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Fire investigators are sifting through the rubble at Romano's Macaroni Grill on south U.S. 41, searching for what caused a fire that destroyed the restaurant this morning. The blaze broke out around 0300, this morning. The fire caused an estimated \$5 million in damage and sent one firefighter to the hospital.

SCHOOL, NEWHAVEN, EAST SUSSEX, UNITED KINGDOM

London, May 25 -- A press report, dated May 24, states: A 15-year-old boy has denied arson and burglary after an attack which caused £3m damage to an East Sussex school. The teenager from Newhaven, who cannot be named for legal reasons, appeared at Lewes Crown Court today. He was remanded in secure accommodation to await trial on Aug 22.

WAREHOUSE, JEDDAH, SAUDI ARABIA

London, May 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: A large fire broke out in a warehouse in the industrial area in southern Jeddah Tuesday morning (May 24). The fire burned for more than three hours before firefighters could bring it under control. The losses were estimated to be well into the millions of riyals. After receiving the call about 0600, the Jeddah fire department dispatched 19 firefighting teams and two helicopters to the scene to put out the blaze. According to a fire department official, the warehouse contained plastic materials and ammonia, both of which are highly flammable. He pointed out that the warehouse had fulfilled the necessary safety requirements. He added that there was no one on duty at the warehouse when the fire started. Officials said the fire may have been due to an electrical fault.

WILDFIRES, AUSTRALIA

London, May 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: Fire-fighters will remain at the scene of a blaze which blackened about 40 hectares of scrub near Cudlee Creek in the Adelaide Hills. At one stage the Country Fire Service had 200 personnel in the area, and issued a phase three warning to residents in the area, which has since been dropped. A water bombing aircraft was eventually brought in to contain the blaze. CFS spokesman Matt Bonser says two spot fires broke out early today, fanned by gusty early morning winds, which probably re-

kindled from yesterday's Fox Creek Road outbreak. "When our crews arrived this morning they reported they had winds in excess of 50-kilometres-per-hour and that fanned the fire quite well, and provided a few problems for our guys this morning," he said.

YACHTS, LIDO KEY, FLORIDA, UNITED STATES

London, May 26 -- A press report, dated May 25, states: A fire at Marine Max (in Lido key) caused about \$1.4 million in damage today, destroying two boats and scorching several others. It took 36 firefighters and 17 firefighting vehicles to control the predawn fire, which claimed a Sea Ray 420 Sundance and a Meridian 459 motor yacht. The state fire marshal has conducted tests to determine the cause of the fire, and the report should be available within days. "Since everything is plastic, it's harder to determine the cause in boat fires," said Paul Dezzi, a spokesman for the Sarasota County Fire Department. Firefighters from Station No. 3 in St. Armands, the first to arrive at the scene, had recently taken a course on boat fires. That training helped them to contain the fire, Dezzi said. Along with destroying the two yachts, one of which had been sold and was to have been delivered today, the fire melted some fiberglass and scorched hulls of several nearby boats. Dezzi said no fuel had leaked from the damaged boats and no injuries were reported. Don Smith, Marine Max general manager, said he had no idea what caused the fire. He said the Sea Ray will be replaced by one brought in from Pompano Beach. Smith said the fire caused no environmental damage.



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

See SWW943.

AIRCRAFT PUT BACK TO TOWNSVILLE AIRPORT, AUSTRALIA

London, May 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: A bird strike caused a scare for passengers on board a Qantas plane in Townsville. About 120 people were on board the Boeing 737 which was struck shortly after take-off from Townsville Airport yesterday evening. Emergency crews were on hand, but the aircraft made a safe return to the airport. No-one was hurt.

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

London, May 25 -- A press report, dated May 24, states: A ban on flights

by Turkish airline Onur Air to the Netherlands, France, Germany and Switzerland was lifted, after the airline promised to meet their safety concerns on its flights. The four countries will carry out controls on aircraft operated by the carrier in the coming weeks and pool the information to ensure the plan had taken effect.

C-GPXE

London, May 20 -- At 1800, May 18, Cessna 150M, C-GPXE, was practicing touch and go crosswind landings at Sexsmith, Ontario. While landing in a strong crosswind, the aircraft landed hard and control was lost. The left wing tip contacted the ground and the nose landing gear broke off. The aircraft spun around and came to rest upright. The pilot was not injured. The aircraft was substantially damaged.

CRASH, ADELAIDE AREA, SOUTH AUSTRALIA

See VH-TUF.

CRASH, ANDES MOUNTAINS, ARGENTINA

London, May 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: Border guard search teams yesterday found the dead bodies of three of the 10 passengers of a small plane which crashed in bad weather on Monday (May 16) in a remote part of southern Patagonia near the Chilean border. The plane crashed on Argentine territory across the border from the Chilean town of Balmaceda, from where it had departed. The plane belonged to the regional Chile airline Don Carlos and was taking staff of the Cerro Bayo mining company.

CRASH, BALLATER AREA, ABERDEENSHIRE, SCOTLAND

London, May 19 -- A press report, dated today, states: A rescue operation was launched today after a light aircraft crashed into a mountain range, police said. Grampian Police received a report from the Air Co-ordination and Rescue Centre at RAF Kinloss at around 1030 hrs, that a Cessna aircraft had come down about five miles from Ballater, Aberdeenshire. An RAF helicopter was sent to carry out a search of the area. The helicopter spotted the aircraft just north-east of Mount Keen, but so far there has been no trace of the pilot. The Cessna pilot, who is believed to be Austrian, had contacted Vienna Rescue who reported the matter to RAF Kinloss. A Grampian Police Mountain Rescue Team was being raised to go to the scene.

London, May 20 -- A press report, dated May 19, states: An Austrian pilot who crashed his aircraft into the mist-shrouded side of a Scottish mountain yesterday escaped with only a broken rib and a bloody nose. The Cessna 150 crashed close to the summit of the 3,081-foot peak of Mount Keen, five miles south-east of Ballater, scattering debris widely. The pilot was able to walk from the

wreckage virtually unscathed. Instead of alerting the emergency services to his plight, the businessman used his mobile phone to contact his office in Vienna before making himself comfortable inside his aircraft's inflatable orange dinghy, and waiting for rescuers to arrive. The incident happened shortly after 1000 yesterday after the pilot had taken off from Inverness airport, bound for Newcastle. He is understood to have been flying back to Austria after collecting the Cessna in the US and had already made a stopover in the Shetland Islands. Fifteen minutes after take-off, the aircraft encountered low cloud. The pilot later told his rescuers that he suddenly saw the side of mountain looming out of the dense mist and had virtually no time to react before the aircraft plunged into the ground, close to the summit of the mountain. Mike Mulford, a spokesman for the RAF rescue co-ordination centre at RAF Kinloss, said the aircraft had crashed on Mount Keen some 15 minutes after taking off from Inverness airport. He said: "The pilot then used his mobile phone to call his office in Vienna and they, for some reason, called the Royal Aircraft Establishment at Farnborough in Hampshire. They quickly realised it was not a matter for them and contacted a military unit at London airport which monitors mayday calls. The RAF unit at London has a direct hotline to the rescue centre at Kinloss and a search and rescue helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth was immediately scrambled." Mr Mulford added: "We knew exactly where he was because the aircraft had a global positioning system, but because of the low cloud and mist we could not see him." The crew of the Sea King was able to make direct contact with the injured pilot on his mobile phone. He was able to assure them he had sustained only minor injuries. Because of the poor visibility in the area and the remoteness of the crash site the pilot had to be rescued by members of the Grampian Police and Braemar mountain rescue teams, who managed to reach him within four hours of the crash. He was then stretchered off the hillside and taken by helicopter for treatment at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary. He was being detained overnight for observation.

CRASH, GOMA AREA, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

London, May 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: At least 27 people were killed today when an Antonov transport aircraft on a flight from the north-eastern city of Goma to the south-eastern town of Kongolo crashed in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo, military officials said. "Twenty-seven people, 22 passengers and five crew members, were killed in the crash of the plane," said a military source who spoke on condition of anonymity from Goma. The defence ministry and civil

aviation authorities in Kinshasa confirmed the crash but were not able to give any further details. The transport plane belonged to a private Congolese company Victoria Air and had been chartered by another group, Maniema Union.

CRASH, HARRIS COUNTY, UNITED STATES

London, May 20 -- A press report, dated May 19, states: Five people survived a crash when their Junior Bell Ranger 206B helicopter, on an oil and gas survey, plummeted nose-first yesterday morning into a field in north-east Harris County. All were listed in fair condition last night. Despite having a broken leg and injured back after being pulled from the wreckage, the pilot managed to tell investigators what he thought happened before being rushed by ambulance to Memorial Hermann Hospital in Houston, where his four passengers also were taken. He recalled feeling a sudden tug and thought the 150-ft cable hanging from the bottom of his Junior Bell Ranger 206B must have snagged something and yanked him back to the ground. Stunda said his initial assessment confirmed the cable, which has a hook on the end that is used to drop off equipment needed for seismographic surveys, had caught the corner of a fuel trailer. The National Transportation Safety Board makes the final determination of the cause of the accident. Stunda said the helicopter had a button that could have jettisoned the cable, but it was never activated. According to investigators, the accident occurred about 0830 hrs, minutes after the helicopter had filled its tank at a fueling station off FM 2100 in Huffman. The helicopter had risen about 20 ft and then plunged back to the ground before those on board realised what happened, said Sgt. Nat Gutierrez with the Harris County Sheriff's Office. The helicopter crumpled when it hit the ground. Its rotor blade was severed and flung 100 feet.

CRASH, NOVOSIBIRSK REGION, RUSSIA

London, May 22 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: A Yak-52 aircraft crashed in the Novosibirsk region today. The pilot died during a training mission when the aircraft crashed near the settlement of Barlak, Mashkovsky region, sources in the Krasnoyarsk Emergencies Department told Itar-Tass. According to preliminary reports, the main reason for the crash is that the pilot fainted during the flight.

CRASH, POTTERSURY, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE, UNITED KINGDOM

London, May 25 -- The BBC reported today: Two people have been injured after a Slingsby T67 crashed into a farm field, police have said. The two-seater aeroplane came down in a field off the A5 at Pottersury, near

Towcester, Northamptonshire, this evening. Northamptonshire Police said the extent of the injuries of those in the aircraft was not yet known. A spokeswoman for the Air Accidents Investigation Branch said the aircraft was based at Turweston Airfield, Bucks. A Northamptonshire Police spokesman said police are securing the scene and are awaiting the arrival of air collision investigators. It was confirmed that there are casualties but further details will be given when police identify the aircraft and those on board. The Northamptonshire Fire Service were called to the scene of the accident to ensure that there was no risk of the aircraft catching fire.

London, Mar 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: Two people were killed when a light aircraft crashed in Northamptonshire yesterday night. Investigators are at the scene of the crash in a field off the A5 road at Pottersury near Towcester. The Air Accidents Investigations Branch is trying to discover why the two-seater Slingsby T67 plane crashed. The victims are believed to have been a trainee pilot and an instructor. It is believed the aircraft had flown out of Turweston Airfield in Buckinghamshire, and belonged to a flying school.

CRASH, SVERDLOVSK REGION, RUSSIA

London, May 19 -- A press report, dated today, states: A light plane of the Russian air and space agency Rosaviakosmos has crashed in the Sverdlovsk Region. The pilot died, an adviser to the emergency situations minister, Viktor Beltsov has said. Radio contact with the light plane Aviatika-890U was lost at 1150 hrs. Thirty minutes later the wreckage was found in the area of the Uktum airdrome. Apparently, it fell from a high altitude. "The plane is completely destroyed and burnt," Beltsov said. An inquiry is has been launched.

CRASH, TEXAS, UNITED STATES

London, May 19 -- A press report, dated May 18, states: A helicopter crashed and broke apart in a wooded area today, injuring the four people on board, an official said. Some people at a construction site near the crash were also injured by flying debris, said Harris County Sheriff's Lt. John Martin. Martin said he had no information about the kind of helicopter or where it was going. Two of the people on board with serious injuries were transported to a Houston hospital by helicopter, Martin said. Two others with less serious injuries were taken to a local hospital. The area of the crash was about 16 miles west of Houston's Bush Intercontinental Airport.

EMERGENCY LANDING AT MUMBAI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, INDIA

London, May 20 -- A press report, dated today, states: A Paris-bound Air India aircraft with 428 passengers and crew aboard made a safe emergency

landing at Mumbai airport today after developing a technical problem, a spokesman for the airline said. "The plane has landed," Air India spokesman Jitendra Bhargava told Agence France-Presse. "All the passengers are safe." The aircraft developed a hydraulic failure and dumped fuel in the Arabian Sea before landing, airport director Sudhir Kumar said. He had no further details. The flight, AI 191, took off for Paris from the international airport in Mumbai at around 0900.

EMERGENCY LANDING, CALCUTTA, INDIA

London, May 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: A Thai Airways plane with more than 300 passengers on board had to make an emergency landing at Calcutta airport in India when a windscreen cracked en route from Bangkok to Munich on Sunday (May 22). Surapol Isarangura, director of THAI's crisis management and operations centre, said the pilot of flight TG924 noticed that there was a long crack on the third windshield on the right-hand side of his cabin at 30,000 feet, prompting him to make the emergency landing. The Boeing 747 plane landed safely and all 330 passengers stayed overnight in Calcutta before THAI arranged another plane to take them on to Munich later yesterday. He said the airline sent technicians to fix the windshield and have the plane back in Thailand by 0300 hrs, this morning. Boeing will send experts to investigate the 747, a model that has never developed this type of problem before.

EMERGENCY LANDING, ISRAEL INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

London, May 20 -- A press report, dated May 19, states: A Turkish aircraft carrying 294 passengers landed safely at Israel's international airport today after the pilot said he was having trouble deploying the landing gear, Israeli media reported. The Airbus aircraft landed safely with its wheels locked in place normally, Israeli media reported. The Airbus was flown by a Turkish charter company. An emergency had been declared at the airport when the pilot reported trouble.

EMERGENCY LANDING, ITAMI AIRPORT, OSAKA, JAPAN

London, May 21 -- A press report, dated today, states: Japan Airlines (JAL) aircraft carrying 172 passengers and crew made an emergency landing at a western Japanese airport today due to engine trouble, but no one was injured, an airport official said. The McDonnell Douglas MD-90 left Osaka's Itami airport for Nagasaki, southern Japan, at 0826 hrs but turned back around 30 minutes later, the official at Itami airport said. "Some 10 minutes after the take-off, pilots noticed engine trouble and shut down the plane's right engine. The plane flew on its left engine alone" until landing at Itami,

400 kilometres west of Tokyo, he said. The passengers switched to a substitute aircraft and arrived in Nagasaki before noon, the official said, adding that the cause of the engine trouble was under investigation.

EMERGENCY LANDING, JOHANNESBURG INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, SOUTH AFRICA

London, May 25 -- A press report, dated today, states: A Boeing 737 carrying 121 passengers made an emergency landing at Johannesburg International Airport this afternoon when a fire warning light flashed, an airport spokesperson said. Jacqui O'Sullivan said it had been a British Airways-Comair flight from Cape Town to Johannesburg. "A fire warning light appeared in the aircraft so the pilot shut down one of the engines," she said. "The plane landed safely and was escorted to a safety bay." No one was injured. It was not clear what caused the warning light to flash.

EMERGENCY LANDING, KARACHI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, PAKISTAN

Karachi, May 20 -- Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) said today that one of its Boeing aircraft, on a flight from Islamabad to Manchester with 348 passengers on board, made an emergency landing at Karachi International Airport following a bird strike yesterday. Flight PK-701 took off from Islamabad at 1120 hrs and was struck by a large bird. As a result, the pilot contacted air traffic control and requested permission to land. He was instructed to jettison extra fuel and land at Karachi. The aircraft landed at Karachi at 1318 hrs. The passengers continued their flight on board another aircraft. The aircraft was repaired and resumed operations this morning, a spokesman for the state-owned airline said. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

EMERGENCY LANDING, NETAJI SUBHAS BOSE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, KOLKATA, INDIA

London, May 23 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: A Thai international aircraft with 355 passengers on board made an emergency landing at Netaji Subhas Bose international airport today after developing some trouble, airport sources said. The pilot informed Kolkata Air Traffic Control that the aircraft, which was on its way from Bangkok to Munich, would make an emergency landing at the airport because of some "pressure difficulty" in the aircraft following which arrangements for emergency landing were immediately made. Ambulance and fire engines were kept ready near the runway to meet any situation, the sources said. After landing, the aircraft was thoroughly checked and it was found that one of its windshields on the right side of the pilot's cabin was damaged. All the passengers were safe, the sources added.

EMERGENCY LANDING, NORFOLK INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, UNITED STATES

London, May 20 -- A press report, dated May 19, states: A USAir Flight headed to Philadelphia from Wilmington had to make an emergency landing this afternoon at Norfolk International Airport. The aircraft had a low fuel pressure. The pilots had to land the aircraft with one of the engines down. Both Norfolk and Virginia Beach had emergency crews on stand-by at the runway. The aircraft landed safely just before 1800 hrs. No one was hurt. All the passengers on the plane were diverted to another aircraft towards Philadelphia at 1940 hrs.

EMERGENCY LANDING, PANDUKAPURA, SRI LANKA

London, May 24 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: A helicopter carrying Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse made an emergency landing on a paddy field at Pandukapura in Paduwasnuwara on Saturday (May 21) evening. He was on his way to Colombo after attending a pinnacle uncovering ceremony at the Sri Sudharshanarama Temple, Padaviya.

EMERGENCY LANDING, SCOTTSDALE AIRPORT, ARIZONA, UNITED STATES

See N4162K.

EMERGENCY LANDING, SHANNON AIRPORT, REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

London, May 21 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: A Continental Airlines aircraft has been forced to make an emergency landing at Shannon Airport after developing engine difficulties over the Atlantic Ocean. The aircraft, which can hold up to 180 passengers, took off from Shannon this morning destined for Newark in the United States but was forced to turn back after twenty minutes in the air. The full emergency plan was activated at the airport but the aircraft landed safely shortly after 2300 hrs. It's been towed from the runway and both passengers and crew have disembarked without injury.

EMERGENCY LANDING, TANAUAN, BATANGAS, PHILIPPINES

London, May 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: Poor visibility forced the pilot of a single engine Piper Cherokee aircraft from Caticlan, Aklan to make an emergency landing late this afternoon at a sugar plantation in Barangay. None of the aircraft's three passengers were hurt, said Max Reyes, Tanauan's chief of police operations. The aircraft, which took off from Caticlan, Aklan at 1443 hrs, was headed towards Manila. Beverly Isle Leisure Corporation is the registered owner of the rented aircraft, authorities said.

FLIGHTS DELAYED DUE TO FOG, NEW ZEALAND

London, May 22 -- A press report, dated May 20, states: Fifteen domestic

and at least two international flights were cancelled at New Zealand airports this morning as airlines struggled to clear the backlog caused by low cloud and fog at Christchurch and Wellington Airports. Air New Zealand and Qantas say about 6,000 passengers have had their travel plans disrupted. They say they are putting on additional flights to assist passengers. Queenstown airport also had three flights cancelled due to low cloud. Yesterday thick fog saw 80 Air New Zealand flights to and from both Wellington and Christchurch cancelled.

INCIDENT AT LEEDS BRADFORD AIRPORT, YORKSHIRE, UNITED KINGDOM

London, May 19 -- A press report, dated May 18, states: Flights are being delayed after a plane overshot the runway at Leeds Bradford International Airport. Emergency crews were alerted when the LTE International A320 Airbus from Fuerteventura in the Canary Islands experienced "problems on landing". All 171 passengers were evacuated safely from the aircraft after West Yorkshire Fire Service sent 10 pumps and 50 firefighters to the scene. An airport spokesman said today that the runway had partially opened. A statement from the airport added: "An A320 LTE aircraft arriving from Fuerteventura at 1240 BST, had problems on landing which resulted in it coming to rest at the end of the runway. The 171 passengers on board were disembarked using the aircraft steps and coached back to the terminal with no reported injuries to any passengers. The Air Accident Investigation Team will look to identify the cause and it is hoped the runway will be operational as soon as possible." A fire service spokeswoman said they had been alerted by the airport at 1245 BST, that a plane had gone off the end of the runway. Working in conjunction with the airport fire service they evacuated all passengers by 1340 BST. Paramedics from West Yorkshire Metropolitan Ambulance Service confirmed none of the passengers were injured.

INCIDENT NEAR JEAN AIRPORT, NEVADA, UNITED STATES

London, May 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: A helicopter made a hard landing at the airport near Jean, southern Nevada. The pilot and passenger were able to walk away from the crash. The helicopter is owned by Jan Air of Merced, California. After what's described as a hard landing, the helicopter came to rest a hundred yards from a runway. The FAA is now investigating. Neither the pilot nor the passenger reported any injury.

N17836

London, May 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: No one was injured yesterday when a single-engine plane crashed on Camp Wahsega Road near Wimpy Airport in

Lumpkin County. Kathleen Bergen, spokeswoman for the Federal Aviation Administration in Atlanta, said the accident happened at about 1352 hrs. "A 1977 Beechcraft Bonanza with one person on board lost power on its approach to the airport and had to make a forced landing," she said. Cpl. Curt Donaldson of the Lumpkin County Sheriff's Office would not identify the pilot, but said the man is a Gainesville resident and his flight originated at Gainesville's Lee Gilmer Memorial Airport. "When he got down to 2,000 feet, the engine stalled on him and he had to make a hard landing," Donaldson said. "The plane then went airborne again, hit a couple of trees, and lost the right wing." Donaldson said damage to the plane was extensive, but the pilot "walked away without a scratch." Bergen said the FAA will spend "a number of weeks" investigating the incident. "We'll have to talk to the pilot and to witnesses, and inspect the plane," she said.

London, May 24 -- Beechcraft Bonanza A36 N17836 crashed near Dahlonega, Georgia, at 1752, May 23, while on a flight from Gainesville, GA, to Dahlonega. The one person on board was not injured.

N217AW

London, May 23 -- Piper PA-28-140 (Cherokee), N217AW, crashed near Ravenna, Ohio, at 1800, May 22, while on a flight to Youngstown, OH. The one person on board was killed.

London, May 24 -- A press report, dated May 23, states: The Ohio State Highway Patrol said a pilot died in a plane crash yesterday afternoon. The plane went down in a farm field near Ravenna in Portage County. The pilot, who was the only person on board, died at the scene. Witnesses said the Piper Cherokee was circling the area and then nose-dived into the ground. The crash remains under investigation.

N276M

London, May 20 -- Bell 206B JetRanger N276M crashed near Houston, Texas, at 1326, May 18. The aircraft was destroyed. One of the four persons on board was seriously injured.

N3004U

London, May 21 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: A small aircraft crashed at the Santa Catalina Island airport today, injuring three people, authorities said. Only one of the three was hurt seriously enough to be taken to a hospital, said Inspector Ron Haralson of the Los Angeles County Fire Department. The crash happened about 1700 hrs on the edge of the island some 26 miles off the coast of Southern California. Authorities didn't immediately know the cause. Television news footage showed the aircraft, with one crumpled wing, had come to rest near the airport's runway. There was no sign of fire or smoke.

London, May 23 -- Piper PA-28-181 (Cherokee Archer II) N3004U crashed

on landing at Catalina Airport, Avalon, California, at 0001, May 21, following a flight from Long Beach, CA. The aircraft sustained substantial damage. One of the three persons on board was seriously injured and the other two suffered minor injuries.

N312MA

London, May 25 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: A small aircraft crashed near a suburban Portland airport late this afternoon, killing all four people on board, authorities said. The privately owned aircraft crashed shortly after take-off in a field across a street from the end of the Hillsboro Airport runway, said Connie King, a spokeswoman for the Hillsboro Fire Department. The names of the crash victims were not immediately released. It was not known where they were headed. News helicopters circling overhead showed the wreckage of a Mitsubishi MU-2, a type of aircraft used by businesses for commuter flights and light cargo. Based on the aircraft's tail number, it was registered to a Hillsboro address. The cause of the crash had not been determined, but Federal Aviation Administration investigators were at the scene.

London, May 25 -- Mitsubishi MU-2B-25 N312MA crashed near Hillsboro, Oregon, at 0052, May 24, while on a flight from Hillsboro. The aircraft was destroyed. The four persons on board were killed.

N4162K

London, May 19 -- Piper PA-34 220-T, N4162K, operated by Sabena Airline Training Center Inc., left main-gear collapsed on landing and aircraft skidded off runway at Scottsdale, Arizona, at 2110, local time, May 17. The aircraft sustained substantial damage.

N6807R

London, May 19 -- A press report, dated May 18, states: Rescue workers say they're unable to recover the bodies of four California residents killed in an aircraft crash (N6807R) on Whitehouse Mountain. Ouray County Sheriff Dominic Mattivi says two crew members flew by helicopter to the crash site early this morning, but every time they tried to land, the chopper started sliding down the snow-covered mountain. Mattivi says the terrain is so rugged it would take the recovery team several days to hike into the area, and several more to hike out. He says he's working to get a high-altitude helicopter, so the team members can be flown in, and possibly lowered to the wreckage. Civil Air Patrol fliers found the wreckage Friday (May 13), the day after relatives reported the aircraft overdue at Elbert, about 150 miles away.

London, May 20 -- A press report, dated May 19, states: Two bodies were recovered from an aircraft (N6807R) that crash in the rugged, snow-covered mountains of south-west Colorado today, but bodies of the two other people on board the aircraft were

missing. The bodies found today were believed to be those of the pilot, Robert Ford, and his wife, said Ouray County Sheriff Dominic Mattivi. The bodies of their son, Richard Ford, and his four-year-old son, Matthew, have not been located. Another search will be made in two to three weeks when conditions improve, Mattivi said. "That's all we can do right now," he said. "We just don't know where the other two victims are. They could be buried under 6 inches of snow or 10 feet." The Cessna 210 was reported overdue May 12 when it failed to arrive in Elbert, about 150 miles away. The Civil Air Patrol found the wreckage near Whitehouse Mountain on May 13. A helicopter landed above the crash site today morning and dropped off a recovery crew. Team members then hiked through waist-deep snow to clear a landing site closer to the bodies.

N756PN

London, May 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: Two people were killed yesterday when the small aircraft they were in crashed and burst into flames near Danbury Municipal Airport, the Federal Aviation Administration said. The Cessna 182 went down at 1130 hrs about 4 miles north of the airport in a wooded area off Gillotti Road, FAA spokesman Jim Peters said. The crash site is near New Fairfield High School and a middle school. The aircraft was registered to the Gace Flying Club in Ronkonkoma, N.Y., Peters said. Messages seeking comments were left at Gace Flying Club. Sergeant J. Paul Vance, a Connecticut State Police spokesman, said the aircraft was heading to Long Island from Albany, N.Y. "At some point and time during the flight, the pilot reported experiencing engine and oil pressure problems," Vance said.

London, May 24 -- Cessna 182R (Skylane RG) N756PN crashed near Danbury, Connecticut, at 1520, May 23, while on a flight from Malone Dufort, New York, to Islip, NY. The aircraft was destroyed. The two persons on board were killed.

N778LP

London, May 22 -- A press report, dated today, states: A small aircraft on a sightseeing tour over Coney Island went into a tailspin and slammed into the famous beach yesterday, killing all four people on board. The victims died at the scene of the afternoon crash of the Cessna 172S, Federal Aviation Administration spokeswoman Holly Baker said. There were relatively few people on the beach at the time, and no one on the ground was hurt. Eyewitnesses said the aircraft was circling above the Brooklyn beach when its engine suddenly stalled, and the aircraft quickly plunged into the beach. The pilot tried desperately to right the four-year-old aircraft after it went into a tailspin. The cause of the crash was unknown, and the National Transportation Safety Board will

investigate. The aircraft was registered to RJ Ventures LLC of Paramus, N.J.

London, May 23 -- Cessna 172S (Skyhawk SP) N778LP crashed on Coney Island, New York, at 1300, May 21. The aircraft sustained substantial damage. The four persons on board were killed.

N9017Z

London, May 20 -- A press report, dated today, states: The pilot of a crop duster was killed yesterday when his Air Tractor AT-602 crashed in a cotton field after hitting a tower that collects wind data, Federal Aviation Administration officials said. Crosby County Judge Joe Heflin identified the man as William Wade Tidwell, of Ransom Canyon. The crash occurred at about 0945 hrs about eight miles south-east of Ralls. No one else was on board the aircraft, authorities said. The FAA is investigating the crash.

London, May 20 -- Air Tractor AT-602, N9017Z, operated by McAdoo Flying Service Inc, while on an aerial application flight from Crosbyton, Texas, with one person on board, came into contact with a tower eight miles south-east of Ralls, Texas, at 1444, UTC, May 19, and was destroyed. The pilot died.

N9951Q

London, May 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: A banner tow plane crashed near Conway yesterday afternoon. The crash killed both people on board. The accident happened just before 1300 hrs, near Sky Field - a grass landing strip off Highway 701 south of Conway. Horry County Fire Department spokesman Todd Cartner says the plane is a Piper PA-18 Supercub. According to records on the Federal Aviation Administration website, the plane is owned by Sky Signs, LLC. Sky Signs own the landing strip. Witnesses say the plane made its second turn after takeoff to pick up an advertising banner from the field. They say the plane crashed nose first into the ground. Officials say two people were on board, the pilot and a student pilot. The student pilot died at the scene. An air ambulance flew the pilot to the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston. He died at the hospital. Officials do not know what caused the crash.

London, May 24 -- Piper PA-18-135 N9951Q crashed near Conway, South Carolina, at 1645, May 23, following take-off from Conway. The two persons on board were killed.

SWW943

London, May 19 -- Boeing 737, SWW943, operated by Southwest Airlines, on a flight from Las Vegas, Nevada, to San Jose, California, encountered severe turbulence at FL380, over Mount Whitney, at 2150, local time, May 16. Two flight attendants and one passenger sustained minor injuries. Aircraft landed safely at San Jose, California.

VH-TUF

London, May 26 -- American Champion 7-GCAA, VH-TUF, crashed under unknown circumstances in Stonefield, South Australia, at 1535, local time, May 15. The pilot, who was also the registered owner of the aircraft, and passenger were killed. The aircraft was destroyed.

Product Recalls



CIRCULAR SAWS, UNITED STATES

Washington, DC, May 18 -- The US Consumer Product Safety Commission announces the recall 69,000 BOSCH Circular Saws in voluntary co-operation with Robert Bosch Tool Corp, of Mount Prospect, Ill. Consumers should stop using recalled products immediately unless otherwise instructed. The lower blade guard can malfunction, creating a risk of injury as severe as amputation. The firm has received three reports of malfunctioning lower guards, including one amputation. The recall circular saws include the BOSCH CS10, CS20 and CS20-XC models, which can be identified on the product nameplate mounted on the top of the motor housing. The recalled models do not have an asterisk (*) in the serial number box. The circular saw uses a 7°-inch blade and has a blue handle and motor enclosure, and a metal guarding system. The name "BOSCH" is printed on the blade guard. Sold at Home Depot, Lowe's and Menards nation-wide, as well as independent hardware retailers and industrial distributors, from February 2004 through April 2005 for between \$120 and \$150. Manufactured in the United States. Consumers should stop using the circular saws immediately and contact Robert Bosch Tool Corp. to receive a repair kit. The kit includes hardware and instructions for installation. -- Consumer Product Safety Commission.

COMPUTER BATTERIES, UNITED STATES

London, May 23 -- A press report, dated May 20, states: About 128,000 rechargeable lithium ion batteries for iBook G4 and PowerBook G4 laptops by Apple Computer Inc. are being recalled because the units can overheat and pose a fire hazard. Apple has received six reports worldwide of batteries overheating, including two in the United States. The batteries are used in 12-inch iBook G4 and 12-inch and 15-inch PowerBook G4 computers. National and regional resellers, catalogers, and Apple's online and retail stores sold the computers with the batteries from October 2004 through May 2005 for between \$900 to \$2300. The batteries also were sold separately for about \$130.

DAIMLERCHRYSLER MERCEDES MOTOR VEHICLES, UNITED STATES

London, May 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration said DaimlerChrysler AG is recalling 7,191 of its 2006 model-year Mercedes M-class sport-utility vehicles because a clamp that secures the power steering fluid cooling hose may be defective and could cause a loss of the fluid. This could diminish power steering and lead to a crash, the NHTSA said.

FOLDING CHAIRS, UNITED STATES

London, May 24 -- The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission has reported a recall of approximately two million children's folding chairs, in voluntary co-operation with the product's distributor: Summit Marketing International LLC, of Dublin, Ohio. The chair's safety lock can fail, allowing the chair to collapse or fold unexpectedly. Children's fingers can become caught or entrapped in the hinge and slot areas of the chair, posing a pinch or cut hazard. This can cause severe lacerations and finger tip amputations to children's fingers. The firm has received seven reports of the chairs collapsing, resulting in four finger tip amputations, one laceration, and bruises to children's fingers. The recalled children's folding chairs, manufactured in China, are made of metal tubing with a padded seat. They were sold in red, blue, yellow and green colours either individually or as part of a set consisting of a table and two, four, or six chairs. Each chair is about 22-inches high, 10-inches wide, and about 11-inches deep. The chairs were sold at hardware, discount department, toy, grocery and drug stores nation-wide from September 2002 through to May 2005 for about \$10 individually and for about \$45 for a set.

GO-KARTS, UNITED STATES

Washington, DC, May 20 -- The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission announces the recall of about 9,000 Carter Brothers Fun-Kart (Go-Karts) in voluntary co-operation with Carter Brothers Manufacturing Co. Inc., of Brundidge, Ala. Consumers should stop using recalled products immediately unless otherwise instructed. No injuries reported. Description: The recall includes one-seater models 1136-3020, 1136-3021, 1136-3420, 1136-3421, 1205-3020 and two-seater models 2336-3021, 2336-

3022, 2336-5019, 2575-3020, 2575-3420, 2605-3416, 2605-3515, 2606-3016, 2606-3017, 2606-3416, 2606-3417, 2636-3016, 2636-3017, 2906-3015, 2906-3016, 2906-3017, 2906-4015, 2906-4016, 2906-4017, 2909-3015, 2909-3415, 2909-4015, 2910-3015, 2910-3016, 2910-3415, 2910-4015, 2910-4016, 2910-4415, 2911-4015, 2911-4016, 2946-3015, and 2946-3016. The model number and serial number is located under the seat (on the driver's side if two-seater). The Fun-Karts were produced in several colours to include red, black, blue, purple and green. Sold at Carter Brothers dealers nation-wide from April 2003 through March 2005 for between \$900 and \$2,900. Manufactured in United States. Consumers should stop using the recalled Fun-Karts immediately. Registered owners of the vehicles will be notified directly by Carter Brothers about the recall. Consumers can call or visit their local Carter Brothers Dealer to schedule a free repair. -- Consumer Product Safety Commission.

HONDA MOTOR VEHICLES, UNITED STATES

London, May 25 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Honda recalled 14,967 of its Element sports utility vehicles in the United States produced between December and April due to a glitch in wiring that could affect the tail lights, company spokeswoman Sachi Ito said. It also recalled 17 of the same model in Canada, she said, adding that no accidents have been reported due to the problem.

KIA MOTOR VEHICLES, UNITED STATES

London, May 26 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: South Korean automaker Kia's U-S distributor is recalling more than 37,000 mini-vans. The Sedona mini-vans have potential damage to a rear-wheel bearing that could cause a crash. The recall covers Sedonas from the 2003-to-2005 model years equipped with alloy wheels. Kia says there have been four warranty claims related to the problem, but it's unaware of any accidents caused by the defect. Owners are expected to be notified in early June.

MAZDA MOTOR VEHICLES, JAPAN

London, May 20 -- A press report, dated today, states: Mazda Motor Corp said yesterday it will recall some 46,000 commercial vehicles in five models, including the Bongo and

Titan, that were produced between December 2003 and March 2005. The rear wheels of these vehicles could lock because of weak braking system parts, it said in a published report to the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport.

TOYOTA MOTOR VEHICLES, JAPAN

See "Toyota Motor Vehicles, World-wide."

TOYOTA MOTOR VEHICLES, WORLD-WIDE

London, May 26 -- A press report, dated May 23, states: Toyota Motor Corp. is recalling about 4,900 of its 2005 model-year Avalon sedans in the United States to fix a defect in the steering wheel column that could result in a loss of control of the vehicle, the company and U.S. safety regulators said today. "A portion of the steering column assembly may not have been welded correctly," Toyota spokesman John McCandless said. London, May 19 -- A press report, dated May 18, states: Japanese carmaker Toyota has recalled 880,000 sports utility vehicles (SUVs) and pick-up trucks world-wide because of problems with the front suspension. The vehicles affected are Tundra pick-up trucks and Sequoia, Landcruiser Prado and 4Runner/Hilux Surf SUVs built between May 2001 and December 2003. The majority of affected vehicles were sold in the US, while the rest were sold in Japan, Europe and Australia. A Toyota spokesman said there had been one report of an accident in Japan. Toyota did not give details of how much the recall would cost. The company recently reported a fifth year of record profits on the back of higher sales to the US and China. Shares in Toyota lost 0.8% in Tokyo on Wednesday following news of the recall.

Port Conditions**ITALY**

Genoa, May 23 -- Port situation May 23: Genoa: One general cargo waiting for berth. Average number of days delay in berthing one day. La Spezia: No vessels awaiting normal berths. Savona: No vessels awaiting normal berth. No vessels awaiting special berth. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Port Delays

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

| Country/Port | Date of report | No.of vessels waiting and/or days delay |
|-------------------|----------------|--|
| Australia | | |
| Abbott Point | 23-May-05 | Coal: One vessel at berth, 1 at anchor; 6 vessels due by 8/6; up to 8 days delay expected.. |
| Brisbane | 23-May-05 | Coal: Fisherman Island coal berth; One vessel at berth; 4 vessels due by 25/6; up to no delays expected. |
| Dalrymple Bay | 23-May-05 | Coal: Three vessels at berth, 27 at anchor; 39 vessels due by 1/7; 10- 30 days delay expected. Vessels are berthing in order of cargo availability. Shippers have a certain entitlement of coal shipped through the terminal. If they exceed their entitlement, additional vessels are moved further down the list, with a resulting additional delay in berthing. |
| Dampier | 23-May-05 | Iron ore: Shippers are experiencing some grade/stockpile problems. Some vessels will berth out of turn and the berthing lineup may change at short notice. Shippers do not guarantee vessel will be able to load up to the maximum sailing draft available. Parker Point: One vessel loading at berth, 6 at anchor; 7 vessels due by 11/6; up to 8 days delay expected; East Intercourse Island; Six vessels at anchor; 8 vessels due by 4/6; up to 8 days delay expected; a shift to lay-by on completion of loading always possible. |
| Geraldton | 23-May-05 | Iron ore: One vessel at anchor; 2 vessels due by 9/6; no delays expected. |
| Gladstone | 23-May-05 | Coal: R.G. Tanna coal terminal: Two vessels at berth, 6 at anchor; 38 vessels due by 17/6; up to 8 days delay expected; Barney Point: 11 vessels due by 25/6; up to 3 days delay expected. CQPA have proposed a shutdown of Barney Point shiploading activities from 0600, 16/5, to 1800, 26/5, for section replacement of wharf deck. |
| Hay Point | 23-May-05 | Coal: Twp vessels at berth, 4 at anchor; 4 vessels due by 28/5; up to 8 days delay expected |
| Newcastle | 23-May-05 | Coal: Kooragang 4, 5 and 6: 6 vessels at anchor; 45 vessels due by 15/6; Dykes 4+5: 2 vessels at anchor; 15 vessels due by 11/6; Kooragang and Dyke terminals: up to 4 days delay expected. |
| Port Hedland | 23-May-05 | Iron ore: BHP Iron Ore Pty. Ltd., Mt. Newman (Nelson Point), "A" berth: One vessel loading at berth, 5 vessels due by 31/5; up to 1 day's delay expected; "B" berth: 1 vessel loading at berth; 8 vessels due by 1/6; up to 2 days delay expected; BHP Iron Ore Pty. Ltd., Goldsworthy (Finucane Island "C" berth): 1 vessel loading at berth; 2 vessels due by 30/5; no delays expected; "D" berth: 1 vessel loading at berth, 3 vessels at anchor; 2 vessels due by 27/5; up to 7 days delay expected. |
| Port Kembla | 23-May-05 | Coal: Fourteen vessels due by 7/7; CB1: no vessels; up to 2 days delay expected. |
| Port Walcott | 23-May-05 | Iron ore: Two vessels loading at berth, 6 at anchor; 13 vessels due by 5/6; up to 7 days delay expected; cargo grade shortages and stockpile may result in vessels berthing out of turn; shippers request that load plans be submitted as early as possible (8 days) so they can co-ordinate stockpiles more effectively; shippers advise that stores, air freight and baggage can no longer be delivered to the vessel or taken off at berth, but must be delivered/removed by launch. |
| Azerbaijan | | |
| Apsheiron | 23-May-05 | Oil products: Dubendi terminal: 4 vessels berthed of which 1 discharging crude oil, 1 discharging fuel oil, 1 waiting to discharge crude oil, 1 gasoil; 3 vessels in roads, all to discharge, of which 1 crude oil, 2 fuel oil; 1 vessel due 23/5, to discharge crude oil. |
| Chile | | |
| Antofagasta | 21-May-05 | Four vessels berthed, 3 berths vacant; 12 vessels due this week to load/discharge concentrates, bulk copper, containers, general cargo. |
| Arica | 21-May-05 | Four vessels berthed, 3 berths vacant; 13 vessels due this week. |
| Iquique | 21-May-05 | Three vessels berthed, 4 berths vacant; 12 vessels due this week. |
| Punta Arenas | 21-May-05 | Three vessels at terminal, 4 berths vacant; 9 vessels due this week |
| San Antonio | 21-May-05 | Five vessels berthed, 4 berths vacant; 23 vessels due this week. |
| San Vicente | 21-May-05 | Three vessels berthed, 2 berths vacant; 12 vessels due during the week; Steel pier: 1 vessel at terminal, 1 berth vacant; no vessels due this week; Coronel pier: 2 vessels at terminal, 2 berths vacant; 2 vessels due this week; Oil terminal: 1 tanker at terminal, 1 berth vacant; 1 tanker due this week. |
| Valparaiso | 21-May-05 | Three vessels berthed, 5 berths vacant; 4 vessels at anchorage: 11 vessels due this week. |

Port Conditions

Cyprus

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| Limassol | 24-May-05 | Four container vessels loading/discharging at berth, 5 conventional vessels discharging at berth; 11 vessels due 25/5, of which 6 containers, 1 conventional vessel, 4 passenger vessels; no delays expected. |
| Larnaca | 24-May-05 | Two conventional vessels discharging at berth; 1 conventional vessel due 25/5; no delays expected. |

Egypt

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| Adabiya | 23-May-05 | Five vessels at berth (loading/discharging) of which 2 general cargo, 1 bulk carrier, 1 tanker, 1 container vessel. |
| Alexandria | 23-May-05 | Forty-three vessels at berth (loading/discharging) of which 29 general cargo, 3 bulk carriers, 2 tankers; 22 vessels at inner anchorage, 11 at outer anchorage; 15 vessels dry-docked. |
| Damietta | 23-May-05 | Eighteen vessels at berth (loading/discharging) of which 11 general cargo, 3 bulk carriers, 1 tanker, 1 Ro/Ro, 2 container vessels; 5 vessels at outer anchorage. |
| Dekheila | 23-May-05 | Nine vessels at berth (loading/discharging) of which 6 bulk carriers, 1 tanker, 2 containers; 2 vessels at outer anchorage. |
| Port Said | 23-May-05 | Ten vessels at berth (loading/discharging) of which 1 general cargo, 9 container vessels. |
| Suez | 23-May-05 | Nine vessels at berth (loading/discharging) of which 2 general cargo, 2 reefers, 4 passenger vessels; 3 tug boats; 2 vessels dry-docked. |
| Suez Canal | 23-May-05 | Twenty-two vessels transiting Northbound, 17 Southbound. |

Estonia

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| Tallinn | 23-May-05 | Paljassaare (formerly Kopli): 1 vessel loading coal at berth, 1 discharging cacao beans at berth; 2 vessels due, with 8 days delay expected. |
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India

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| Kolkata | 23-May-05 | 2 vessels operating at berth of which 1 vessel waiting to load General Cargo, 1 vessel loading and discharging General Cargo ; 1 Log vessel discharging at mid stream; 2 Containers vessels due. |
| Haldia | 23-May-05 | 10 vessels operating at berth of which 5 loading (Iron Ore-4, Thermal Coal), 4 vessels discharging (LPG, Coke, Rock Phosphate, Moke), 1 vessel loading and discharging Containers; 6 vessels awaiting berth (3 to discharge, 3 to load), 1 vessel waiting at anchorage to load; 6 vessels due (POL, Coking Coal, PRXL, Crude, More, Soya,). |
| Paradip | 23-May-05 | 6 vessels operating at berth of which 4 loading (Thermal Coal, Coking Coal-2, Iron Ore), 2 vessels discharging S. Coal; 2 vessels awaiting berth (2 to load), 1 vessel waiting at anchorage to load. |
| Visakhapatnam | 23-May-05 | 7 vessels operating at berth of which 3 loading(Iron Ore, B.F. Slag-2), 4 vessels discharging (Coking Coal, Steam Coal, DBM Bags, Product); 10 vessels not ready to work and waiting at anchorage (2 to load, 8 to discharge) ; 28 vessels due (Iron Ore-7, C. P. Coke, Alumina Powder-2, Steel Cargo-2, Naptha, Containers-3, Styrene Monomer, Coking Coal-3. Rock Phosphate, Ammonium Nitrate, Phosphoric Acid, Liquid Sulphur, Crude Oil, Methanol, Muriate of Potash, |
| Chennai | 23-May-05 | 12 vessels operating at berth of which 3 loading (C. Stone, HR Coil, Furnace Oil), 7 vessels discharging (Raw Sugar, HM Scrap, PFAD, Rock Phosphate, Steel Coal, Thermal Coal, High Speed Diesel), 2 vessels loading and discharging (Granite Block/General Cargo, Containers); 1 vessel not ready to work and waiting at anchorage to discharge; 2 vessels due (Steel Pipes/Granite Block, Sulphur) |
| Tuticorin | 23-May-05 | 8 vessels operating at berth of which 2 loading (General Cargo, Ilminite Sand), 6 vessels discharging (T. Logs- 2, Thermal Coal-2, I. Coal, Salt); 2 vessels not ready to work and waiting at anchorage to load |
| Cochin | 23-May-05 | 5 vessels operating at berth of which 1 vessel loading Naphtha, 2 vessels discharging (Copra, Crude), 2 vessels loading and discharging Containers. |
| New Mangalore | 23-May-05 | 5 vessels operating at berth of which 3 loading Iron Ore Fines, 2 vessels discharging (Timber, LPG); 3 vessels waiting at anchorage to load; 13 vessels due (Iron Ore Fines-3, POL Crude, Container, POL Product-3, LPG, Iron Ore (P), Crude Palm Oil, Granite Stone). |
| Mormugao | 23-May-05 | 3 vessels operating at berth of which 1 loading Iron Ore, 2 vessels discharging (Coal, M. Coke); 4 vessels working at mid stream to load Iron ore; 2 vessels awaiting berth to discharge, 5 vessels waiting at anchorage to load; 4 vessels under repairs/dry docked; 9 vessels due (Steel, MOP, R.P. Coke, Iron Ore-6). |

Port Conditions

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| Mumbai | 23-May-05 | 19 vessels operating at berth of which 3 loading General Cargo, 12 vessels discharging (General Cargo-4, Fertiliser (RM)- 2, Fertilizer-2, POL-4) , 4 vessels loading and discharging (Containers , General Cargo-3); 1 vessel working at mid stream to discharging Mixed Fatty Acid; 1 vessel awaiting order to discharge, 8 vessels waiting at anchorage (4 to discharge, 1 to load, 3 to load & discharge); 11 vessels under repairs/dry docked, 12 under arrest; 1 vessel under laid up (Berth not required for cargo operations); 18 vessels due (Container-4, Oil, Other Dry Bulk, Fertiliser (RM), General Cargo-11). |
| J.N.P.T. | 23-May-05 | 8 vessels operating at berth of which 3 vessels discharging (Cement, Lubricant Oil, Super Kerosene Oil) , 5 vessels loading and discharging Containers; 3 vessels awaiting berth to discharge; 3 vessels due (HSD/SKO, Lubricant Oil, Meg). |
| Ennore | 23-May-05 | 5 vessels due (MV Dubai Faith, MV Apj Akhil, MV Apj Sri Devi, MV Rani Padmini, MV Gem of Ennore). |
| Kandla | 23-May-05 | 17 vessels operating at berth of which 10 discharging (Timber Logs, Iron Scrap, St. Coils, MOP-2, Chemical, Butane, Naptha, CPO, Furnace Oil) , 5 vessels loading (Wheat, Marble Blocks, Salt, Castor Seed, Castor Oil) , 2 vessels loading and discharging Containers; 10 vessels due (Steel Pipes, Agriculture Product-3. Wheat, Timber Logs, Containers, DSBO, Naptha, CPO). |
| Israel | | |
| Ashdod | 24-May-05 | Three general cargo vessels loading at berth, 11 vessels discharging at berth (9 general cargo, 2 bulkers), 3 vessels loading/discharging at berth (2 containers, 1 tanker); 5 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (3 general cargo, 2 bulkers), 1 container vessel waiting at anchorage to load/discharge; 1 vessel awaiting orders; 21 vessels due, with 2-3 days delay expected. |
| Haifa | 24-May-05 | Five vessels discharging at berth (4 general cargo, 1 bulker), 8 vessels loading/discharging at berth (6 containers, 2 tankers); 2 general cargo vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge, 5 vessels waiting at anchorage to load/discharge (3 containers, 2 tankers); 2 vessels under repairs/dry-docked, 1 awaiting orders; 13 vessels due, with 2-3 days delay expected |
| Pakistan | | |
| Karachi | 23-May-05 | Three vessels loading at berth (1 rice, 2 cement), 5 discharging at berth (2 general cargo, 1 MAP, 1 phosphorus, 1 crude oil), 2 loading/discharging containers; 1 vessel waiting at anchorage to discharge fertiliser; 7 vessels due (4 containers, 2 naphtha, 1 crude oil), with no delays expected. |
| Port Qasim | 23-May-05 | Fourteen vessels discharging at berth (11 ore, 2 palm oil, 1 HSD); 1 vessel waiting at anchorage to load containers, 12 waiting at anchorage to discharge (1 container, 11 ore); QICT berth: 1 vessel loading/discharging containers. |
| Russia | | |
| Novorossiysk | 23-May-05 | Fifteen vessels in port operating, of which 11 loading (1 DRI, 1 bulk NPK, 2 scrap, 1 pig-iron, 1 pipes, 2 copper, 1 bulk ammonium nitrate, 1 aluminium, 1 UAN solution), 4 discharging (1 bulk sugar, 1 bulk NPK, 1 bulk fertiliser, 1 bananas); 5 vessels waiting in roads, of which 2 to discharge (1 ore, 1 bulk sugar), 3 to load (1 WRIC, 2 equipment); 66 vessels due, of which 58 to load (5 aluminium, 4 pig-iron, 5 wheat, 1 HBI, 1 DRI, 3 bulk ammonium nitrate, 1 packed fertiliser, 4 copper, 3 bulk cement, 1 coils/pipes, 2 steel sheets, 6 steel billets, 2 scrap, 3 bulk NPK, 3 coils, 1 WRIC/steel billets, 1 coils/steel billets, 2 slabs, 1 coils/lumber, 1 cellulose, 1 steel billets/steel, 1 steel billets/debars, 1 steel billets/slabs, 1 paper, 1 equipment, 1 vehicles, 1 diesel oil, 1 WRIC/coils), 6 to discharge (1 zinc ore, 3 bulk sugar, 2 copper ore), 2 to load/discharge containers; Oil terminal: 1 tanker berthed loading crude oil; 2 tankers in roads, both to load crude oil; 7 tankers due, all to load crude oil. |
| Slovenia | | |
| Koper | 23-May-05 | Port working normally; Eleven vessels berthed of which 1 vessel discharging/loading containers, 3 bulk carriers discharging ore/coal/minerals, 1 bulk carrier loading grain, 1 vessel loading steel products/sawn timber, 2 Ro/Ros loading sawn timber/vehicles/containers, 3 car carriers discharging/loading vehicles; 3 vessels at anchorage of which 1 bulk carrier to load grain, 1 vessel to load sawn timber, 1 bulk carrier to discharge coal; 20 vessels due over the next 2 days of which 2 vessels to discharge/load containers, 3 bulk carriers to discharge coal/minerals/fertiliser, 4 bulk carrier to load coal/grain, 2 vessels to discharge aluminium products/agricultural products, 6 vessels to load sawn timber/timber products/general cargo, 1 car carrier to discharge/load vehicles, 2 tankers to discharge mineral oils/liquid chemicals. |

Port Conditions

Spain

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| Bilbao | 23-May-05 | Twenty-nine vessels in port operating (7 tankers, 22 others), of which 6 loading, 11 discharging, 12 loading/discharging. |
| Cadiz | 24-May-05 | Sixteen vessels in port of which 6 operating (3 Ro/Ros, 2 containers, 1 machinery), 10 vessels under repair; no delays. |
| Sagunto | 23-May-05 | Twenty-six vessels in port operating of which 18 discharging (16 steel products, 2 anhydrous ammonia), 3 loading (1 steel coils, 2 cement), 5 Ro/Ros discharging/loading general cargo; no vessels outside commercial wharf; no berthing delays at present. |

Turkmenistan

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| Turkmenbashi | 23-May-05 | Oil products: 4 vessels berthed, of which 1 completed loading gasoline, 1 loading crude oil, 1 discharging crude oil, 1 loading gasoil; 4 vessels in roads, all to load, of which 1 gasoil, 1 gasoline, 2 unknown cargo. |
|--------------|-----------|--|

Ukraine

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|-----------|-----------|---|
| Ilichevsk | 23-May-05 | Seven vessels in port operating, of which 3 loading (1 steel products, 1 wheat, 1 containers), 2 discharging steel products, 2 discharging/loading containers; 1 vessels in roads to discharge/load containers; 14 vessels due, of which 7 to load (3 vegetable oil, 4 steel products), 7 to discharge/load containers |
| Mariupol | 23-May-05 | Five vessels in port operating, all loading, of which 1 coal, 3 fire-clay, 1 coke; 4 vessels in roads, all to load, of which 1 fire-clay, 2 steel, 1 coke; 38 vessels due, of which 33 to load (13 steel, 9 coal, 7 fire-clay, 1 bran, 1 wheat, 1 pitch, 1 unknown cargo), 4 to discharge/load (1 containers/steel, 2 containers, 1 containers/fire clay), 1 passenger vessel. |
| Odessa | 23-May-05 | Eighteen vessels in port operating, of which 10 loading (5 metal, 1 metal/wood, 1 barley, 1 general cargo, 1 wheat, 1 paper), 5 discharging (2 citrus, 1 luggage, 1 bananas, 1 sand), 2 discharging/loading containers, 1 passenger vessel; 12 vessels in roads, of which 7 to load (3 metal, 1 corn, 1 scrap, 1 ore, 1 ferro alloy), 3 to discharge (1 general cargo, 1 equipment, 1 metal), 2 to load/discharge containers; 63 vessels due, of which 33 to load (25 metal, 1 scrap, 1 sunflower oil, 1 ferro alloy, 1 building materials, 1 oil, 1 paper, 1 wood, 1 corn), 10 to discharge (1 metal, 1 citrus, 7 sugar, 1 oil), 20 to discharge/load containers.. |

United States

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|--------------------|-----------|--|
| Beaumont, TX | 24-May-05 | Louis Dreyfus terminal: 4 days delay expected. |
| Corpus Christi, TX | 24-May-05 | Interstate grain terminal: 2 days delay expected; ADM terminal: 2 days delay expected. |
| Houston, TX | 24-May-05 | Cargill terminal: 1-2 days delay expected |
| Kalama, WA | 24-May-05 | Kalama export terminal: 2 days delay expected; United Harvest terminal: no delays expected |
| Portland, OR | 24-May-05 | Columbia Grain terminal: 2 days delay expected; CLD Irving terminal: 4 days delay expected; CLD, O Dock terminals: no delays expected. Seattle |
| Seattle, WA | 24-May-05 | Louis Dreyfus (Pier 86) terminal: 2 days delay expected. |
| Tacoma, WA | 24-May-05 | Temco terminal: 2 days delay expected. |

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