

Lloyd's

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

CasualtyWeek

November 4 2005

Flags of convenience are 'assisting criminals'

IMB lambasts lax registration checks, writes Marcus Hand — Thursday November 03 2005

THE International Maritime Bureau has hit out at flags of convenience, saying they are assisting criminal gangs by not making checks about the vessels being registered.

"The actions of some ship registries in not making checks and re-registering ships within 48-72 hours, sometimes merely over the internet, only serves to assist the criminal gangs behind the hijackings and subsequent operation or resale of the vessels involved," IMB director Potengal Mukundan said in the Commercial Crime International newsletter.

The IMB is calling for a system whereby the new registry contacts the previous registry to ensure that the vessel was really on its books.

The anti-piracy watchdog highlighted the case of the Malaysian-owned, Panama-flagged vessel Natris, which was hijacked in 2002 and traded "legally" for nearly three years as the Belize-registered Paulijing before being recaptured by the Malaysian Navy this summer.

The IMB noted that provisional registration had been issued by Belize on the basis of documents showing the vessel had been deleted from the registry of Belize and a bill of sale for a mere US\$10,000.

"The documents, which have now been proved to be fakes, were accepted at face

value and no checks were apparently made before the ship was re-registered under the Belize flag," the IMB said.

"Had checks been made, the Belize Registry could have found out that the ship was never registered in Sierra Leone."

Copies of the documents used in the original issue of the temporary registration shown to Lloyd's List recently were, in some cases, close to illegible.

The IMB added that the low sale price should also have aroused suspicions and hit out at Belize for failing to de-register the vessel as soon as evidence of the false registration came to light.

"The Belize Registry should have immediately de-registered the ship the moment these facts became known and its current stance to wait for the Malaysian courts to decide the outcome is inappropriate given the circumstances," the Bureau said.

The original owner of the Natris, Malaysian shipowner BAL Shipping, has been critical of the fact that neither the Panama nor the Belize registry will confirm the Paulijing is indeed the Natris.

The IMB wants to see greater transparency in the registration process to prevent such incidents in future.

"In many cases, the crime is perpetrated with the unwitting assistance of lax procedures in ship registries that

fast-track the re-registration process without conducting proper due diligence or checking the documents they receive," Mr Mukundan said.

"The remedy is relatively simple: a little extra time spent during registry can save a huge amount of cost later."

This extra time would involve the incoming registry contacting the previous registry and ensuring the vessel was registered with it, and suspicious documents should be investigated before registration is granted.

Would you like casualty information as it happens ?

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Casualty

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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
ARCO AVON	lpg	GBR	BV	3,474	5,213	1986	Reported drifting ENE of Spurn Point, in lat 53 46.5N, long 00 47E, Oct 20 due to main engine failure. Tug proceeded and took vessel in tow to River Humber for repairs. Alongside at Hull Oct 21. Completed repairs and sailed Oct 24.
ARKLOW VIEW	general	IRL	GL	2,827	4,258	1991	Had propeller shaft trouble in lat 49 36N, long 07 30W, Oct 21. Anchored. Taken in tow by tug <i>Breedbank</i> Oct 22 bound Cork. Arrived Oct 23. Repaired and sailed same day.
CONCEL PRIDE	product tanker	NGA	—	8,124	14,506	1974	Reported Oct 21 under repair at NORMAR workshops. 2 turbines reported in very poor condition and require replacing. Owners reported to have apparently abandoned vessel. Vessel arrested.
DIA	product tanker	TUV	—	18,125	29,990	1977	Reported Oct 21 that a tank caught fire and exploded while the vessel was being broken up at Sitakunda, Chittagong. three workers killed, 15 injured.
LAURA ANN	container	GBR	GL	9,981	11,639	2002	In collision with bulk <i>Paros</i> in the Kiel Canal, near Fischerhutte, Oct 21. Pushed into the embankment. Secured by two tugs. Proceeded Oct 22, bound Kiel. Exited the canal Oct 22, eastbound, following engine repairs.
MAERSK ENSENADA	container	ATG	GL	6,406	8,500	1998	Reported Oct 26 aground about 60 miles west of Havana.
PAB	yacht	ITA	AB ABS	182	120	2003	Had fire on board Oct 23 while moored at Carlo Riva Marina, Genoa. Only vessel's hull and engine-room unaffected. Damage estimated at €1 million. Cause under investigation.
PANAGIA	bulker	MLT	RS	22,046	34,170	1982	Seized by pirates off Somalia Oct 19. Pirates demanding \$700,000 for release of vessel and crew.
RUBEZHNOYE	fishing	RUS	RS	648	304	1975	Reported Oct 23 on fire for more than a day near Vladivostok repair yard quay. Firefighting efforts commenced but then halted to allow fire to burn out.
SEA HAWK-2	general	MLT	RS	3,629	4,150	1976	Grounded near Molyvos, Lesvos Island, Oct 23. Still aground Oct 24. Coast Guard vessel on scene. Oil and lubricants to be removed Oct 25. Still aground Oct 27. Transshipping cargo to another vessel.

CONTENTS

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

Marine, including Overdue & Missing Vessels	1
Piracy	6
Port State Control	7
Seizures & Arrests	7
Pipeline Accidents	8
Pollution	9
Weather & Navigation	9
Earthquakes	20
Volcanic Activity	22
Political & Civil Unrest	22
Labour Disputes	27
Awards & Settlements	29
Railway Accidents	30
Miscellaneous	31
Fires & Explosions	34
Aviation	36
Space Vehicles	41
Product Recalls	41
Port Conditions	42
Port Conditions charts	44

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The following reports are reprinted from Lloyd's List



ACTIVE (U.S.A.)

Seattle, Oct 24 -- Tug Active, now reportedly named Magic, unconfirmed, and tug Legacy, still reportedly lying on the bottom at Port Gamble. Reported owner of Active, Magic, Caicos Marine, is said to have contacted local crane company regarding possible salvage attempt, however, there has been no actual commencement of any salvage operation to our knowledge. The Active and Legacy were reportedly moored together with the sinking of one causing the other to go down as well. -- Lloyd's Agents.

AEGAIO (Greece)

London, Oct 20 -- Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 1535, UTC: Research Aegaios is now safely anchored at Kimi.

AEGITNA (St. Vincent & Grenadines)

Vigo, Sep 30 -- General cargo Aegitna is still under repair at Vigo. -- Lloyd's Agents.

AFAMIA (Dominica)

See "Cyprus" under "Port State Control".

ALLIANCE (St. Vincent & Grenadines)

London, Oct 26 -- General cargo Alliance arrived and sailed Malmo Oct 20 for Ridham Dock.

ARCO AVON (U.K.)

London, Oct 20 -- Following received from Coastguard Humber MRSC, timed 1141, UTC: Trailing suction dredger Arco Avon, GGNV (3474 gt, built 1986), Hull for River Tees, in lat 53 46.5N, long 00 47E, 27 miles east-north-east of Spurn Point, presently drifting north-north-east at approximately 1.5 knots. Arco Avon reported a main engine failure. At the time of reporting engineers were investigating. The outcome of the investigations and anticipated duration of repair will be reported when available. The master has made his shore-side office aware of the situation. Wind west by south, 260 deg, force 6 (strong breeze), expected to back southerly 4 (moderate breeze) to 5 (fresh breeze).

London, Oct 20 -- Following received from Coastguard Humber MRSC, timed 1320, UTC: Trailing suction dredger Arco Avon is presently anchored in lat 53 50.6N, long 00 48.3E, and maintain hourly contact with the MRSC. Tug Lady Laura has departed from the River Humber and ETA alongside Arco Avon is approximately 1600, UTC. Lady Laura will tow the Arco Avon back to the River Humber for repairs.

London, Oct 20 -- Following received from Coastguard Humber MRSC, timed 1645, UTC: Tug Lady Laura is now expected alongside trailing suction dredger Arco Avon at approximately 2200, UTC, to tow the vessel to King George Dock, Hull, for the morning tide.

London, Oct 21 -- Following received from Coastguard Humber MRSC, timed 2141, UTC, Oct 20: Trailing suction dredger Arco Avon: Tug Lady Laura has made fast the tow, ETA River Humber 0845 hrs.

London, Oct 21 -- Following received from Coastguard Humber MRSC, timed 0749, UTC: Trailing suction dredger Arco Avon and tug Lady Laura are now alongside in King George Dock, Hull.

Hull, Oct 24 -- Trailing suction dredger Arco Avon completed repairs and sailed Hull at 0900 today. -- Lloyd's Agents.

ARKLOW VIEW (Republic of Ireland)

London, Oct 22 -- Following received from Coastguard Falmouth MRCC, timed 2100, UTC, Oct 22: General cargo Arklow View (2827 gt, built 1991) had problem with propeller shaft in lat 49 36N, long 07 30W, at 1324, local time, Oct 21. Vessel anchored in position for about 12 hours. Owners arranged for Irish tug Breedbank to proceed for rendezvous with Arklow View. Breedbank connected with Arklow View and towage commenced about 1000, local time, Oct 22, bound Cork, ETA 1100, local time, Oct 23.

London, Oct 23 -- Following received from Coastguard Dublin MRCC, timed 1345, UTC: General cargo Arklow View, in tow of tug Breedbank, arrived safely in Cork at 1109, UTC, this morning.

Dublin, Oct 26 -- The Cork Port Authority have confirmed that general cargo Arklow View was repaired and departed from Cork Harbour at 2000, Oct 23.

AUDACE A. (Italy)

Naples, Oct 25 -- Chemical/oil carrier Audace A. has been released from arrest and has resumed normal trading. -- Lloyd's Agents.

CAST PROSPERITY (Germany)

Montreal, Oct 24 -- C.c. Cast Prosperity still under repair at Montreal, ETC Oct 31. -- Lloyd's Agents.

CHEM LIBRA (Marshall Islands)

St. Michael's, Oct 27 -- Acid tanker Chem Libra (8003 gt, built 1988) presently in a position of about 30 miles north-east from Ponta Delgada with reported main engine damage. Local tug Sao Miguel is proceeding to the area in order to assist or tow the vessel to the port of Ponta Delgada for repairs. -- Lloyd's Agents.

CITY OF GLASGOW (Greece)

See Denizhan Bayraktar.

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

CONCEL PRIDE (Nigeria)

Cadiz, Oct 21 -- Product tanker Concel Pride (8124 gt, built 1974) is under repair at NORMAR workshops. One of the subcontractors in charge of repairing. Understand two turbines are in very poor condition, and repairs are not possible, they must be replaced. Its owner seems to have abandoned the vessel due to lack of funds for repairing operations and their needs, nor to the actual crew, who live thanks to the help of local people. Port Authorities have arrested the vessel due to its bad condition and probably due, as well, to lack of payment. -- Lloyd's Agents.

DAL EAST LONDON (Antigua & Barbuda)

Zeebrugge, Oct 21 -- C.c. DAL East London (16803 gt, built 1997) grounded while sailing from river berth, Container Terminal, Antwerp, at 0100 today near the entrance to the Oostgat. Vessel refloated ten minutes later and passed Flushing Roads at 0120 hrs. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents. (Note - - DAL East London subsequently reported in lat 53 16 58N, long 04 39 15E, at 0756, UTC, course 072 deg, speed 18 knots, bound Bremerhaven, where ETA 1700, UTC, today.)

DAYANA (Panama)

Santo Domingo, Oct 26 -- Ro/ro Dayana is still at the port of Santo Domingo. Sources consulted indicate that the vessel's engines are totally damaged and it is stated that money is owed by the owners to both its local agents: Messrs CODONAVE and Remolcadores Dominicanos, CxA. Reportedly, a Mr. Peter Kennedy is the vessel's owner or owners' representative. -- Lloyd's Agents.

DENIZHAN BAYRAKTAR (Turkey)

Tunis, Oct 26 -- C.c. Denizhan Bayraktar (4721 gt, built 2000), while manoeuvring, in contact with c.c. City of Glasgow (14050 gt, built 1978) at Tunis, today. -- Lloyd's Agents.

DG HARMONY (Isle of Man)

London, Oct 21 -- A press report, dated today, states: Failure by Pennsylvania-based PPG Industries to investigate the risks of shipping calcium hypochlorite has led a federal judge in New York to hold the company liable for the fire that gutted general cargo DG Harmony in November, 1998. The fire occurred off the coast of Brazil when a drum containing the chemical hydrated, decomposed and self-heated, causing the blaze that burned for nearly three weeks. The vessel was a total loss. (Note -- DG Harmony had an explosion and fire in No.3 hold Nov 9, 1998.)

DIA (Tuvalu)

London, Oct 21 -- A report in the Oct 21 issue of "Newsfront" states: Three workers were killed and 15 injured, some seriously, in an explosion on product tanker Dia (18125 gt, built 1977) which was being broken up at a demolition yard in Sitakunda, Bangladesh. The workers were killed

when a tank caught fire and exploded, trapping others inside the vessel. The tanker had been waiting about three months for demolition and had provided gas-free certificates. (Note -- Dia arrived Chittagong Aug 28.)

DURGANDINI (Panama)

Jakarta, Oct 21 -- Product tanker Durgandini remains under repair at Cilacap. -- Lloyd's Agents.

ERIC H. (U.S.A.)

Miami, Oct 21 -- Fishing Eric H.: Vessel's pilot house and forward cabin were gutted by the fire. No repairs have been effected. -- Lloyd's Agents.

ERMINA (Greece)

London, Oct 25 -- Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: General cargo Ermina (977 gt, built 1966) grounded in shallow waters in the Preveza Channel, this morning. On board were seven crew who are in good health. Previously vessel had departed from Nea Peramos, Kavala loaded with corn bound for Preveza. Immediately proceeded to the area a patrol vessel of the coast guard and a tug. Divers were also arranged. There was no pollution caused or ingress of water. No vessels transiting the channel were impeded by the position of the grounded vessel. In the region the weather conditions remain good. Preveza Port Authority is performing an investigation into the incident.

London, Oct 25 -- Following received at 1330, UTC: General cargo Ermina has been refloated.

Piraeus, Oct 26 -- General cargo Ermina, Kavala for Preveza with a cargo of corn, grounded in shallow waters near Preveza Oct 25. The vessel was subsequently refloated and is now at Preveza to discharge. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Oct 26 -- Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: Following the grounding of general cargo Ermina at Preveza yesterday, the vessel was inspected by divers and later the same day was refloated with the assistance of a tug. Ermina arrived safely at Preveza port same day. The Port Authority has prohibited departure pending inspection of the vessel by the Marine Inspectorate.

EUGENIO

Durban, Oct 26 -- General cargo Eugenio is currently still berthed at the Dormac repair quay, Durban. Understand that Dormac have had the vessel arrested and that repairs are not yet complete. The repairs are expected to be completed by mid-November. -- Lloyd's Agents.

F.C.G.SMITH (Canada)

London, Oct 24 -- Research F.C.G.Smith (430 gt, built 1986) struck an uncharted submerged object near the mouth of the Becancour River, Quebec, in lat 46 22.52N, long 72 26.07W, at 0913, local time, Oct 20. No apparent damage to vessel.

FREDERICK G.CREED (Canada)

London, Oct 25 -- Research Frederick G.Creed (152 gt, built 1988) broke its anchor cable and lost its anchor at the mouth of the Netagamioiu River off Chevery, Quebec, in lat 50 27.18N, long 59 37.24W at 1715, local time, Oct 23.

FRONT FIGHTER (NIS)

See under "Pollution".

FRONT RIDER (Singapore)

London, Oct 20 -- Following received from Madrid MRCC, timed 1555, UTC: Bulk/oil Front Rider anchored safely in Vigo Bay about one hour ago.

Vigo, Oct 21 -- Bulk/oil Front Rider had engine breakdown about 16 miles off Cape Silleiro Oct 19 and was towed in by local tug Luz de Mar and now awaiting repairs at anchor. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Vigo, Oct 24 -- Bulk/oil Front Rider sailed from Vigo at 1600, yesterday, after completion of repairs. Vessel was escorted out of Spanish territorial waters by two local tugs. -- Lloyd's Agents.

GENMAR TRUST (Liberia)

Ponta Delgada, Oct 22 -- Bulk/oil GenMar Trust has been released from her local Port State Control. Owners have decided to tow the vessel to a port on the Continent in order to proceed with the repairs due to lack of local facilities for the purpose. Salvage tug Fotiy Krylov, towing GenMar Trust, left Ponta Delgada outer anchorage today at 0630, local time, Oct 22, bound for Vigo. -- Lloyd's Agents.

HOHEBANK (U.K.)

Malmö, Oct 21 -- General cargo Hohebank is undergoing tests today. The vessel is due to leave Falkenberg at 1000, local time, tomorrow for Varberg, where it is due to start loading a cargo for Inverness on Oct 24. -- Lloyd's Agents.

HYDE PARK (Liberia)

London, Oct 26 -- Chem.tank Hyde Park sailed Halifax Oct 22.

IERAPETRA L. (Greece)

Piraeus, Oct 24 -- Ro/ro Ierapetra L., in tow of tug Megas Alexandros, sailed Rhodes Oct 14 for Piraeus port for inspection/repairs. -- Lloyd's Agents.

ILONA-M (Germany)

London, Oct 20 -- About 1100, local time, today salvage company BTS succeeded in lifting the damaged and sunken unknown Ilona-M from the bottom of the River Ems, with two floating cranes. However, the lifting wires around the heavily damaged vessel were not in a good position and it was feared it would break in two. Therefore it was lowered again. Salvage vessel Spitsbergen, crane barge Ibis, sheerleg crane Triton and pushboat Evodia on scene. Also working under a salvage master are 15 salvage people and three divers. The cables under Ilona-M will be shifted at low tide and the next

salvage attempt will be made early tomorrow morning. Ilona-M has to be raised until the sides of the hold are above the water and thereafter the water can be pumped out of the hold and the vessel shifted to free the fairway.

London, Oct 23 -- After a first attempt on Thursday (Oct 20), in which the salvor BTS used a second sheerleg crane to lift the sunken inland cargo vessel Ilona-M from the bottom of the River Ems, close to the North-German town of Rhede, they did not succeed. Just before midnight a new attempt was made to raise the sunken vessel, in which they succeeded to lift it from the river bed. But the powerful tides had severely damaged the vessel and for safety reasons BTS decided to lower the vessel back into the river. The slings underneath the vessel were not in the proper place and it was feared that it would break in two. Later Friday another attempt was made but in vain. At an inspection by the divers, it was found that the hold was full of mud. Also the vessel was so damaged that it was then decided to saw the vessel in two parts with a chain and lift the fore part of the vessel ashore and the aft part will be lifted on a pontoon and transported to a port. The hold has been emptied again yesterday by a grab crane and a chain has been placed underneath the sunken vessel. It was hoped that this morning the vessel will be severed so the fore part could be removed. Then the aft part will be lifted with the two cranes onto a pontoon. The authorities expect to have the River Ems free by Monday and after an inspection of the river bed and possibly some dredging at the place of the accident, shipping will continue again.

London, Oct 24 -- After the chain being used in an attempt to raise inland cargo vessel Ilona-M broke yesterday, a heavy wire was used. The vessel's forepart was pulled free from the bottom of the river at low tide, and was lifted onto a barge today. Wires will be pulled underneath the aft part of the vessel, and the salvors hope to lift this section this evening and have the vessel cleared by tomorrow. Altogether, about 200 inland cargo vessels are waiting on both sides of the accident site. It is hoped that the fairway will be cleared as soon as possible, because a lot of the factories in the area are very low on supplies.

London, Oct 26 -- The salvage company BTS had not much luck in raising the sunken inland cargo vessel Ilona-M yesterday, because while lifting the forepart of the broken vessel, the hydraulic system of the crane had a failure and it had to be repaired before the forepart could be placed on a pontoon. Four engineers were working on the hydraulic system overnight. This morning the failure had been repaired and the forepart of Ilona-M, which was already above water, was lifted onto a pontoon and transported to a breakers yard in Papenburg. While lifting the forepart, it was found that the weight was 335 tons, caused by the extra weight of the

sand and silt which was in the double bottom. The total lifting capacity of the two cranes is 350 tons. Due to the narrow river, no bigger cranes can be put on this job. The aft part weighs more than that, also caused by the inflowing silt and sand. So the salvors have cut the aft part in two parts in order to remove. Another set back for more than 200 inland cargo vessels which are waiting on both sides to proceed their voyages.

INGRID GORTHON (Sweden)

Montreal, Oct 24 -- General cargo Ingrid Gorthon has now left Canadian waters. -- Lloyd's Agents.

ISERAN (France)

Lorient, Oct 24 -- Fishing Iseran sailed Concarneau Oct 17. -- Lloyd's Agents.

KADUNA (Panama)

London, Oct 25 -- Information received from Sandnes, dated today: Ro/ro Kaduna (6722 gt, built 1972), Haugesund for Newcastle, made hard contact with the pier when arriving Stavanger early today. There was strong wind when the accident occurred. Minor damage to vessel but the quay facilities were heavily damaged. (Note -- Kaduna sailed Haugesund Oct 25 for Stavanger.)

KAPTAN RESAT AKBAS (Cambodia)

Piraeus, Oct 24 -- General cargo Kaptan Resat Akbas sailed Kos Oct 20 for Haifa. -- Lloyd's Agents.

KERAVNOS (Greece)

London, Oct 25 -- Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: This morning, ferry Keravnos (195 gt, built 1972) sustained engine damage while making departure preparations at the port of Angistri, bound for Aegina-Piraeus. Following the incident the Port Authority of Angistri prohibited its departure pending an inspection of the repairs. As a result, the 14 passengers were forwarded to their destinations on board other vessels of the same line.

KIEFERNWALD (Antigua & Barbuda)

Hamburg, Oct 24 -- General cargo Kiefernwald is still in the port of Rendsburg, waiting for repair at the dock. They already had to cancel repairs once and are now waiting for a new date when repairs are possible. No new date is known yet. -- Lloyd's Agents.

KIPEROUSA (Malta)

London, Oct 23 -- A press report, dated Oct 22, states: Stranded bulk Kiperousa has almost fully disintegrated after strong winds and stormy weather in East London, sending her last cargo of logs into the ocean. "The last storm and strong winds caused the ship to break up and lots of logs to disperse." National Ports Authority spokesman Terry Taylor said. He said that most of the timber had washed up in the Hamburg area

as well as towards the harbour entrance area. "We have helicopters monitoring the location of logs and making sure ships can enter and leave the port safely," Taylor said. Small craft and fishing vessels were assisting in towing the massive logs to shore and a mobile crane was standing by at the quayside. Salvors have been working hard to beat the sea, to prevent the potentially hazardous scenario which has now occurred. However, now it seems the Kiperousa had rid herself of all remaining cargo, and only the wreck remained off the shore.

LAKE EXPRESS (U.S.A.)

London, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated Oct 26, states: Ferry Lake Express (1757 gt, built 2004) had some problems last night and had to return to port. The lifeboat on board came loose and hit the side of the ferry. Sixty-one passengers were on the ferry crossing Lake Michigan. A representative for the ferry said the damage is superficial. The Coast Guard has to inspect the ferry before it can return to service. Tonight's ferry run was cancelled, and as of 1700 hrs, officials hadn't decided whether the ferry would depart tomorrow morning.

LAURA ANN (U.K.)

London, Oct 22 -- Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: C.c. Laura Ann (9981 gt, built 2002) and bulk Paros (14397 gt, built 1997) were in collision close to Fischerhuetten in the Kiel Canal at 1800, Oct 21. Laura Ann was pushed into the embankment. The canal was totally blocked for shipping until two tugs had secured the vessel, which was not in danger of sinking though damaged severely. Paros proceeded to Brunsbuettel port for inspection. Laura Ann left in direction of Kiel at about 1000 today. (Note -- Laura Ann left Hamburg Oct 21 for Klaipeda. Paros left Klaipeda Oct 20.)

London, Oct 24 -- Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: The damage to c.c. Laura Ann and bulk Paros after their collision in the Kiel Canal Oct 21 was less serious than first expected. The Laura Ann left the canal with East course Oct 22 after repairs to the engine. There was slight damage to the foreship on port side. The Paros was damaged at the stern.

London, Oct 24 -- C.c. Laura Ann, collision with bulk Paros: Paros subsequently passed Brunsbuettel, westbound, at 0518, Oct 22, and passed Dover Strait Oct 23, bound Veracruz.

LEADER AMIRAL (North Korea)

Piraeus, Oct 24 -- Ro/ro Lider Amiral sailed Piraeus Oct 23 for Turkey. -- Lloyd's Agents.

LEGACY (U.S.A.)

See Active.

LIDER AMIRAL (North Korea)

London, Oct 22 -- Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 0810, UTC: Ro/ro Lider Amiral remains at Piraeus anchorage.

LODBROK (Sweden)

Gothenburg, Oct 22 -- Crane barge Lodbrok proceeded to yard at Oskarshamn as it sustained damage to the top of the crane where it hit the concrete bridge and could not operate and required repair. The hooks are dismantled and will within the weekend put down the entire arm for control and repair. -- Westax Marine Services AB.

Gothenburg, Oct 26 -- The crane from crane barge Lodbrok is now at a depot in Stockholm awaiting the removal of the hooks and arm. The upper part is reported to be bent and broken. -- Westax Marine Services AB.

Gothenburg, Oct 27 -- Owner of crane barge Lodbrok confirmed today that Oskarhamns Yard are one of four repair shops that will be invited for tender, but will do their own work to dismantle the damaged top of the crane arm and connected parts for closer examination tomorrow. -- Westax Marine Services.

MAERSK ENSENADA (Antigua & Barbuda)

London Oct 26 -- Understand that c.c. Maersk Ensenada (6406 gt, built 1998) is currently aground about 60 miles west of Havana. (Note -- Maersk Ensenada was due at Santo Tomas de Castilla, Guatemala, today.)

MAMRY II (Panama)

Helston, Oct 21 -- Bulk Mamry II (11676 gt, built 1979), Rouen for Agadir, cargo barley, lost starboard anchor and 700 feet of anchor cable when the cable parted during anchoring operations in the Cross-Channel Anchorage during bad weather over the weekend (Oct 15-16). Docks-based underwater specialists Submarine Services will start work on recovering the anchor and cable today. -- "Cornish Packet."

Falmouth, Oct 25 -- Bulk Mamry II sailed Falmouth Oct 15. The anchor has not yet been recovered, owing to bad weather. -- Lloyd's Agents.

MARTINA M (St. Vincent & Grenadines)

Tunis, Oct 24 -- General cargo Martina M completed hull and machinery repairs and sailed Bizerta Oct 12 for Malta. -- Lloyd's Agents.

MAWASHI AL-GASSEEM (Kuwait)

Adelaide, Oct 26 -- Livestock Mawashi Al-Gasseem: A tender has been accepted. Certain details remain to be settled concerning hand over and crew matters. Understand that these will be resolved imminently. -- Lloyd's Agents.

MED BREEZE (Malta)

See "Spain" under "Port State Control".

MRS (U.S.A.)

Anchorage, Oct 26 -- A local press report, states: The incident involving fishing MRS is still being investigated by the appropriate authorities as one of the crew members died in the

accident. It is still unknown what caused the vessel to turn over. Attempts will be made to lift MRS off the bottom of the Inside Passage, which could be as deep as 400 feet. -- Lloyd's Agents.

MSC AL AMINE (Morocco)

Tunis, Oct 24 -- Understand from repair yard that general cargo MSC Al Amine is still under repair. -- Lloyd's Agents.

MURAT KIRAN (Turkey)

Chittagong, Oct 23 -- Bulk Murat Kiran sailed from Chittagong port at 1200 yesterday for Indonesia after undertaking necessary repairs as informed by vessel's local agent, Angelic Shipping Lines, Chittagong. -- Lloyd's Agents.

NORDSUN (Cyprus)

See "Outbreak of 'Bird Flu'" under "Miscellaneous".

NOVA SCOTIA (Antigua & Barbuda)

Buenos Aires, Oct 26 -- Repairs to ref Nova Scotia will be concluded within the next 10 days. -- Lloyd's Agents.

ORIENT BRILLIANCE (Panama)

Lima, Oct 25 -- Bulk Orient Brilliance has commenced repairs, which are expected to take about two months. -- Lloyd's Agents.

ORUBA (Panama)

London, Oct 25 -- Chem.tank Oruba arrived Tuzla Oct 15.

OUR LADY OF GOOD VOYAGE (Philippines)

Manila, Oct 23 -- The Philippine Coast Guard reported that passenger ro/ro Our Lady of Good Voyage (5463 gt, built 1979) encountered engine trouble at around 2100, Oct 21, shortly after leaving the port of Cagayan de Oro in Mindanao. The vessel was bound for Cebu when it's engine stopped. Repairs were undertaken by the crew and the vessel was able to resume its voyage. The vessel arrived at Cebu port on at about 1200, Oct 22, or five hours behind schedule. There were no injuries or fatalities. The vessel's operators, Cebu-based Cebu Ferries Corporation, said that the vessel was "delayed due to technical problems." -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Manila, Oct 23 -- Passengers of Philippine passenger ro/ro Our Lady of Good Voyage will file a formal complaint against the owners of the vessel for inconvenience caused by the vessel's delay due to engine problems while enroute from Cagayan de Oro to Cebu on Oct 21. The vessel arrived at Cebu port at around 1200, Oct 22, five hours behind schedule. Passengers said that they would be filing their complaint before the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA), the state agency regulating the Philippine domestic shipping industry. In their complaint, the passengers said they would claim damages and will demand a refund

for the tickets they purchased for connecting trips. They also urged the MARINA to stop the operation of the vessel until it is inspected and certified as "seaworthy" by a classification society. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

PAB (Italy)

Genoa, Oct 24 -- A fire broke out on board yacht Pab (182 gt, built 2003), while moored at Carlo Riva Marina at Rapallo (Genoa), at about 1130, yesterday. Understand fire damage was limited to the yacht as security measures have been successfully accomplished and boats moored in the vicinity immediately moved away. Only yacht's hull and engine-room are unaffected and damage is roughly estimated in the range of million Euro. The cause of fire is presently being investigated. -- Lloyd's Agents.

PACIFIC (Malta)

London, Oct 21 -- Following received from Rome MRCC, timed 0920, UTC: Ro/ro Pacific arrived Siracusa at midday yesterday.

London, Oct 24 -- Information received, dated Oct 21, states: Ro/ro Pacific arrived Siracusa Oct 20 for engine repairs. The repairs are expected to be completed by around 1400-1500, Oct 21, and the vessel is due to sail Siracusa 1700-1800, the same day. The vessel's next port is given as Civitavecchia, where it is expected about 0800-0900, Oct 23.

PANAGIA (Malta)

See "Somalia" under "Piracy".

PAROS (Cyprus)

See Laura Ann.

PEARL OF JEBEL ALI (Cyprus)

See Pride of Al Salam 95.

PHILIPP ESSBERGER (Madeira)

Zeebrugge, Oct 27 -- Chemical/oil carrier Philipp Essberger (3785 gt, built 2003), which grounded in the River Scheldt, near Flushing roads, at 0905, local time, today, was refloated at 0935 hrs and grounded again at 0940 hrs. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents.

Zeebrugge, Oct 27 -- Chemical/oil carrier Philipp Essberger was refloated for the second time at 1015, local time, today. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents.

PINEGLEN (Canada)

London, Oct 24 -- Bulk Pineglen (20370 gt, built 1985), cargo Soya, while departing in strong current from Sarnia Elevators, St.Clair River, grounded on a shoal some 61 metres off the dock, in lat 42 58.48N, long 82 24.55W, at 2120, local time, Oct 21. Vessel was freed with tug assistance. No apparent damage.

POLARBORG II (Uruguay)

Buenos Aires, Oct 24 -- Our sub-agents inform that trawler Polarborg II has left Argentinean waters. -- Lloyd's Agents.

PRIDE OF AL SALAM 95 (Panama)

Port Said, Oct 23 -- Passenger ro/ro Pride of Al Salam 95 is still in the same position and salvage operation is still not yet decided. Bulk Pearl of Jebel Ali is currently at the western side of S.C.A entrance buoys. Vessel has a large hole in the forepeak tank, also damages to its bulbous bow and the anchor housing. Repairs have not yet started, awaiting results of authorities' investigations on the accident. -- Lloyd's Agents.

PRINSENBORG (Netherlands)

London, Oct 22 -- Bulk Prinsenberg arrived Baltimore Oct 20.

PUERTO DE ALTAMIRA (Panama)

Veracruz, Oct 25 -- Cutter suction hopper dredger Puerto de Altamira was refloated on Oct 22 and pushed to the nearby Talleres Navales del Golfo shipyard for repairs. -- Lloyd's Agents.

PUTFORD GUARDIAN (U.K.)

London, Oct 26 -- Following received from Coastguard Yarmouth MRCC, timed 0554, UTC: Offshore safety Putford Guardian (638 gt, built 1967) has one engine running and one with the cylinder head gasket blown, alongside at Lowestoft.

RICKMERS GENOA (Marshall Islands)

London, Oct 26 -- Following received from the operators of general cargo Rickmers Genoa, dated today: Rickmers Genoa is still under repair at Shanghai, ETC unknown.

ROSTOK (Russia)

Bucharest, Oct 24 -- General cargo Rostok: Operations to remove the last piece of wreck are still in progress. Salvors hope that this last piece will be removed by the end of November. -- Lloyd's Agents.

RUBEZHNOYE (Russia)

London, Oct 24 -- A press report, dated Oct 23, states: Fishing Rubezhnoye (648 gt, built 1975) has been on fire for over a day near the pier of the Vladivostok ship repair yard. Eight fire engines and the Predanny sea rescue ship yesterday made attempts to extinguish the blaze, but their efforts proved futile. Rubezhnoye was decommissioned a year ago and since then has been staying at the pier without crew. According to the Vladivostok-based service of monitoring over the fishing fleet, she caught fire for some unknown reasons. The owner of the ship totally abandoned her so it was decided to stop fire-fighting efforts and wait until she burns out. The sea rescue ship Predanny is continuing to monitor the situation at the shipyard. There is no danger of the ship's sinking near the pier. (Note -- Rubezhnoye arrived Vladivostok Dec 12, 2003, and was reported in port Apr 30, 2005.)

SAGA MASCOT (Bahamas)

London, Oct 22 -- General cargo Saga Mascot arrived Vila do Conde Oct 13.

SAN CARLO (Malta)

See "Somalia" under "Piracy."

SARAH JANE

Vigo, Sep 30 -- Ref Sarah Jane is still under repair at Vigo. -- Lloyd's Agents. (See issue of Sep 16.)

SEA FOX (Latvia)

Liverpool, Oct 22 -- General cargo Sea Fox sailed Liverpool Oct 20 for Rotterdam. -- Lloyd's Agents. (See issue of Jul 6.)

SEA HAWK-2 (Malta)

London, Oct 24 -- General cargo Sea Hawk-2 (3629 gt, built 1976) cargo of wheat, ran aground near Molyvos, Lesvos Island, during the evening of Oct 23.

London, Oct 24 -- Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 0710, UTC: General cargo Sea Hawk-2 ran aground at 1910, UTC, yesterday off Lesvos Island. Vessel remains aground and a tug from Piraeus is due on scene later today.

London, Oct 24 -- Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 2100, UTC: General cargo Sea Hawk-2 remains aground. The weather in the area is fine. A Coast Guard vessel is on scene. Although there is no pollution at the moment, booms have been placed around the vessel. Oil and lubricants will be removed from the vessel tomorrow morning. A diver inspection will also take place tomorrow morning before a decision regarding refloating is made.

London, Oct 25 -- Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 1005, UTC: General cargo Sea Hawk-2 remains aground. It is hoped to attempt refloating tomorrow.

London, Oct 26 -- Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 1024, UTC: General cargo Sea Hawk-2 is still aground. General cargo Sea Transporter has arrived on scene and has commenced transshipment of part of the cargo from Sea Hawk-2. Transshipment is expected to take about two days, after which another refloating attempt will be made. (See issue of Oct 26.)

London, Oct 27 -- Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 0950, UTC: General cargo Sea Hawk-2 remains aground with transshipment of cargo to a lightering vessel in progress. Coast Guard vessel and tug in vicinity. Refloating attempt will hopefully be possible tomorrow.

SELENDANG AYU (Malaysia)

London, Oct 26 -- A press report, dated Oct 25, states: The stern of the wrecked bulk Selendang Ayu has shifted in recent storms off Unalaska Island, releasing about 1,000 gallons of residual oil in the soybean tanker that broke apart last December, officials said today. A Coast Guard crew flew over the wreckage yesterday and saw that the stern had been dislodged and rotated 90 degrees,

putting it closer and nearly parallel to the shore at Spray Cape on the western side of the island, the Coast Guard said. A private pilot flying over the site on Friday reported that the stern had moved. Emulsified oil was seen over a three-mile area of the wreck, according to the state Department of Environmental Conservation. The oil probably had been clinging in pumped tanks and other areas not reachable when the bulk of the oil was removed in January, DEC officials said. Pollution survey crews will try to assess the impact of the shifting, the Coast Guard said. No oil has been seen coming from the sunken bow section. Assessment teams will return next spring to determine what still needs to be done to finish the clean-up.

SEMLOW**(St. Vincent & Grenadines)**

See "Somalia" under "Piracy".

SILVA (Cambodia)

Esbjerg, Oct 21 -- General cargo Silva remains in port at Esbjerg. -- Lloyd's Agents.

SPEEDRUNNER I (U.K.)

London, Oct 27 -- Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: While passenger ro/ro Speedrunner I (3003 gt, built 1990) was making manoeuvres to berth stern fast at the port of Serifos, Oct 26, the port side wire rope for the ramp became damaged. At the time of the incident vessel was performing the schedule Piraeus-Serifos-Sifnos-Milos. Following the incident, the passengers and their vehicles were disembarked safely and the vessel departed without passengers for Piraeus in order to carry out the repair. Passengers for Sifnos and Milos were forwarded to their destinations on board passenger ro/ro Ag. Georgios.

TALLINK AUTOEXPRESS 2 (Estonia)

Tallinn, Oct 25 -- Ferry Tallink Autoexpress 2 (5419 gt, built 1997) sustained damage to the port inboard main engine while on voyage from Tallinn to Helsinki at 1409, local time, Oct 23. During damage inspection No. 5 crank of the port inboard main engine was found cracked rendering the engine inoperable. The cause of damage is under investigation. The vessel is fitted with 4 x MTU main diesel engines, 6000 kW each, and according to owners it will continue regular service on three engines until the end of the navigational season. -- Lloyd's Agents.

TASCO 1 (Thailand)

London, Oct 25 -- Reported that asphalt tanker Tasco 1 was refloated yesterday. It is anticipated that the vessel will be re-delivered on Oct 27 or 28.

Shanghai, Oct 26 -- Asphalt tanker Tasco 1 has been refloated after discharging part of oil on board. Damage situation is, so far, unknown.

Current location of the vessel is near Zhoushan Island, south of Shanghai. Intentions regarding repairs are not yet known. -- Lloyd's Agents.

TAXIARCHIS (Greece)

London, Oct 25 -- Passenger ro/ro Taxiarchis arrived Midia Oct 23 and sailed Oct 24.

TORGELOW

(St. Vincent & Grenadines)

See "Somalia" under "Piracy".

TRANSMODAL (Argentina)

Buenos Aires, Oct 25 -- Ro/ro Transmodal (3491 gt, built 1991) remains at Darsena Sur under repair. Repairs are expected to be completed by November. -- Lloyd's Agents.

TS HONGKONG (Liberia)

London, Oct 26 -- C.c. TS Hongkong is still at Yiu Lian Wharf, Tsing Yi, Hong Kong.

UMFOLOZI (Cyprus)

London, Oct 24 -- C.c. Umfolozi has been declared a constructive total loss. Salvage work continues on board and, according to the vessel's managers, it is hoped refloating may take place early next month.

VENLO

London, Oct 23 -- Inland tanker Venlo (built 1964), 86 metres long, ran aground yesterday morning in the River IJssel near Deventer. The tanker, loaded with a cargo of sodium hydroxide, with a draught of 2.85 metres, ran aground in a part of the River IJssel which was no deeper than 2.35 metres. At the end of the afternoon vessel was refloated by a tug and assisted to a quay, where today another tanker will come alongside to take over part of its cargo, so it can continue voyage with the correct draught.

VIGOUR (Liberia)

See "Aspropyrgos, Greece" under "Pollution."

VOC GALLANT

(Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Oct 25 -- Bulk VOC Gallant was still at Dubai as of Oct 23.

WANA NAREE (Thailand)

Troy, Michigan, Oct 24 -- Bulk Wana Naree (16518 gt, built 1980) was still anchored with engine problems above Beauharnois at 1730, Oct 22. -- Great Lakes & Seaway Shipping.

Troy, Michigan, Oct 25 -- Bulk Wana Naree is still anchored with engine problems above Beauharnois. -- Great Lakes & Seaway Shipping.

Montreal, Oct 25 -- Bulk Wana Naree completed repairs and proceeded early Oct 25 for Duluth. -- Lloyd's Agents.

WAREMBUNGAN (Indonesia)

Jakarta, Oct 26 -- Product tanker Warembungan is currently at Nonang River Anchorage at the port of

Belawan. However no information is available regarding the extent of damage or intentions regarding repairs. -- Lloyd's Agents.

WILLOW (Bahamas)

Maassluis, Oct 25 -- Repairs to general cargo Willow have been completed and the vessel will depart on/about Nov 2. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents.

WILSON BRUGGE (Malta)

Trondheim, Oct 25 -- General cargo Wilson Brugge is still under repair. The vessel is expected to sail around noon, Oct 27. -- Lloyd's Agents.

WILSON MAR (Malta)

Bergen, Oct 21 -- General cargo Wilson Mar is currently under tow from Hanoytangen to a shipyard in Poland, most likely a yard in Szczecin. The vessel had a engine breakdown where the crankshaft was damaged. The intended time for repair is one month. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents.

London, Oct 26 -- General cargo Wilson Mar arrived Gdynia Oct 24 from Bergen.

YICK LEE (Panama)

London, Oct 27 -- Bulk Yick Lee (23715 gt, built 1982) was reported with hull damage near the waterline around the area of hatch No.1 at Lower Cove at 0443, UTC, Oct 21. Hull bent in between the frames, some fractures and possibly a hole or two.

YILMAZ KAPTAN (Turkey)

London, Oct 27 -- Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: During the evening of Oct 26, while general cargo Yilmaz Kaptan (498 gt, built 1979) was making departure manoeuvres at the port of Iraklion, the vessel grounded in shallow waters near the end of Jetty III. Following the incident the vessel refloated under own power and moored safely at Jetty III. The Port Authority prohibited departure pending issuance of class maintain certificate.

ZIM ASIA (Israel)

London, Oct 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: The captain of Israeli c.c. Zim Asia, which collided last month with a Japanese fishing vessel (Shinsei Maru No.3), was detained for police questioning in Israel today. Police spokesman Mickey Rosenfeld said the Israeli captain of the Zim Asia, Moshe Ben-David, flew into Israel several days ago, but was detained today after the vessel docked in the port of Haifa. Ben-David was taken to police headquarters near Tel Aviv for questioning by members of the National Unit for Fraud Investigation. The Zim Asia collided with the fishing vessel 40 kilometers off the cape of Nosappu in northern Japan on Sept. 28. The Japanese vessel capsized and seven of its eight-man crew died. The captain has denied responsibility for the incident, and his lawyer, Gad Nashitz, told Israel Radio today that Ben-David was asleep at the time of the accident.

ZIM ASIA (Israel)

London, Oct 24 -- A press report, dated Oct 23, states: The Police Fraud Unit arrested today the master, Moshe Ben-David, the first officer and the observer of c.c. Zim Asia that was involved in a sea accident last month in which seven Japanese fishermen had been killed. The men were arrested on suspicion of negligent homicide. Another 20 crew members who were on board the ship when the collision took place will be investigated as well. An investigation into the incident was launched immediately following the collision by the Israeli Port Authority, but in light of the severity of the matter, the investigation was later turned over to the hands of the police. The two main suspicions Zim Asia personnel face are of negligent homicide and failure to perform rescue at sea (a clause in shipping law). The police are also expected to examine why the deck officer failed to wake up the captain, who was sleeping while the accident occurred. Upon the arrival of the Zim Asia in the Haifa Harbor this morning, the investigation was unveiled. Police teams boarded the ship to conduct a search of the vessel today, and crew members were detained for questioning.



SOMALIA

London, Oct 20 -- Following received from Stavanger RCC, timed 1545, UTC: Product tanker San Carlo: We have been in contact with the International Maritime Bureau Piracy Centre in Kuala Lumpur and with the vessel's owners and information indicates that the vessel is currently moving at slow speed, according to its AIS indicator. It is believed pirates are on board, though not confirmed.

London, Oct 21 -- A press report, dated Oct 20, states: Gunmen have hijacked bulk Panagia (22046 gt, built 1982) off Somalia in the latest of a spate of such attacks, officials said today. Pirates seized Panagia yesterday as it sailed northwards from South Africa to Europe with cargo of iron ore and have demanded a \$700 000 ransom for its release, they said. "They took over the vessel about 90 nautical miles off the Somali coast, near the Puntland region," said Andrew Mwangura of the seafarers' assistance programme from Mombasa. "They are demanding \$700 000 before they release the ship and the crew," he said, adding that the number of crew on board, all believed to be Ukrainian, was not immediately known. In Mogadishu, officials with Somali militias in control of the capital confirmed the attack and said negotiations between the hijackers and the vessel's owners

had already begun. "The gunmen are inside the vessel now," one official said on condition of anonymity. "The negotiations are under way, some money must be paid."

London, Oct 21 -- Understood product tanker San Carlo is on voyage to Argentina with gasoil on board. Vessel had sailed from Bandar Imam Khomeini on Oct 4. Suggestions are that vessel is now heading in the wrong direction to that expected by its voyage, indicating the likely presence of pirates.

London, Oct 22 - A press report, dated today, states: A search was under way yesterday for product tanker San Carlo that has not been heard from since it sent out a distress call on Thursday (Oct 20) evening off the coast of Somalia. San Carlos, captained by a Greek with a crew of 24, sent out the signal from a location around 170 nautical miles off the Somali coast, the Merchant Marine Ministry said. It is feared that the vessel may have been hijacked by pirates following Wednesday's attack on another Maltese-flagged vessel, the latest in a string of hijackings in the area. Maltese and Somali authorities have been searching for the vessel since it sent out the alert, used to indicate the occurrence of a hijacking or similarly serious incident. It had set sail from Bahrain and was en route to South Africa, the ministry said.

London, Oct 25 -- A press report, dated Oct 24, states: Pirates have seized a gas oil tanker and possibly another ship carrying food to Somalia in the latest of a series of hijackings off the lawless Horn of Africa nation, maritime officials said today. "They say two more ships have been hijacked, we are still trying to know where in Somalia they were seized," said Andrew Mwangura, of the Kenyan branch of the global Seafarers organisation representing the maritime industry. Mwangura told Reuters he was informed of the hijackings by colleagues in Dubai where both ships had embarked on their voyages. "The ship that was laden with oil was just passing Somalia, and the other one was carrying foodstuff destined for Somalia," he told Reuters from the port of Mombasa. The London-based International Maritime Bureau confirmed the tanker hijacking, but said it had no record of a second attack at the weekend.

London, Oct 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: An emissary is negotiating the release of general cargo Torgelow and its crew following their hijack in the Indian Ocean 17 days ago. The vessel was sailing to Somalia to deliver supplies for general cargo Semlow, and was also carrying general cargo for a Somali client when the pirates struck. Its owner Karim Kudrati of Motaku Shipping Agencies, said yesterday he had received information that a go-between had left Mogadiscio to negotiate with the hijackers. He said he believed the vessel was being held near the Port of

Haradhere in northern Somalia. "There are already three people who are helping with the negotiations, including the cargo owner," said Mr Kudrati. They had not received any ransom demands from any quarters, he said. The vessel was hijacked at Marka on Oct 9 on its way to deliver supplies to Semlow, which had mechanical problems after it had been freed by hijackers.

Port State Control



CYPRUS

Limassol, Oct 25 -- General cargo Afamia (9767 gt, built 1979) which arrived at Limassol Oct 15 from Octybrisk, has been detained by the Department of Merchant Shipping. -- Lloyd's Agents.

SPAIN

Vigo, Oct 20 -- C.c. Med Breeze (3836 gt, built 1982) has been detained at Vigo and will be fined due to breaches of MOU Inspection requirements. The vessel's engineers, working under the supervision of GL Class, are endeavouring to rectify the defects. -- Lloyd's Agents. (Note -- Med Breeze arrived Vigo Oct 16.)

Seizures & Arrests



BALTIC KRISTINA (Latvia)

Gothenburg, Oct 20 -- The court in Riga have, upon request of Riga Passenger Terminal, kept passenger ro/ro Baltic Kristina (12281 gt, built 1973) in embargo from Oct 19 to Nov 20, for a missing amount of approximate Eur 250. The Line has financial problems. -- Westax Marine Services AB. (Note -- Baltic Kristina arrived Riga after May 27, 2004.)

Gothenburg, Oct 25 -- Approximate 80 employees onboard Riga Sea Lines passenger ro/ro Baltic Kristina who haven't been paid their salaries since mid-september, and refused to leave the vessel in attempt to put pressure to the Line, and to solve the problem. At this time a court ordered ordered the banks to temporarily close any payments from Lines bank accounts. Representatives of the Line have ordered all crew, except for some few required for the daily running business to leave the vessel. They are also preparing to sue the Riga Passenger Terminal in court, since prohibited for the vessel to leave the terminal and port of Riga. -- Westax Marine Services AB.

London, Oct 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: Troubled Baltic ferry group Riga Sea Line has been forced to cease its services after the

Latvian capital's port authority seized passenger ro/ro Baltic Kristina. Riga's port authority, which is a major shareholder in the Latvian ferry operator, has impounded the ferry faced with with worries over the company's mounting debt. Local news sources claimed that the Riga Sea Line is unlikely to resume services.

CABO VERDE (Argentina)

Buenos Aires, Oct 21 -- Product tanker Cabo Verde is still under arrest at Bahia Blanca in apparent conditions of abandonment. -- Lloyd's Agents. (Note -- Cabo Verde was arrested at Bahia Blanca in June, 1994.)

CENTURY BRIGHT (Belize)

London, Oct 25 -- General cargo Century Bright (1532 gt, built 1978), which arrived at Hong Kong at 0158 hrs, Oct 21, is today reported to be at Western Anchorage No.1, Hong Kong, under detention.

ELEKTRON (Russia)

London, Oct 22 -- A press report, dated Oct 21, states: The captain of fishing Elektron (739 gt, built 1989) that was at the center of a Russian-Norwegian scandal is currently in intensive care in the port of Murmansk in the Russian arctic, a local official said. He was hospitalised with a heart attack Thursday (Oct 20) night before an interview with journalists who arrived at the trawler on a patrol boat, Gennady Stepakhno, the head of the Northern Fishery Union, said. "The man has not slept for six days," Stepakhno said, adding that other Elektron crew members were in good health. Commissions from the Agriculture Ministry and the Federal Agency for Fishery are currently inspecting the trawler. The examination may take up to 10 days. The Elektron was detained by the Norwegian Coast Guard on Oct 15 for violating the fishery protection zone, unilaterally set up by Norway north of the Arctic Circle. But the trawler fled into Russia's waters with two Norwegian inspectors on board and Norwegian ships pursued. At the height of the drama Monday night, captain Yarantsev called for Russian ships to come to his aid and said the trawler could take radical action against the Norwegian boats, including deliberately colliding with them. An agreement was reached between Russia and Norway to allow the trawler to be convoyed to the Russian port of Murmansk. The incident ended Thursday when the inspectors were transferred from the Elektron to a Norwegian vessel.

London, Oct 22 -- A press report, dated Oct 21, states: The Russian trawler Elektron, that sailed off with two Norwegian inspectors trying to make an arrest for illegal fishing, has been freed by local authorities. Norway got a vivid example of how hard it will be to press for its territorial claims when a Murmansk border guard rejected what the Norwegian coast guard characterized

as powerful evidence of gross violations of Norwegian and Russian fishery laws. Deputy leader of the Murmansk coast guard, Leonid Miroshnichenko, told Norwegian Broadcasting (NRK) that the photographs they were shown could have been taken anywhere. Murmansk authorities saw no reason to link the trawler Elektron to the charges and released the vessel today. The Elektron had its license to fish in the Norwegian zone revoked this spring after it was found illegally loading a Cambodian cargo vessel. "The Elektron has been a notorious scoundrel at sea and is behind a series of serious violations of fishery regulations. What we discovered in the Svalbard zone is one of the worst violations we have documented in ages," said Steve Olsen, head of Coast Guard North. The Norwegian coast guard claims that their images show the Russian trawler using a variety of illegal equipment that violates regulations, for example, rules banning the use of nets that prevent small fish from being sorted out of the catch. Olsen said that stricter rules from both the Norwegian and Russian authorities had resulted in a steep decline in this type of environmental crime.

HEYDAR ALIYEV (Malta)

Beirut, Oct 24 -- General cargo Heydar Aliyev (5687 gt, built 2004) was arrested Oct 19 by the Lebanese Authorities as being on the blacklist of the Israeli Boycott Office. -- Lloyd's Agents.

INDONESIAN FISHING VESSELS BEING ESCORTED TO DARWIN

London, Oct 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: Two Indonesian boats spotted on the Northern Territory's Arnhem Land coast are being escorted to Darwin. A spokesman from Coastwatch says there were three sightings of Indonesian shark boats in three days last week near the remote community of Maningrida in Arnhem Land. He says only two of the boats were manned and both were sighted close to the shoreline. The third had washed up on the beach after being cast adrift by a Navy escort to sink. It is believed 10 crew members are being escorted on their boats to Darwin and could arrive tonight. It is not clear how the boats came so close to land or if the boats were intercepted as part of Operation Clearwater Two, which netted 11 boats off the Territory coast in two weeks.

NIRIA (Panama)

Jakarta, Oct 24 -- Crude oil tanker Niria was arrested for fuel smuggling. Based on the information gathered, its arrest was early June. -- Lloyd's Agents.

RUSSIAN FISHING VESSEL SEIZED BY NORWAY

London, Oct 25 -- A press report, dated Oct 24, states: Vladimir Yevseyev, captain of the Russian

transportation vessel Dmitry Pokramovich has sent a radio telegram to the management of the Murmanrybprom company to notify it about the seizure of two Russian vessels by the Norwegian coastguard. The telegram, whose text Interfax obtained from Murmanrybprom General Director Vladimir Zagorovsky, says that "M-00013 Dmitry Pokramovich started reloading fish from M-0041 Kapitan Gorbachev belonging to the Arkhangelsk trawling fleet near Bear Island [Bjornoya Island] on October 21."

London, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated Oct 26, states: Russian officials say Norway is acting too tough in detaining fish factories Dmitry Pokramovich and Kapitan Gorbachev and fining the ships' owners accused of violating Norwegian fishing laws. Norway is demanding that the owner of the boats pay fines of \$140,000 and \$200,000, or face trial on charges of unauthorized fish reloading and being in unauthorized waters, Novosti reports. The companies also have to admit their guilt, the deputy governor of Svalbard, Norway said. The ships were detained in the Barents Sea Monday (Oct 24). Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Mikhail Kamynin downplayed the charges, saying Norway's demands are heavy-handed compared to the alleged violations.

RUSSIAN FISHING VESSELS SEIZED BY NORWAY

London, Oct 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: Murmanrybprom, the owner of fish factory Dmitry Pokramovich, detained on Oct 24 near the Svalbard islands, has received notification from the Norwegian authorities demanding a \$200,000 fine, the company's general director said today. Vladimir Zagorovsky said the vessel owner had sent requests to Russian authorities seeking advice as to which country's laws the vessel was subject to. A Norwegian court will hear the case of two arrested Russian vessels in the middle of December if their owners do not pay fines before procedures begin, a spokesman for the governor of the Norwegian archipelago of Svalbard said today. The fish factory Kapitan Gorbachev and the Dmitry Pokramovich should pay bail or fines worth about \$140,000 and \$200,000 respectively, the spokesman said. If the vessel owners pay fines immediately, the case will be closed. Otherwise, these sums may be transferred to a bank deposit to guarantee the payment of the fines a Norwegian court could impose if it were proved that the vessels' crews were guilty of unauthorized fish reloading in Norway's territorial waters. The Svalbard deputy governor said earlier today that the vessels could be released immediately if the owners posted bail or paid fines and acknowledged Norway's claims were correct. On Monday (Oct 24), the Norwegian Coast Guard detained the vessels near the island of Medvezhy in the Barents Sea after the vessels entered a 12-mile exclusive fishing

zone without permission. The Russian Foreign Ministry's official spokesman, Mikhail Kamynin, said today that the Norwegian authorities had gone too far in their handling of the arrested Russian fishing vessels. "Even if Norway has reasons to say the vessels had deviated somewhat from the existing fishing regulations in that area, the Norwegian authorities' actions look excessive, whereas the sanctions they imposed do not correspond to the circumstances," he said.

SANTORINI SKY (Greece)

London, Oct 21 -- A report in the Oct 21 issue of "Newsfront" states: Ro/ro Santorini Sky is scheduled to be auctioned on Nov 9.

YM XINGANG I (Germany)

Manila, Oct 27 -- C.c. YM Xingang I is still detained in Manila pending resolution of drug trafficking case. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Manila, Oct 27 -- C.c. YM Xingang I is still detained at the port of Manila's Pier 3, South Harbour terminal. Sources at Sky International, the Manila shipping agent for the vessel, said that police and customs authorities have allowed the unloading of the ship's container load which had been stuck at Manila for the past 16 days. The discharging of containers was completed today and will be loaded onto another Yang Ming Transport Corp. vessel bound for Hong Kong. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.



Pipeline Accidents

BAIJI AREA, IRAQ

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

DELTA STATE, NIGERIA

London, Oct 22 -- A press report, dated today, states: Some 60 suspected oil thieves were feared dead in the southern Nigerian state of Delta when fuel pipes punctured by them to siphon fuel were gutted by fire, state media reported yesterday. The oil thieves met their death when the fire, which occurred at about 0100 on Monday (Oct 17) at a river that crossed the Ekpan village, destroyed 10 fiber speed boats and a large number of small wooden barges, the official News Agency of Nigeria reported. Three big barges were also partially destroyed as the fire engulfed the pipelines of the Pipelines and Product Marketing Company (PPMC), a subsidiary of state-run oil firm NNPC, it said. Head of the PPMC Lanre Onasagha, said that his department later put out the fire, but could not give the exact number of those burnt in the inferno. "It is impossible to quote as the river has washed away some of the dead by the time the fire was put out, it is hard to

tell but many people died." Nigeria, the world's eighth largest oil exporter, loses about 100,000 barrels of crude per day to oil theft. As Onasgha explained, the thieves usually came through the river and planted valves on the pipelines, ran hoses through them into the barges and loaded their wares.

ESCRAVOS AREA, NIGERIA

London, Oct 25 -- A press report, dated Oct 24, states: Unknown arsonists yesterday set the pipeline that supplies crude oil from the Escravos Terminal to the Warri Refinery, on fire, a situation which could lead to the closure of the refinery if the stock pile of crude oil in its reservoir is exhausted. The 24-inch pipeline which is operated by the Pipelines and Products Marketing Company (PPMC), the subsidiary of the NNPC, supplies both the Warri refinery and the Kaduna Refinery with crude, and was still on fire.

WARRI AREA, NIGERIA

London, Oct 20 -- A press report, dated Oct 19, states: A major fire erupted near the city of Warri after thieves cracked open a pipeline to steal fuel, a spokesperson for a state distribution firm said today. "There was a pipeline explosion at Oreghe near Warri yesterday. It was caused by pipeline vandalism. Fortunately, there were no loss of lives," Ralph Ugwu said. "The fire is being contained. Our men are at the site working. No negative impact on the surroundings has been reported," he added. He said the incident would not lead to a fuel shortage in the area. No arrests have been made but security forces are hunting the gang, he added.



Pollution

ASPROPYRGOS, GREECE

London, Oct 21 -- Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: During the evening of Oct 20, the master of crude oil tanker Vigour (50552 gt, built 1995) advised the Coast Guard of Eleusis that, during discharge of vessel's cargo at Hellenic Refineries, Aspropyrgos, a leak had occurred to cooling pipes of the cargo pumps and, as a result, an oil pollution was caused to an extent of 400 square metres. Immediately the refinery contracted the anti-pollution works of Environmental Protection Engineering SA. Work was interrupted due to darkness and continued at daybreak using two craft. The Coast Guard arrested the master and chief engineer and took them to the Public Prosecutor.

CAPE ST.MARY'S, CANADA

London, Oct 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: A Newfoundland and Labrador provincial court judge

has ordered ex crude oil tanker Front Fighter (79669 gt, built 1998), now named Nordic Fighter to pay a penalty of CAD 70,000 for an oil spill south-west of Cape St. Mary's in June 2004. An investigation found that 64 litres of oil had been spilled from the tanker's bilges. On Jun 22 2004 a routine Transport Canada marine pollution surveillance flight detected three slicks in the wake of the tanker. The pollution incident was detected approximately 85 miles south-west of Cape St. Mary's. Front Fighter was travelling from Yorktown, Virginia toward Whiffen Head, Newfoundland and Labrador at the time of the incident. Transport Canada Marine Safety Inspectors determined that the oil, estimated to be about 64 litres, originated from the vessel. As a result of the investigation, Transport Canada laid charges against the vessel in Newfoundland and Labrador provincial court on Jun 30 2004 under the Pollution Prevention Regulations of the Canada Shipping Act. The vessel pleaded guilty to the charge of illegal discharge of a pollutant in provincial court in St. John's, NL and was subsequently fined. At the time of the pollution incident, the vessel was named Front Fighter and was owned by Frontline Ltd, of Oslo, Norway. The vessel has since then been sold to new owners and re-named Nordic Fighter.



AUSTRALIA

London, Oct 25 -- A press report, dated today, states: Producers in southern Queensland are bracing for more storms in the next few hours after last night's weather caused tens of millions of dollars damage. Fruit growers near Stanthorpe say they lost about a quarter of their apple crop, worth about \$20 million. The severe hail storms have decimated vegetable crops in the Lockyer Valley, west of Brisbane. Barry Stefan's farm near Gatton was one of those badly hit. "We've had about 60 acres of pumpkins and watermelons just totally demolished," he said. Large hail stones pelted citrus crops near Gayndah in the north Burnett for the second time in four days. Ian Shepherd, from the local Packers Co-operative, says some growers have lost 60% of their crops.

London, Oct 25 -- A press report, dated today, states: Farmers in Queensland's southern border area are reporting millions of dollars damage after severe storms battered most of the state overnight. The line of thunderstorms stretched along Queensland's entire east coast from Cape York Peninsula to the Gold Coast. Fruit growers near Stanthorpe say it hailed for nearly an hour. Malcolm McMahon from nearby

Pozieres says there is about \$1.5 million damage to his property alone. There was also large hail in the Lockyer Valley, west of Brisbane, but the extent of crop damage there is not known. Almost 50,000 homes lost electricity during the storms and crews are still working to restore power to hundreds of houses and businesses.

London, Oct 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: Storms have continued to wreak havoc across Queensland's south-east, with hailstones battering homes and winds bringing down power lines and trees. Hailstones damaged at least three houses and farms north of Tara in the Darling Downs, west of Brisbane, overnight. Lighting strikes and fallen lines cut electricity to around 4500 consumers, mainly in the Beaudesert, Laidley and Gatton areas, south-west of Brisbane. A Counter Disaster and Rescue Services spokeswoman today said State and Emergency Service crews were busy moving "a lot" of fallen trees off roads around Tara. Bureau of Meteorology senior forecaster Jonty Hall said overnight storms dumped between 25 and 50mm of rain in areas from Brisbane's south to the New South Wales border. BoM forecaster Craig Mitchell said the stormy weather would ease today before returning tomorrow. He said a slow moving line of showers that brought loud thunder to Brisbane overnight was slowly moving towards the Gold Coast. Meanwhile, savage storms that lashed Queensland on Monday (Oct 24) night have been blamed for two road fatalities and an estimated \$25 million in damage to crops. The state's south-east bore the brunt of those storms with almost 50,000 homes losing power as winds up to 100kph battered the region along with heavy rain and hailstones.

BAY OF BENGAL

Chittagong, Oct 24 -- Due to the continued moderate to heavy rain caused by the persisting low over the Bay of Bengal for the last couple of days, the Met office maintained the local cautionary signal number 3 for the maritime ports of Chittagong, Mongla and Cox's Bazar since Wednesday (Oct 19). Under the influence of the low, heavy clouds have stretched from southwestern coast to northwestern Bangladesh. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Oct 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: At least 12 people have been killed following a series of floods in southern Bengal. Four of the victims were crushed when a house collapsed while two others died as a result of electrocution during the storm. Around 800,000 people are now stranded as a result of the floods, many of which are now living in relief camps. Many train services in the region were severely disrupted, as rails stood underwater making it impossible for trains to run. Meanwhile, the torrential rains also caused enormous damage to crops in the area.

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

CANADA

London, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated Oct 26, states: The first major snowstorm of the season has left about 34,000 people without electricity in Quebec's Eastern Townships and the Monteregie region. Hydro-Quebec said its crews worked throughout last night to restore service, but heavy wet snowfalls were continuing to hamper their efforts today. About 30 cm of snow fell on some parts of the region. The high winds and snow had knocked out power for about 6,000 Hydro-Quebec customers by yesterday evening, said company spokesperson Helene Perreault. Perreault said that, as of 0600, EDT, today, the number of customers without power rose to 22,000. Most of those affected were concentrated around Coaticook, Lake Memphremagog and the area around Sherbrooke. Another 1,000 people in Sherbrooke were also without power. Hydro-Quebec said 11,000 customers were without electricity in the Monteregie region. Perreault said it could take all today to restore electricity to all areas.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

London, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: A rain-swollen river flooded a city in the northern Dominican Republic, washing away houses and killing six people, including two children, officials said today. Authorities rescued two people from their homes after the river flooded last night in Puerto Plata, about 150 miles from the capital, Santo Domingo, said Jose Luis German of the National Emergency Committee. Floodwaters swept away at least 10 homes and a bridge connecting two small towns, German said. An unknown number of other homes were damaged.

HURRICANE "KATRINA"

London, Oct 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: The death toll attributed to hurricane "Katrina" in Louisiana has grown to 1,053, according to figures released Tuesday. The number of bodies received by a special morgue in St. Gabriel near Baton Rouge and by coroners in 13 parishes rose to 1,061, up from 1,056 on Oct 21. However, that total included the bodies of eight people whose deaths have since been ruled unrelated to the storm, the state Department of Health and Hospitals said. Just under half of the bodies have been identified, and many of those names have not been released because of difficulty locating family members or because autopsies are pending, said Bob Johannessen, a DHH spokesman.

HURRICANE "WILMA"

London, Oct 20 -- At 1500, UTC, the Government of Mexico has extended the hurricane warning southward to Chetumal. A hurricane warning is now in effect from San Felipe to Chetumal, on the Yucatan Peninsula, including Cozumel and the nearby islands. A

hurricane warning is also in effect for Swan Island. A tropical storm warning and a hurricane watch remain in effect from west of San Felipe to Celestun. A tropical storm warning remains in effect for Belize, from the border with Mexico southward to Belize City. A hurricane watch remains in effect in Cuba for the provinces of Matanzas westward through Pinar del Rio and for the isle of youth. A tropical storm warning remains in effect for Honduras from the Honduras/Nicaragua border westward to Cabo Camaron. All interests in the Florida Keys and the Florida peninsula should closely monitor the progress of extremely dangerous hurricane "Wilma". At 1500, UTC, the centre of hurricane "Wilma" was located near lat 18.4N, long 85.5W or about 170 miles south-south-east of Cozumel, Mexico. "Wilma" is moving toward the west-north-west near seven miles per hour. A turn toward the north-west is expected later today. Maximum sustained winds are near 145 mph, with higher gusts. "Wilma" is a category four hurricane on the saffir-simpson scale. Some re-strengthening is forecast during the next 24 hours. Hurricane force winds extend outward up to 90 miles from the centre and tropical storm force winds extend outward up to 260 miles. km. Estimated minimum central pressure is 915 mb. Coastal storm surge flooding of seven to 10 feet above normal tide levels, along with large and dangerous battering waves can be expected near and to the north of where the centre makes landfall on the Yucatan peninsula. "Wilma" is expected to produce 10 to 20 inches of rain through Saturday (Oct 22) across portions of western Cuba and the Yucatan peninsula, with isolated amounts of 40 inches possible particularly over higher terrain in western Cuba.

London, Oct 21 -- A press report, dated Oct 20, states: Roaring waves pounded Mexican beach resorts on Thursday and thousands of tourists were evacuated to escape the wrath of Hurricane "Wilma", which gathered strength in the Caribbean on its way to Florida. Cuba evacuated 220,000 people and residents of southern Florida stocked up on drinking water and gas to prepare for "Wilma", which spun off the coasts of Mexico and Belize packing winds of around 150 mph (240 kph). Described by forecasters as extremely dangerous, "Wilma" killed 10 people in mudslides in Haiti earlier in the week. Expensive beachfront hotels all along Mexico's "Maya Riviera" coast emptied of tourists who escaped to shelters. The normally calm, turquoise Caribbean heaved and frothed and light rain began to fall. "We are trying to stay calm, but we are freaking out inside," said Kerry Rieth, a tourist from Pennsylvania in the cloud-covered resort of Cancun. Winds were strong and heavy rains were expected later in the day. "Wilma" became the strongest Atlantic storm on record in terms of

barometric pressure on Wednesday. It weakened to a Category 4 hurricane, then picked up speed again as it headed toward Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula, where it was expected to hit on Friday. "Believe me, this is still a very, very powerful hurricane," said Max Mayfield, director of the U.S. National Hurricane Center in Miami. The hurricane season has six weeks left and has already spawned three of the most intense storms on record. Hurricane experts say the Atlantic has entered a period of heightened storm activity that could last another 20 years. The storm was expected to miss Gulf of Mexico oil and gas facilities battered by Hurricanes "Katrina" and "Rita" in August and September, but Florida's orange groves were at risk. "The centre of "Wilma" will be very near the coastline of the Yucatan by midday tomorrow. However, "Wilma" has a large circulation, and hurricane conditions will be felt well before the arrival of the centre," the hurricane centre said. Residents who live in flimsy shacks that cannot withstand high winds were being moved to shelters. "This is one of the most destructive hurricanes," said Felix Gonzalez, governor of Quintana Roo state which is home to Mexico's Caribbean resorts. "We are on maximum alert." The island of Cozumel, one of the world's best spots for scuba diving, faced a possible direct hit and tourists were ordered to leave. In Cancun, they took shelter at gymnasiums and schools as the storm was expected to send a 10-foot (3-meter) surge of water over the coast. Mexican authorities said about 42,000 tourists could be evacuated from coastal areas, and airlines added flights from Cancun and nearby points on the Riviera Maya as well as Cozumel and Isla Mujeres. Lowanda Cole, a massage therapist from Houston, said she was getting used to hurricanes after one of the most destructive seasons on record. "We evacuated from "Rita", we helped folks out with "Katrina" and now here we are and we have to run again. We can't get away from these things," she said in a crowded Cancun hotel lobby as she waited with her sons to be evacuated. Some hardy local residents who have lived through many hurricanes were unfazed. "I've been here 25 years. I'm not at all worried. My house is safe," said Jorge Moreno, a carpenter who lives in a low-cost housing project in Cancun. At 5 p.m. EDT (1800 GMT), "Wilma" was 135 miles (220 km) south-east of Cozumel and was slowly moving north-west. Forecasters said it would strike densely populated southern Florida late on Sunday. At a briefing in Tallahassee, Florida, Gov. Jeb Bush told residents to take advantage of the extra time the slow-moving storm has given them to prepare. "You need to have non-perishable food for 72 hours. Make sure you have fresh water, make sure you have batteries, battery-powered radios and lighting so that you can survive what will happen after a storm." Authorities in the

Keys, connected to mainland Florida by a single road, ordered tourists out on Wednesday and are considering telling the islands' 80,000 residents to evacuate on Saturday. Tobacco planters in Cuba's westernmost Pinar del Rio province protected seedlings and secured bales of leaves for the country's famed cigars.

London, Oct 21 -- A press report, dated today, states: Tourists packed Cancun's airport and shuttled from luxury hotels to spartan emergency shelters yesterday, desperately trying to escape Hurricane "Wilma" as its outer bands battered the resort's white-sand beaches. Cuba evacuated more than 200,000 people. "Wilma", a Category 4 storm with 150 mph wind, churned toward the Yucatan peninsula and south Florida after brushing by Haiti and Jamaica, where it killed at least 13 people. Forecasters said the storm was expected to make a direct hit on the vacation isle of Cozumel today, then slam Cancun and sideswipe Cuba. "As it hits the Yucatan peninsula, it has the potential to do catastrophic damage," said Max Mayfield, director of the National Hurricane Centre in Miami. Forecasters predicted it would swing northeast around Cuba and charge Sunday (Oct 23) at hurricane-weary Florida. Gov. Jeb Bush declared a state of emergency, after the state got caught in the westerlies, the strong wind current that generally blows toward the east. Briefly the most intense Atlantic hurricane on record, "Wilma" was a potentially catastrophic Category 5 storm before weakening. Its 150 mph winds made it more powerful than Hurricane "Katrina" when it plowed into the US Gulf coast on Aug 29, killing more than 1,200 people. The National Hurricane Centre in Miami, Florida said that by early today, the storm's centre was roughly 90 miles southeast of Cozumel. But hurricane-force wind extended 85 miles out from the centre, and tropical storm-force wind reached 200 miles out. It was heading northwest toward the Yucatan at near six mph. Tropical storm-force winds and rains were already hitting Cozumel by yesterday night. Hundreds of schools in the Yucatan were ordered closed and many were turned into shelters. Airlines started cancelling flights. While hundreds were evacuated from Cozumel, Mexican officials said about a thousand tourists stayed on the island, mainly at hotel ballrooms being used as storm shelters. About 20,000 tourists remained at shelters and hotels on the mainland south of Cancun, and an estimated 10,000 to 12,000 in the city itself. After the Cancun airport closed, desperate tourists shuttled from luxury hotels to emergency shelters ahead of "Wilma", which forecasters said was growing stronger. Cuba evacuated more than 200,000 people as the storm approached.

London, Oct 21 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office: Hurricane "Wilma": A hurricane

warning remains in effect from San Felipe to Chetumal on the Yucatan Peninsula, including Cozumel and the nearby islands. A tropical storm warning and a hurricane watch remain in effect from west of San Felipe to Celestun. A tropical storm warning remains in effect for Belize from the border with Mexico southwards to Belize City. A tropical storm warning is in effect for the provinces of La Habana, Ciudad de la Habana, Pinar del Rio and the Isle of Youth. A hurricane watch remains in effect in Cuba for the provinces of Matanzas westwards through Pinar del Rio and for the Isle of Youth. All interests in the Florida Keys and the Florida Peninsula should closely monitor the progress of extremely dangerous hurricane "Wilma." Hurricane centre located near lat 20.0N, long 86.2W, at 0900, UTC, Oct 21. Position accurate to within 10 nautical miles. Present movement towards the north-north-west, or 330 deg, at five knots. Diameter of eye 30 nautical miles. Maximum sustained winds 130 knots with gusts to 160 knots. Radius of 64-knot winds 60 nautical miles south-west quadrant, 75 nautical miles elsewhere. Radius of 50-knot winds 75 nautical miles south-west quadrant, 90 nautical miles south-east quadrant, 110 nautical miles elsewhere. Radius of 34-knot winds 120 nautical miles south-west quadrant, 150 nautical miles south-east quadrant, 175 nautical miles elsewhere. Radius of 12-foot seas 175 nautical miles south-west quadrant, 325 nautical miles south-east quadrant, 450 nautical miles elsewhere. Forecast for 0600, UTC, Oct 22: Position lat 21.2N, long 87.1W. Inland. Maximum sustained winds 115 knots with gusts to 140 knots. Radius of 64-knot winds 40 nautical miles south-west quadrant, 75 nautical miles elsewhere. Radius of 50-knot winds 60 nautical miles south-west quadrant, 90 nautical miles south-east quadrant, 100 nautical miles elsewhere. Radius of 34-knot winds 90 nautical miles south-west quadrant, 150 nautical miles south-east quadrant, 175 nautical miles elsewhere.

Cancun, Oct 21 -- Lashing wind and rain pounded Mexican beach resorts today and thousands of tourists hunkered down in shelters to escape hurricane "Wilma," which was hammering Caribbean resorts on its way to densely populated southern Florida. Heavy rain was coming down in diagonal sheets and howling winds were buckling sturdy trees. Tourists were evacuated from luxury beachfront hotels all along Mexico's "Maya Riviera" coast and the normally calm, turquoise Caribbean seas heaved and "Wilma" dumped rain on streets patrolled by soldiers ordering people to take cover. Described by forecasters as extremely dangerous and at its height later today expected to send a seven-to-11-foot surge of water over the coast, the hurricane killed 10 people in mudslides in Haiti earlier in the week. Cuba evacuated

220,000 people and residents of southern Florida stocked up on drinking water and gas to prepare for the storm, which hammered the coasts of Mexico and Belize with winds of around 150 mph. Mexican authorities said close to 22,000 tourists and locals residents had been evacuated from low-lying coastal areas. "Wilma" became the strongest Atlantic storm on record in terms of barometric pressure on Wednesday (Oct 19). It weakened to a Category 4 hurricane, then picked up again as it headed for Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula, where it was expected to hit around noon today. At 0500, EDT (0900, UTC), the hurricane was 55 miles south-east of Cozumel, Mexico, and was moving towards the north-north-west at roughly six mph, according to the US National Hurricane Centre. Forecasters said it would strike densely populated southern Florida late on Sunday. Wilma was expected to miss Gulf of Mexico oil and gas facilities battered by hurricanes "Katrina" and "Rita" in August and September, but Florida's orange groves were at risk. The island of Cozumel, one of the world's best spots for scuba diving, faced a possible direct hit. Authorities in the Florida Keys, connected to mainland Florida by a single road, ordered tourists out and were considering telling the islands' 80,000 residents to evacuate. The hurricane was expected to bring 10-20 inches of rain through Sunday across parts of western Cuba and the Yucatan, the hurricane centre reported, with isolated areas of mountainous western Cuba receiving up to 40 inches of rain. -- Reuters.

London, Oct 22 -- A press report, dated today, states: Residents began fleeing the Florida Keys and parts of the mainland yesterday as Hurricane "Wilma" plodded toward Florida, its slower-than-expected path prolonging the anxious wait for a fierce storm that could hit the state Monday (Oct 24). The Category 4 hurricane earlier had been expected to strike somewhere on Florida's west coast this weekend. Its erratic movement frustrated residents already worried about what would be the eighth hurricane to hit or pass near the state since August 2004. Charlotte Regional Medical Centre in Punta Gorda, which sustained tens of millions of dollars in damage last year from Hurricane "Charley", was discharging as many patients as possible, had reduced elective surgeries and prepared to evacuate patients if needed. Scattered gas shortages were reported in parts of Florida, but Gov. Jeb Bush said the state had a 10-day supply of fuel. Some highways were jammed as people fled the west coast, but police told the governor most of the congestion was from accidents. At 0200, EDT today, the hurricane's winds were about 135 mph, down slightly from 140 mph hours earlier, as the storm made landfall on the Yucatan peninsula in Mexico. "Wilma" was about 450 miles southwest of Florida's southwest coast and moving

north-northwest at about 3 mph and is expected to reach Florida Monday, the hurricane centre said. Landfall in Florida was not likely until sometime Monday afternoon. "Wilma" will likely linger over the Yucatan for a few days, which should weaken the hurricane's top sustained winds to 130 mph or lower.

London, Oct 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: At least three people are known to have died as Hurricane "Wilma" continues to pound Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula. Tens of thousands of people, many of them foreign tourists, are riding out the storm in overcrowded shelters. The slow-moving storm has sent waves surging over hotels in the resort of Cancun, wiped out electricity supplies and flattened hundreds of homes. Forecasters said "Wilma" had weakened but was expected to intensify as it slowly heads towards Florida's west coast. Officials have ordered 80,000 residents to leave the Florida Keys island chain ahead of the storm's arrival late today or tomorrow. Hundreds of thousands of people have also been moved from coastal areas in western Cuba, already lashed by rains and a tornado spun off from "Wilma." Storm surges reached as high as the third storey of some hotels yesterday, as the hurricane lingered over Mexico's popular Cancun area. In the resort town of Playa del Carmen, two people died when a gas tank exploded. And to the west of the Yucatan Peninsula, a man died after he was crushed under a large branch. There have been some reports of looting and police officers have been standing guard outside some of the larger convenience stores. On the resort island of Cozumel, which took the brunt of the storm on Friday, streets have been flooded and hotel windows shattered. Playa del Carmen has also suffered severe damage, the town's civil defence chief Moises Ramirez told the AFP news agency. "Playa is destroyed," he said. "We have water everywhere, all of the power lines are down, we are flooded all over. Playa is just not like this." Mexico's President Vicente Fox, who is to visit the area today, sought to reassure both tourists and residents in a televised address. The US National Hurricane Center had downgraded "Wilma" to a Category Two storm, packing winds of 110 mph by 1800, GMT. The peninsula and areas of western Cuba can expect 25 to 50cm of rain by today, with some parts of Cuba hit by up to 100cm, the NHC has warned.

London, Oct 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: Hurricane "Wilma" punished Mexico's Caribbean coastline for a second day yesterday, ripping away storefronts, peeling back roofs and forcing tourists and residents trapped in hotels and shelters to scramble to higher floors. At least seven people were killed. On the island of Cozumel off the Yucatan peninsula coast, a navy rescue mission sighted three bodies floating down a flooding avenue and a fourth in a town square. Cozumel has been isolated

since weathering the brunt of the storm on Friday (Oct 21). Earlier, officials reported three other deaths from the storm. Waves slammed into seaside pools and sent water surging over the narrow strip of sand housing Cancun's luxury hotels and raucous bars, joining the sea with the alligator-infested lagoon. Downtown, winds tore banks open, leaving automatic teller machines standing in knee-deep water. "Wilma", which had weakened to a Category 2 as it inched northward with sustained winds near 100 mph, was expected to pick up speed today, sideswiping Cuba before it hits Florida. Max Mayfield, director of the National Hurricane Centre in Miami, predicted the storm would pick up speed and its top winds would increase dramatically today. Early today, the storm was slowly moving back over the Caribbean Sea, and rains and winds were easing in Cancun. A hurricane watch was issued yesterday for the entire southern Florida peninsula, with heavy rain from Wilma's outer bands already causing hip-deep flooding in the Fort Lauderdale. At 0100, EDT, today, "Wilma" was drifting northeast with maximum sustained winds near 100 mph. It was located about 55 miles north of Cancun, Mexico or about 370 miles west-southwest of Key West, Florida. Even as it battered Mexico, the storm's outer bands whipped the western tip of Cuba, where the government evacuated more than 500,000 people. A tornado spun off from the storm flattened 20 homes and several tobacco-curing huts.

London, Oct 23 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office: At 0900, UTC, the hurricane watch is replaced by a hurricane warning north of Jupiter Inlet to Titusville. A hurricane warning is now in effect for all of the Florida Keys, including the Dry Tortugas and Florida Bay, along the Florida west coast from Longboat Key southward, and along the Florida east coast from Titusville southward, including Lake Okeechobee. At 0900, UTC, the tropical storm watch is replaced by a tropical storm warning north of Titusville to Flagler Beach. A tropical storm warning is now in effect along the Florida west coast north of Longboat Key to Steinhatchee River and along the Florida east coast north of Titusville to Flagler Beach. A tropical storm watch remains in effect along the east coast of Florida from North of Flagler Beach to Fernandina Beach. A hurricane warning remains in effect from San Felipe to Punta Gruesa on the Yucatan Peninsula, including Cozumel and the nearby islands, and a tropical storm warning remains in effect west of San Felipe to Progreso. A hurricane warning remains in effect for the Cuban provinces of Ciudad de la Habana, La Habana and Pinar del Rio. A tropical storm warning is in effect for the Isle of Youth. A hurricane watch remains in effect for the province of Matanzas. A hurricane watch remains in effect for the northwestern Bahamas including the Abacos, Andros Island,

Berry Islands, Bimini, Eleuthera, Grand Bahama Island and New Providence. Hurricane centre located near lat 22.1N, long 86.6W at 0900, UTC, Oct 23, position accurate within 15 nautical miles. Present movement toward the northeast or 45 degrees at three knots. Estimated minimum central pressure 961 mb Maximum sustained winds 85 knots with gusts to 105 knots. Radius of 64-knot winds: 60 nautical miles east semicircle, 40 nautical miles west semicircle Radius of 50-knot winds: 100 nautical miles east semicircle, 75 nautical miles south-west quadrant and 90 nautical miles north-west semicircle. Radius of 34-knot winds: 125 nautical miles south-west quadrant, 175 nautical miles elsewhere. Forecast for 0600, UTC, Oct 24: Position near lat 24.7N, long 83.3W with maximum winds of 85 knots and gusts to 105 knots. Radius of 64-knot winds: 75 nautical miles east semicircle, 50 nautical miles west semicircle. Radius of 50-knot winds: 125 nautical miles north-east quadrant, 100 nautical miles south-east quadrant, 75 nautical miles elsewhere. Radius of 34-knot winds: 200 nautical miles east semicircle, 125 nautical miles south-west quadrant and 150 nautical miles north-west quadrant.

London, Oct 24 -- A press report, dated Oct 23, states: Hurricane "Wilma" set its sights on Florida, having left a trail of death and destruction across Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula. The Category 2 hurricane battered the popular holiday resort of Cancun for a third day today, prolonging the horror for thousands of stranded British tourists. Driving sheets of rain and howling 115 mph gales ripped off roofs, shattered windows and flooded streets. Homes were flattened and at least six people were killed. The eye of the storm, blamed for 13 deaths in Jamaica and Haiti, entirely cut off the idyllic Cozumel Island, before causing severe damage in Playa del Carmen. Trees were ripped from the ground, all power lines were down and waves crashed into the lower floors of luxury hotels. A hurricane warning was issued for the southern half of Florida as "Wilma," with winds stretching 170 miles across, began beating a path towards the US mainland.

London, Oct 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: Hurricane "Wilma" has strengthened has been upgraded to a category 3 storm heading toward the south-western coast of Florida, the US National Hurricane Centre says. The centre says it did not expect further significant changes in the strength of "Wilma" until it makes landfall in Florida early today. At 0300, GMT, the eye of the storm was located 275 kilometres south-west of Naples and barrelling toward the US coast at 30 kilometres an hour. A storm surge up to 2.5 metres above normal was forecast for the Florida Keys and Florida Bay.

London, Oct 24 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated

today: Hurricane centre "Wilma" located near lat 25.5N, long 82.4W at 0900, UTC, today. Position accurate within 20 nautical miles. Present movement towards the north-east or 50 degrees at 17 knots. Estimated minimum central pressure 950 mb. Maximum sustained winds 110 knots with gusts to 135 knots. Forecast position lat 27.9N, long 79.0W at 1800, UTC, today. Maximum winds 85 knots, gusts 105 knots. Forecast position lat 32.9N, long 73.1W at 0600, UTC, Oct 25. Maximum winds 75 knots, gusts 90 knots.

Miami, Oct 24 -- Hurricane "Wilma" crashed ashore in south-west Florida and roared across the peninsula, pounding Miami, Fort Lauderdale and West Palm Beach today after slamming Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula and killing 17 people in the Caribbean. Once the most intense hurricane on record in the Atlantic, "Wilma" weakened after hammering Cancun and Cozumel for three days with punishing winds and rains but strengthened as it reached Florida with top sustained winds of 125 mph. The hurricane's powerful core struck the Florida mainland before dawn on the west coast near Naples, blasting beach sand across coastal roads, shredding power lines and bending palm trees. It hit as a Category 3 storm on the five-stage hurricane intensity scale, capable of causing significant damage. "The rain is coming down sideways. We've had a handful of tornadoes," said Jaime Sarbaugh, an emergency management spokeswoman for Collier County, where the hurricane made landfall. "We're still in the middle of this hurricane so we're not sending anyone out right now." The sprawling storm, about 400 miles across, covered much of the Florida peninsula and some of its strongest winds whipped Miami, Fort Lauderdale and West Palm Beach, the state's most populous area with about five million people. More than 315,000 Florida Power & Light customers were without power, the utility said. Forecasters said "Wilma" could prove to be the strongest storm in Miami since hurricane "Andrew" caused more than \$25 billion in damage in August, 1992. Before hitting the mainland, the hurricane's eye roared just north of Key West, the popular tourist island at the end of the 110-mile Florida Keys island chain. The streets of the Keys, no more than 16 feet above sea level at their highest point and connected to the Florida mainland by a single road, were dark and deserted as the winds and rains picked up and power went out block by block. Seawater sloshed into downtown streets in Key West and local media reported parts of the Overseas Highway were swamped in the Upper Keys. Fatigued after being forced to evacuate for three earlier hurricanes this season, no more than 7% of the Keys' 80,000 residents fled ahead of "Wilma," officials said. Key West Police Chief Bill Mauldin said early today he had not received any reports of deaths or injuries. In south-

west Florida, the hurricane's tidal surge was expected to be up to 18 feet above normal. At 0700 hrs (1100, UTC), the hurricane's centre was just north of Everglades City and was moving north-east at 23 mph. Hurricane-force winds extended up to 90 miles, while tropical storm-force winds stretched out 230 miles from the centre. "Wilma" was accelerating as it raced across the Florida Peninsula. The storm ploughed through the heart of the Everglades on a path to the state's east coast around Palm Beach County. In Mexico, "Wilma" caused severe damage in Cancun and on the island of Cozumel off the Yucatan. Many of the 20,000 or more tourists stranded on the "Maya Riviera" were short of food and water and becoming increasingly frustrated yesterday as they faced a fourth night in cramped shelters with no electricity or running water. The storm killed seven people in Mexico, fewer than many had feared. It killed 10 people in Haiti last week after spawning mudslides in the impoverished Caribbean country. In Cuba, 86-mph wind gusts howled through the deserted streets of Havana, knocking down lamp posts and smashing windows. Rough seas stirred up by "Wilma" crashed over Havana's famed Malecon sea wall after midnight, turning streets into rivers of knee-deep flood water. About 15 blocks were under water. -- Reuters.

London, Oct 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: Developments across Florida related to Hurricane "Wilma": "Wilma" made landfall as a Category 3 storm at 0630, EDT, today, near Cape Romano on the southwest Gulf Coast. It then weakened to a Category 2 as it churned across the peninsula. At least one death blamed on storm. Up to 2.5 million customers lost power. More than 33,000 people in shelters across the state. The National Hurricane Centre clocked a gust at its own building in Miami of 104 mph. President Bush signs disaster declaration. About 35 percent of Key West flooded. Schools in Monroe, Broward, Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach, Collier, Okeechobee, Polk and Glades counties closed. Some 3,100 National Guard soldiers on duty. State emergency officials said 200 tractor-trailers of ice and 225 of water ready to be deployed. Truckloads of tarps and ready-to-eat meals were being assembled. Rescue teams on standby. Walt Disney World theme parks closed; Everglades National Park closed.

London, Oct 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: Rescuers in inflatable rafts and amphibious vehicles pulled nearly 250 people from flooded homes in Cuba today after huge waves churned by Hurricane "Wilma" flooded the capital's coastal highway and adjacent neighborhoods of old, crumbling buildings. The ocean spread up to four blocks inland, inundating streets and buildings with water up to three feet deep. There were no immediate reports of injuries anywhere on the island. Nearly 700,000 people were evacuated across

Cuba's west in recent days as "Wilma" approached, first hitting Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula and then plowing across southern Florida. The outer bands of "Wilma" also flooded evacuated communities along the island's southern coast over the weekend after the hurricane clobbered Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula. Flooding and high winds caused heavy damage to homes in the northern coastal community of Baracoa, just east of Havana. In the Port of Mariel east of Havana, people gathered outside homes to watch in awe as waves several yards high rolled in one after another. Part of a concrete seawall crumbled, but otherwise no major damage was evident. The government shut off electricity throughout the capital and across the island's west, a standard safety precaution, as high winds howled across the island.

London, Oct 24 -- Due to hurricane "Wilma", Port Everglades, Port of Palm Beach, and Port of Miami have been closed to all commercial inbound traffic effective from 0100, Oct 23. Ports of Tampa and Manatee have closed as well. USCG COTP advisory expects that the ports will re-open very late Oct 24 or early Oct 25.

London, Oct 25 -- A press report, dated Oct 24, states: Hurricane "Wilma" knifed through Florida with winds up to 125 mph today, shattering windows in skyscrapers, peeling away roofs and knocking out power to six million people. At least six deaths were blamed on the hurricane in Florida, bringing the toll from the storm to 25. The insurance industry estimated insured losses in Florida at anywhere from \$2 billion to \$9 billion. Officials said it was the most damaging storm to hit the Fort Lauderdale area since 1950. More than one-third of the state's residents lost power. Florida Power & Light, the state's biggest utility, said it could take weeks to restore electricity to everyone.

London, Oct 25 -- A press report, dated Oct 24, states: Hurricane "Wilma" knifed through Florida with winds up to 125 mph today, shattering windows in skyscrapers, peeling away roofs and knocking out power to six million people. At least six deaths were blamed on the hurricane in Florida, bringing the toll from the storm's march through the tropics to 25. The insurance industry estimated insured losses in Florida at anywhere from \$2 billion to \$9 billion. Officials said it was the most damaging storm to hit the Fort Lauderdale area since 1950. The 21st storm of the 2005 season - and the eighth hurricane to hit Florida in 15 months - howled ashore around daybreak just south of Marco Island as a Category 3, cutting electricity to the entire Florida Keys. A tidal surge of up to nine feet swamped parts of Key West in chest-high water, and U.S. 1, the only highway to the mainland, was flooded. As it moved across the state, Wilma weakened to a Category 2 with winds of 105 mph, but it was still powerful enough to flatten trees, flood streets, break water mains, knock down signs,

turn debris into missiles and light up the sky with the blue-green flash of popping transformers. By early afternoon, "Wilma" had swirled out into the open Atlantic, back up to 115-mph Category 3 strength but on a course unlikely to have much effect on the East Coast. Forecasters said it would stay well offshore. "Wilma" brought eight inches of rain to Miami-Dade County, nearly 6.5 to Naples and three to Fort Lauderdale. The flooding could well have been worse if the storm had lingered over the state instead of racing straight through, National Hurricane Centre meteorologist Mark McInerney said. More than one-third of the state's residents lost power. Florida Power & Light, the state's biggest utility, said it could take weeks to restore electricity to everyone. The storm's reach was so great that it blacked out homes and businesses as far north as Daytona Beach, an eight-hour drive north from Key West. In Fort Lauderdale, Miami and Miami Beach, countless windows were blown out of high-rises. Along central Miami's Brickell Avenue, broken glass from skyscrapers littered streets and sidewalks. Broken water mains in the Fort Lauderdale area prompted advisories to boil water, and a ruptured main in central Miami sprayed water 15 feet in the air. In the snowbird enclave Marco Island, where only about 3,000 of the 15,000 residents were believed to have stayed for the storm, the streets were littered with damaged street signs, roofing shingles, awnings and fences. A man in the Fort Lauderdale suburb of Coral Springs died when a tree fell on him. Another man in rural Collier County died when his roof collapsed on him or a tree fell on his roof. In Palm Beach County, a man went to move his van and was killed when debris smashed him into the windshield. Also, an 83-year-old St. Johns County woman died in a weekend car crash while evacuating. A man in Collier County had a fatal heart attack while walking in the storm. An 82-year-old woman in Boyton Beach died after a sliding glass door in her living room fell on her as she looked out. "Wilma" also killed at least six people in Mexico and 13 others in Jamaica and Haiti as it made its way across the Caribbean. In Cuba, rescuers used scuba gear, inflatable rafts and amphibious vehicles to pull nearly 250 people from their flooded homes in Havana after "Wilma" sent huge waves crashing into the capital city and swamped neighbourhoods up to four blocks inland with three feet of water. In Cancun, Mexico, troops and federal police moved in to control looting at stores and shopping centres ripped open by the hurricane, and hunger and frustration mounted among Mexicans and stranded tourists. President Bush, bitterly criticised for a sluggish response to Hurricane "Katrina", signed a disaster declaration for hurricane-damaged areas and promised swift action to help "Wilma"'s victims. The Federal Emergency Management Agency was

prepared to send in dozens of military helicopters and 13.2 million ready-to-eat meals. National Guard units airlifted 12 patients from a Key West hospital, and other units were prepared to deliver food, water and other supplies to the Keys.

London, Oct 25 -- Following received from the Meteorological office, dated today, states: Hurricane "Wilma" centre located near lat 34.8N, long 70.0W at 0900, UTC, today. Position accurate within 20 nautical miles. Present movement toward the north-east or 50 degrees at 46 knots. Maximum sustained winds 100 knots with gusts to 120 knots. Forecast position lat 38.9N, long 64.2W at 1800, UTC, today. Maximum winds 85 knots, gusts 105 knots. Forecast position lat 43.0N, long 57.0W at 0600, UTC, Oct 26. Maximum winds 60 knots.

London, Oct 25 -- A press report, dated today, states: Across South Florida's largest cities, Hurricane "Wilma" forced residents, hospital administrators, airport staff and emergency personnel to cope with sweeping power outages that may not be quickly remedied. More than six million people were without power early today, and while utility company officials said they would try to restore service within days, they also indicated that it could take up to four weeks to fully restore service to all customers. Armando Olivera, president of Florida Power & Light Company said "We will do everything we can to get the lights back on." More of the company's 4.3 million customers have been affected by "Wilma" than by any other natural disaster in the company's history, Olivera said. In heavily populated areas such as Miami-Dade County, as many as 98 percent of its customers lost power. The corridors of Miami International Airport, usually teeming with 90,000 passengers on a Monday night, were dark and empty. The third busiest airport in the US, like others in the region, was closed. Progress Energy, which has 1.5 million customers in central and north Florida, had 52,000 customers lose power at one point; by 0500, today, that number was down to 1,259.

London, Oct 25 -- Hurricane "Wilma" is beginning to weaken as it races northeastward. At 0500, EDT, 0900, UTC, the centre was located near lat 34.8N, long 70.0W, or about 310 miles east of Cape Hatteras North Carolina. "Wilma" is moving toward the northeast near 53mph and this motion is expected to continue for the next 24 hours, keeping "Wilma" well offshore of the north-eastern United States. Maximum sustained winds are near 115mph with higher gusts. Additional weakening is forecast during the next 24 hours and "Wilma" is expected to lose tropical characteristics during the next day or so. Hurricane force winds extend outward up to 105 miles from the centre and tropical storm force winds extend outward up to 430 miles. Although "Wilma" will not be directly affecting the US east coast, high surf is presently occurring along the mid-Atlantic states.

London, Oct 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: Port facilities on Grand Bahama had a narrow escape yesterday when Hurricane "Wilma" skirted by without causing too much damage, but many properties were destroyed and much of the island was without electricity. Freeport Container Port, a major transshipment hub for the region, was preparing to handle ships with mobile cranes while waiting for power to be restored. "We've been lucky, but some of our employees have lost their entire homes," said Chris Gray, chief executive in The Bahamas for Hutchison Port Holdings, which operates both the container port and airport. The airport re-opened yesterday morning. The port closed down and all ships departed on Friday (Oct 21) as "Wilma" approached. Apart from a few containers that were blown over, damage in the harbour was fairly light, said Mr Gray.

London, Oct 26 -- A press report, dated Oct 25, states: As hurricane "Wilma" hustled up the Atlantic coast toward the Maritimes, a Canadian search-rescue helicopter was dispatched today to look for a sailboat that was thought to be headed directly into the path of the sprawling storm. Two Canadian Coast Guard cutters and a military Hercules aircraft were also sent to track the U.S. sailboat's route from Nova Scotia to Massachusetts. But the ships and the Hercules were forced to seek shelter as the weather deteriorated. Steve Miller, a forecaster at the Canadian Hurricane Centre in Dartmouth, N.S., said the storm was expected to stay offshore, swinging well south of Atlantic Canada by tonight. Wind and heavy rain warnings were issued for all of Nova Scotia, coastal New Brunswick and southern Newfoundland. Mariners have been warned to expect storm-force winds as far north as Newfoundland. By 1500, Atlantic time, the storm was 430 km south-east of Yarmouth, N.S., travelling at 74 km per hour. Its maximum sustained winds were clocked at 157 km/h. The Category two hurricane was expected to be downgraded to an extra-tropical storm by the time it reached Canadian waters. In Halifax, the hurricane centre issued bulletins saying wind gusts were expected to peak at 90 kph in Nova Scotia by late today.

London, Oct 26 -- A press report, dated Oct 25, states: Repair crews across Florida struggled today to restore electricity to up to six million people, reopen the region's airports and replace countless windows blown out of central high-rises. Officials said it could take weeks for Florida's most heavily populated region, the Miami, Fort Lauderdale and West Palm Beach area, to return to normal. Water and gas became precious commodities, and people waited for hours for free water, ice and food. Lines stretched for blocks at the few petrol stations with the electricity needed to pump fuel, and arguments broke out when motorists tried to cut in line. More than 500

people waited outside one store for clean-up supplies. The quantity of debris was daunting: Pieces of roofs, trees, signs, awnings, fences, billboards and pool screens were scattered across several counties. Damage estimates ranged up to \$10 billion. Some of the worst damage was in Fort Lauderdale, where "Wilma" was the strongest hurricane to strike since 1950. Winds of more than 100 mph blew out windows in high-rises, many built before Florida enacted tougher construction codes following Hurricane "Andrew" in 1992. The school district's 14-story headquarters - known as the "Crystal Palace" - was stripped of nearly its entire glass facade on one side. Government officials and business executives scrambled to repair buildings and find other places to work. Broward County court officials were trying to determine whether sessions could be held at the damaged courthouse in coming days. Some schools and courts closed for the week. Orders to boil water were issued in many locations. Miami-Dade, Broward and Monroe counties imposed overnight curfews. At Miami International, the busiest U.S. hub for Latin American travel, the first plane to land since the hurricane arrived today from Brazil, and domestic flights were to resume tomorrow morning. Airports at Fort Lauderdale and West Palm Beach remained closed to commercial traffic but emergency aircraft were coming into both facilities. At least 2,000 domestic and international flights were disrupted by the storm, affecting hundreds of thousands of fliers, when "Wilma" knocked out electricity and damaged roofs, towers, fences and other equipment. Agriculture officials said damage to their industry would be in the hundreds of millions of dollars. The greatest losses were believed to be to the winter vegetable crop, which provides more than half of the nation's supply from November to February. Also damaged were sugar cane fields and ornamental-plant nurseries. In the wake of complaints over the way the government dealt with Hurricane "Katrina", the governor praised the early response to "Wilma". But not everyone was so pleased. Thousands of people reportedly stood in line for up to 10 hours in North Miami, waiting for relief supplies that did not arrive until early evening. Trucks carrying bags of ice and cases of water were late to a number of distribution areas. FEMA spokeswoman Frances Marine urged patience. "We can't wave a magic wand and clear roads and fix damage that was done by nature in a day," she said. Distribution went more smoothly elsewhere. "Wilma" knocked out power for hundreds of miles, cutting off electricity to a staggering one out of three Florida residents. Florida Power & Light, the state's biggest utility, said Wilma affected more of its 4.3 million customers than any other natural disaster in the company's history. In heavily populated areas such as Miami-Dade County, as many as 98% of its customers lost power.

London, Oct 26 -- A press report, dated Oct 25, states: U.S. Coast Guard Captain of the Port, Miami, this afternoon opened the port of Miami to vessel traffic during daylight hours only and to vessels with a draft of 32 feet or less. The port of Palm Beach was also opened to daylight only vessel operations this afternoon. Port Everglades and the Miami River remain closed as does the port of Key West. Port Canaveral is open with restrictions. Vessels may transit during daylight hours only and may not draft more than 34 feet. During high tide drafts of 38 feet will be permitted. The ports of Tampa, St. Petersburg and Manatee are open without restrictions. Post-storm damage and port assessments continue as do aids to navigation and bottom surveys. National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration survey teams are slated to conduct bottom surveys in Port Canaveral, Miami and Key West.

London, Oct 26 -- The ports of Miami and Port Everglades remain closed until at least tomorrow.

London, Oct 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: The docks on Cozumel island, Mexico's top cruise destination and a popular stop for U.S. ocean liners, suffered severe damage from Hurricane "Wilma" and should take months to repair, a port official said yesterday. "For the moment, (the industry) has collapsed," César Patricio Reyes, Mexico's ports coordinator, said. "Some of the docks have split and others have disappeared entirely," Reyes said. "It's a true disaster." The island, just south of Cancun, is heavily frequented by the world's two biggest cruise lines, Carnival Corp. and Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd., both of which are based in Miami. Cozumel is also a popular stop for divers. The island's three cruise docks receive 1,600 ships a year carrying three million passengers, who in turn contribute an estimated US\$150 million to the local economy. Each dock is worth about US\$50 million, Reyes estimated. One of Cozumel's docks is owned by Carnival, which confirmed yesterday that its facility there sustained heavy damage. The company also uses the other two cruise ports on the island. "We received a preliminary assessment yesterday from one of our Mexico-based employees. He indicated that the facility has sustained heavy damage," said Carnival spokeswoman Jennifer de la Cruz, adding that the cruise company has flown in a team to evaluate the damage. The Carnival brand features Cozumel as a destination for 14 of its 22 ships, while some of the company's other lines such as Holland America also stop there. Royal Caribbean officials weren't available to comment on how the damage in Cozumel will affect its operations. "We're hoping that by December we'll be able to offer some basic services at the destination so that we can rebuild faster with the economic help of the cruises," Reyes said. Meanwhile, Reyes suggests that

the ocean liners substitute other destinations on Mexico's Caribbean and Gulf Coasts such as Progreso on the Yucatan Peninsula for Cozumel on their itineraries. Cozumel's municipal dock, meanwhile, was left largely intact, and is being used to ferry passengers back to Playa del Carmen on the mainland, said Jes's Vega, who has a concession to operate the dock at Playa del Carmen. "We will be able to receive cruise ships as always," he said.

Freeport, Bahamas, Oct 26 -- The North Western Bahamas, particularly Grand Bahama (Freeport) have been badly hit yet again. Coastal flooding all along the southern shore of Grand Bahama has been severe but with only one reported loss of life at the moment. The basic infrastructure, which is basically "new" since "Frances" and "Jeanne" held up fairly well and it is hoped will be back on line soon (electricity, phones, water, etc) but property damage appears substantial. Marine losses not yet determined but the offshore oil terminal (BORCO) might have suffered badly, yet again. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Oct 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: Miami International Airport reopened to domestic flights today for the first time since hurricane "Wilma," but the biggest carrier there only expected to operate about half its flights. West Palm Beach's airport also opened, but Fort Lauderdale's was still closed. Miami is the busiest US hub for Latin American travel and lines were beginning to form by this morning as more people tried to get on flights. Although several flights had arrived and left, the airport looked far from fully operational with some employees still standing around and waiting. The nation's largest airline, American Airlines, is the airport's biggest carrier. The airline typically flies 500 flights a day into and out of Miami, but the carrier said yesterday that operations there would run at 50% until aircraft and crews flown out before the hurricane arrived were back in place. The first flight to land in Miami since the hurricane hit on Monday (Oct 24) arrived from Brazil last night. Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport, Southwest Airlines Co's hub for South Florida, remained closed to commercial traffic but emergency aircraft were coming into both facilities. "Our main problem right now is water pressure, because it's an integral part of our fire safety system," Fort Lauderdale airport spokesman Steve Belleme said. "That's mandatory before we can have passengers in the building." No decision has been made on when commercial flights would be able to return, he said. Roof damage still needs to be repaired in many of the airport's four terminals, but the instrument landing system and runway lights were working, he said. Palm Beach International Airport appeared to have about half its flights scheduled for the day operating, according to its Website. The airline

disruptions in Florida caused a minor ripple effect of flight delays and cancellations in other parts of the country, but industry officials said the impact was limited because carriers had several days to prepare before "Wilma" made landfall. In the Florida Keys, Marathon Airport reopened yesterday. Key West International's terminal was open and runways were clear of debris, and were to begin accommodating emergency aircraft today. No start date for resumption of commercial service has been announced. The hurricane also wreaked havoc at some Florida municipal and commercial airports and made others inaccessible by downing trees on access roads. Boca Raton lost most of its hangars, and Hollywood-North Perry sustained extensive damage to its tower and roof. Elsewhere, five cruise vessels also returned to the Port of Miami today, after spending an extra two days at sea because the world's largest cruise terminal was closed due to the hurricane.

London, Oct 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: Floridians already were waiting in long lines for gasoline at sunrise today as they voiced frustration at the slow arrival of relief following the destruction of Hurricane "Wilma". Police watched over the few gas stations that were open as a precaution in case motorists' tempers flared while they waited for hours to buy fuel. Florida Power & Light, the state's biggest utility, said Wilma affected more of its 4.3 million customers than any other natural disaster in the company's history. By today, service was restored to about 20 percent of the 3.2 million customers who lost service, but the company reminded Floridians that total restoration may take weeks. In Mexico, thousands of haggard tourists battled for airline and bus seats out of the country's hurricane-battered Caribbean resorts, but thousands more remained stranded today. Officials said about 22,000 foreign tourists remained in the area yesterday, down from a peak of almost 40,000. There was limited progress in Florida as more streets were cleared of debris, a few restaurants opened and even trash removal returned to some areas. The quantity of debris was daunting: Pieces of roofs, trees, signs, awnings, fences, billboards and pool screens were scattered across several counties, including the state's most populous region, the Miami, Fort Lauderdale and West Palm Beach area. Damage estimates ranged up to \$10 billion.

London, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated Oct 25, states: U.S. Coast Guard Captain of the Port, Miami, this afternoon opened the Port of Miami to vessel traffic during daylight hours only and to vessels with a draught of 32 ft or less. The Port of Palm Beach was also opened to daylight only vessel operations this afternoon. Port Everglades and the Miami River remain closed as does the Port of Key West. Port Canaveral is open with restrictions. Vessels may transit

during daylight hours only and may not draught more than 34 ft. During high tide draughts of 38 ft will be permitted. The Ports of Tampa, St. Petersburg and Manatee are open without restrictions. Post-storm damage and port assessments continue as do aids to navigation and bottom surveys. National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration survey teams are slated to conduct bottom surveys in Port Canaveral, Miami and Key West. The data collected from each of these processes is factored into decisions affecting a port's status.

London, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated Oct 26, states: Miami International Airport reopened to domestic flights today for the first time since Hurricane "Wilma," but the biggest carrier there only expected to operate about half its flights. West Palm Beach's airport also opened, but Fort Lauderdale's was still closed. Miami is the busiest U.S. hub for Latin American travel and lines were beginning to form by this morning as more people tried to get on flights. Although several flights have arrived and left, the airport looked far from fully operational with some employees still standing around and waiting. The nation's largest airline, American Airlines, is the airport's biggest carrier. The unit of AMR Corp. typically flies 500 flights a day into and out of Miami, but the carrier said yesterday operations there would run at 50% until aircraft and crews flown out before the hurricane arrived are back in place. No decision has been made on when commercial flights would be able to return. Roof damage still needs to be repaired in many of the airport's four terminals, but the instrument landing system and runway lights are working. Palm Beach International Airport appeared to have about half its flights scheduled for the day operating, according to its Web site. The airline disruptions in Florida caused a minor ripple effect of flight delays and cancellations in other parts of the country, but industry officials said the impact was limited because carriers had several days to prepare before "Wilma" made landfall. In the Florida Keys, Marathon Airport reopened yesterday. Key West International's terminal was open and runways were clear of debris, and were to begin accommodating emergency aircraft today. No start date for resumption of commercial service has been announced. The hurricane also wreaked havoc at some Florida municipal and commercial airports and made others inaccessible by downing trees on access roads. Boca Raton lost most of its hangars, and Hollywood-North Perry sustained extensive damage to its tower and roof. Elsewhere, five cruise ships also returned to the Port of Miami today, after spending an extra two days at sea because the cruise terminal was closed due to "Wilma."

London, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated today, states: A passenger jet has been left with a huge hole in its fuselage after another aircraft

smashed into it at Miami International Airport. But no one was injured as the jets were empty, parked and simply blown into each other by Hurricane "Wilma". Several smaller aircraft were torn in two as Wilma's 125mph winds screamed across the airport.

London, Oct 25 -- A press report, dated today, states: A nor'easter that drew energy from the remnants of far-off Hurricane "Wilma" battered New England and the mid-Atlantic states with 20-foot waves and winds up to 70 mph today, brought some inland areas their first snow of the season and knocked out power to nearly 200,000 homes and businesses. The powerful nor'easter reminded fishermen of the deadly "Perfect Storm" of October 1991. On Cape Cod, Harwich Harbormaster Thomas Leach recorded sustained wind of 56 mph and gust of 70 mph. The storm was reinforced by the remnants of Hurricane "Wilma", which was about 400 miles south-east of Boston and speeding toward the North Atlantic after battering Florida a day earlier. "It's getting some energy from "Wilma", but it's its own separate system," said Alan Dunham, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Taunton. The nor'easter is "a good storm in its own right." Many commercial fishermen stayed in port. In New Jersey, waves up to 20 feet high washed away stretches of beach at Bay Head, and howling wind stripped sand off the shore at Point Pleasant Beach, piling it three feet deep on a street a block inland. Dozens of flights were cancelled at Boston's Logan Airport. In the New York City area, airports reported flight delays of as much as three hours. With the ground already soggy from one of the rainiest Octobers on record, the high winds toppled trees, bringing down power lines. In Massachusetts alone, 40,000 homes and businesses lost electricity. Snow fell at higher elevations from West Virginia, which got up to seven inches, to northern Maine. The wet, heavy snow brought down tree limbs and power lines, blacking out some 76,000 customers in West Virginia and 27,000 in Pennsylvania. One Pennsylvania traffic death was blamed on the weather. Atop New Hampshire's Mount Washington, the Northeast's tallest peak at 6,288 feet, the Mount Washington Observatory measured 100 mph wind and near-blizzard conditions in fog and blowing snow.

London, Oct 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: An early nor'easter fed by moisture from Hurricane "Wilma" dumped heavy rain and up to 20 inches of wet snow from New England south to West Virginia, knocking out power to tens of thousands, closing schools and elevating rivers. The wintry blast yesterday brought the leaf-peeping fall foliage season to an abrupt end as branches still bearing leaves broke beneath the snow's weight, pulling down power lines. Dozens of schools were closed in Vermont, western Maryland and West Virginia. Minor

flooding closed some streets in Cape Cod, and ferries serving the Cape, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket were cancelled. The storm was reinforced by "Wilma's" travels up the Atlantic Coast. "Wilma's" spinning action pulled down cold air from Canada and mixed it with the hurricane's subtropical moisture, she said. The National Weather Service in Vermont reported 16 inches of snow in Barton, 14 inches in East Brownington and, in Underhill, 20 inches on Jay Peak. In Maine, 12 inches fell in northern Aroostook County, and 12 inches was dumped on Garrett County in far western Maryland. Unplowed roads were clogged with tree limbs and deep slush in parts of West Virginia where 3 to 7 inches of snow fell. Power was restored to many in affected areas but thousands remained without this morning.

INDIA

London, Oct 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: Tens of thousands of people were marooned by flooding in West Bengal today after four days of torrential rains, that killed at least 10 people, officials said. The unseasonal rains came after the June-September monsoon, which triggered severe flooding in places like Gujarat, Maharashtra and Assam. Rains also hit life in Kolkata, which remained flooded as the city's more than two centuries old drainage system failed to cope with the rising waters. People said they were facing problems commuting due to the continuous rains for the last four days. Officials said at least 10 people had died in the state due to wall collapses and electrocution, following the rains, and some 50,000 people remained cut off by the floods. Relief officials warned the situation could get worse for hundreds of thousands of people living in the Sunderbans region, where two rivers were close to bursting their banks. Cars and motorcycles floated in waist-deep water in Kolkata, while people waded their way around the city and residents of some low-lying areas used boats. Many shops and business establishments remained closed.

London, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated Oct 26, states: Five days of torrential rain have led to severe flooding in the south Indian states of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. Several hundred villages in Karnataka are threatened by the rising water levels of the Cauvery river. Residents in India's technology hub, Bangalore, are also battling floods after three major lakes in the city breached their banks. Many of the areas affected by the rainfall have been hit by severe drought in recent years. The water level in many dams in Karnataka is overflowing. The Karnataka government has released excess water to the Mettur dam in the neighbouring state of Tamil Nadu, which has led to severe flooding in low-lying areas in Salem district. In the Karnataka state capital,

Bangalore, flooding was worsened by unauthorised developments along the three flooded lakes. Choked drains led to residential areas being inundated. Traffic has been severely affected. Thousands of office-goers were stranded on the city's waterlogged roads. Schools in the city were closed and several apartment complexes flooded. Water entered some office-buildings, including one of the offices of India's third largest software exporter, Wipro. Karnataka Chief Minister Dharam Singh has held several rounds of meetings with senior officials, but they say little can be done until the rain stops. Flooding in West Bengal state earlier this week claimed 19 lives and left more than 250,000 homeless, officials say.

Chennai, Oct 27 -- Heavy rain and storms paralysed life in southern India today, flooding roads, snapping power and phone lines and disrupting flights as the death toll due to the bad weather this month crossed 100. Tamil Nadu state was the worst hit by the latest downpour as many areas in the capital Chennai were inundated and cut off, while people and vehicles waded through waist-high water in some parts of the city, witnesses said. Strong winds uprooted trees and snapped power and phone links in some parts of the city. State relief commissioner R. Santhanam said: "We have already evacuated about 50,000 people from the flooded low-lying areas in Chennai and its suburbs. Over 100,000 food packets have been distributed for lunch in the temporary shelters set up in community centres." Chennai city had received 27 cm of rain until early today, he said. Tamil Nadu and the neighbouring states of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh have struggled to cope with torrential rain this month. More than 100 people have been killed in the three states, mostly in house collapses or due to electrocution. At least 60 of those deaths occurred in Tamil Nadu, with four new deaths being reported over the last 24 hours, said R. Sivakumar, a senior government official. Police in Karnataka said that seven people had died in the state capital Bangalore, India's technology hub, in accidents triggered by heavy rain and winds this week. In Andhra Pradesh, the airport in the eastern port city of Visakhapatnam remained closed for the second week as the runway was under water, officials said. At least 35 people have been killed in storms in the state over the past two weeks, they said. Weather officials predicted more rains in the region over the next two days as a severe depression over the Bay of Bengal moved close to the Andhra Pradesh coast. "Heavy to very heavy rainfall accompanied by squally winds with speeds of 55-65 kph in north Tamil Nadu and south Andhra Pradesh are expected," said S.R. Ramanan, director of a Chennai cyclone warning centre. He said the seas would get very rough and fishermen had been told not to venture out. -- Reuters.

ITALY

London, Oct 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: At least six people have been killed as torrential rain battered southern Italy, demolishing a bridge, sweeping away cars and derailing a Eurostar train. Three members of a family were killed as their car plunged into a ravine when a bridge collapsed near Bari, the capital of the Apulia region. Two men drowned near the city when their cars were swept away by floods of water and mud. Italian civil defence chief Guido Bertolaso, who immediately flew to Bari from Rome, describes the deluge as an "exceptional climatic event which can only happen once in a hundred years." Around 20 passengers were injured when six carriages of a Taranto to Milan Eurostar train were derailed near Bari after a landslide swept away the earth beneath the rail tracks, leaving one carriage overhanging a chasm. The storms also caused one death near Catania, in Sicily, where rescuers have recovered the body of a hunter. Civil defence officials say many roads, houses and factories in the Bari and Taranto area have been flooded. Fields of vegetables and olive trees are completely submerged but officials say it is too soon to put a value on the damage.

NEW ZEALAND

London, Oct 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: A major clean-up operation is beginning on the North Island's East Coast today after the worst floods in the region since Cyclone "Bola." Two days of torrential rain caused serious flooding, closing roads, forcing some families from their homes and trapping others in cars or outside overnight. Gisborne, Wairoa, Tolaga Bay and Ruatoria were cut off by road, with some residents having to be airlifted to safety and travellers seeking shelter in local marae. More than 50 people were forced from their homes, but the financial cost of the disaster is still to be calculated. More than 1200mm of rain fell on the coast over Friday (Oct 21) and yesterday, including 370 mm in Hikuwai, near Tokomaru Bay, 365 mm in Te Puia Springs, around 180 mm in Gisborne and another 280 mm throughout Napier and Hastings. In Tolaga Bay, one of the worst-hit areas, several families were choppered to safety yesterday morning after spending the night stranded on a hillside. By last night the worst was over and the clean-up was well underway, with emergency staff working overtime to clear roads and restore services. Assessment teams would start inspections this morning to survey the damage and begin estimating the cost. "We won't know what damage has been done until the water recedes and we see the crops underneath." Power had been restored in Gisborne after a blackout had paralysed the entire city, forcing supermarkets to use backup generators to clear huge queues. Elsewhere, about 130 households were still without power last night. Beginning on Friday, the downpour

throughout the Gisborne region and Hawke's Bay caused power cuts and loss of telephone coverage. By yesterday afternoon flood waters were draining from the Gisborne Plains, leaving many landowners tallying the cost of newly planted crops lost in the deluge. Large areas of lower lying land used for seasonal crops such as export squash, sweetcorn, maize and vegetables, were still under water. Most vineyards and citrus orchards were draining rapidly, minimising the risk of permanent damage. Civil Defence said flood levels throughout much of the Gisborne region were as bad as they were during the 1988 Cyclone "Bola" flood. However, indications were that there had not been the same widespread erosion and silt.

London, Oct 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: Hundreds of flood-hit farmers and growers have met near Gisborne as the cost of the weekend's (Oct 22/23) near-record deluge looks set to run into millions. Civil Defence officer Richard Steele said the picture of damage was "growing all the time" and it was likely that at least 3000 hectares (7500 acres) of horticultural land would be affected by a layer of silt. It was already clear that some crops could not be replanted and land would sit unused till next season, he said. Near-record amounts of rain fell in the region, according to MetService, which recorded 350 millimetres in 36 hours on Saturday in Hikuwai, near Tokomaru Bay. About four families were still homeless yesterday, and power lines down in some areas. It would be several days before a figure could be put on the cost of the damage, but Civil Defence controller Jon Davies said indications from farmers suggested it would be "several million". Most of the claims would relate to crops, fencing that had been flattened by the floodwaters, and stock. About 1000 sheep had been lost, he said. Farmers and growers met yesterday to speak to Government officials, including Work and Income Department, Housing New Zealand and Inland Revenue Department staff, and fill out forms estimating damage to their properties. One of New Zealand's biggest horticultural companies, LeaderBrand, was in a "pretty serious" situation, fresh crop manager Stuart Davis said. He estimated that up to half of squash crops had been damaged, and this would affect consumer prices. Sweetcorn and tomatoes had also been affected. However, it was difficult to ascertain the total effect as the floodwaters had only recently receded. The region's packhouses and processors would also be affected, he said. Some civil defence systems for dealing with flooding needed to be looked at, but the immediate concern was mopping up the damage. However, the weather had improved and the cleanup was well under way. All state highways in the Napier region have been reopened, after nearly 600 kilometres were closed on Saturday

morning. However, the Matahorua Gorge, about 40km north of Napier on State Highway 2, is one-way and controlled by traffic lights because guard-rails have been torn away. Transit New Zealand's Napier regional network operation manager, Gordon Hart, said the other problem was on Kemp's Ascent on SH35, north of Ruatoria, which was only suitable for light vehicles. Mr Hart said he was amazed at how well contractors and consultants had coped with the flood damage to roads. "When Transit staff, contractors and consultants met at 6am on Saturday morning with 600km of state highway closed, I didn't think we had a show of getting the roads open over the weekend," he said. The Napier-Gisborne rail line will remain closed till next week because of slips.

PUERTO RICO

London, Oct 21 -- A press report, dated Oct 20, states: Damage from torrential rains last week will cost Puerto Rico's agriculture industry at least US\$16 million (euro13 million), an official said today. Vegetables, coffee and bananas were the crops hardest hit by days of heavy showers that flooded some parts of the US Caribbean territory, said Francisco Oramas, the island's deputy agriculture secretary. Damage to crops was estimated at US\$8 million, while an equal amount was expected to be lost on the retail of the products, Oramas said

SOMALIA

Nairobi, Oct 27 -- A severe drought in western and southern Somalia has killed dozens of people, hundreds of livestock and raised fears of an outbreak of disease after seasonal rains failed, a minister said today. The fledgling Somali government appealed for food, medicine and water tanks to cut the risk that hundreds of dehydrated residents may die while searching for water, Information Minister Mohamed Abdi Hayr said in a statement. Hayr said the worst hit areas were Gedo, in Somalia's west and Buale in the Lower Juba region bordering Kenya. He said government representatives who toured the regions reported having seen dozens of human deaths and hundreds of livestock casualties. "Animals and the people have started to die," Hayr said. "This is an urgent matter for which we call the immediate attention and action on the part of the donors, UN agencies and other humanitarian agencies." -- Reuters.

THAILAND

London, Oct 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: Prachuap Khiri Khan province's Bang Saphan district has been declared a disaster zone after flash floods damaged over 200 houses and a vast area of agricultural land amid continuing heavy rains. Deputy Governor Siva Sirisaovalak declared the disaster status in Bang Saphan, where five tambons had become submerged due to flash floods from the Tanaosri range. Bang Saphan district

chief Pradit Yamanant yesterday said the floods had affected 245 houses, 24 roads and about 15,000 rai of farm land. Flood waters had reached about 40 cm in residential areas of tambon Kamnerd Nopakhun yesterday, and were still rising. They were up to 50 cm deep on a 500 m section of Bang Saphan-Bang Saphan Noi road. As heavy rains are continuing in Bang Saphan, provincial authorities plan to evacuate people in flood-prone areas and gather equipment, necessities and boats for rescue missions. It was estimated that about 28 cm of rain had fallen yesterday. Bang Saphan Hospital was one site vulnerable to flooding due to its location on low land. Officials have been preparing to transfer patients to Thap Sakae Hospital, about 30 km away, should the Bang Saphan site become flooded. Local administrative officials ordered that Khlong Pak Bid canal be dredged to make it easier for flood waters to disperse.

London, Oct 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: Floodwaters in many areas of Prachuap Khiri Khan and Chumphon were receding last night, having drowned one man and affected tens of thousands of people in the two provinces. Two days and two nights of rain also caused flooding in four districts of Ratchaburi, where the water was still rising rapidly. In Chumphon, low-lying areas of Tha Sae district were still inundated and farmers faced a shortage of fodder for their cattle despite the animal feed development institute's distribution of 230 tonnes of grass to farmers. Thanakorn Trabunpruek, head of the Chumphon disaster prevention and mitigation office, said more than 20,000 villagers in Muang, Tha Sae, Pathiu, Sawi, Thung Tako, Lamae and Lang Suan districts were affected, with total damage to 7,330 rai of farms and 200 fish and shrimp ponds about 200 million baht. In Prachuap Khiri Khan, governor Kittipong Sunanan said the situation was not worrying. There was no damage to farm produce, but reservoirs in every district still needed more water after months of drought. Hua Hin district chief Niphan Chollawit said all hotels, resorts and restaurants in the resort town had reopened, but Pa La Ou waterfall remained closed to tourists. Ratchaburi governor Wongsak Sawatpanich said Muang, Pak Tho, Chom Bung and Suan Phung districts were still flooded after two days of rain. Suan Phung was hard hit by runoff from the Tanaosri Range and the Phachee river was rapidly rising, prompting urgent flood relief operations.

London, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated today, states: Floods hit nearly 500 houses in more than 10 villages in Dan Makhamtei district of Kanchanaburi yesterday, as dams almost reached capacity. A village in Pran Buri district of Prachuap Khiri Khan province was also flooded and more than 80 houses were inundated. Days of rain eventually led to flash floods and overflows from the Lam

Pachi river to Dan Makhamtei district. It was reported that almost 500 houses with about 1,500 people and more than 7,000 rai of farmland were submerged. Residents had to evacuate and take their animals with them to high ground and roadside areas. Local authorities have deployed 12 boats to supply necessities and assist in the evacuation. Twenty-four local roads were flooded including the district's main Dan Makhamtei-Ratchaburi road. A PTT Pcl pipeline section in the district was also flooded. The pipe feeds gas to the Ratchaburi power plant. Flood levels did not subside yesterday.

TROPICAL STORM "ALPHA"

London, Oct 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: Tropical storm "Alpha" has formed in the Caribbean. The formation of Tropical Storm "Alpha," which threatens flooding for Haiti and the Dominican Republic, makes this year's Atlantic hurricane season the most active since 1933. It is the first time the National Hurricane Centre has had to resort to using the Greek alphabet, after all 21 names pre-assigned for storms this year were used up.

London, Oct 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: Tropical Storm "Alpha" formed yesterday in the Caribbean, setting the record for the most named storms in an Atlantic hurricane season and marking the first time forecasters had to turn to the Greek alphabet for names. The previous record of 21 named storms had stood since 1933. At 0200, EDT, the storm had sustained winds near 50 mph and was moving northwest near 14 mph, the National Hurricane Centre said. It was about 60 miles south-southwest of Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic. Tropical storm warnings were in place for Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and the Turks and Caicos islands and the southeastern Bahamas. Alpha was expected to hit the Dominican Republic early today, but forecasters say it wasn't expected to threaten the United States.

London, Oct 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: Tropical Storm "Alpha" came ashore early today in the Dominican Republic, where days of heavy rain have already swollen rivers and saturated the soil. Forecasters warned deadly flash floods and mudslides were possible. The Dominican Republic and Haiti, which share the Caribbean island of Hispaniola, were under a tropical storm warning "Alpha" made landfall with maximum sustained winds of 50 mph. "Alpha" was expected to weaken after it hit land and could dissipate in the mountains of the Dominican Republic, the National Hurricane Centre in Miami said. In the Dominican Republic, authorities evacuated some 8,000 people from the cities of Bani, Azua and Barahona and parts of the capital prone to flooding. A baseball stadium was being used as an emergency shelter. Meteorologist Ignacio Feliz of the Dominican

weather service said authorities were especially concerned since heavy rains, in part due to Hurricane "Wilma", already have drenched the island in recent days. The National Hurricane Centre warned "Alpha" could bring 4-8 inches of rain across the island, and as much as 15 inches in some places.

London, Oct 23 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office: A tropical storm warning remains in effect for the entire coastlines of the Dominican Republic and Haiti. A tropical storm warning remains in effect for the Turks and Caicos and for the southeastern Bahamas. Tropical storm centre located near lat 18.1N, long 71.0W at 0900, UTC, Oct 23, position accurate within 35 nautical miles. Present movement toward the northwest or 305 degrees at 12 knots. Estimated minimum central pressure 1000 mb. Maximum sustained winds 45 knots with gusts to 55 knots. Radius of 34-knot winds: 40 nautical miles south-east quadrant, and 20 nautical miles in the south-east and north-west quadrants. Forecast for 0600, UTC, Oct 24: Position near lat 23.3N, long 73.5W with maximum winds of 30 knots and gusts to 40 knots.

London, Oct 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: Tropical storm "Alpha" pounded Haiti and the Dominican Republic with torrential rains and gusty winds yesterday, sending rivers crashing over their banks, washing away homes and tossing debris into the streets. At least one person was killed. "Alpha" came ashore near the southern Dominican town of Barahona with 50 mph winds, dousing the region with heavy showers. The storm was later downgraded to a tropical depression after passing over the mountainous zone near the Dominican border with Haiti. It was expected to move into the open Atlantic by today after brushing the south-eastern Bahamas. In Haiti, at least 23 homes were washed away when a rain-swollen river overflowed its banks and flooded a neighborhood in the Port au Prince suburb of Carrefour, said Kathleen Monpoint of Haiti's civil protection agency. A river overflowed its banks in the southern town of Jacmel, flooding some areas and forcing an unknown number of residents into shelters, said civil protection director Maria Alta Jean-Baptiste. In the capital, the airport was closed for several hours because of heavy rain, which turned main streets into muddy streams and tossed piles of trash and basketball-sized stones into the road. At 2300, EDT, 0300, UTC, the poorly defined center of the depression was about 100 miles north of Great Inagua Island in the Bahamas and moving toward the north-west at nearly 21 mph. Maximum sustained winds were nearly 35 mph. Heavy rain was reported throughout the Dominican Republic and authorities had ordered the evacuation of some 30,000 people from areas prone to flooding, said Jose Luis German, a spokesman for the country's Emergency Operations

Committee. About 1,000 people were in shelters. Authorities reported moderate flooding in several low-lying communities in the southern Dominican Republic.

London, Oct 24 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: Tropical depression "Alpha" centre located near lat 24.4N, long 73.1W 0900, UTC, today. Position accurate within 35 nautical miles. Present movement toward the north or 355 degrees at 20 knots. Estimated minimum central pressure 1004 mb. Maximum sustained winds 30 knots with gusts to 45 knots. Forecast position lat 28.5N, long 72.7W at 1800, UTC, today. Maximum winds 30 knots, gusts 45 knots. Forecast position lat 34.7N, long 70.4W at 0600, UTC, Oct 25. Maximum winds 30 knots, gusts 45 knots.

London, Oct 25 -- Ten people died, 11 were injured and three were reported missing in Haiti after Tropical Storm "Alpha" flooded rivers and wrecked homes, civil defense officer Alta Jean-Baptiste said yesterday. Three people were also missing as a result of the storm in the Dominican Republic, which shares the Caribbean island of Hispaniola with Haiti, authorities there said. "Alpha" became the record-breaking 22nd named storm of the Atlantic hurricane season on Saturday (Oct 22) in the Caribbean and headed straight for Hispaniola, lashing it with rain through yesterday. The storm weakened to a tropical depression as it moved northeast over the Atlantic.

London, Oct 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: Tropical storm "Alpha" has left at least 15 people dead in Haiti and the Dominican Republic before moving north into the Atlantic Ocean. A dozen people were missing after mudslides and flooded rivers swamped streets and swept away homes. The death toll in Haiti could rise, its civil protection agency chief said. "Alpha" was the record-breaking 22nd named storm of the Atlantic season. It later weakened from a tropical storm into a tropical depression. In the Dominican Republic, authorities found the bodies of two fishermen whose boat capsized in the rough seas that preceded the storm.

London, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated today, states: Several more deaths were confirmed in Haiti and the Dominican Republic from flooding caused by Tropical Storm "Alpha," bringing the death toll to 26, officials said today. The storm drenched the two countries with torrential rain on Monday (Oct 24) and caused flash floods that swept away people, houses and animals. Haiti is especially vulnerable to floods and mudslides because much of the impoverished country has been stripped of trees by desperately poor people whose main source of fuel is charcoal. Five more deaths were confirmed in Haiti today, bringing the death toll in the country to 17, civil protection officials said. Nine people died in the Dominican Republic, officials said. Six of the

deaths occurred in the coastal province of Puerto Plata, in the north, when a river broke its banks.

TROPICAL STORM "BETA"

London, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated today, states: A tropical depression that formed in the southwestern Caribbean Sea was expected to become Tropical Storm "Beta" today. The system was not expected to threaten the United States, according to the National Hurricane Centre in Miami. At 0200 hrs, it was located about 85 miles south of San Andres Island and about 150 miles east-southeast of Bluefields, Nicaragua. A tropical storm warning has been issued for the entire Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua and the islands of San Andres and Providencia. Its maximum sustained winds were near 35 mph and was moving northwest near four mph. Up to 20 inches of rain were possible across western Panama, Costa Rica and Nicaragua, forecasters said. If the system becomes a tropical storm - which will happen if its maximum sustained winds reach 39 mph - it would become the 23rd named storm of the Atlantic hurricane season, extending this year's record. The previous record of 21 named storms had stood since 1933.

London, Oct 27 -- Tropical Storm "Beta" formed yesterday in the southwestern Caribbean Sea, extending this year's record of named storms in the Atlantic hurricane season. The disturbance formed last night but forecasters say it is not expected to threaten the United States. At 0500, EDT, it was located about 75 miles south of San Andres Island and about 140 miles east-southeast of Bluefields, Nicaragua. A hurricane watch and a tropical storm warning has been issued for the islands of San Andres and Providencia. Heavy rain and strong winds were expected there today. A tropical storm warning has been issued for the entire Caribbean coast of Nicaragua and adjacent islands. Hurricane conditions are possible in the next several days, forecasters said. Its maximum sustained winds were near 40 mph and was moving northwest near 5 mph. Tropical storm force winds extend outward up to 35 mph. "Beta" is expected to produce 10 to 15 inches of rain across western Panama, Costa Rica and Nicaragua, forecasters said.

London, Oct 27 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: A record 23rd tropical storm of the season has formed in the southwestern Caribbean Sea. Very heavy rainfall is expected in portions of Central America. At 0900, UTC, today, the government of Colombia issued a hurricane watch, in addition to the tropical storm warning already in effect, for the islands of San Andres and Providencia. A tropical storm warning is in effect for the entire Caribbean coast of Nicaragua from the border with Costa Rica northward to Cabo Gracias a Dios near the

Nicaragua/Honduras border and adjacent islands. Hurricane conditions are also possible within the next 36 hours within the tropical storm warning area. At 0900, UTC, today, the centre of tropical storm "Beta" was located near lat 11.4N, long 81.8W, or about 75 miles south of San Andres Island and about 140 miles east-southeast of Bluefields, Nicaragua. "Beta" is moving toward the northwest at around five mph and this general motion is expected to continue during the next 24 hours. The maximum sustained winds are near 40 mph, with higher gusts. Some strengthening is forecast during the next 24 hours. Tropical storm force winds extend outward up to 35 miles from the centre. The estimated minimum central pressure is 1005 mb. Tropical storm "Beta" is expected to produce rainfall totals of 10 to 15 inches across western Panama, Costa Rica and Nicaragua, with isolated maximum amounts of 20 inches.

TURKEY

London, Oct 25 -- Traffic in the Canakkale Strait was suspended at 0630, local time, this morning due to poor visibility.

London, Oct 25 -- Northbound traffic in the Canakkale Strait was resumed at 0930, local time, today.

UNITED STATES

London, Oct 21 -- A press report, dated Oct 20, states: Flood damage to homes, businesses, roads and bridges in five New Hampshire counties probably will be in the tens of millions of dollars. Pam Walsh, Governor John Lynch's spokeswoman, said today no firm estimate will be available until federal authorities do a better assessment of the damage. Bruce Cheney, chief of the state Bureau of Emergency Services, says a preliminary estimate was done quickly just to establish that the damage was enough to qualify the state for federal disaster aid. He says the number is almost certain to go higher. Cheney said the first look found at least 20 million dollars in damages. Walsh said damages certainly will be more than that.

London, Oct 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: Crews will soon begin repair work on flood-damaged roads in Riverside County now that federal officials have agreed to release \$11.5 million in disaster-relief funds after a paperwork mix-up. The Federal Emergency Management Agency told county officials on Friday (Oct 21) that it would help cover the cost of damages caused by February's floods. FEMA officials initially denied the application for funding, saying that the county failed to meet a May 27 deadline. But county officials said it had filed its application electronically on May 4. Heavy rain from the winter storm battered roads in the southwestern portion of the county, particularly around Clinton Keith Road and in the Temecula Valley Wine Country.

VIETNAM

London, Oct 20 -- A press report, dated today, states: Floodwaters caused by rainstorms hit Vietnam's southern Mekong Delta city of Can Tho, Vietnam News Agency reported today. Water tides in the Hau River, which hit a peak of 2.2 metres or 0.5 meters above the third and highest warning level yesterday, have broken four sections of dykes and submerged most of the transport system in the city. In some areas water is 0.5 metres above the surface, said the report. The flooding has caused many traffic accidents and caused health problems to hundreds of families.

London, Oct 25 -- A press report, dated today, states: Fifty-seven people have perished in floods ravaging the Mekong delta in southern Vietnam and in the central region over the last several weeks, according to the last official tolls released today. The official Vietnam News Agency said four people died in central Binh Dinh province and 53 in the three southern provinces of An Giang, Dong Thap and Long An. Thousands of hectares of rice and some dykes have been damaged, VNA said.

London, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated today, states: Floods have killed 24 local people and left one missing in Vietnam's central region since last weekend, a local official told Xinhua today. Binh Dinh province has suffered the highest human loss with 12, and followed by provinces of Quang Ngai, Quang Nam, Khanh Hoa and Phu Yen, said Nguyen Sy Nuoi, deputy head of the Flood and Storm Control Bureau in charge of the central region under the Central Flood and Storm Control Committee. The floods, sparked by torrential rain, have also submerged several thousands of houses, more than 15,000 hectares of rice and subsidiary crops, and damaged many sections of roads, dykes and irrigation works in the region, he said. Last year, natural disasters killed 232 people and left 38 missing, injured 187 others, destroyed 4,200 houses and 3,000 hectares of rice, and killed over 2,000 cattle and 170,000 poultry in Vietnam, causing a property loss of over 900 billion Vietnamese dong (some US\$57 million).

Earthquakes



AFGHANISTAN

London, Oct 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: An earthquake destroyed homes and killed five people near Afghanistan's eastern border with Pakistan today, a Defence Ministry spokesman said. Army rescue teams were on their way to the remote area in Paktika province, said Gen. Mohammed Zahir Azimi. Pakistan's Seismological Center in the city of Peshawar said two quakes were registered along the border area early

today. One was a magnitude-5.2 and hit just after midnight local time. The other, a magnitude-4.9 quake, struck at dawn.

London, Oct 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: An earthquake shook eastern Afghanistan near the border of quake-hit Pakistan early yesterday, local time, with initial reports saying at least five people were killed and six hurt, the Defence Ministry says. Initial reports also say some houses have been destroyed in the quake that struck mountainous Paktika province at about 0630, local time, Ministry spokesman General Mohammad Zahir Azimi told a press briefing. "Our national army units are in the region assessing the damage. They're on the ground helping villagers," he said. Another quake struck adjacent Zabul province on Friday (Oct 21), killing at least three people, provincial officials say.

JAPAN

London, Oct 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: An earthquake with a preliminary magnitude of 5.5 jolted Fukushima Prefecture and surrounding areas yesterday night, the Japan Meteorological Agency said. The quake, which occurred around 2212, registered 4 on the Japanese seismic scale of 7 in parts of Fukushima and Ibaraki prefectures, the agency said. The quake's focus was about 50 kilometres below sea level in the Pacific Ocean off Fukushima Prefecture.

PAKISTAN

London, Oct 21 -- A press report, dated Oct 20, states: The top U.N. aid official said on Thursday he had appealed to NATO to launch a massive airlift to evacuate possibly hundreds of thousands of earthquake survivors from remote areas of Pakistani Kashmir before winter sets in. Jan Egeland, U.N. emergency relief coordinator, would make his case for boosting the military alliance's aid role at a NATO Council meeting in Brussels on Friday, officials said. Egeland also said the official death toll from the Oct 8 quake in northern Pakistan could double from 48,000, echoing local fears that it was set to soar. "The emergency in Kashmir is becoming worse by the day as the extent ... dawns on us. The world is not responding as we should be," Egeland told a news conference in Geneva. "We have never had this kind of logistical nightmare ever. We thought the tsunami was bad, this is worse," he added, noting the quake had also left at least 67,000 people seriously injured and up to three million people homeless or without safe housing. Egeland said the relief effort was being complicated by differences between India and Pakistan over the disputed Kashmir region, including arguments over whether Indian helicopter pilots could fly aid missions into Pakistan-controlled areas. "These discussions are now holding up a bigger (relief) operation and they shouldn't," he said.

"I would want them to work out a compromise immediately." Donor countries have pledged only \$86 million so far to a U.N. appeal for \$272 million, which has been increased to \$312 million for now, according to the senior U.N. official. Large areas of the hard hit rugged mountains of Pakistani Kashmir and North West Frontier Province have not been reached and no one knows how many more were killed in the high hills. Egeland said that "hundreds of thousands" of people remained beyond reach ahead of heavy snowfalls which could start before December. Although 60 helicopters are in operation, with 20 more about to join, many more aircraft and tents were needed. The Norwegian called for matching a life-saving Western airlift operated in 1948-1949 to keep West Berlin supplied despite a blockade by the Soviet Union. "If they could do that in the end of the 1940s, set up in no time a lifeline to millions of people, we should be able to do that in 2005," he said. "We are humanitarians, we don't know how to evacuate hundreds of thousands of people in the Himalayas. But the most efficient military alliance in the world should be able to," Egeland said. In Kiev, NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer said NATO had flown many tonnes of goods into Pakistan since it began relief flights from Europe last week and it fully realised how serious the situation was. Egeland's request would be on the agenda of the council in Brussels, he added. "You must rest assured that NATO fully realises the gravity of the situation and that within its means and capabilities, NATO will act accordingly," de Hoop Scheffer told reporters.

Karachi, Oct 22 -- A local press report states: Nato said on Friday (Oct 21) it would send up to 1,000 troops to help hundreds of thousands of earthquake survivors who have been waiting for two weeks for help in the rugged mountains of northern Pakistan. But it rebuffed a UN call for a massive airlift to rescue stranded survivors on the scale of the 1948-49 Berlin airlift to the beleaguered people of Soviet-blockaded West Berlin. President Pervez Musharraf says the amount of foreign reconstruction aid pledged after the October 8 quake is totally inadequate. Talking to the BBC, he said about \$620 million had been promised, but Pakistan needed about \$5 billion to rebuild devastated areas. The Asian Development Bank and the World Bank said they would start an assessment in Pakistan on Monday of the needs and reconstruction costs after the devastating earthquake two weeks ago. With winter closing in, an estimated two million survivors are still waiting for help in the rugged Himalayan foothills where 50,000 people are known to have died. The government on Friday informed the National Assembly that it intended to set up "tent schools" in the earthquake-hit areas as early as

possible so that educational activities could be resumed without any delay. Federal Minister for Education Lt-Gen (retd) Javed Ashraf Qazi said there was a need to revive education system in the affected areas of the NWFP and Azad Kashmir where almost all schools and colleges had been demolished the massive earthquake on Oct 8. Over 6,200 displaced people have been housed in 20 tent villages set up in Balakot and Mansehra. According to figures released by the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), 2,430 people have been housed in the 130 tents at Hassan near Balakot and 1,127 in 206 tents at Basian. The Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization (WHO) have deployed around 600 doctors, 64 nurses and 104 paramedics in the field hospitals set up in the quake-hit areas of Azad Kashmir and the NWFP. Presiding over a meeting of the National Disaster Management Committee on Friday, Health Minister Mohammad Nasir Khan said these hospitals were being regularly supplied with necessary medicines and equipment and there was no shortage of any item. Saudi government is there to help its Pakistani brethren in this hour of need and it is making all-out efforts to help the people in quake-stricken areas, Saudi Ambassador Ali S. Awadh Asseri said. He was briefing mediapersons on Saudi government's relief and rescue efforts, on Friday. Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has so far handled a total of 143 flights carrying relief goods for earthquake victim at Islamabad International Airport, Mr Mobarik Shah, a spokesman for the airport said on Friday. CAA has waived off aeronautical charges worth Rs27 million on these relief flights. Six more bodies including four Swedish and a Spanish were recovered from underground water tank of Margalla Towers bringing the death toll to 73. The NWFP assembly was informed on Friday that 1,610 students were buried when the Oct 8 earthquake flattened school buildings in the Mansehra district. Education Minister Maulana Fazle Ali informed the house that at least 70 teachers had died in Mansehra alone and added that 2,166 school buildings had collapsed in the five quake-hit districts of the NWFP. - Lloyd's Agents.

London, Oct 23 -- A press report, dated Oct 22, states: The toll in the October 8 earthquake in Pakistan has crossed 53,000 while the number of injured has risen above 75,000, government said today. "The casualty figures are now 53,182 dead and 75,146 injured," Pakistan's disaster relief chief Major General Farooq Ahmed told reporters. The toll yesterday crossed 51,000 with Pakistan-occupied Kashmir alone accounting for 32,703 fatalities. Meanwhile, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan warned that the approaching winter may lead to more deaths in quake-hit areas. He also appealed for an "immediate and

exceptional escalation" in aid for survivors following the world body's failure to raise the needed funds.

London, Oct 24 -- A press report, dated Oct 23, states: Federal Minister for Water and Power Liaquat Ali Jatoi has directed the electricity supply companies of Islamabad and Peshawar to immediately restore power to hospitals, banks, markets, basic health centres and schools in the earthquake-affected areas. He stated this during a visit to the earthquake-stricken areas of Muzaffarabad to review the rehabilitation work on electricity network. The restoration of electricity of vital services will help complete the relief operation soon. The minister also directed Iesco and Pesco to continue their support for restoration of electricity in AJK. The minister appreciated that 95% electricity of Muzaffarabad grid station had been restored. The electricity from other seven affected grid stations of NWFP and AJK has been energized. Earlier, the minister was told that eight out of 10 grid stations had been energized and were providing electricity to the respective areas as per demand. Only Hattian and Noseri grid stations in the AJK have yet to be restored because the road was not clear to approach the grid stations. The electricity supply to hospitals, water supply and other services have been restored in all the cities while those in the villages were being restored.

Karachi, Oct 24 -- An aftershock of a magnitude of 5.9 on the Richter scale, the second biggest of almost over 900 aftershocks recorded so far after Oct 8 7.6-magnitude tremor, sent waves of panic among the people living in northern area of Pakistan in the affected areas yesterday evening. According to local media reports, the jolt came almost at the heels of a press conference addressed by Director-General Pakistan Meteorological Department Dr Qamar Zaman Chaudhry, in which he announced that the magnitude of the aftershocks is gradually decreasing and the occurrence is becoming "less frequent" since the massive Oct 8 earthquake. The aftershock, technically falling in the "moderate category", was recorded at 2004, yesterday and according to the Met Office, the epicentre was once again around 100 kilometres in the north of Islamabad, close to Muzaffarabad. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

London, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated Oct 26, states: The death toll from Pakistan's massive quake is now 54,000, Interior Minister Aftab Sherpao says, raising the total by more than 800. Mr Sherpao warned that the figure was likely to climb further, because more buildings razed by the Oct 8 quake are being cleared and because of cold weather in the disaster zone. Around 36,000 of the dead were in Pakistani Kashmir and some 18,000 were in North-West Frontier Province, he says. Mr Sherpao added the number of injured had also increased to 77,000. On

Saturday (Oct 22), Pakistan's disaster relief chief Major General Farooq Ahmad Khan said 53,182 people died and 75,146 were injured. Meanwhile, four aftershocks measuring up to 5.2 on the Richter scale shook northern Pakistan early today local time, sparking fears of more landslides after the devastating Oct 8 earthquake, an official says. There were no immediate reports of injuries or damage from the tremors, which came hours before a major United Nations quake donors conference in Geneva. Witnesses say the biggest shock woke people from their sleep in the capital Islamabad and the devastated city of Muzaffarabad.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

London, Oct 26 -- A report, dated Oct 25, states: A moderate earthquake occurred at 1940, UTC, today. The magnitude 5.9 event has been located near the south coast of New Guinea, Papua New Guinea, in lat 07 21S, long 145.99E, depth 197 km.

TURKEY

Istanbul, Oct 21 -- A moderate earthquake shook western Turkey early today, causing slight damage to several buildings and resulting in 15 casualties from the ensuing panic, the local governor said. The Kandilli earthquake observation centre said the tremor, at 0040 hrs (2140, UTC, Oct 20), measured 5.9 on the Richter scale and its epicentre was in the Aegean Sea off the coast of Seferihisar in Izmir province. Izmir Governor Oguz Kagan Goksal told the CNN Turk television channel 15 people had been taken to hospital as a result of heart attacks or jumping from buildings during the quake. The roofs of five buildings, three of them empty, had been damaged in the tremor, he said. Residents gathered in parks and open areas after the quake, and the local council made public announcements telling them not to go back into their houses, CNN Turk said. Authorities decided to close schools in the Izmir region today as a result of the quake, the channel said. - Reuters.



CHICO, GALAPAGOS ISLANDS

London, Oct 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: A volcano erupted in Ecuador's Galapagos Islands, a major tourist attraction, but the nearby main town was left unscathed by lava flows, officials said overnight. The Chico volcano on Isabela island erupted late Saturday (Oct 22) with a powerful explosion that spewed rivers of lava and a column of steam 20 km high, the Ecuador Geophysical Institute said. Residents of the island's main town, Puerto Villamil, 25 km away, felt the explosion, the

institute said. The Galapagos National Park said three lava flows were slowly making their way toward the sea but they did not threaten the town.



AFGHANISTAN

London, Oct 21 -- A press report, dated today, states: A car bomb exploded near a mosque in southern Afghanistan, killing a deputy provincial police chief and one of his bodyguards, officials said today. A second bodyguard was wounded in the blast as Nafus Khan, the deputy police chief of Nimroz province, was parking his car next to a mosque late Thursday, said Ghulam Dastaqir, the province's governor. He blamed the attack on Taliban rebels.

London, Oct 23 -- A press report, dated Oct 22, states: Nine policemen were killed during an attack by suspected Taleban rebels yesterday afternoon in Afghanistan's southern province of Helmand. Four Taleban rebels were also killed, officials said today. Provincial administrator Ghulam Muhiddin told the Associated Press news agency that insurgents had attacked police from behind rocks as they were driving slowly along rough roads looking for a rebel hide-out in the area. Several thousand people held a demonstration against the Taleban campaign in the eastern province of Khost on Thursday (Oct 20).

London, Oct 25 -- A press report, dated today, states: Militants attacked security forces on two sides of Kabul, killing four civilians and a police officer in one of the deadliest assaults near the Afghan capital in months, police said today. Security forces also uncovered a cache of bombs inside the city of four million. Militants were suspected to be plotting to use the weapons against international peacekeepers, police said. It was not immediately clear if the two attacks were co-ordinated, but they reinforced the security threat facing the tightly guarded capital. The first attack was late yesterday when rebels fired rockets at a U.S.-led coalition convoy 10 miles south of Kabul but missed and instead hit three civilian cars, killing four Afghans, said Khan Mohammed, the police chief in Logar province. Three civilians were also wounded. A child was among the dead, he said. The civilian cars were travelling close behind five military Humvee vehicles on a main north-south road when they were hit by two rockets and small-arms fire, Mohammed said. The police chief said extra security forces were rushed to the area and have surrounded a run-down fort where the assailants were suspected to be hiding. The second assault happened hours later, just before dawn today, when militants

opened fire with assault rifles on a police vehicle 30 miles east of Kabul, near a key trade route linking the capital with the eastern Pakistani border, said Ghafor Khan, a police spokesman in the eastern town of Jalalabad. The attack killed a senior police officer who was a teacher at a police academy. Two others were wounded, he said. The bombs discovered in Kabul were found in a junkyard of old military vehicles in the northern part of the city, said Interior Ministry spokesman Yousuf Stanekzai. The explosives were made from old anti-personnel mines, and rebels were "suspected to be planning to use them against ISAF," he said, referring to the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force, which guards the capital.

COLOMBIA

London, Oct 25 -- A press report, dated today, states: Seven people were killed in a south-west Colombian town near Ecuador in an attack blamed on rebels, local media reported yesterday. Authorities in San Miguel, Putumayo, 550 km south-west of Bogota, said Front 48 of the 17,000-strong Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) was most likely responsible.

London, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated Oct 26, states: Leftist Colombian rebels today announced an end to a nearly month-long armed blockade in northwest Colombia during which they torched vehicles that defied a travel ban, blew up bridges and electricity towers and killed police officers. The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, said in a statement sent to local radio stations in northwest Arauca province that the blockade had "successfully achieved all its goals" and would end tomorrow. Fearful drivers in Arauca have been staying off roads and highways, causing food and other shortages, while thousands of residents have been living largely without electricity because of FARC attacks on the region's energy infrastructure. Arauca Gov. Julio Enrique Acosta today estimated the blockade had cost the region \$2.2 million in lost business. "Transport is starting to pick up and people are beginning to go back to work," Acosta said. "We hope that normality can return to Arauca with the FARC decision to lift the blockade." At least eight people, including five police officers and a town councilman, were killed in attacks and sporadic firefighters with the guerrillas. The government deployed additional forces to Arauca and insisted roads were safe, but residents remained unconvinced.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

London, Oct 26 -- A press report, dated Oct 25, states: Some 1,000 militiamen in the Democratic Republic of Congo have handed over their weapons, UN officials say. The disarmament happened in the volatile

eastern Ituri province. UN military spokesman Major Hans-Jakob Reichen said the fighters belonged to a coalition known as the Congolese Revolutionary Movement. He added though that an estimated 15,000 armed militiamen were still at large in eastern DR Congo. The surrenders come two weeks after the Congolese army stepped up its operations in the east.

EGYPT

London, Oct 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: A play last performed two years ago at a Christian church in the Egyptian city of Alexandria has sparked a riot in which three people were killed. I Once Was Blind But Now I See, performed in 2003 at the Coptic church of St George, told the story of a poor young Copt drawn to militant Islamists, who then try to kill him. Last week the appearance of the play on DVD rekindled the fury of local Muslims, who called it "an insult to Islam". On Friday night (Oct 21) three people were killed and 53 arrested at the culmination of a series of protests outside St George's. Police resorted to sticks, tear gas and rubber bullets to hold back a crowd of several thousand who nevertheless succeeded in breaking the church's windows as well as smashing cars parked nearby. One man was trampled to death as the crowd was forced back, while two others died early yesterday when the police opened fire. Earlier in the week, protesters stabbed a nun and a man outside the church, though neither was seriously wounded.

London, Oct 24 -- A press report, dated Oct 23, states: More than 100 people have been placed in 15-day preventive detention for suspected involvement in sectarian riots in Alexandria, a judiciary official has said. They are accused of "attacks against places of worship, resisting authorities, blocking traffic, gathering on the street and damaging public and private property, including by arson," the official said today. "Authorities have decided to keep the 103 for more than the usual four-day preventive detention in light of the exceptional nature of the incidents," he added, asking not to be identified. About 5000 Muslim rioters clashed with police outside the St. Girgis (George) Coptic Orthodox church on Friday (Oct 21), and three were killed and scores wounded. The clashes were among the worst of communal violence Egypt has seen in years, underscoring the fragile religious balance of the Arab world's most populous country.

INDIA

London, Oct 26 -- An Indian border guard has been killed and more than 25 others injured in a car bomb attack in Indian-administered Kashmir, officials say. The blast came as a bus carrying soldiers of India's Border Security Force was passing by on the outskirts of the state capital, Srinagar. At least five civilians are among those

injured, the authorities say. There has been no let up in violence in Indian-administered Kashmir despite the recent earthquake in the region. The latest attack took place along the main highway linking Srinagar, the state's summer capital, with the northern town of Baramullah. The Hizbul Mujahideen, one of the most powerful militant groups fighting Indian rule in Kashmir, says it carried out the bombing.

INDONESIA

Jakarta, Oct 26 -- A clash between police and machete-wielding members of an Islamic sect on Indonesia's eastern Sulawesi island has killed four people, three of them police officers, a senior policeman said today. The incident took place yesterday in the rugged hills just outside the Central Sulawesi provincial capital of Palu. Fighting broke out when police had sought to apprehend the leader of a tiny sect which was branded deviant by local Muslim clerics. Local media reported that police retaliated with guns after being attacked with lethal traditional weapons like machetes and poisonous blow darts. -- Reuters.

IRAQ

London, Oct 21 -- A press report, dated today, states: A lawyer for one of Saddam Hussein's co-defendants was kidnapped yesterday, a day after his client sat in the dock next to the former president on the opening day of their trial for crimes against humanity. Saadoun Janabi is defence counsel for former judge Jawad al-Bander, a senior legal source involved in the trial said. "(He) was kidnapped this evening around 2030 hrs (1730, UTC) from his office, which is also his home, in the Shaab district by eight armed men," the source said. Police and Interior Ministry sources confirmed the kidnapping. There was no immediate claim of responsibility. Eight men arrived in two cars and forced Janabi from his upper-storey office at gunpoint, the police sources said. Bander is a former top judge under Saddam who is charged, along with the ousted leader and six others, over the killings and executions of Shi'ite men from the village of Dujail after Saddam escaped an assassination attempt there in 1982. As Janabi was being taken, Irish journalist Rory Carroll was freed, a day after he was seized while reporting on a Baghdad Shi'ite family watching the televised start of Saddam's trial. A British government source said he believed Carroll was released after two Iraqi prisoners were freed in southern Iraq. "I don't know who took me," Carroll told Reuters. "I'm fine. I was treated reasonably well," he said, adding he wanted to go on reporting on Iraq, though his immediate plans were unclear. "I spent the last 36 hours in the dark," he said. Iraq's powerful Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Chalabi was present when he was released, Carroll added. Saddam and the seven others went on trial on Wednesday but swiftly won an

adjournment to Nov. 28 to hone their defence after they pleaded not guilty; they all face the death penalty.

Baghdad, Oct 21 -- A defence lawyer for one of Saddam Hussein's co-defendants who was kidnapped by gunmen has been found shot dead, police said today. Police said the body of Saadoun Janabi, who was acting as defence lawyer for Saddam co-accused Awad al-Bander, was found shortly after his abduction late yesterday with several gunshot wounds to the head and chest. -- Reuters.

London, Oct 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: US troops and warplanes killed 20 insurgents yesterday while destroying safehouses for foreign militants near the Syrian border, and four more American military deaths edged the war's US death toll closer to 2,000. Iraqi election officials, meanwhile, said no significant fraud had been detected in last weekend's constitutional referendum as they released partial results. Officials indicated the final count would not come for at least a few more days. The day's heaviest fighting came when US-led forces raided five houses suspected of sheltering foreign fighters in Husaybah, a town near Iraq's border with Syria, the military said. The troops reportedly killed 20 insurgents and captured one. The raiders found two caches of small arms, ammunition, rocket-propelled grenades, mortar rounds and bomb-making materials, the military said. Troops set off a car bomb found near one of the buildings, and the Air Force then used precision-guided munitions to destroy the houses. Seven Iraqis, including two civilians, were reported killed in drive-by shootings and bombings yesterday. But in the week since the Oct 15 constitutional referendum there have been none of the major suicide attacks that militants had been staging. Twenty-three US military personnel have been reported dead over the week, bringing the total of American dead since the war began in March 2003 to 1,996, according to an Associated Press Count. The latest US deaths reported by the military included a Marine killed by an explosion near the western town of Haqlaniyah on Friday (Oct 21), the final day of an offensive that began Oct 4. After the blast, Marines fought with insurgents, killing four and destroying a bunker with an unknown number of gunmen inside, the military said. Two more Marines were killed by a bomb during fighting near Amiriyah, 25 miles west of Baghdad, the military said. A US Army soldier died in central Baghdad on Thursday of a "non-hostile gunshot." Iraqis will have to wait until at least tomorrow to learn the final outcome of the constitutional referendum. (See issue of Oct 24.)

Baghdad, Oct 24 -- Four sabotage blasts have halted oil exports from northern Iraq and repairs could take up to a month, while bad weather in the south has stopped loading from the country's main terminal, industry

sources said yesterday. "The exports to Ceyhan (Turkey) have stopped completely because of four blasts that hit a main gathering centre for at least four fields," an oil official told Reuters. He said that oil from Kirkuk, Janbour, Bay Hassan, Khabaz and other northern fields were gathered at the centre. Meanwhile, in the south of the country, high seas and thick dust have halted oil loadings from Iraq's main Basra terminal since Friday (Oct 21), a shipping source said. Seven oil tankers are anchored waiting to load. It was not clear how long the delays would last in the port which was shipping 84,000 barrels per hour before the bad weather began, the source said. "There is no sailing or loading, we don't know when the weather will be better," the source said. -- Reuters.

London, Oct 24 -- Saboteurs set ablaze an oil pipeline near the country's biggest refinery in Baiji early today, said the police. Captain Khalid Khalaf said insurgents set off an explosive device beneath a pipeline east of Baiji. A big fire and plumes of black smoke were seen rising from the site. He said the pipeline carries crude oil from Kirkuk oilfields to the Baiji refinery. He said firefighters rushed to the scene of the fire near Green Heights in Malha village to extinguish it.

London, Oct 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: At least a dozen people were killed this afternoon when three large bombs, one of them a cement-mixing truck packed with explosives, exploded beside Baghdad hotels used as a base by many foreign journalists, police said. There was considerable damage to rooms of the Palestine and Sheraton hotels. Initial Iraqi police reports suggested at least 12 people had been killed and another 15 injured, Reuters reported. Associated Press quoted the Iraqi assistant interior minister as saying that 17 people were killed. The ground floor of the nearby Sheraton hotel suffered severe damage and several people were wounded, a hotel official told Reuters by telephone. The Palestine Hotel's windows and rooms on the south side of the 19-storey building were substantially damaged. Dramatic TV pictures showed a flash of light and sparks on the north-west side of Firdous Square, next to the hotel, followed by a huge cloud of dust and smoke rising from the scene and debris falling from the building. After the bombing, automatic heavy weapons fire rang out in the area. Iraqi police opened fire, but it was not clear what they were shooting at. There was no sign of a further assault on the hotel. Major Abbas Mohammed Suleiman said the hotel compound was hit by two rockets and a car bomb. Security sources said the explosions occurred two minutes apart, not long before Muslims marking Ramadan were preparing to break their day-long fast. A death toll of 11 was reported by the Qatari-based al-Jazeera and the Dubai-based al-Arabiya networks, quoting Iraqi security officials.

London, Oct 25 -- A press report, dated today, states: There have been several bomb explosions in the largely-Kurdish city of Sulaymaniyah in north-eastern Iraq, officials say. One bomb exploded outside a building housing the provincial security ministry in charge of the Kurdish militia groups, the peshmerga. Nine people were killed and four injured by the explosion. Two others were wounded in an earlier attack on the convoy of a senior Kurdish politician. Local sources said that the explosion at the security ministry was caused by a suicide car bomber who rammed his vehicle into the ministry's compound. The explosion killed six peshmerga and three civilians, a peshmerga official, Lt-Col Taha Rida, told the Associated Press. Two Kurdish militiamen and two civilians were also wounded, he said. Experts are also attempting to defuse a bomb that was discovered outside a hotel on the city's main street. Militants have increased their attacks in Iraq since the referendum on the draft constitution on Oct 15. Iraqi electoral officials announced today that the charter had been approved.

London, Oct 26 -- A press report, dated Oct 25, states: The American military death toll in the Iraq war reached 2,000 today with the announcements of three more deaths, including an Army sergeant who died of wounds at a military hospital in Texas and two Marines killed last week in fighting west of Baghdad. The 2,000 mark was reached amid growing doubts among the American public about the Iraq conflict, launched in March 2003 to destroy Saddam Hussein's alleged weapons of mass destruction. None were ever found. President Bush warned the U.S. public to brace for more casualties in the fight against "as brutal an enemy as we have ever faced, unconstrained by any notion of common humanity and by the rules of warfare." As a sign of those challenges, one of Iraq's most ruthless terror groups, al-Qaida in Iraq, claimed responsibility for yesterday's suicide attacks against hotels housing Western journalists and contractors in Baghdad, as well as suicide bombings today in northern Iraq. In the latest fighting, U.S. and Iraqi troops raided insurgent safe houses today north-west of Qaim, a tense town near the Syrian border along a major infiltration route for foreign fighters. At one safe house, where women and children were also staying, an exchange of fire detonated an insurgent's suicide vest, causing the roof to collapse, a U.S. statement said. Elsewhere, suicide car bombs exploded today in the generally peaceful Kurdish province of Sulaymaniyah, killing 12 people. Al-Qaida in Iraq claimed responsibility in an Internet statement. Also today, insurgents killed six Iraqis, a seven-year-old boy, two Iraqi soldiers and three policemen and wounded 45 others in a series of attacks in Baghdad.

Dubai, Oct 25 -- Al Qaeda's wing in Iraq said today it had abducted two Moroccan embassy employees who had gone missing on their way from Jordan to Baghdad, according to a statement on a Web site. "Your brothers in the military wing of Al Qaeda Organisation in Iraq have captured the two Moroccans working at the Moroccan government's embassy in Baghdad. Their interrogation is continuing," said the statement, without giving further details. The statement could not be authenticated, but it was signed by al Qaeda's spokesman in Iraq and posted on a main Web site used by insurgents. Morocco's foreign ministry earlier said driver Abderrahim Boualam and assistant Abdelkrim El Mouhafidim, both working at the chancellery in Baghdad, went missing on Thursday (Oct 20) after returning by road in an embassy car from a brief trip to Jordan. -- Reuters.

Baghdad, Oct 26 -- Three Sunni Arab parties announced today they have formed a coalition to run in Iraq's parliamentary elections in December. The Iraqi Peoples Gathering, the Iraqi Islamic Party and the Iraqi National Dialogue told a news conference they had formed a coalition named the Iraqi Accordance Front. The Sunni parties urged Iraqis to take part in the polls and reject any calls for a boycott. Most Sunni parties are fiercely opposed to the Iraqi constitution which was ratified yesterday after a referendum. -- Reuters.

London, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated today, states: Two American soldiers were killed in Iraq yesterday when their convoy hit a roadside bomb, the U.S. military said today. The convoy was travelling in eastern Baghdad when the bomb went off, the military said in an e-mailed statement, without providing further details. In a separate attack, one Iraqi civilian was killed and eight others were injured today by a suicide car bomber targeting a U.S. patrol passing by in Karrada, central Iraq, Agence France- Presse reported, citing unidentified security and hospital officials.

ISRAEL

London, Oct 22 -- A press report, dated today, states: Israeli soldiers have shot and killed two Palestinians in the northern West Bank, Palestinian security officials say. The shootings are the latest of a series of fatal incidents in the past week threatening to unravel an eight-month cease-fire and dash hopes that Israel's pullout from Gaza last month could lead to a resumption of peace talks. Both sides have given conflicting accounts, and it was unclear whether the fatalities are a result of one or two separate incidents. Palestinian witnesses say troops opened fire on unarmed protesters who threw stones at an Army jeep, east of Tulkarm, a town in the northern West Bank, killing an 18-year-old youth. Medics say the youth died immediately of his wounds. But an Israeli military

spokesman says soldiers have shot at gunmen who fired first at the troops and damaged a military vehicle. The spokesman says soldiers later found one body near the scene, but believed they had shot two armed men. Palestinian officials say Israel has informed them of the second fatality but that they have not yet identified the body. A spokesman for the Yasser Arafat Brigades, an offshoot of the militant wing of the mainstream Fatah movement, says Israel had killed one of its members in Tulkarm. The same group has claimed responsibility for gunning down three young Jewish settlers on a road near the West Bank city of Bethlehem last week. The latest deaths mean three Palestinians have been killed by Israeli troops since Thursday (Oct 20) when soldiers shot dead a Palestinian man who threw a firebomb at an Israeli car in Bethlehem. The Bethlehem shooting came amid spiralling tensions since the killings of the settlers last week for which Israel has retaliated by restricting Palestinian traffic on many West Bank roads and stepping up military patrols. In a separate incident yesterday, a Palestinian policeman was critically wounded in Tulkarm as officers tried to break up a brawl between two Palestinian men on a city street outside a cafe. Neither Palestinian involved in the brawl was believed to belong to militant groups fighting Israel. Israel withdrew from Gaza last month but still occupies the West Bank.

London, Oct 24 -- Two Palestinian gunmen were shot dead by Israeli troops during a confrontation late yesterday in the northern West Bank city of Tulkarem, Palestinian medical and security sources said. Security sources named the men as Majed al-Ashkar, 28, and Yusuf al-Hanna, 25, saying they were shot during an exchange of fire with Israeli troops who had surrounded a house in which they were hiding. Ashkar had previously been associated with the radical Al Qsa Martyrs' Brigades, but had recently changed affiliation and joined Islamic Jihad, they said. It was not clear whether Hanna was associated with any particular militant group. The Israeli army confirmed that two Palestinians had been killed in the city during an arrest operation in which one soldier was lightly injured by gunfire.

Gaza, Oct 25 -- Israel launched air strikes in Gaza today after Palestinians in the territory responded to the killing of a top West Bank militant by launching rocket attacks into the Jewish state. The flare-up in violence, which included rare Israeli artillery fire toward militants in Gaza, was one of the most serious since an Israeli pullout last month raised hopes for Middle East peacemaking. A Palestinian woman and her two daughters were wounded in one of the air raids, which destroyed two buildings linked to Islamic Jihad and President Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah faction. The army said

militants from both groups had used the structures. The army said the air strikes, the first such attacks in about a month, came in response to cross-border rocket barrages by Islamic Jihad militants in Gaza avenging Israel's killing of one of the group's top commanders in the West Bank. Israel had said after the rocket salvos, which caused no casualties, that it would respond to any attacks on its people. Islamic Jihad said the attacks were an "initial response" to the killing of their commander in the West Bank town of Tulkarm. The army said troops targeted the militant and his comrade because they had masterminded past attacks against Israelis and were planning more. Abbas said the killing of the Islamic Jihad militant undermined his efforts to maintain calm during an eight-month ceasefire militants declared in March. He also wants to ensure violence does not disrupt a legislative election in January. Top militant groups said last month they would stop anti-Israeli attacks from Gaza, after Israel killed several gunmen in response to similar rocket salvos launched after Israel quit Gaza on September 12 after 38 years of occupation. The armed groups, which included Islamic Jihad and Hamas, both of which are sworn to Israel's destruction, had said at the time that they would stop such attacks to honour the truce. Hamas has also said it wants to ensure calm ahead of the legislative elections in January, in which the group plans to challenge Fatah for the first time. -- Reuters.

London, Oct 26 -- Israel has deployed warplanes and artillery to target an area of northern Gaza today in response to Palestinian militants firing a rocket into the southern Israeli town of Sderot. No casualties were reported in any of the incidents, part of a flare-up of violence this week that has been one of the worst since Israel quit the Gaza Strip last month. The violence has threatened to unravel an eight-month-old ceasefire and has cast a shadow over international hopes of a revival of Israeli-Palestinian peacemaking since the Jewish state withdrew from Gaza after 38 years of occupation. After a lull in violence for much of yesterday, militants fired two rockets at Israel from Beit Hanoun in northern Gaza today, witnesses said. An Israeli military source said the remains of one rocket were found near a Sderot college. The al-Qsa Martyrs Brigades, an armed wing of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas's ruling Fatah movement, claimed responsibility for the rocket attack.

London, Oct 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: A suicide bomber struck the crowded entrance of a falafel stand at an open air market in the northern Israeli town of Hadera today, killing four people and wounding at least 30, police and rescuers said. Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for the bombing, saying it was in retaliation for the killing of a top militant leader by Israeli troops

earlier this week. Ambulances rushed to the scene after the explosion at the falafel stand, which was next to the central bus station. Israel Radio said a bomb had been placed at the scene, rather than blaming it on a suicide attack. Police and Hadera mayor Chaim Avitan, however, insisted the attack was a suicide bombing, the first to hit Israel since a bomber struck a bus station in Beersheba on Aug 28. Rescue teams were treating the wounded in a nearby field. Islamic Jihad said the bombing was to avenge the death of Luay Saadi, leader of the group's military wing in the West Bank. Saadi was killed in a shootout with Israeli soldiers closing in on his hideout in the Tulkarem refugee camp on Monday (Oct 24). Israeli police and medics reported that four people were killed in the blast and one person was critically wounded. Yeruham Mendola, a spokesman for the Magen David Adom rescue service, said 30 people were hurt, five seriously.

Gaza, Oct 27 -- Israeli planes struck the Gaza Strip today and Prime Minister Ariel Sharon approved a major ground offensive in the West Bank after a suicide attack killed five Israelis. The suicide bombing in the coastal city of Hadera -- the first such attack since Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip last month -- dealt a serious blow to an eight-month-old truce and international hopes for a revival of peacemaking. Security sources said Sharon and Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz decided on a large scale military operation in the northern West Bank against Islamic Jihad, which claimed responsibility for yesterday's bombing. Israel would also hit Islamic Jihad targets in the Gaza Strip, the sources said. "We will do everything we can to strike out the infrastructure of the organisation that carried out this act of terror," Mofaz told reporters. No timetable was given for the West Bank offensive. Islamic Jihad said the attack was to avenge Israel's killing of one of its top West Bank commanders in a raid on Monday (Oct 24). The 20-year-old bomber came from a town in the northern West Bank. Israeli aircraft launched three strikes on the Gaza Strip early today in what the army said were attacks aimed at stopping militants firing rockets into the Jewish state from the territory. There were no reports of casualties. It was the third day of air raids in the worst flare-up of violence since Israel withdrew from Gaza last month after 38 years of occupation. -- Reuters.

LIBERIA

Monrovia, Oct 25 -- Scores of protesting soldiers set up barricades of bricks and tyres in front of Liberia's Defence Ministry today, demanding severance pay in return for demobilising as a new post-war national army is formed. Thousands of soldiers from the old Armed Forces of Liberia, many of whom fought 14 years of on-off civil war against rebel fighters, are being demobilised to make way for a smaller new air force, navy and ground army in the West African

country. Two U.N. armoured personnel carriers stood on either side of the Defence Ministry as the soldiers, unarmed and wearing civilian clothes, shouted "We want pay! We want pay". "Some disgruntled elements went on the rampage ... but we will restructure the army at all costs," Defence Minister Daniel Chea told Reuters by telephone. Police officers armed with batons later dispersed the protesters and made several arrests. The protest was the first major disturbance during an otherwise trouble-free election campaign which culminated in presidential and parliamentary polls two weeks ago, the first since the end of the civil war in 2003. The presidential contest is due to go to a second round on November 8 between international soccer star George Weah and former Finance Minister Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, who could become Africa's first elected female president. "We came here purposely to tell the authorities that we need our benefits. Some of us have served this country for many years and it is time that we retired in an honourable way," said Amos Zayzay, 40, an infantry sergeant dressed in jeans. Frustration over delays in demobilisation boiled over in June, when around 200 unarmed soldiers looted their own barracks and rampaged through the capital Monrovia, setting up roadblocks and lying on the ground to stop traffic circulating. Many former rebels from the LURD and Model factions have handed in their weapons and U.S. defence contractor DynCorp International, hired to train the new 2,000-strong army, finished in August demobilising more than 8,000 irregular fighters employed by former president Charles Taylor. But funding shortfalls have delayed the demobilisation of regular army soldiers, leading to fears that disgruntled former combatants might try to disrupt the election process. -- Reuters.

NIGERIA

London, Oct 25 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Unknown arsonists yesterday set the pipeline that supplies crude oil from the Escravos Terminal to the Warri Refinery, on fire, a situation which might lead to the closure of the refinery if the stock pile of crude oil in its reservoir finishes. The 24-inch pipeline which is operated by the Pipelines and Products Marketing Company (PPMC), the subsidiary of the NNPC supplies both the Warri refinery and the Kaduna Refinery with crude, was still on fire this morning. At about midnight yesterday, a loud explosion was heard and fire started raging at the point near Escravos. Aerial view by officials of the Chevron Nigeria Limited, the company which supply the refinery with the crude showed that it happened on the pipeline Right of way (ROW) belonging to Chevron/PPMC. Chevron officials mobilized helicopters which hovered above the scene as it is suspected that the explosion could only have been caused by an act of sabotage. It would be recalled that last week, the

South-South Liberation Movement (SSLM), a militant Ijaw organization promised to precipitate economic havoc against the Federal Government if Governor Diepreye Alamieyeseigha and Alhaji Dokubo Asarui are not released.

London, Oct 26 -- A press report, dated Oct 25, states: Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) Nigeria, has said it will no longer compensate any community for oil spillage resulting from sabotage. Its External Affairs Manager, West, Mr. Harriman Oyofe, restated the company's position, at the weekend, in Asaba. Oyofe, who said that SPDC's stand was in line with an existing law on vandalism, was speaking at a one-day seminar organised by the company. He accused some communities and youth leaders in oil producing areas of Delta of conniving with vandals to burst pipelines to attract compensation from oil companies. Some participants at the seminar, however, criticised SPDC for retaining corroded and weak pipelines that often burst and devastate the ecology in oil producing communities. They also accused SPDC of being "insensitive" by refusing to pay compensation for some oil spillage, saying that Shell was using the media to claim sabotage each time a spill occurred.

PHILIPPINES

Manila, Oct 26 -- Philippine security forces today arrested the leader of an Islamic militant group suspected of involvement in the sinking of a ferry that killed more than a 100 people last year, an army general said. Ahmad Islam Santos, the head of a radical Muslim convert group with ties to the Abu Sayyaf terror group, and eight suspected militants were caught from a house in Zamboanga, one of the largest cities on the southern island of Mindanao. Lieutenant-General Edilberto Adan told reporters that weapons, explosives and maps of the capital, Manila, were seized from the hideout. "He's still undergoing tactical interrogation. We believed the group was up to something big during the long holiday," he said, referring to next week's holidays to mark the Roman Catholic All Saints Day and the end of Ramadan for Muslims. Santos, also known as Hilarion del Rosario, is believed to have founded the Rajah Solaiman Movement in the late 1990s after he converted to Islam and attended military training in a Muslim rebel camp in Mindanao's Lanao province. The Abu Sayyaf group claimed responsibility for the sinking of the ferry near Manila in 2004 that killed more than 100 people, the country's worst terror attack. Intelligence authorities said Santos's group was also involved in the attack. One of the self-confessed ferry bombers was a Muslim convert that belonged to the Rajah Solaiman Movement. -- Reuters.

RUSSIA

Moscow, Oct 26 -- Four Russian servicemen were shot dead today as they drove near the border between

Ingushetia and North Ossetia, Russian news agencies reported, citing the Interior Ministry. The four servicemen -- including a female lieutenant -- were killed when unknown assailants opened fire with automatic weapons, Itar-Tass news agency said. A seriously wounded serviceman was taken to hospital in Nazran, the regional capital of Ingushetia, which borders the rebel republic of Chechnya. -- Reuters.

SPAIN

Madrid, Oct 25 -- Bombs exploded near magistrates courts in four Spanish towns early today and police said they suspected the armed Basque separatist group ETA was to blame. The explosions damaged buildings but no one was injured, officials said. Basque police said a caller claiming to represent ETA warned the newspaper Gara shortly before one bomb exploded in a rubbish bin in the Basque town of Guernica. Journalists at the scene said the bomb twisted a railing outside a school near the court. There were also explosions at Ordizia and Amurrio in the Basque country and the fourth blast, caused by a home-made bomb placed by the window of a court, was at Berriozar in Navarre, a region adjoining the Basque country, a government official said. ETA has carried out about 20 minor attacks this year, but has not killed anyone since May 2003. The Socialist government recently offered to talk to ETA if the group first laid down its arms, but ETA has continued to carry out sporadic bombings. -- Reuters.

THAILAND

London, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated today, states: Five villagers and two militants were killed overnight in Muslim southern Thailand when insurgents launched about 50 raids on remote villages in the restive region. The Thai army said most of the attacks targeted members of civilian guards created by the government to provide emergency security against militants. "The attacks came at around 1900 hrs to 2000 hrs while all the men were praying at mosques. They left shotguns with their families at home," Colonel Acra Tiprote of the southern Army command said. "We are hunting for the suspects with lots of help from villagers, both Buddhists and Muslims." At least 73 government-issue weapons were stolen, while three militants were captured alive, the army said.

Labour Disputes



BELGIUM

Brussels, Oct 24 -- Belgium's southern city of Charleroi was paralysed on today as workers began a 24-hour strike to protest against government plans to raise the age for

early retirement from 58 to 60. Employees from all sectors, pre-empting a nationwide strike planned for Friday (Oct 28), stayed away from work, forcing the city's buses to stay in their garages, schools to suspend class, and hospitals to run with skeleton staff. Charleroi airport was out of action and Irish no-frills airline Ryanair, which has its European hub there, said on its Web site it had cancelled flights. Talks between the government and unions on reform of the pension system broke down two weeks ago. "Charleroi is very much affected by unemployment and that is why they have decided not to wait until Friday to take strike action," Diana De Crop, a spokeswoman for the Christian trade union ACV/CSC, told Reuters. Airport officials were negotiating with picketing workers to get operations running. "We hope to open the airport at around 1030 hrs (0830 GMT) today as we have an agreement with the unions," said airport spokesman Pierre Fernement, adding that eight flights had been cancelled. -- Reuters.

BRAZIL

London, Oct 25 -- A press report, dated Oct 24, states: The strike at Volkswagen AG's Sao Bernardo do Campo plant, the company's largest in Brazil, has led to a shortage in show rooms, financial daily Valor Economico reported, citing car dealers. VW's metalworkers in Sao Bernardo went on strike 26 days ago to obtain larger payouts under VW's profit-sharing scheme. The report noted the strike could end today as the dispute over the profit-sharing scheme is now handled by a court after the talks between management and the union failed to yield any result. The VW workers will decide today at an AGM whether they want to continue the protest while the court is studying the case.

London, Oct 26 -- A press report, dated Oct 25, states: Employees at Volkswagen Brazil's Sao Bernardo do Campo car plant decided yesterday to end the strike that started on Sep 29. The 12,400 workers at the oldest and largest VW factory in Brazil returned to the assembly line though they had not signed an agreement with the automaker. The strike started to pressure Volkswagen into increasing the size of the worker's profit shares. The strike began at Sao Bernardo do Campo and spread to the Sao Carlos engine plant and Taubate car plant. But these two factories restarted work after reaching agreement with VW. Sao Bernardo do Campo plant employees are now awaiting a Labour Court decision on their claim. VW said the strike has cost it Sao Bernardo do Campo production of 16,000 vehicles and over 20,000 in total.

CANADA

London, Oct 20 -- A press report, dated Oct 19, states: There appears to be some movement in the impasse that has closed BC's public school system for nearly two weeks. Labour Minister

Mike de Jong has confirmed that Ken Dobell, a senior advisor to Premier Gordon Campbell, and Deputy Labour Minister Chris Connelly have been talking to mediator Vince Ready since Sunday (Oct 16) about how to broker a deal to end the strike. They've been talking about more money on the table for salary increases for teachers next year, and a written commitment to amend the School Act to meet teachers' demands on class size and composition.

London, Oct 22 -- A press report, dated today, states: The B.C. government and the striking teachers' union agreed yesterday to accept a facilitator's report and teachers were to begin voting on it with the possibility of getting 600,000 students back in class. Premier Gordon Campbell told a news conference the government will accept the recommendations unconditionally laid out the evening before by Vince Ready. The premier also pointed out that the striking teachers will be paying for the \$100 million cost of the recommendations since the government has already saved as much as \$160 million by not paying wages. A few hours later, a B.C. Supreme Court judge fined the B.C. Teachers' Federation \$500,000 for contempt of court in the illegal strike. Justice Brenda Brown said she based the amount of the fine on the fact it appears the teachers are about to return to work.

London, Oct 22 -- A press report, dated Oct 20, states: The Liard River ferry is being docked, leaving residents of two N.W.T. communities stranded on the west side of the river. The ferry's operator says it can no longer keep the vessel running during a labour dispute with ferry workers. Today, Rowe Construction told the N.W.T. Department of Transportation that the service would cease operating this evening. The company had been trying to run the ferry with replacement workers after locking out its six regular ferry workers Friday. That action came after the six workers began legal strike action two days earlier. The workers are trying to negotiate their first-ever collective agreement with the company. The two sides have not spoken for more than a month.

London, Oct 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: Students across British Columbia returned to school today after teachers voted to end an illegal strike that kept them out of class for two weeks. After the B.C. Teachers Federation was fined \$500,000 by the B.C. Supreme Court for going on strike illegally, teachers voted 77 per cent in favour of returning to work under a deal reached through mediator Vince Ready that will see the province increase funding to deal with learning conditions, including class sizes. B.C.'s 38,000 teachers began the illegal strike Oct 7.

London, Oct 25 -- A press report, dated Oct 24, states: Gas has become a precious commodity in Fort Simpson

as reserves dry up because of the ferry strike that's cut the community off from the outside world. TJ Grocery shut down its gas bar last Thursday (Oct 20), the last time the Liard River ferry moved vehicles across the river into the community. There's been little movement on ending the dispute, now on its 13th day. "The contractor is not willing to do anything and the government is not willing to do anything," says worker spokesman Sean Cli. The department of transportation is expected to announce its plan for the ferry sometime this week.

London, Oct 26 -- A press report, dated Oct 25, states: The Liard ferry is still not running, despite a government-imposed deadline on the company supplying the service to get the vessel back in the water. Sources in Fort Simpson say the ferry did not resume at 0800, MT, the deadline the territorial government gave the company to end its dispute with locked-out workers and restore service to two communities. However, there's no word yet on what action the government plans to take to restore the service. Transportation Minister, Michael McLeod, hasn't giving any more details about the government's backup plan, saying there are legal ramifications. But he says he can commit to restoring the service before the end of ferry season, before freeze up.

London, Oct 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: Teck Cominco Ltd. expects it will be November before it can lift a "force majeure" that the company declared at the start of a strike at its smelter in Trail, B.C., delaying all contracts to sell metal and chemical products. Employees at the smelter returned to work earlier this month after ratifying a new collective agreement, but Teck Cominco said it will take time before things return to normal. "The plant is now operating at full rate, but it will take us into November to refill the pipeline and remove the force majeure," Roger Brain, the company's retiring senior vice-president for marketing and refining, told a conference call with analysts.

London, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated Oct 26, states: The government of the Northwest Territories restored ferry service to two isolated communities last night, after firing the ferry's operator and hiring its six striking employees as seasonal workers. The ferry across the Liard River had not been running regularly since the strike began on Oct 12. The territory's transportation minister, Michael McLeod, announced yesterday that it was firing Rowe Construction as the ferry's contracted operator, after the company missed a deadline yesterday morning to bring the service back. The six ferry workers were on the job doing safety inspections in preparation for the first sailing last night, McLeod said as he made the announcement.

CYPRUS

London, Oct 22 -- A press report, dated Oct 21, states: Cyprus's airports briefly shut down for flights today when aviation staff walked out without warning in a two hour work stoppage, witnesses said. At least two aircraft were grounded in the strike, causing a backlog and delays for hundreds of travellers. Staff at Larnaca, the main air terminal, and the smaller Paphos airport, are worried at job security.

GERMANY

London, Oct 25 -- A press report, dated Oct 24, states: Workers at semiconductor manufacturer Infineon went on strike Monday to protest the Munich plant's future closure. Europe's largest chipmakers said earlier this year that it would close the factory in 2007 and cut 800 jobs. Last month Infineon said that rival chip maker X-Fab had decided not to buy the ageing plant because the factory's economic and structural deficits were "insurmountable." Workers from German truck manufacturer MAN, electronic giant Siemens and auto companies BMW and Volkswagen's Audi joined about 400 Infineon workers at the strike. Trade union IG Metall is protesting against the compensation package offered to workers for the closure, in which only a small number of employees are expected to be offered jobs at other Infineon sites. Negotiations to extend the life of the plant and increase compensation between management and the union broke down earlier this month. Union officials hope the strike will bring Infineon management back to the negotiating table.

INDONESIA

Manila, Oct 21 -- A strike affecting around 100 passenger ferries left at least 1,000 passengers stranded at the Indonesian ports of Sekupang and Telago Punggur in the Batam and Riau islands group yesterday. The strike was staged by ferry operators in protest at a recent policy by state oil and gas company PT Pertamina, which they claim made it more difficult to purchase subsidised diesel fuel. Prior to the new policy, ferry operators could purchase subsidised fuel at commercial fuelling stations around the island. Today, ferry operators can only buy subsidised fuel at Pertamina's bunker service facility at Sambu island. The strike has affected ferry operations between the island of Batam and the neighbouring islands of Tanjung Balai Karimun, Tanjung Pinang, Dumai, Pekan Baru and Kuala Tungkal. Pertamina justified the new policy as part of its efforts to curb the rampant smuggling of fuel in the country. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

London, Oct 22 -- A press report, dated Oct 21, states: Some 100 ferries operating in the Riau Islands resumed operations today after being halted by a strike a day earlier. The ferries resumed services after state oil and

gas company PT Pertamina bowed to ferry operators' demand that they be allowed to buy subsidised fuel at Pertamina's depot near the Sekupang and Telago Punggur ports on Batam. Under the new deal, ferry operators could buy diesel fuel at the subsidised price of Rp 4,250 a liter. Unsubsidised diesel fuel costs Rp 6,000 a liter. As the ferries resumed their operations, traffic at the Sekupang and Telago Punggur ports returned to normal. The ports were busy on Friday as people traveled between Batam and the surrounding islands.

ITALY

London, Oct 20 -- A press report, dated today, states: Italian air traffic controllers have staged a four-hour strike to call for better training and shorter working hours, causing 144 flight cancellations. The strike, limited to controllers working at Rome airports, began at noon yesterday. State airline Alitalia said it had cancelled 62 domestic and 40 international flights, and the rest of the cancelled flights were from airlines including British Airways, Air France and Lufthansa, the airport said.

Genoa, Oct 24 -- As a result of the Genoa port Customs' work-to-rule, delays are being experienced in the delivery of containers, causing congestion at terminals. The situation is expected to worsen as the strike continues. -- Lloyd's Agents.

NIGERIA

London, Oct 20 -- A press report, dated today states: No-one is being allowed to enter Brass Terminal today, after port staff started strike action yesterday, Oct 19. Although no vessels are currently affected by the strike, it is expected to have an impact on a vessel which is due to arrive later today.

London, Oct 23 -- A press report, dated Oct 22, states: Oil exports from Nigeria's 240,000 barrel-per-day Brass River tanker terminal were suspended yesterday due to a strike by unions, a ship agent said. The industrial action against a joint venture operated by Italian oil company Agip, a unit of ENI, began on Wednesday and has also hit production from some fields, the agent and union sources said. "The strike started Wednesday. There are no loadings at Brass terminal. Production has been cut down," the shipping agent told Reuters. Officials of the joint venture, which is majority-owned by state-run Nigeria National Petroleum Corp., were unavailable for comment. A meeting between the unions and Agip to resolve the dispute over pay ended in deadlock on Friday evening and talks will resume on Monday, unionists said. "The meeting ended in deadlock. Neither side is ready to yield ground," a union member said outside the company headquarters, asking not to be named. Industrial disputes in Nigeria are common but they rarely impact supply from the world's eighth largest oil exporter. Union leaders were reluctant

to speak officially on the dispute or the impact on operations, but protesters outside the building in Port Harcourt confirmed that output had been hit. "Members offshore are involved and this action has impacted on production," one union member said, asking not to be named. The Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN) and the blue-collar NUPENG union are demanding among other things a 100% pay rise, while the company has offered a 25 percent increase, unionists said. More than 100 unionists staged a protest outside the building and barricaded the entrance with over 50 cars. "We are really angry with the way Agip is treating us. We are ready for a showdown," another unionist said.

SPAIN

London, Oct 25 -- A press report, dated today, states: Merchant vessels have been advised by Spanish state ports entity Puertos del Estado not to call at Spain's commercial ports on the Mediterranean after striking fishermen stepped up protests by blocking the sea entrance to Barcelona port. Fishermen are also continuing their blockade of the ports of Valencia, Tarragona, Castellon, Almeria, Denia and Alicante. About 30 fishing vessels lined up across the mouth of Barcelona port have impeded the entrance of all commercial traffic, causing cruise lines to divert and ferry companies to cancel sailings. Barcelona Port Authority said 58 ships had been scheduled to depart and enter the port today. The Barcelona action, which started at 2200 hrs, last night, comes after fisherman started blocking other commercial ports in the Mediterranean on Sunday (Oct 23) night. The protests are expected to go until at least midnight tonight. Fishermen have intensified their protest after rejecting a government package to reduce the burden of high fuel costs, on Sunday.

London, Oct 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: Spanish fishermen protesting over high fuel prices blockaded the country's Mediterranean ports and brought maritime trade to a standstill yesterday. About 30 fishing vessels blocked the entrance to the port of Barcelona, stopping 16 merchant ships from leaving and preventing another 33 vessels from coming alongside. The protest led to serious congestion at the port's terminals. Barcelona port authority chairman Joaquim Coello said the financial losses arising from the action could be as high as Euro3m a day in the Catalonian port alone. Similar scenes were evident at other ports along Spain's Mediterranean seaboard and vessels were urged to adjust their itineraries and avoid Spanish ports wherever possible. Elena Espinosa, Spain's agriculture minister, yesterday called on the fishermen to cease their radical action ahead of a meeting with representatives of the sector today.

Blockades were still in place by late afternoon local time and expected to continue into the night.

Barcelona, Oct 26 -- The entrance and departures of vessels in the major Mediterranean ports in Spain are being affected by a strike of the fishing fleet in Spain. They are not allowing the normal movement in and out of the ports, as they are in strike in rejection to the increase in price of the gasoil. Therefore an important number of vessels are anchored outside the ports and can not enter the ports or are retained inside the ports not being able to leave them. The representatives of the fishing fleet have stated that the strike will be held until they are received by the Minister of Agriculture and Fishing, in order to find a solution and/or obtaining help so that the fishing fleet can face the increase in the cost of gasoil. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated today, states: Spanish fishermen protesting over high fuel costs continued to blockade the country's key ports throughout yesterday. The protests, which initially focused on the Mediterranean seaboard, spread to the country's Atlantic ports as pressure mounted on the government to resolve the crisis. The fishermen want Madrid to seek mechanisms to ease financial pressures that they say are crippling their industry. But as the protests entered their second day, the total block on maritime trade was starting to take its toll, particularly on Spain's island communities, which rely on shipping as a vital link with the mainland. Anave, the Spanish shipowners' association, said the situation was "unsustainable" and called on Madrid to take whatever action was necessary urgently to lift the blockades. On the Mediterranean coast, the main ports affected by the protests were Tarragona, Murcia, Castellon, Valencia, Almeria, Alicante and Barcelona. Key Atlantic ports, including Bilbao, were also hit by the action. Numerous ships remained trapped, unable to leave their berths, while others had to divert elsewhere to avoid the blockades. The fishermen's protests also led to serious congestion problems in terminals across the Spanish ports system. Anave said that more than 30 regular cabotage services linking the Spanish mainland with the country's island territories, as well as with other Mediterranean ports, had been hit by the blockades. International services were also severely disrupted. "Clients are already seeking compensation from Spanish shipowners," the association said in a statement. "Our members are already receiving claims from their clients and are suffering numerous damages due to the direct costs generated by the impossibility of operating." The shipowners, which are still calculating the extent of their financial losses, said they would seek compensation from both the government and those responsible for the blockades. Anave president Juan Riva maintained high-level contacts

with government ministers yesterday to convey the shipowners' concerns and to insist that the situation at the country's ports be resolved.

UNITED STATES

London, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated Oct 26, states: After 18 months of a bitter contract dispute, teachers in the sprawling Oregon Trail School District went on strike yesterday, the first in the state to do so since 1999. The strike began at 0600 hrs, an hour and a half after a marathon overnight negotiating session ended with no substantive agreement on the table. Teachers and the school board in the Oregon Trail School District remain at odds over several key issues, including salary, guidelines for teacher evaluations, implementation of federal education laws and health care costs, representatives from both sides said. Schools in the 4,200-student district closed yesterday and will remain shuttered until at least Friday (Oct 28). State mediators are expected to schedule another bargaining session later this week. The Oregon Trail district spans 425 square miles, including the communities of Sandy, Boring, Government Camp and Welches. Oregon Trail School District officials have declined to staff the schools with substitute teachers, the course they took the last time teachers there went on strike in 1997. Parents have seconded that choice, citing concerns about whether substitutes would be fully prepared.

London, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated Oct 26, states: The financial effect of the four-week Machinists strike against The Boeing Co. became clear today when the company reported it lost \$1.5 billion in revenue because of the walkout. The strike hurt Boeing's third-quarter earnings by as much as 30 cents a share -- much more than most analysts had expected. In reporting its results from the quarter, Boeing said it has pushed back into 2006 and even into 2007 the delivery of 30 jets -- 21 from September during the strike and nine more jets from the fourth quarter. Instead of delivering 320 jets this year, Boeing will deliver only 290. Even though many Machinists are now working overtime in an attempt to catch up on production, Boeing said it is sticking to its previous forecast that it will deliver 395 jets next year.

Awards & Settlements



CLASS-ACTION SETTLEMENT, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 24 -- A press report, dated Oct 23, states: Residents forced from their homes in January by a magnesium fire at an Anderson recycling plant will receive about \$200 each under a settlement with the

company. The two class action lawsuits filed against Advanced Magnesium Alloys Corporation were settled recently for one million dollars, the amount of liability insurance the company carried. The fire, which began Jan 14 and lasted for days, forced Anderson city officials to evacuate 8,000 residents from an area surrounding the Amacor plant. Under the settlement, residents forced from their homes will receive about 200 dollars each, while businesses that were forced to close will receive 1,000 dollars. Two attorneys who filed the lawsuits will receive one third of the one million-dollar settlement, plus expenses.

VIOLATIONS OF CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES ACT, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 22 -- A press report, dated Oct 21, states: The Department of Justice today announced a record \$7 million settlement by King Sooper, City Market, and parent company Kroeger for violations of the Controlled Substances Act. The problems stem from pharmacy practices, ranging from poor record keeping to controlled substance security. Audits by the Drug Enforcement Agency determined that it was impossible to determine how many drugs had been lost or diverted, and who was responsible for potential drug losses. In addition to the \$7 million settlement, Kroeger agreed to implement a pharmacy compliance and training program estimated to cost more than \$6 million in all 1,900 of its pharmacies nation-wide. The DEA audited seven King Soopers pharmacies after receiving tips, and found a pattern of non-compliance with the requirements of CSA and federal regulations. The problems were systemic, spanning from the time the drugs were ordered to when they were dispensed. Kroeger fully cooperated with the audits, according to the U.S. Department of Justice. "Kroeger should be commended for recognizing that they have a problem, and taking steps to immediately address their controlled substance security deficiencies on a national level, said U.S. Attorney Bill Leone, in a statement. "As part of this settlement, Kroeger offered to institute their compliance program, not just in Colorado, but throughout the country. This important step goes a long way towards removing controlled substances illegally obtained from pharmacies from our streets." He added that diversions of drugs are not limited to Kroeger or King Soopers and that the Justice Department will continue to investigate pharmacies. Jeffrey Sweetin of the DEA said that diverted pharmaceuticals account for a large percentage of illegal drug abuse. An additional \$3 million penalty imposed by the settlement was suspended as long as Kroeger complies with the agreement.

WRONGFUL DEATH, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 25 -- A press report, dated Oct 24, states: A lawsuit filed by Teresa Heinz Kerry after her first husband died in a midair collision in 1991 was settled for \$15 million, according to newly unsealed court records. She sued the owners of the airplane on which her husband was travelling, as well as the owners of the helicopter involved in the crash. According to the National Transportation Safety Board, errors in judgment by pilots of both aircraft caused the crash that killed U.S. Sen. John Heinz and six others - including two first-graders on the ground. Attorneys for The Philadelphia Inquirer sought to unseal the settlement papers last year when U.S. Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., ran for president; Kerry married Heinz's widow in 1995. At first, attorneys for the Heinz estate tried to prevent the court records from being unsealed, citing the family's need for security and privacy. A judge unsealed portions of the file in October 2004 and attorneys for the Heinz estate appealed his ruling. The case was settled this month, according to William H. Lamb, who represented the Heinz estate. The 1997 settlement states that \$3 million would go to Heinz Kerry as co-executor of the Heinz estate. The remaining \$12 million was paid to Heinz Kerry and the couple's three sons, John IV, Andrew and Christopher, according to court records. The wrongful-death lawsuit alleged that the owner of the helicopter, Sun Co. Inc., of Philadelphia; and Lycoming Air Services Inc., of Montoursville, Lycoming County, the plane's owner, had failed to properly train their flight crews.

Railway Accidents



BARI AREA, ITALY

See "Italy" under "Weather & Navigation."

DE AAR AREA, SOUTH AFRICA

London, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated today, states: Problems with an electronic signalling system could have caused yesterday night's head-on collision between the Blue Train and the Trans Karoo express, Spoornet's chief executive said. Scores of passengers were injured in the crash, five of them seriously. Spoornet CEO Siyabonga Gama: "They are still looking for the black box that was on Trans Karoo to download information for a better understanding of what caused the accident." Gama, who flew to the accident scene at 0300 hrs, today with several managers from the rail operator, said the accident could have been far worse if the driver of the

Trans Karoo had not applied emergency brakes. Spoornet spokesperson Molatwane Likhetho said the incident was still being investigated, but it appeared the Trans Karoo had crashed into the stationary Blue Train, which - as it had been ahead of schedule - was whiling away time. The Trans Karoo was apparently diverted onto the same track and the two met head-on at 2307 hrs. Police Captain Zandisile Makhuphula said 74 people aboard the hotel on wheels and 182 travelling in the Trans Karoo express. United Transport and Allied Trade Union general secretary Chris de Vos said this morning the union would "request the rail safety regulator and Spoornet to include our union as part of the investigation because both train drivers are our members and we want to ensure that this is not a finger-pointing exercise". He added that 80 percent of rail accidents took place when "abnormal working conditions" prevailed. He was informed that the accident resulted from a failure in the signals system and the absence of a back-up system to prevent human failure.

DECATUR, ALABAMA, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 25 -- A press report, dated today, states: Eight freight cars of a CSX train derailed yesterday at the south end of the railroad bridge over the Tennessee River. No one was injured. The derailment occurred about 1700 between the bridge and Wilson Street. Residents of Harbor View apartments said they heard a series of "booms" and several cars overturned several yards from the buildings. Both CSX and Norfolk-Southern Railway use the tracks, which serve several plants. Officials said there were no hazardous materials in the tank cars. Several cars were carrying scrap metal.

FORT EDWARD, NEW YORK, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: A freight train carrying dangerous chemicals derailed in Washington County yesterday, but luckily no leaks were caused. Officials say on of the carts that derailed in a the Fort Edward rail yard yesterday morning contained anhydrous ammonia and another carried sodium hydroxide. Railway officials are still investigating the cause of the derailment. The Washington County Board of Supervisors deployed a countywide hazardous material team to the scene.

IOWA, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 23 -- A press report, dated Oct 22, states: An Amtrak locomotive caught fire today, delaying the Chicago-bound train carrying 164 passengers but causing no serious injuries, authorities said. The crew separated the burning engine from the passenger cars in southeast Iowa, and officials planned to use the train's remaining locomotive to pull the

eastbound California Zephyr later today. "We will be severely delayed," Amtrak spokesman Cliff Black said. "But we need to get the people to their destinations." The diesel engine, one of two, caught fire shortly before 1700 in an apparent fuel-related blaze, he said. "We don't know what ignited it, perhaps a leak," Black said. Lockridge firefighters extinguished the blaze, officials said. The train left Emeryville, Calif., near Oakland, on Thursday (Oct 20) and was to arrive in Chicago today.

LIVERPOOL, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Oct 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: A busy commuter train derailed in Liverpool city centre during the rush-hour today following a suspected mechanical fault. All 119 passengers on board the underground train were safely evacuated after it came off the tracks as it travelled from Lime Street to Central Station. The only casualties were two people who suffered shock, a spokesman for Merseyside Fire Service said. Passengers were taken from the station and given alternative transport home. A spokeswoman for Merseyside Police said that it appeared the derailment was caused by a mechanical fault. The low-speed derailment happened about 200metres from Central Station. Union officials said a temporary speed restriction of 20mph was in operation inside the tunnel. British Transport Police were called out at 1755 hrs to the scene but they said it was not a major incident. Peter Mulcahy, incident commander for Mersey Regional Ambulance Service, said two elderly people were treated at the scene for shock but no passengers were taken to hospital.

London, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated today, states: An investigation is under way into how a busy commuter train derailed in Liverpool city centre, trapping 119 passengers underground. The Wirral line Merseyrail train came off the tracks in a tunnel 200 metres from Liverpool Central Station yesterday. Early reports suggested the low-speed derailment was caused by a mechanical fault, Merseyside police said. The train would be examined by experts including the Rail Accident Investigation Unit. A spokesperson for Merseyrail, which operates Liverpool's underground service, said the emergency procedures had worked and a full investigation into the cause of the derailment would take place.

ROHRI AREA, SINDH PROVINCE, PAKISTAN

Karachi, Oct 23 -- Pakistan Railway said five bogies of a goods train carrying relief goods for earthquake affected people to Lahore from Karachi, derailed on Saturday (Oct 22) near Rohri in Sindh province of Pakistan at about 1900. As a result, rail traffic suspended for quite some. However, a relief train later early this morning cleared the track to restore the rail traffic. The cause of derailment could not be ascertained. However, the DS Railways Sukkur

ordered an inquiry and asked the concerned authorities to submit the report within three days. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

SQUAMISH AREA, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA

London, Oct 25 -- A press report, dated today, states: Another Canadian National train derailed yesterday in what has become a string of train wrecks in the past three months. A line of 10 empty CN Rail cars left the tracks while travelling through the Cheakamus Canyon near Squamish. CN spokesman Graham Dallas said: "There are no injuries to the crew, no dangerous goods involved in the derailment and no environmental concerns."

THESSALONIKI AREA, GREECE

Athens, Oct 20 -- A Greek intercity train bound for Athens derailed near the northern city of Thessaloniki today, catching fire and injuring some of the 140 passengers aboard, a regional fire brigade official told Reuters. "The train has been derailed. There is a small fire that should be put under control fairly soon and there are some injuries," he said. He did not know if there were any fatalities or if passengers were still trapped inside the coaches. Greece's state-run railway company said in a statement: "The train, comprising four coaches, had 140 passengers. It derailed during entry at the train station of (the town of) Adendro. At the moment there is no information on injuries." -- Reuters.

London, Oct 21 -- A press report, dated today, states: Seventeen people including a baby were injured yesterday when a high-speed Athens-bound train carrying 140 passengers derailed close to Thessaloniki in an accident authorities are blaming on human error. At 1250, four of the train's carriages overturned as it entered the village of Adendro, about 35 kilometres west of Thessaloniki, authorities said. The first carriage went up in flames. "The accident occurred due to human error, just as they happen on other modes of transport, such as airplanes and cars," said Costas Giannakos, managing director of OSE, the Hellenic Railways Organization. An 8-month-old baby was among those hurt, suffering serious head injuries. After operating on the infant late yesterday, doctors said its condition was critical but stable. Passengers accused the driver of traveling at an excessively high speed to make up for a delay. OSE has placed two of its employees on suspension and is continuing its investigation into the accident.

TOLEDO, OHIO, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 22 -- A press report, dated Oct 21, states: Two Norfolk-Southern freight trains collided this afternoon outside of Toledo. Authorities say it appears no one was seriously injured in the crash in Millbury. They've also checked both trains and found no leaking hazardous materials. Lake Township Police Chief

Mark Hummer says neither train was moving very fast when they collided head-on. One was able to come to a stop and the other had been trying to slow down when they collided. Two crew members on one locomotive jumped just before impact. There was just one person aboard the other train. The police chief says one conductor suffered minor injuries and has been taken to a hospital. About 20 cars from both trains derailed. Both trains were carrying tractor-trailers full of cargo.

VARDAPURAM AREA, INDIA

London, Oct 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: Three bogies of Bangalore- Kanyakumari Express derailed near Vardapuram in Kolar district in the early hours today. No casualties were reported, a Railway spokesman said. The derailment affected the rail traffic between Bangalore and Chennai, resulting in either cancellation or diversion of some trains, he said.

WORDEN, MONTANA, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 23 -- A press report, dated Oct 22, states: Piles of soybeans and crumpled railcars littered a half mile of track at Worden, Montana, after 43 freight cars derailed early today. The train, with 109 carloads of soybeans, originated in East Dubuque, Iowa, and was bound for Kalama, Wash., said Gus Melonas, a spokesman for BNSF Railway. The derailed cars were the eighth through the 50th on the train and Melonas said the majority of those cars would have to be scrapped. He estimated the half the load was spilled in the 0100 accident. The cause of the derailment, which tore up several hundred feet of tracks, is still under investigation. No one was hurt. Crews from Billings and Havre were brought in to help clean up. Melonas said the work will likely take three to four weeks. Melonas said about 25 trains a day go through the main line near Worden, just east of Billings. Plans were being made to reroute some traffic, but he said the line could reopen as early as tomorrow.



OUTBREAK OF "BIRD FLU"

London, Oct 21 -- A press report, dated today, states: Australia will immediately impose a ban the import of birds from Canada until there is an adequate explanation about how pigeons that tested positive for avian flu antibodies reached Australia. Federal agriculture minister Peter McGauran will ask officials at the Canadian embassy about the consignment of pigeons which arrived in Australian with full veterinary documentation from Canadian

authorities that said they were disease-free. Three of the 102 birds tested positive to avian influenza antibodies and for Newcastle Disease antibodies. The infected birds will be destroyed and the rest may be returned to Canada. Mr McGauran said what was most worrying was that the birds arrived with all the appropriate certification. "Thankfully Australia's quarantine system worked as it's meant to, that we didn't take the certification on face value even though it is coming from an advanced country," he told ABC radio today. "We have had apologies from the Canadian authorities but not yet an adequate explanation of the testing anomalies. "Australia will be imposing an immediate ban in the importation of birds from Canada until there is further and better reasons given for the errors made by the Canadian quarantine authorities." Mr McGauran said the birds arrived on September 5 and were immediately put into the highest level of containment in Melbourne. He said the birds were not carrying bird flu, only the antibodies, indicating exposure. "That could at some stage have developed into something else in the future," he said. "Our science isn't so precise and knowledgeable. We don't know the consequences of further mutations. "We have commenced discussions with the Canadian authorities as to return of the remaining pigeons. Otherwise they will also have to be destroyed. Mr McGauran said Australian import protocols required the birds be quarantined for 55 days before export with testing and treatment and certification to be provided by the exporting country's veterinary authority.

London, Oct 21 -- A press report, dated today, states: Taiwan's agricultural authorities reported Thursday the island's first case of bird flu, saying the H5N1 virus was found in birds smuggled from mainland China. The Council of Agriculture said the coast guard seized a Panama-registered cargo vessel on Oct 14 and some 1,000 birds in a container on the vessel later tested positive for the H5N1 virus, according to the semi-official Central News Agency. All the birds infected have been destroyed, council officials said. A large number of pigeons at a shrine in central Nepal have died recently and the government suspects the pigeons were infected with bird flu, a local newspaper reported yesterday. Hindu devotees visiting the Manakamana shrine, about 25 kilometres west of Kathmandu, reported that a large number of pigeons at the shrine died suddenly, the Nepalese-language Samacharpatra newspaper said.

London, Oct 21 -- The government says it plans to launch a national register of poultry businesses to protect against any future outbreak of bird flu. From next month, the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs will start inviting new registrations from businesses raising

chickens, ducks and other fowl. Currently, Defra, the National Farmers Union (NFU) and individual poultry organisations, hold information separately, but no central register exists. "Commercial poultry keepers will be asked to register their flocks as part of an initiative, backed by the industry, to step up surveillance of the avian influenza virus," a Defra statement said yesterday. Bird flu, which experts fear could mutate into a form that jumps easily from person to person and unleash a global pandemic, has killed more than 60 people in four Asian countries during this period. All human deaths from avian flu have so far been in Asia but the H5N1 strain was detected this month in birds in Russia, Turkey and Romania. Further tests are being carried out in Europe on a bird from Greece. Britain, although it has no recorded cases of bird flu, has a detailed contingency plan in the event of an outbreak of bird flu. The new national register of poultry businesses will further reinforce protection. "Combining all the information on one database containing the location and size of enterprises would be a major advantage to aid effective communication between keepers and help manage any outbreak," Defra said. Defra has announced plans to publish this week a simple one-page guide on avian flu and how poultry keepers can reduce the risk of disease. Margaret Beckett, Minister for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, said Defra had worked closely with the poultry industry to prepare its contingency plans, which were tested in July. "We believe we are prepared to deal with an outbreak," she said. "The European directive on avian influenza will require us to introduce a poultry register by 2007, but we must move much faster than that," she added. She said the new register could limit the spread of the disease in any future outbreak. "It would allow us to know where poultry farms are and target effort and resources effectively," she said. "Farmers hold the key to tackling any notifiable disease, and we will continue to work together with them to ensure any avian influenza outbreak is quickly contained and eradicated." -- Reuters.

London, Oct 22 -- A press report, dated today, states: New cases of bird flu have been discovered in Europe, with Britain and Croatia both confirming birds found with the disease and Romania detecting a suspected new case. Britain says a parrot that died in quarantine has been diagnosed with an H5 virus, but does not say whether it is H5N1. Croatia says it has detected a bird flu virus in six dead swans and has sent samples to Britain for testing. Romania says it has detected a new suspected case close to its eastern border with Moldova. Russian authorities say the risk of a bird flu pandemic is highly unlikely despite the flu being found in several districts in Russia. Officials say they have the

situation under control, quarantining several villages and taking protective measures at poultry farms. Russian medical experts say so far, just one in 1 million people have contracted the virus through close contact with contaminated birds. In Indonesia, fears fanned by the Health Minister about a possible human-to-human transmission have eased after tests on a father and son hospitalised in Jakarta proved negative. In its current form, humans need to be in prolonged close contact with an infected animal, usually in a confined space, to catch the disease.

Valletta, Oct 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: C.c. Nordsun (11998 gt, built 1991) was placed under quarantine at Malta Freeport yesterday evening after stevedores noticed dead birds on deck and raised the alarm. Three dead birds were taken off the vessel and transferred to the government's slaughterhouse where an autopsy and tests will be carried out this morning to determine whether they were infected with bird flu. If the tests prove positive, samples will be sent to the UK for further tests in order to find out what strain of avian influenza it is. Workers who spoke to The Times said it was not rare for dead birds to be found on the decks of vessels. A government agriculture spokesman said that whatever the outcome of the tests, an outbreak of bird flu is certainly not on the cards. The first reports of the dead birds came in at around 1900 hrs after a number of stevedores had boarded the vessel. They disembarked when they saw the birds and informed their General Workers' Union representatives who in turn called the authorities. The Civil Protection Department and a team from the Food and Veterinary Division, led by Mireille Vella, rushed to the scene, putting into operation the contingency plan they had only practised last Friday (Oct 21). The area around Terminal two, where the vessel was berthed, was cordoned off and a mass decontamination unit set up. The 21 stevedores who had come in contact with the vessel were all decontaminated and by 2130 hrs, they were allowed to go home. The vessel's crew were placed in quarantine and will only be allowed to resume their operations if the birds test negative. Contact was made with the vessel's local agents in order to track the vessel's movements. Sources told The Times that the vessel had sailed from Taiwan where the first case of avian flu was discovered in a smuggled cargo of exotic birds last Thursday. Despite the precautions, the authorities are cautioning against unnecessary alarm. "The fact that these birds were found dead on this vessel means nothing," said Randolph Spiteri, a spokesman for the Parliamentary Secretariat for Agriculture and Fisheries. "Migratory birds are known to rest on board such vessels and are often found dead." -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Oct 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: An official

spokesman for the Environment Ministry dismissed any notion that bird flu had reached Malta. Reports on the death of three birds on board c.c. Nordsun raised fears that Malta may have become the latest destination for the bird flu. However, tests on the birds had come back negative and showed that they died of natural causes. The spokesman said that though decay had already set in, the veterinary services were able to conduct examinations. However all the results were negative.

Moscow, Oct 24 -- Another region in European Russia today confirmed an outbreak of the deadly bird flu virus H5N1 and Croatia said it would cull more poultry after finding two dead wild swans suspected of having an avian flu strain. The latest case of bird flu in Russia killed 12 hens at a private dacha, leading authorities to cull 53 ducks and hens at the locality and impose a quarantine. The outbreak was in Tambov, 400 km south-east of Moscow last week, and tests confirmed the H5N1 avian flu strain which can infect humans, a senior regional health official said. Since emerging in 2003 in South Korea, H5N1 has killed more than 60 people in four Asian countries. Health experts fear it could mutate into a strain that can spread from human to human, triggering a worldwide pandemic and killing millions. Carried by migratory birds, H5N1 has now moved west as far as European Russia, Turkey and Romania. Countries in Europe, the Middle East and Africa have taken steps to try to stop migrating birds from mixing with domestic fowl. A spate of H5N1 cases or suspected cases in Europe in recent weeks has put authorities on alert at ports, airports and areas where migratory birds flock, and has caused ripples in financial markets. The 25-member European Union, the world's biggest importer of wild birds, is considering a ban on such imports after a South American parrot died from H5N1 in Britain while in quarantine with birds from Taiwan. Bird flu cases persisted on the EU's doorstep today with Croatia saying it would cull more poultry after finding two dead wild swans in the rural eastern area where avian flu was found last week. The dead swans were from the same flock as the initial cases and were confirmed with the same H5-type virus, Mate Brstilo, who heads the national committee for bird flu prevention, said. Test results in Britain were expected this week on the six dead swans found last week, which should determine whether the birds in Croatia had the lethal H5N1 stain. Croatian authorities culled some 13,000 birds at the weekend (Oct 22-23) in 500 farms near Grudnjak pond, where the first dead swans were found. It will now cull poultry around Nasice pond, some five km away, where the latest swans were found. So far, H5N1 has infected domestic poultry and wild birds mostly in Asia, prompting massive culls of flocks there, but it has also moved from

animals to humans in Asia. A weekend report that China would close its borders if it detected human-to-human transmission of bird flu unsettled the Hong Kong stock market with shares in hotels, retailers and airlines sliding today. "Bird flu is having a psychological impact on investors," said Alfred Chan, chief dealer at Cheer Pearl Investment Ltd. China's vice minister of health, Huang Jiefu, was quoted on Saturday as saying any human case would be quarantined and China would close its borders, including with Hong Kong, if there were a single case of human-to-human transmission of the H5N1 virus. Countries that have already suffered from bird flu outbreaks were redoubling their efforts to stop its return. North Korea said mechanisms were in place to eliminate "any slight symptoms in time," using its experience from an outbreak earlier this year when more than 200,000 chickens were destroyed and 1.1 million poultry vaccinated. The virus in North Korea was an H7 strain, not the H5N1 strain that can jump from birds to humans, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation. South Korea is also under a bird flu alert issued earlier this month largely targeted at the arrival of migratory birds. Nearly 400 South Korean poultry farms were affected between December, 2003, and March, 2004, and more than five million birds were slaughtered to halt the spread of an H5N2 strain. Companies around the world have been seeking a vaccine against bird flu. An Australian firm said today it was confident a vaccine it was testing in humans could protect against a pandemic form of the H5N1 virus unless it undergoes major genetic changes. CSL Ltd, the world's largest maker of blood plasma products, has begun human vaccine trials using different dosages and hopes to know results by next February. -- Reuters.

Jakarta, Oct 25 -- Indonesia confirmed today that a fourth person in the country had succumbed to bird flu while China said hundreds of farm geese had died, the latest outbreak of a disease that seems to defy efforts to halt its spread. The European Union was poised today to ban all imports of captive wild birds after a parrot died of the H5N1 strain in Britain. More dead birds have also been found and taken for tests in Germany, Croatia, Hungary and Portugal as suspect cases multiplied. Indonesia's Health Ministry said today testing confirmed that a man who died in September was positive for bird flu. A total of seven people have been confirmed infected with H5N1. In China's latest outbreak, hundreds of farm geese died in the eastern province of Anhui, Nouredin Mona, of the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization, told Reuters. He said China's Ministry of Agriculture had told him yesterday that 2,100 birds had been infected, 550 had died and 45,000 had been culled. Some health experts worry Indonesia, the world's fourth most populous

nation, is not showing enough urgency in tackling bird flu, especially in culling chickens. The government has defended its response, saying for example that it does not have enough money to compensate farmers. Vietnam, where 41 people have died of bird flu, is considering rules that would ban the raising and trading of live poultry in urban areas as well as the sale of a traditional pudding made from the raw blood of ducks and geese. -- Reuters.

London, Oct 26 -- A press report, dated Oct 25, states: Pakistan yesterday banned import of pet birds, poultry and poultry products to avert a possible outbreak of bird flu in the country. Secretary Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock, MINFAL, Ismail Qureshi said that keeping in view involvement of migratory birds in spread of the disease, it was decided that surveillance should also cover wild birds. To keep lethal H5 N1 virus at bay, Pakistan included Croatia in the list of those countries from where it would not import poultry and poultry products. Islamabad has already stopped import of poultry and poultry products from 13 Avian Influenza infected countries. The secretary said in order to counter the menace the government had sent a proposal to the Geneva Conference envisaging \$10 million assistance to Pakistan for effective surveillance to check the disease. He said the request would be considered in the meeting of the Geneva Conference scheduled to be held in first week of November. The strategy included establishment of quick response mechanism for early disease reporting, upgradation of laboratory facilities, setting up of disease surveillance and monitoring teams in the provinces. The compensation would also be given in case of any damage to the poultry products. The Minfal secretary informed the participants that federal government has already allocated Rs40 million to handle any likely crisis. A new outbreak of avian flu has been detected in Russia's Altai region in southern Siberia, after the disease had been detected in the Urals and in the Tula region south of Moscow last week.

London, Oct 26 -- A press report, dated Oct 26, states: China has seen a third bird flu outbreak in the week, as measures to tackle the threat were intensified, with sterilisation stations set up on highways and checks under way at markets. The latest outbreak came in the central province of Hunan where 545 chickens and ducks fell ill and died from the H5N1 strain, the Ministry of Agriculture said in a report filed to the World Organisation for Animal Health. So far, 2,487 birds have been culled in Wantang village in Xiangtan county since the virus was found there on Saturday (Oct 22). According to the OIE website, precautionary measures have been taken, including vaccinations and disinfection of infected areas. It is the third outbreak in China in a week, following cases in Inner Mongolia, in

the north of the country, and Anhui province in the east. The China Daily reported Wednesday that the Anhui scare had been brought under control. "The epidemic has been stamped out and no new outbreak spots have been found," the ministry of agriculture said. "Anhui implemented a chain of emergency control measures." Wei Jianzhong, vice-director of the Animal Husbandry and Aquaculture Institute of Anhui Agricultural University said the probable cause of that outbreak was contact with migratory birds and wild water fowl. Chinese leaders have warned the country faces a "grave" threat from avian influenza, which has killed at least 60 people in Asia, although no human infections have been reported in China so far. As part of emergency plans to prevent a disastrous outbreak, China's health and agricultural ministries have intensified their coordination and strengthened monitoring around the country. Beijing and other large cities have set up sterilization stations at major highways and road entries, checking all poultry transported on trucks. Authorities in the capital have also launched a thorough check of all poultry and bird markets, demanding all live poultry on sale have certificates proving they come from areas not infected by bird flu, Xinhua news agency said. A rapid response plan issued this week said all bird flu outbreaks must be reported to authorities in Beijing within three hours of their detection.

POWER OUTAGE, MANILA, PHILIPPINES

London, Oct 25 -- A power outage has hit southern Manila following technical problems involving a main transmission line of Manila Electric Co. (MERB.PH), the largest power distributor in the Philippines. A Meralco official told DZMM radio today that the outage began around 0330, GMT and has affected around 15% to 25% of the total franchise area of the utility firm. Among the hardest hit areas is the financial district of Makati. The power outage also affected operations of the Metro Rail Transit network, which traverses the main EDSA highway, an important commuting hub between the northern and southern parts of the city. The Meralco official said they were unable to provide an estimated timeframe for resolution of the outage.

Fires & Explosions



COAL MINE, GUIZHOU PROVINCE, CHINA

London, Oct 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: An explosion at a coal mine in southern China killed 15 miners and injured three, China's official news agency said today. The

explosion occurred yesterday at the Zhongxing Colliery in Guizhou province's Qinglong County, the Xinhua News Agency said. Eight of the 41 miners working underground at the time of the explosion were killed instantly, Xinhua said. Seven others were trapped in the shaft and were presumed dead 20 hours after the blast, it said. The cause of the accident was under investigation.

DETENTION CENTRE, SCHIPHOL AIRPORT, AMSTERDAM, NETHERLANDS

London, Oct 27 -- At least 10 people have died, and 15 are injured and in hospital, after a fire set buildings ablaze at Amsterdam's Schiphol airport. The blaze broke out soon after midnight in a detention centre at the airport, which police said houses mainly suspected drugs traffickers. The Dutch news agency ANP reported that it was not contained for several hours, and said the death toll could rise. The building houses people awaiting deportation from the Netherlands. ANP said that there were around 350 people being held in the detention centre when the fire broke out. The cause of the blaze is still unknown.

FACTORY, GERMISTON, SOUTH AFRICA

London, Oct 21 -- A press report, dated today, states: A fire was raging at an electrical factory in Germiston this morning, said Johannesburg Emergency Services. Spokesperson Malcolm Midgley said the fire started around 0530 at the factory on Germiston Drive. "The fire is in a factory that has something to do with oil plants and repairs to transformers," Midgley said. "Midgley said the fire had caused a thick cloud of black smoke to hang over the city. The temperature of the fire was extremely hot. "Transformer oil burns at very high temperatures and is making the fire extremely hot," Midgley said. Fire fighters were trying to protect the rest of the plant from catching fire. There were no injuries in the fire and no-one is in danger.

FACTORY, HARIPUR DISTRICT, PAKISTAN

Karachi, Oct 24 -- Pakistan leading fibre manufacturer-Dewan Salman Fibre Limited, said this afternoon that a huge fire broke out in unit No.6 of its plant at Dewan Farooque Industrial Park, District Haripur, North West Frontier Province (NWFP) at 1415, yesterday. As a result, building, plant, and huge quantity of fibre material burnt to ashes. About 4000 bales of polyester fibre ready for export were gutted, an official of company confirmed. No loss of life has been reported. It is said that the blaze also damaged a high-powered transmission line, which forced local electric utility to disconnect electricity supply from the feeders to avert any further damage. The fire was extinguished around 1830 hrs by fire-fighters from Wah Cantt, Rawalpindi,

Islamabad, Abbottabad, Havelian and Haripur. The cause of fire and loss are yet to be ascertained but it would be in million of rupees. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

FOREST, FIJI

London, Oct 25 -- A press report, dated today, states: Lautoka City is covered in thick smoke this morning after a major forest fire started in Tavakubu last night. Acting Town Clerk Shiva Rajan confirms that the fire is now spreading to other parts of the pine forest due to strong winds. A similar forest fire is currently burning in Lautoka. Meanwhile Forest Manager, Peni Verebau who is at the scene said fire fighters of the Fiji Pine forest are now trying to control the smoke which has covered the Sugar City.

London, Oct 25 -- A press report, dated today, states: Dry weather conditions in the Western Division is one of the main causes of forest fires in the Lautoka and Ba areas. As residents woke up to thick smoke covering the Sugar City this morning due to the Tavakubu pine forest fire, it has now been revealed that firefighters are also battling other fires in the west. Forest Manager, for Lautoka Pine Forest Peni WereBauinona confirms that fire fighters are still battling to put out fires in a few areas in Lautoka and Ba. Audio Comment He has raised the concern that cane cutters irresponsibly burn cane and leave it unattended which leads to such forest fires.

GOLD MINE, MOUNT DIWATA, PHILIPPINES

London, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated today, states: At least 18 miners were killed and dozens of others were feared dead following an explosion inside a gold mine in the southern Philippines, officials said today. The Office of Civil Defence in Manila said at least 10 miners had been rescued following the blast late yesterday inside a mine operated by JB Management and Mining in the mountain village of Mount Diwata in Compostela Valley province. Village chief Franco Tito said one survivor told him that a cache of dynamite ignited inside the tunnel about 2220 hrs, yesterday. Tito said mine officials refused to let local villagers and even police and soldiers to go inside their compound to help in the rescue. He held out little hope of finding more survivors among about 50 people believed to have been inside the tunnel because this is an explosion, not a tunnel collapse.

GRAIN ELEVATOR, VERNON CENTER, MINNESOTA, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 26 -- A press report, dated Oct 25, states: A huge explosion ripped part of the roof off a grain elevator in southern Minnesota early today. Six people were injured when the elevator owned by the Crystal Valley Co-op exploded. The blast sent

charred pieces of metal down the sides of the building. A truck on a loading dock was covered by the debris. Fire crews doused hot spots periodically today. Officials had not announced an official cause of the fire. John Mertesdorf, who was driving into town about 0715 hrs, today, said "the big ball of flame just shot way up (into) the sky. It sounded like a bomb. And I thought maybe it was the sun or something until I got around the trees, then I (saw) all the smoke and everything rolling out." Vernon Center Fire Chief Hank Roeloff said the fireball went up 200 feet. Crystal Valley Co-op General Manager Roger Kienholz said farmers in the area, already struggling to find space to store the big harvest, can hopefully find space at the co-op's other locations. It was the second explosion at a Minnesota grain elevator since Saturday (Oct 22), when the Wendell Farmers Elevator was heavily damaged. No-one was hurt. The cause of that fire has not been determined, but local officials said they suspect grain dust exploded. Robert Schoeff, a professor emeritus from the University of Kansas State and a national expert on grain dust explosions, said the fireball described at the Vernon Center explosion was an indication that grain dust may have exploded there too. "It's very intense heat -- 1,500 to 2,000 degrees -- in the middle of the fire ball," he said.

LOCOMOTIVES, NUREMBERG, GERMANY

London, Oct 25 -- Following received from LaSalle, dated today: A press report, dated Oct 23, states: Part of Europe's railway history went up in flames when a fire swept through an engine shed belonging to the Nuremberg Transport Museum and gutted about 15 veteran locomotives and other rolling stock last Monday, Deutsche Presse-Agentur (dpa) reported quoting the local police. The late Monday fire caused a roof to collapse on the engines, which included a replica constructed 70 years ago of the Adler. The cause of the blaze, which was worsened when eight gas canisters exploded and was not put out till after midnight, was yet to be excavated. The site was a storage area that was not open to the public. The museum, which is run by the German railway company Deutsche Bahn, said it feared that as many as 24 engines were in the charred wreckage, but it would not know precisely until an inventory had been taken.

OIL REFINERY, CARDON, VENEZUELA

London, Oct 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: A fire broke out inside the state-run Cardon oil refinery but was brought under control within roughly two hours, authorities said today. Humberto Reyes, the refinery's public affairs representative, said that the cause of the fire Sunday evening (Oct 23) was under investigation. No injuries were

reported, he said. It wasn't immediately clear whether the fire forced the refinery to shut down its processing units. State-run oil company Petroleos de Venezuela S.A. operates the refinery. Cardon is part of the Paraguana refining complex, which has an output capacity of 940,000 barrels of crude oil per day. The complex, which also includes the giant Amuay refinery, normally produces around 700,000 barrels of oil per day.

PREMISES, COLUMBUS, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 25 -- A press report, dated Oct 24, states: A piece of Columbus' history went up in flames last night as the old Cartersville Mill on 12th Avenue burned. The 210,000-square-foot building, now used primarily for storage, started burning a little before 2100 hrs, nearby residents said. Firefighters and police officers evacuated nearby houses as the flames shot through the roof, consuming the mill. Sgt. Kevin Nixon, an investigator with Fire and EMS, said firefighters' objectives last night were to keep other structures nearby from burning. He said he expected the mill to burn at least through the night. The cause of the fire had not been determined late yesterday, Nixon said. John Lupold, a retired Columbus State University history professor who is an expert on local mills, said the Cartersville Mill was built around 1905, and started out as two hosiery mills, Perkins Mill and Topsy. Financier Gunby Jordan changed the name to Jordan Mill, and the name was later Cartersville Spinning.

PREMISES, NEW YORK, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 21 -- A press report, dated Oct 20, states: A massive five-alarm fire today reduced a commercial building in the Bronx to rubble. It broke out shortly before 0800 at 13-64 Jerome Avenue and 170th Street. All that remains now is a smokey shell in what was a row of stores. Officials say that it's the third fire that was reported here in the last two months. The first two fires are still under investigation and they consider this morning's blaze suspicious. Flames shot high above 1364 Jerome Avenue in the Mount Eden section of the Bronx as the stores were quickly reduced to mere frames. The fire started just before 0800 and quickly spread to five alarms then required additional personnel. More than 200 firefighters battles the flames, which spread to a nearby apartment building, destroying three units there.

PREMISES, NIAGARA, BUFFALO, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 26 -- A press report, from Wheatfield, NY, dated Oct 25, states: Officials at a western New York metal-finishing company hope to have the facility back up and running soon despite a fire that destroyed more than half of the plant. The fire broke out at about 0200 yesterday at

Precious Plate in the Niagara County town of Wheatfield, north of Buffalo. Employees working the overnight shift noticed flames coming from processing equipment and tried to put it out, but called 9-1-1 when the flames spread. Firefighters worked for several hours to put out the blaze. Officials say the fire was probably started by a heater used in the electroplating process. The investigation is continuing. The plant employs more than 100 people.

RECYCLING PLANT, ANDERSON, INDIANA, UNITED STATES

See "Class-Action Settlement, United States" under "Awards & Settlements."

RECYCLING PLANT, EL PASO, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 26 -- A press report, dated Oct 25, states: El Paso fire investigators believe the cause of a massive fire at a recycling facility was a car's fuel tank. It all started 1530 yesterday in the Lower Valley. Officials say that workers at Newell Salvage were cutting the metal door off a vehicle. Apparently that vehicle still had fuel in the tank and that caused an explosion. The high amount of flammable materials kept at Newell helped the fire to spread quickly. It took more than 60 El Paso firefighters several hours to bring the blaze under control.

SUBWAY, MANHATTAN, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated Oct 26, states: Loose wires caused a fire that spewed heavy smoke in a bustling subway station last week, authorities said. Last Friday's (Oct 21) blaze during the morning rush hour caused seven subway lines to be suspended for several hours, affecting tens of thousands of commuters. The West Fourth Street station is a major hub along Manhattan's West Side. NYC Transit attributed the fire to wires dangling from a fluorescent light fixture in a utility room. "It was a short in the wiring," said the agency's president, Lawrence Reuter. The fire department said the wires should have been encased in a metal pipe or covered by a metal panel. Half a dozen firefighters suffered minor injuries in the blaze.

TRAIN, LOCKRIDGE AREA, IOWA, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 23 -- A press report, dated Lockridge, Iowa, Oct 22, states: An Amtrak locomotive caught fire today, delaying the Chicago-bound train carrying 164 passengers but causing no serious injuries, authorities said. The crew separated the burning engine from the passenger cars in south-east Iowa, and officials planned to use the train's remaining locomotive to pull the eastbound California Zephyr later today. "We will be severely delayed," Amtrak spokesman Cliff Black said. "But we need to get the people to their destinations." The diesel engine, one

of two, caught fire shortly before 1700 hrs in an apparent fuel-related blaze, he said. Lockridge firefighters extinguished the blaze, officials said. The train left Emeryville, Calif., near Oakland, on Thursday (Oct 20) and was to arrive in Chicago today.

WILDFIRES, CHINA

London, Oct 26 -- A press report, dated Oct 27, states: A large prairie fire in Mongolia that crossed into China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region was largely extinguished yesterday. There were no reports of injuries or damage. More than 800 firefighters and forest policemen were at the scene, according to a fire control office in Dong Ujimqin Banner, similar to a county, in Xilin Gol League, best described as a city. Sporadic fires were still burning in Arxan beyond a man-made ditch designed to prevent blazes from spreading. According to government sources from adjacent Hinggan in northeastern Inner Mongolia, satellite photos taken on Monday morning (Oct 24) showed the fire in Mongolia was nearly 100 kilometres long. Earlier reports said on Monday and Tuesday morning that the prairie fire had crossed into Inner Mongolia.



5N-BFN

London, Oct 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: A passenger aircraft carrying 116 people has been reported missing shortly after taking off from Lagos, officials and local media reported. The aircraft, operated by Bellview Airlines, lost contact with the control tower five minutes after taking off at 2045, 2145, GMT, yesterday, said Jide Ibinola, a spokesman for the Federal Airport Authority of Nigeria. The airports authority official told Reuters the airliner was carrying 116 people, 110 passengers and six crew. Nigerian media had earlier said there was 114 on board. Their nationalities were not immediately known. Pilots issued a distress call before the aircraft disappeared from radar about 24 km west of Lagos over the Atlantic Ocean, state television reported. Ibinola said the craft was headed to the capital, Abuja, and had not been located. "We've tried from neighbouring countries to see if the aircraft landed there but there's no such information" said Jide Ibinola, spokesman, Federal Airport Authority of Nigeria. "We still don't have any concrete information of what became of the aircraft," Ibinola said. "We've tried from neighbouring countries to see if the aircraft landed there but there's no such information." No other details were immediately available. Bellview is a privately owned Nigerian airline that mostly operates a fleet of mostly Boeing 737s

on internal routes and throughout West Africa.

London, Oct 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: A passenger aircraft carrying 114 people crashed after take-off from Nigeria's biggest city, officials said today. There was no immediate word on survivors. Lagos police Spokesman Bode Ojajuni said search teams located the downed Bellview Airlines jet in Oyo State, 120 miles north of Lagos, from where the aircraft departed yesterday evening on an internal flight to the capital Abuja. "Our men have spotted the wreckage of the aircraft," said Ojajuni. The Boeing 737 aircraft, operated by Nigerian-run Bellview, lost contact with the control tower five minutes after taking off from the international airport in Lagos at 2045 yesterday, said Jide Ibinola, a spokesman for Nigeria's Federal Airport Authority. Pilots issued a distress call before the aircraft disappeared from radar about 15 miles south of Lagos over the Atlantic Ocean, state television reported. Most aircraft take off from Lagos, Nigeria's biggest city, in the direction of the Atlantic, and turn back toward the coast. At least 108 passengers and six crew members were aboard, Ibinola said. Their nationalities were not immediately known. There was no indication the crash was terrorism-related. Bellview, one of about a dozen local airlines plying Nigeria's skies, is a privately owned Nigerian company that operates a fleet of mostly Boeing 737s on internal routes and throughout West Africa. Bellview first began flying about 10 years ago and has not suffered a crash before.

London, Oct 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: A passenger jet carrying 117 people crashed shortly after take-off from Nigeria's largest city, but more than half of those onboard survived, officials said today after search teams reached the wreckage. The Boeing 737, which was en route to the capital, Abuja, lost contact with the control tower five minutes after taking off from the international airport in Lagos at 2045, yesterday, said Jide Ibinola, a spokesman for the Federal Airport Authority of Nigeria. "More than half of those on board survived," said Abilola Oloko, a spokesman for Oyo state, the site of the crash. Oloko urged "all medical personnel to proceed to the crash scene, if they can." Search teams located the downed aircraft, operated by Nigerian-run Bellview Airlines, near the town of Kishi, 120 miles north of Lagos, police Spokesman Bode Ojajuni said. Representatives of many countries gathered at the airport to find out if any of their citizens were on board the flight. The airline said 117 people were on board, 111 passengers and six crew members. Ibinola said the craft was headed to Abuja, on what was supposed to have been a 50-minute flight. There was no immediate indication the crash was terrorism-related. President Olusegun Obasanjo's office said in a statement

that the leader was personally overseeing search and rescue operations.

London, Oct 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: A Nigerian airliner with 116 people on board including some senior officials crashed shortly after taking off from Lagos en route to the capital Abuja, the Government said. The Nigerian Red Cross said the crash site had been located in Lissa, about 30 kilometres north of Lagos in Ogun state, and the aircraft appeared to have been destroyed. "There were no traces of any survivors. The rescuers saw charred bodies," said the Red Cross general secretary, Abiodun Orebiyi. The Boeing 737-200 was believed to be carrying some senior Nigerian officials as well as a US consular official and some European passengers. "The plane was totally destroyed," Orebiyi said. "It was scattered everywhere." Bellview Airlines flight 210 took off at 2045 hrs yesterday and lost contact with the control tower minutes later during a heavy electrical storm. The television station AIT said its news crew had found the crash site of the Boeing 737-200. Earlier, a spokesman for Oyo state, Adeola Oloko, had said the crash site was 150 kilometres further north and that more than half the passengers had survived. He later retracted that statement. The aircraft was carrying 110 passengers and six crew, authorities said. The pilot made a distress call minutes after take-off, indicating the aircraft had a technical problem, a source in the presidency said. State radio reported that several high ranking government officials were on the aircraft.

London, Oct 24 -- Boeing 737-2L9, 5N-BFN, operated by Bellview Airlines, flight number 210, took off from Lagos at 2035, Oct 22, for a domestic flight to Abuja. Last radio contact was about three minutes after take-off. The flight was cleared to climb to FL250 and was to report when reaching FL130. The next morning the wreckage was found near Lisa, Nigeria, about 20 miles north of Lagos. All six crew and 111 passengers on board were killed. Aircraft written off.

London, Oct 24 -- A press report, dated Oct 23, states: None of the 117 passengers and crew on board a Nigerian airliner which crashed overnight north of Lagos survived, the National Emergency Management Agency said. No-one could have survived the impact when the Bellview Airlines Boeing 737 hit the ground at such speed that the wreckage was "completely buried under ground," NEMA spokesman Ibrahim Farinloye said. The statement followed a similar report by the Nigerian Red Cross, which was working with NEMA on the ground at the crash site in Lissa village, a short distance north of Lagos near the farming town of Otta. "The aircraft is actually beyond recognition," Abiodun Orebiyi, secretary general of the Nigerian Red Cross, told Agence France-Presse. He was speaking more than 20 hours

after Bellview flight 210 lost contact with Lagos air traffic control. Orebiyi also confirmed that the wreckage was discovered near Otta. Earlier, officials had placed the site much further north in a remote rural area of Oyo State, but later corrected themselves.

London, Oct 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: Nigerian rescuers are struggling to gather and identify hundreds of body parts scattered amid smoking debris at the site of an airliner crash, which has killed 117 people. Local villagers say the Boeing 737 jet appeared to explode in mid-air as it fought its way northwards through a thunderstorm shortly after nightfall on Saturday (Oct 22). Hunks of wreckage are buried in eight-metre deep craters amid a twisted, corpse-strewn landscape. "The Federal Government announces with regret the unfortunate air crash of Bellview Airlines ... which resulted in the loss of life of all passengers and crew on board," a government statement said. This is national disaster. Not a single (person) was rescued alive," Police Commissioner Tunji Alapini, of Ogun State, said. Commissioner Alapini's men were the first to reach the crash site in Lissa, a village near the town of Otta, which is a short distance north of the Nigerian commercial capital Lagos. Several homes in Lissa have been flattened in the crash.

London, Oct 25 -- A press report, dated Oct 24, states: The Nigerian police have recovered the black boxes of the ill-fated Boeing 737 95-N-BFN) which crashed just north of Lagos late Saturday (Oct 22). Haz Ineadi, spokesman for the Nigeria Police Force based in the capital Abuja told Xinhua by telephone today that "we found the black boxes this morning." He refused to give any information on what progress had been made in decoding the boxes, but saying "we have handed the boxes over to the appropriate authorities."

CRASH NEAR BIGGIN HILL, KENT, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Oct 22 -- A press report, dated today, states: Two men died when their Piper Cherokee aircraft crashed in a street near Biggin Hill airport, narrowly missing homes. The pilot radioed ahead to say there was a problem before losing control of the aircraft, which crashed in Victoria Gardens, Kent, today. He and a pupil died after the engine apparently cut out - it is thought the pilot was heading for a nearby field. Residents described hearing "a really big bang" before seeing the wreckage in the road outside their homes. The accident happened at about 0930, BST, shortly after the aircraft had taken off from Biggin Hill. The scene was cordoned off immediately and foam was put down to prevent any explosion caused by the aviation fuel. The Air Accidents Investigation Branch (AAIB) has sent a team to the scene for an initial assessment. The wreckage will be taken to Farnborough for analysis.

London, Oct 24 -- A press report, dated Oct 23, states: Accident investigators are continuing to examine the wreckage of an aircraft which crashed near houses, killing its learner pilot and his instructor. The single-engine Piper Tomahawk ploughed through an electricity line before crashing onto a road and hitting a parked van in Biggin Hill, Kent. The Air Accidents Investigation Branch is investigating the cause. The instructor, who was an experienced pilot, had reported a problem and was asked to return to the airfield.

CRASH, ARIZONA, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 25 -- A press report, dated today, states: Several agencies continue to investigate an aircraft crash in Arizona from over the weekend (Oct 22-23). Jake Lundell was practicing landings Saturday at Casa Grande's airport. The aircraft's engine stalled in mid-flight and crashed just west of the airport, killing him. Jake's father, a doctor, and his brother were watching. Before authorities arrived, they took his body out the wreckage and back to their home in Paradise Valley. Local police say they did not violate any laws, but the National Transportation Safety Board says it is against federal law to remove anything from the scene of an aircraft crash. Lundell had a pilot's license, but according to the FAA, it expired two years ago. The National Transportation Safety Board says it will have a preliminary report done in five days.

CRASH, BARCELONA AREA, SPAIN

London, Oct 25 -- Four people aboard a light aircraft flying over Sant Quirze del Valles in Barcelona died yesterday when the aircraft crashed into a construction crane, local media reported. Remains of the recreational aircraft were still hanging from the top of the crane, which officials had not been properly marked, reports said. The crash site was close to a train station and a shopping area, but there were no reports of any victims on the ground, as the building site appeared empty of construction workers.

CRASH, BYRON BAY AREA, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA

London, Oct 25 -- A press report, dated Oct 24, states: A search by police has failed to find the wreckage of a light aircraft that crashed into the sea two days ago near Byron Bay, in northern New South Wales. A 54-year-old pilot and his 25-year-old son were on board the aircraft at the time of the crash on Saturday (Oct 22) afternoon. There have been claims that the pilot was unlicensed and police say they are looking into the matter. Inspector Owen King of Byron Bay police says the search will resume tomorrow, and he is confident they will find something soon. "There was some debris that washed up on Saturday afternoon," he said. "With the

witnesses accounts and where the debris came to the surface, along with where the lifesaver chopper found an oil slick, is the location that we're searching. We're fairly confident we're in the right area, it's just a matter of locating the wreckage."

CRASH, CLAYTON AREA, SUSSEX, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: A man escaped with minor injuries when his light aircraft crash-landed in a Sussex field, the fire brigade said. The four-seater single-engine private aircraft came down on the Sussex Downs near Clayton this afternoon. It was en route from North Weald Aerodrome in Essex to Bembridge on the Isle of Wight. West Sussex Fire and Rescue said the pilot, who was the only person on board, was tended to at the scene but did not need hospital treatment. There was no fuel spillage and the aircraft was expected to be removed later in the day.

CRASH, DIVIDE PEAK AREA, NEVADA, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated Oct 26, states: The wreckage of a small plane missing since a California man and his daughter took off in it from Jackpot on Aug 31 was found today on a rugged mountain in the wilderness of north-east Nevada. The two victims in the wreckage have not been positively identified but are believed to be the pilot, Roy Grossman, 55, and his daughter, Claire, 17, of Napa, Calif., a sheriff's deputy said. They were in the blue and white Piper Super Cub flying from Jackpot to Davis, Calif., when it disappeared nearly two months ago. Two deer hunters on horseback contacted the Elko County Sheriff's Office today after they spotted the wreckage near Divide Peak at an elevation of about 10,000 feet in the Jarbidge Wilderness Area of the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest. "The tail number of the plane located matches the Grossman aircraft," Undersheriff Bill Cunningham said. "We are making an effort to do recovery of the bodies tomorrow with the help of a helicopter from the Fallon Naval Air Station", he told KELK Radio of Elko. The wreckage is about 10 miles south-east of Jarbidge and 15 miles west of the Cottonwood ranch, within about 20 miles of the Nevada-Idaho state line. Grossman, a retired emergency room physician, and his daughter were on their way back from a fly-fishing trip in Jackson Hole, Wyo., and last were seen during a stop to refuel in Jackpot.

CRASH, LABOZHSKOE AREA, RUSSIA

London, Oct 24 -- Antonov 2, registration unknown, operated by Naryan-Mar Air Enterprise, two crew and 13 passengers on board, was operating on a flight from Nes to Narian-Mar via Oma and Nizhnyaya Pesha. En route the engine failed, forcing the pilot to carry out an

emergency landing. The aircraft landed in a wooded area near Labozhskoe, Russia, at 1057, Oct 19. One passenger was injured and the aircraft sustained serious damage to the wings and the underside of the fuselage and was written off.

CRASH, NEWBERG AIRPORT, OREGON, UNITED STATES

See N2388L.

CRASH, PERTH AREA, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

London, Oct 24 -- A press report, dated Oct 23, states: Air safety investigators have spent the day at the scene of a fatal aircraft crash in Western Australia's wheatbelt. A 43-year-old man died when the light aircraft he was flying crashed in scrub land near the town of Ballidu about 200 km north-east of Perth yesterday afternoon. The father of two was practising taking off and landing as part of preparations for water bombing for the coming bushfire season. The crash site will be guarded overnight and investigators will return to the scene tomorrow to continue their inquiries.

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

See N5HU.

CRASH, RABBIT EARS PASS, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 24 -- A press report, dated Oct 23, states: The wreckage of an aircraft carrying two people was found this morning near Rabbit Ears Pass and officials said both people on board were dead. The single-engine plane had been reported missing yesterday evening. Three teams of rescuers, aided by a helicopter and an aircraft, began searching at dawn this morning for the private aircraft after it failed to show up at the Steamboat Springs airport. Randall Hannaway, spokesman for the rescue teams, said witnesses reported seeing a small aircraft flying low near Rabbit Ears Pass yesterday evening. A short time later, a plane and pilot were reported missing. The aircraft's wreckage was spotted just north of Walton Peak on Rabbit Ears Pass at about 1030 hrs. "There were no survivors," Hannaway said. He said the bodies would be removed and the scene secured so federal investigators could try to determine the cause of the crash. Hannaway said the aircraft was based in Steamboat Springs and was returning from a trip to the Midwest.

CRASH, WESTERN SPRINGS AREA, UNITED STATES

See N285JB.

CRASH, WINDHOEK AREA, NAMIBIA

London, Oct 22 -- A press report, dated today, states: An Australian researcher is one of two foreigners killed in an aircraft crash in Namibia. Ian Payne, who was working for Perth-based company GPX, was with New Zealand colleague Dougal

Williamson when their Cessna crashed south of Windhoek in Namibia on Thursday morning (Oct 20). The experienced pilots were assessing the region for mineral deposits as part of a geophysical survey. Mr Williamson was flying the aircraft when it went down. It is believed the pilots were blinded by the sun as they came over a mountain ridge and flew into the ground, SABC News reported.

London, Oct 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: The cause of an aircraft crash in Namibia that killed an Australian researcher and his New Zealand colleague is still a mystery, the men's employer said today. West Australian man Ian Payne, 38, was a passenger in the Cessna 210 aircraft flown by New Zealander Dougal Williamson, which crashed about 80km south-west of the capital, Windhoek, on Thursday morning (Oct 20). According to reports in Namibia, the aircraft had taken off from Windhoek's Eros Airport about 30 minutes before the crash, and the men were conducting an aerial survey when it crashed in an area known as Farm Goellschau. Farm workers told media how they first saw a plume of thick black smoke on the horizon, and drove to the area to discover the burning wreckage. They alerted staff at a nearby gamma-ray telescope, who contacted police and air safety authorities. The Antipodeans men were in the country working for a subsidiary of Perth-based company GPX, whose airborne division offers fixed-wing and helicopter-borne geophysics and remote sensing to mining, oil and environmental industries and government agencies. Mr Payne lived in Jakarta with his wife and young child, and still has relatives in Perth, while Mr Williamson lived close to family in Queensland. Pat Cunneen, managing director of GPX airborne, said the men were highly experienced flyers and very professional, and the reasons for the crash were still a mystery. "They were away from the survey area, so should have been high, they were flying away from the sun, they were still under power and the wheels were up. "They could even have landed on the road if they'd wanted, but that obviously was not on their mind. "We are still very much in the dark" said Mr Cunneen. The aircraft belonged to Namibian air charter company Westair Wings Charters, and was being used to perform an aerial geological survey for the Namibian Ministry of Mines and Energy, Mr Cunneen said. Weather conditions were said to have been ideal at the time of the crash. A spokeswoman for the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade said the department was aware of the death of Mr Payne, and the Australian High Commission in Pretoria, South Africa, was liaising with authorities. Mr Payne, originally from Western Australia, had been based in Namibia for two and a half years, while Mr Williamson had previously worked in northern Australia and Queensland. The New

Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade said an autopsy would have to be performed on Mr Williamson before his body could be flown home. A spokesman said the New Zealand High Commission in Pretoria was working with GPX to have Mr Williamson's body repatriated to New Zealand. "The company director from Australia has gone to Namibia and the High Commission is working with the company to facilitate the return of the body," the spokesman said. He could not say how long that might take as investigators were working on the cause of the crash. "It's a matter of doing autopsies, so we can't put a time on that, but it would be a few days I would think," the spokesman said.

EMERGENCY LANDING, ANKARA, TURKEY

London, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated Oct 26, states: A privately operated Turkish airliner was forced to make an emergency landing at Ankara today after its cockpit window cracked in mid-air, a spokeswoman for the company said. The MD-83, operated by Fly Air, was en route from Istanbul to Trabzon with 124 passengers on board when it had to redirect to Ankara. Nobody was injured during the incident, the spokeswoman said, adding that the passengers would be flown on to their original destination on another aircraft.

EMERGENCY LANDING, CARDIFF INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, WALES, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Oct 24 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: A light aircraft was forced to make an emergency landing at Cardiff International Airport yesterday after a technical fault. The pilot and his co-pilot had just taken off when they sent a May Day to air-traffic control. The aircraft was forced to land, overshooting the runway. Airport manager Jon Horne said: "The aircraft is based here but it's not from our flying school. "Minutes after take-off we got a May Day. The aircraft was still over the airfield but it over-shot the runway on landing. Luckily the pilots were unharmed."

EMERGENCY LANDING, CHHATRAPATI SHIVAJI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, INDIA

London, Oct 26 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: A private aircraft on a cross-country flight made a precautionary landing at the Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport this afternoon after its pilot suspected a problem with the landing gear. Sources explained that while bringing an aircraft - the eight-seater King Air aircraft belonging to Chennai-based NEPC Airlines, which was once an air taxi operator to land, the pilot usually lowers the landing gear and gets an indication in the cockpit. But, in this case, the pilot became alarmed when he failed to get this indication. Airport Director

Sudhir Kumar confirmed the incident. Around noon, the pilot asked the air traffic control to confirm if the undercarriage was in place. He then made a low pass over the airport to enable airport engineers on the ground to observe it. After getting a green signal from them, he made a safe landing.

EMERGENCY LANDING, CHRISTCHURCH AIRPORT, NEW ZEALAND

London, Oct 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: An aircraft with 17 people on board made a successful emergency landing at Christchurch Airport this morning. The Mt Cook ATR flight, believed to be headed for Queenstown, turned back to Christchurch after an indicator light warned of an undercarriage problem. An airport police spokesman said there was a light saying the undercarriage wasn't down, but it was and the aircraft landed safely about 0745 hrs.

EMERGENCY LANDING, HALIFAX INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, CANADA

London, Oct 24 -- A press report, dated Oct 23, states: A passenger aircraft en route to London from Florida made an emergency landing in Halifax late yesterday after the pilots smelled smoke, but an airport official said no smoke was actually seen. Halifax International Airport Authority spokeswoman Gina Connell said the airport was alerted around 2310, local time, that an Air Atlanta Europe flight would be diverted to Halifax. The Boeing 747, with about 500 people on board, landed safely about half an hour later. Airport emergency crews and Air Canada ground handlers conducted a maintenance inspection of the aircraft. "They (the pilots) never found any visible smoke, it was a smell," Connell said today. Connell said passengers were allowed off the aircraft about two hours after it landed and sent to area hotels for the night. The aircraft was scheduled to depart at 2130 today for London Gatwick Airport after Air Canada completed its maintenance work. Connell said she wasn't sure whether any problems were found with the aircraft.

EMERGENCY LANDING, MEDFORD AIRPORT, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated Oct 26, states: A Mercy Flights helicopter carrying a patient had to make an emergency landing yesterday afternoon when one of its engines failed en route to the hospital. No reason was given for the malfunction, which occurred at around 1840 hrs. The helicopter was transporting a patient who had been diagnosed with chest pain and was possibly in cardiac arrest, Mercy Flights general manager Ken Parsons said. The crew radioed Medford airport, calling on ground crews to prepare for an emergency landing. Standard protocol for pilots is

to switch off an engine when readings suggest possible engine failure, Parsons said. The helicopter, its crew comprising one pilot and two crew members, landed at runway 27 surrounded by several fire engines and ambulances. The patient was transported to a ground ambulance and taken to Rogue Valley Medical Center. It was the only helicopter available to Mercy Flights yesterday. Parsons said the helicopter would be inspected to determine the cause of the engine failure.

EMERGENCY LANDING, SALT LAKE CITY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 25 -- A press report, yesterday, states: A Delta Air Lines jetliner made an emergency landing at Salt Lake City International Airport yesterday night after an engine stalled on takeoff. The Delta MD-90, landed safely, and no one was injured. Flight 758, carrying 80 passengers, departed Salt Lake City International bound for Las Vegas at 2056, yesterday, said Delta spokeswoman Janis Logue. The flight landed without incident shortly after 2130 hrs.

INCIDENT AT BEIJING CAPITAL AIRPORT, CHINA

London, Oct 21 -- A press report, dated today, states: Passengers stopped an Air China aircraft from taking-off at Beijing Capital Airport yesterday afternoon, after a German passenger thought the aircraft had some problems. The maintenance workers later found the aircraft engine leaking oil, according to today's Beijing Times. About 1500, yesterday, while the aircraft from Beijing to Nanchang was taxiing on the runway, passengers heard some strange noises like "si, si" from the front of the aircraft. "The man beside me is a German mechanical engineer. He said such noises indicated something wrong with the aircraft. Its conditions might not fit flying," the newspaper said, quoting a female passenger. The crew onboard then taxied the aircraft to the tarmac for overhaul. All passengers got off. The Beijing-based airline prepared another jet for the flight, which was delayed to take-off at 1900, the newspaper said.

INCIDENT AT DALLAS- FORT WORTH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, TEXAS, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 21 -- A press report, dated Oct 20, states: American Airline's Flight 570 from Dallas Fort Worth International Airport to Omaha was nearly airborne when blown tires forced an emergency on the runway. There were 140 passengers and five crew members on the flight late this afternoon. The aircraft was about to take-off, when the tires on the right main landing gear blew. The captain managed to keep the aircraft on the runway and brought the MD80 to a safe stop with no injuries reported. Many of the passengers gave high praise for the safe manoeuvring by

the American Airline's pilot and the calm work of the crew. All of the 140 passengers were rebooked on other flights. Most of those made it to Omaha tonight. The aircraft has been taken in for repairs.

INCIDENT AT DON MUANG, THAILAND

London, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated today, states: Thai Airways Flight TG 240 from Hat Yai skidded off the runway after touching down in heavy rain at Don Muang, Bangkok, about 1820 yesterday. The Airbus A300-600 had 240 people on board. No injuries were reported. The mishap was put down to a slippery runway.

INCIDENT AT LADY'S ISLAND AIRPORT, SOUTH CAROLINA, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated Oct 26, states: A light twin-engine aircraft ran off the runway at Lady's Island Airport on Monday (Oct 24) afternoon when one of its main landing gear tyres blew, causing the aircraft to veer off the runway and its nose wheel to break off in the soft dirt, said airports director Tom Olson. Neither the pilot nor the passenger, employees of CorpJet, was hurt, he said. They were on their way from Atlanta to repair another aircraft. The accident happened at about 1600 hrs, and the airport was fully operational by 1730 hrs, he said. The lightly damaged Beechcraft Baron remains at the airport, awaiting repairs and a possible FAA investigation.

INCIDENT AT MELBOURNE AIRPORT, AUSTRALIA

London, Oct 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: Melbourne airport was closed today after a Thai Airways passenger jet blew two tyres on landing and came to a halt blocking the intersection of two runways. Air Services Australia said the Airbus A340 landed heavily and damaged a number of wheels. There was also a fire in the undercarriage that was quickly put out, the spokesman said. Flights are being diverted to Adelaide in South Australia and to Avalon, Melbourne's second airport. Engineers are examining the undercarriage to see if the plane can be towed. Thai Airways marketing manager Sue Marr said the aircraft did not appear to be damaged. There were no injuries but the aircraft is grounded for the time being, until it can be checked thoroughly.

London, Oct 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: One of Melbourne airport's runways has been reopened after the entire airport was brought to a standstill when a Thai Airways jet blew a tyre on landing today. The Airbus A340 flight 981 from Bangkok blew a tyre on landing just after midday, AEST, and became stranded at the intersection between two runways. All flights were suspended. A spokesman for Airservices Australia said only one tyre had burst. He said the aircraft had now been towed off one of the runways, which was now

operational again. Hydraulic fluid had leaked onto hot metal, which started two small fires in the main landing gear, the spokesman said. Thai Airways earlier said the aircraft with 240 passengers were on board burst two tyres on landing, but nobody was hurt. "The aircraft landed at 1207, AEST, in very heavy crosswinds and blew two tyres," spokeswoman Sue Marr said.

London, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated Oct 26, states: Passengers and crew members on board a Thai Airways International, THAI, aircraft whose main wheel burst in the Australian city of Melbourne today are all safe, the THAI has confirmed. THAI's Acting President Somchainuk Engtrakul told local media that all the 260 passengers and crew of the THAI's Air Bus 340-600 aircraft, TG981 flight, Bangkok - Melbourne route, were safely transferred to a passenger terminal of the Melbourne International Airport. "There are no people injured from the accident and the aircraft itself is being fixed with no serious damage," he was quoted by the Thai News Agency as saying. The aircraft was taxiing on a taxi way after smoothly passing through a runway when its main wheel No.1 burst with a spiral of smoke but no fire, said Mr. Somchainuk. Mr. Somchainuk praised the airport's air traffic control tower for the prompt action. The incident took place at 1159, local time, today, he said. The acting THAI chief said that the national airline's aircraft did not seek an emergency landing, and that the accident was a normal incident of the international airline business. THAI has cancelled its TG982 flight, the return flight of the TG981 flight, earlier scheduled to leave the Melbourne International Airport. All the passengers are requested to fly to Bangkok via the THAI's TG980 flight instead.

London, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated Oct 26, states: The Australian Transport Safety Bureau is meeting officials from Thai Airways to discuss the landing mishap at Melbourne airport today. Domestic flights are still being delayed tonight. Thai Airways flight 981 from Bangkok burst a tyre and swerved down the runway. There was also a small fire in its undercarriage. None of the 253 passengers on board the Airbus A-340 was injured. The airline says there is minor damage to the aircraft but it must wait for clearance from the ATSB before it can return to Bangkok. Some of the passengers on the stricken aircraft are being transferred to other flights. Domestic flights at Melbourne airport are expected to be back to normal by tomorrow morning.

INCIDENT AT TIRUPATI AIRPORT, INDIA

London, Oct 21 -- A press report, dated Oct 20, states: All 51 passengers and a 10-member crew on board an Indian Airlines Airbus 320 aircraft had a miraculous escape when two of

its rear tyres reportedly got "punctured" even as the aircraft was taxiing towards the end of the runway at the Tirupati airport today. According to eye-witness accounts, the aircraft swerved a bit off the runway and mired itself to a stop on the loose soil. It would have been a disaster had the tyres got flat at the time of the take-off when the aircraft would be travelling at a great speed, a senior official of the IA said. All the passengers on board the aircraft were made to disembark and their luggage offloaded at the accident site. The stranded passengers were later brought to the terminal and were either sent to their destinations by private transport or accommodated at the local lodges. The aircraft was later towed back to the tarmac using the luggage tractor and another local tractor.

N1263Y

London, Oct 27 -- Cessna 208B Grand Caravan, N1263Y, operated by Bering Air, two persons on board, crashed near Unalakleet, AK, at 1415, Oct 24. Aircraft sustained substantial damage. No fatalities.

N2388L

London, Oct 20 -- Cessna 172R N2388L crashed near Newberg, Oregon, at 1938, Oct 15. The aircraft sustained substantial damage. The two persons on board were seriously injured.

N268ST

London, Oct 20 -- Hughes 369D N268ST crashed on Santa Catalina Island at 2129, Oct 19, while on a flight from Carlsbad, CA. The aircraft sustained substantial damage. The two persons on board were seriously injured.

N285JB

London, Oct 20 -- Lancair IV N285JB crashed near Julian, California, at 1045, Oct 17, while on a flight from San Diego, CA, to Scottsdale, Arizona. The aircraft was destroyed. The three persons on board were killed.

N5HU

London, Oct 20 -- Cessna 337H (Skymaster) N5HU crashed near Port St. Lucie, Florida, at 1857, Oct 19, while on a flight from Boca Raton, FL, to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. The aircraft was destroyed. The one person on board was killed.

N7345U

London, Oct 24 -- A press report, dated Oct 23, states: A Cessna 411 crashed in East Hampton Village this afternoon, killing one person, local and federal officials said. East Hampton Village Police responded to the crash of a Cessna 411 at about 1345 hrs near Meadow Way and Mill Hill Lane in East Hampton Village. The victim's identity was not immediately released. Firefighters quickly extinguished the aircraft, which was on fire when they arrived.

The Federal Aviation Administration and the National Transportation Safety Board are investigating the crash.

London, Oct 25 -- Cessna 411, N7345U, privately operated, made a forced landing in a residential area under unknown circumstances at East Hampton, New York, at 1800, local time, Oct 23. The one person on board was fatally injured. The aircraft was destroyed.

London, Oct 25 -- A press report, dated today, states: An oil leak and pilot error doomed the twin-engine aircraft (N7345U) that crashed Sunday (Oct 23) in East Hampton, killing the pilot, a source close to the accident probe said yesterday. The source said that an oil leak sprung from one of the Cessna 411's two engines during the aircraft's flight from Georgia to Nantucket, Mass. "At this time, it looks like the pilot feathered the good engine" and did not address the engine with the oil leak, the source said. When feathering an engine, a pilot is repositioning the engine blades so that they do not cause a drag on the aircraft. The source also said that the pilot, who was identified yesterday as Bill Holdgate, 50, of Nantucket, was only licensed to fly single-engine aircraft, not a twin-engine. Law enforcement officials have made no official statement on what may have brought the aircraft down and did not officially identify the pilot, but Holdgate's business partner confirmed the identification. The Federal Aviation Administration and the National Transportation Safety Board are investigating the crash.

N8164H

London, Oct 26 -- Piper PA-28RT-201 (Arrov IV) N8164H crashed near Dunkirk, New York, at 0115, Oct 26, while on a flight from Zelenople, Pennsylvania, to Niagara Falls, NY. The aircraft was destroyed. The three persons on board were killed.

N9222H

London, Oct 25 -- Cessna 185, N9222H, privately operated, reported missing Oct 17, crashed under unknown circumstances. Wreckage located 110 nautical miles from south-east of Fort Saint John, British Columbia, Canada. The one person on board was fatally injured.

OH-HCI

London, Oct 21 -- A press report, dated today, states: A technical fault has been found from the control system of the Copterline helicopter (OH-HCI) which crashed near Tallinn in August with the loss of all its 12 passengers and two crew, and its impact on the possible cause of accident is to be further investigated, commercial operator Copterline reported yesterday. During investigations carried out in Washington, a technical fault was discovered in the front servo of the Sikorsky 76C-helicopter, which is

thought to have been a possible cause for a temporary seizing up of the control system. The front servo is one of the three power steering systems of the control apparatus, which transmits the steering commands of the pilot. The manufacturer of these parts is responsible for their complete overhaul on a regular basis. "It was discovered in Washington that the front servo did not pass the operational check. It is still unclear what caused the freezing of the front servo. It is also uncertain whether the accident was caused by the front servo malfunction", the Finnish representative of the Estonian-led commission of inquiry, announced yesterday.

PK-RIM

London, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated today, states: Several family members of victims of the recent Mandala air disaster (Boeing 737-200 PK-RIM) have turned down Rp 300 million, US\$30,000, in cash assistance from PT Mandala Airlines, available from Monday (Oct 24), refusing to sign agreements that they fear could affect their capacity to sue U.S. aircraft maker Boeing Co. As of Tuesday, at least six families had turned down the cash payments being made available to each of the 119 victims, even though they satisfied all the administrative requirements. The six families objected to the agreement that had been drafted by Mandala. The families of the crash victims, who are grouped in different associations, have appointed lawyers to file suits against Boeing. A lawsuit was filed in a Chicago court this week by the Nolan Law Group, representing the family of a Regional Representatives Council member, the late Abdul Halim Harahap, who died in the crash along with his wife. The chairman of the Mandala Crash Victims Families Association, Waspada Sinulingga said several clauses in the agreement would restrict the rights of the families, such as the clause stating that a victim's family would not sue anyone after receiving the cash payout. He said that the families of the victims would lose their rights as a clause in the agreement states that all the family's legal rights would be assigned to Mandala. His was among the families of crash victims who were still reluctant to sign the agreement prepared by Mandala as it would thwart the plan to sue Boeing.

UL170

London, Oct 22 -- A press report, dated today, states: The Sri Lankan Airlines aircraft UL170, damaged at the Karippur airport after being hit by a ladder, would be flown to Colombo by tomorrow evening after getting the fitness certificate, an Airlines official said today. The repair work on the aircraft was delayed due to non-availability of spares. They were expected to be brought from Singapore in a special cargo aircraft by this evening, he said. Meanwhile, a group of nine expert engineers, who arrived

from Colombo this morning were carrying out detailed inspections of the damaged aircraft, he said. The Colombo-bound Airbus with 84 passengers on board was grounded soon after the step ladder hit the rear of the aircraft damaging its elevator last morning forcing the authorities to ferry the passengers to their destination on two different Indian Airlines' aircraft. Forty-one passengers were flown to Doha last evening while the rest of them, lodged in nearby hotels, took a morning flight to Colombo, the official added. An airport employee Jayaraj, who drove away the tractor on the impression that the ladder had been detached, was placed under suspension, for negligence, sources said.

XA-TYU

London, Oct 24 -- Britten-Norman BN-2A Trislander Mk.III-3, registration: XA-TYU, operator Aerolamsa, was blown upside down by hurricane "Wilma" at Playa del Carmen Airport, Mexico, Oct 22. The nose cone and the tail section were ripped off as a result. The aircraft was written off.

Space Vehicles



VENUS EXPRESS

London, Oct 22 -- A press report, dated today, states: The European Space Agency (ESA) says the launch of Europe's first mission to Venus, which was due to have taken place next Wednesday (Oct 26), has been postponed by several days. Venus Express is designed to monitor the planet's unusual atmosphere. It was to have been launched by a Russian Soyuz-Fregat rocket, operated by the company Starsem, from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan. ESA says that "contamination" has been detected inside the fairing, the bullet-shaped hood that covers the payload on the top of the rocket, in final checks at Baikonur. It did not give details. "A new launch date will be announced shortly," a brief statement said. The 1.27-tonne unmanned orbiter is equipped with seven instruments. It is intended to map the Venusian surface and weather system, looking at temperature variation, cloud formations, wind speeds and gas composition. Its main goal is to help understand why Venus fell prey to runaway global warming. Venus Express is a sister to Mars Express, an orbiter that is now circling the Red Planet. The launch postponement was announced less than two weeks after a disastrous launch involving an ESA satellite and a Russian rocket. CryoSat, an ice-monitoring satellite costing 140 million euros, was lost on Oct 8, after the booster stage failed following lift-off from a base at

Plesetsk, northern Russia. Its carrier was a converted Soviet-era SS-19 ballistic missile, Rocket, operated by Eurokot Launch Services GmbH, a joint venture of EADS SPACE Transportation and Khronichev State Research and Production Space Centre.

Product Recalls



GAS FURNACE & AC UNITS, UNITED STATES

Washington, DC, Oct 19 -- The US Consumer Product Safety Commission, in co-operation with International Comfort Products LLC, of Lewisburg, Tenn., today announced a voluntary recall of about 28,700 certain packaged gas furnace and AC units. Consumers should stop using recalled products immediately unless otherwise instructed. The unit's control board can ignite and, in certain units, can result in the ignition of flammable material adjacent to the unit. The firm has received three reports of minor property damage. There are no reports of injuries. The recall involves certain packaged gas furnace and air conditioning units sold under the brand names Airquest, Arcoaire, Comfortmaker, Heil, Keeprite, Kenmore, ICP Commercial, and Tempstar. The recall includes configurations of "A" chassis units with 3-ton or 5-ton cooling capacity, manufactured between the 41st week of 2000 and the 26th week of 2003. The model and serial numbers are printed on the unit's rating plate. The rating plate is on the exterior of the unit, on the right side (as viewed when facing an installed unit). Contact the firm to check if your model and serial number of your unit is included in the recall. Manufactured in U.S. Sold by heating, ventilation, and air conditioning dealers and contractors nationwide between October 2000 and September 2005. Consumers with recalled units will receive a free replacement control board and capacitor installed. -- Consumer Product Safety Commission.

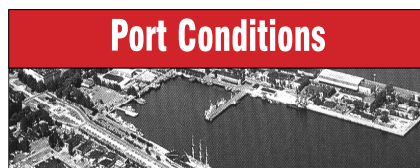
TOYOTA MOTOR VEHICLES, WORLD-WIDE

London, Oct 20 -- A press report, dated Oct 19, states: Toyota has recalled 70,000 of its Australian cars as part of a world-wide recall involving more than a million vehicles. The company has identified a potential problem with headlight dimmer switches in its Corolla, RAV4 and Echo models manufactured and sold between May 2000 and July 2002. A Toyota spokesperson said no Australian cars had been found with

the problem, but local models would still be included in the recall which extends to Japan, Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia. Toyota Motor Corporation Australia spokesman Peter Griffin said the faulty headlight dimmer switch contact points could overheat. "The owner might see the headlights starting to flicker or at worst the headlights won't work at all," Mr Griffin said. "But it's important to note that there have been no reports of this condition in Australia at all." The recall affects 1.4 million vehicles internationally. "In Australia, we think it's about 69,800 or just under 70,000," he said. Mr Griffin said there had been no reports of accidents or incidents as a result of the fault. "It's just one of those things when you become aware of a potential problem you want to get on top of it." Owners would be contacted by mail in November advising them to take their car to a dealer, where it would be repaired at no cost. Mr Taylor was confident the recall would not affect sales of the car maker's most popular model, the Corolla. "In September it (Corolla) was the top selling car in the country ... this is a concern because you want to have the best quality car out there and Toyota prides itself on its quality." The Wall Street Journal reported that the recall would set Toyota back about \$US127 million (\$A166.86 million), based on an estimated repair price of \$US100 per car. But Mr Griffin would not give a cost estimate. "There's certainly a cost involved with this sort of exercise but we don't discuss the amount," he said.

TOYOTA MOTOR VEHICLES, WORLDWIDE

London, Oct 20 -- A press report, dated Oct 19, states: Toyota New Zealand is recalling about 8500 cars to repair defective front lights, a company spokesman said today. "It affects Toyota Corolla, RAV4 and Echo models," Spencer Morris, Toyota NZ after-sales divisional manager, said. All vehicles involved were produced between May 2000 and September 2002, and are being recalled because of a defective switch of front lights caused by a design problem. Mr Morris said the problem also affects imported used-cars from Japan, "ones we have imported and those brought in by a third party." These involved other makes of cars. "Echo in Japan is sold as Vitz and there are other models that are based on Echo, so there is a slightly wider range of namebadges, but we will be contacting all owners once we get the details." Mr Morris warned Toyota NZ does not yet have the parts to fix the cars available. "It's likely we won't be actively contacting customers until November as we have to source quite a few replacement switches," he said.



AUSTRALIA

London, Oct 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: The Australian Customs Service denies cargo vessels on their way to Sydney's Port Botany will be turned away because the terminal is full of containers. New South Wales Minister for Ports Eric Roozendaal says a massive backlog in processing containers caused by a new computer system will mean five container ships on their way to the port may be turned away. David Collins from the ACS says almost half of the containers on the dock have been cleared by Customs and are waiting to be transported away. He says there are problems with the computer system but Customs is hopeful it will be sorted out in the near future. "We can only judge that from the stevedore companies operating out at Port Botany but certainly it's very tight and we're hopeful that no ships will be turned away," he said.

London, Oct 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: Sydney's major port will hit 100 per cent capacity tomorrow as chaos continues to envelop the nation's air and sea terminals after the botched introduction of a new \$250million Customs computer system. Qantas Freight yesterday called on forwarders to collect their inbound goods as quickly as possible to clear space for incoming cargo at terminals in Perth, Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney. NSW Ports Minister Eric Roozendaal described the introduction of the Integrated Cargo System as "gross bungling" and said the arrival of six more cargo-laden vessels today and tomorrow would further strain the system. "This is a major threat to the state's businesses," he said. "The federal Government is just not being realistic about the damage it is doing to the NSW economy." Mr Roozendaal said terminal operator P&O was at 95 per cent capacity and had moved 700 containers to a bonded warehouse, where cargo sits until it has cleared Customs. Rival port operator Patrick Corp is at 90 per cent capacity. It has moved 380 containers to a nearby bonded warehouse and a further 100 containers by train to a warehouse in western Sydney. Qantas Freight general manager Robert Lugton said: "All four terminals are at critical capacity levels, and delays in the collection of freight over the weekend will have a major impact, particularly at the terminals in Melbourne and Sydney." Despite the chaos, and calls from industry, Customs Minister Chris Ellison last week decided to keep the computer system, introduced this month, rather than reinstate the old system. TNT Freight Management's

national freight forwarding manager, Chris Jensen, said the new system was causing "almost total disruption to the business of Customs clearing and delivering import cargo". He said freight handlers had serious doubts it would work and operators had spent hours trying unsuccessfully to log on to the system.

London, Oct 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: Freight industry operators are predicting all major ports around Australia will be gridlocked within days because of problems with the new computer system being used by the Australian Customs Service (ACS). Customs says its considering offering compensation because of the massive bottleneck in Australia's ports The Customs Brokers and Freight Forwarders Association says the new system is causing businesses to lose millions of dollars each day in the lead-up to the busy Christmas period. There are also reports of people who work in the industry being laid off. The association's Steve Morris says the situation could have been avoided if the the Minister for Customs, Senator Chris Ellison, reverted to the old computer system last week when he had the chance. "We've estimated that it's costing our industry \$2.6 million a day," he said. Customs spokesman David Collins says the Senator Ellison will conduct a roundtable meeting at Customs House in Sydney on Wednesday. He says storage of a container on the waterfront costs around \$150 a day. "In terms of compensation for storage, Customs will consider compensation for charges incurred on the storage of containers on a case by case basis and we'll be announcing details of how that will work in the next couple of days," he said.

London, Oct 25 -- Cargo is moving at Australian ports but many importers have no idea their goods are ready for collection, thanks to another glitch in the controversial new computer system. Major ports - especially Port Melbourne and Port Botany in Sydney - have been facing gridlock because of problems with the Integrated Customs System (ICS) introduced two weeks ago. The new system was meant to clear imports and exports faster than the former 20-year-old program, but instead containers have banked up because of slow processing. NSW Ports Minister Eric Roozendaal warned yesterday the backlog of shipping containers could lead to Port Botany being filled to capacity by tomorrow, which would force vessels to anchor off the coast waiting to unload. Melbourne Corporation chief executive Stephen Bradford said the Port of Melbourne was also at breaking point and could be in the same situation by the end of the week. But Customs officials said today that 45 per cent of cargo sitting on wharves in Sydney and Melbourne had been cleared. Customs New South Wales regional director David Collins said movement at terminals was now "normal", with a total of more than 6000 containers

moved out of both ports yesterday and again today. "Cargo is moving," he said. "Port Botany is not in gridlock and shipping containers are moving away from the waterfront." The claim was backed up by major stevedore P&O, which said it was "working effectively". Almost 7500 containers were waiting to be collected from the two ports, Mr Collins said. Australian businesses reliant on the ports say they are losing \$2 million a day in profits.

London, Oct 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: Sydney's Port Botany is effectively closed today with six ships facing a long wait to unload because of the chaos caused by the Customs' new computer system. The nation's second-biggest port is at full capacity as brokers and freight forwarders struggle to clear 20,000 containers through the Integrated Cargo System, the \$250million computer software system introduced this month. NSW Ports Minister Eric Roozendaal said the six ships, due to arrive today, could be delayed or turned away because the Australian Customs Service had not fixed the computer problems. He estimated that delays in clearing containers was costing businesses \$2million a day. "There are six ships with 4000 containers and we may have to delay them or turn them back," he said. The problems were not confined to Sydney, with Victorian Transport Minister Peter Batchelor saying electronic clearances at the Port of Melbourne that normally took a few minutes were now taking several hours. Port of Melbourne, the nation's biggest, with capacity for 38,000 containers, is expecting four ships at its Swanson east and west docks today. Federal Customs Minister Chris Ellison said thousands of containers in Sydney had cleared Customs. Customs NSW regional director David Collins said Botany was not gridlocked, adding: "Those misrepresenting the situation to gain advantage are not helping." He said 1500 containers had been moved from Sydney's ports on yesterday, with a further 1300 booked for yesterday.

London, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated today, states: Businesses will need to be more flexible with delivery times if the bottleneck of cargo in Australian ports is to be cleared, a freighting industry chief says. David Kotte, director of freight and business options with the Customs Brokers and Forwarders Council of Australia, said the temporary solution brokered in a ministerial meeting yesterday between Customs, industry and the Federal Government was only the first step in solving the problem. "If we can we're

trying to get our members to co-ordinate with their customers to do out of hours deliveries," he said. "The great bulk of cargo, people are still going to want delivered during their normal business hours so those slots are just going to fill. So there will be delays, there are going to be problems getting the bottleneck cleared but I think, ideally, if we can start getting some relief in the data matching and so on, I'd say within a couple of weeks we'll get back to a modicum of normalcy." To avoid further processing delays, elements of the previous software system and the new ICS system have now been merged to allow for easier tracking of cargo once it arrives in port. An action group, spearheaded by both Customs and industry, has been formed to address the software issues and will have its first meeting tomorrow. The new software system was implemented earlier this month and has caused havoc since its inception. Container loads of goods have sat idle at Port Melbourne and Port Botany in Sydney due to computer servers crashing and glitches in processing. The extra days spent in port have racked up additional storage costs for those businesses that have not been able to move their shipments. Mr Kotte said compensation for these additional costs was being explored. P&O Ports and Patricks announced they would be extending terminal hours on Saturday (Oct 29) and Sunday to facilitate the speedy clearance of containers but Mr Kotte was not hopeful the ports would be back to normal within the week.

London, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated today, states: Australia's opposition Labour Party is calling for the resignation of Customs Minister Chris Ellison if a backlog of cargo at Australia's ports is not cleared by the weekend. Major ports in Sydney and Melbourne have ground to a virtual standstill because of problems with a new Australian Customs Service computer network. Opposition Leader Kim Beazley said today Senator Ellison should step down if the problems were not resolved by the weekend. Businesses were suffering major losses as shipping containers sat on wharves at Port Botany and Port Melbourne, he said. "We're losing more than Aus\$2 million a day in the ports because of a botched (installation) of a software system which has been pridefully defended against the best advice of business," Mr Beazley told Macquarie Radio. "The minister has said the agreement he's reached (will have) cleared it over

the weekend. The challenge for the minister ought to be this: if it isn't, you resign."

ITALY

Genoa, Oct 24 -- Port situation Oct 24: Genoa: No vessels waiting for berth. La Spezia: No vessels waiting for berth. Savona: One vessel waiting for normal berth. Average delay in berthing 12 hours. No vessels waiting for special berth. -- Lloyd's Agents.

PAKISTAN

London, Oct 24 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: The supply of goods imported under the Afghan Transit Trade Agreement (ATTA) has come to a halt, as the Pakistan Railways is, reportedly, not in a position to provide the needed quantity of wagons due to increased activity of relief goods transportation to the quake-hit areas. As a result, more than 3,500 containers have been stuck at the two ports of the country. Sources in railways and customs agents, involved in clearing ATTA consignments from the ports, said in the first phase containers were dispatched to Peshawar through railways and from there the consignments crossed borders on trucks. "As per the latest data, some Afghan goods 3,717 containers are stuck at the ports," said a source close to the customs. "The Pakistan Railways has almost suspended supplying the ATTA goods and diverted all its wagons for the supply of relief goods to Peshawar and Rawalpindi from where those goods are transported to the quake-hit areas," the source added. He said the last supply from the Pakistan Railways was received yesterday when three wagons carrying ATTA goods left for Peshawar and with the same pace of transportation the increasing number of the stuck consignments at the ports could take months to move. The current situation has created last month like crisis when the supply of ATTA cargoes came to a standstill due less-than-demand supply of wagons by the Pakistan Railways and over 2,000 containers stuck at the ports. The matter was resolved after a months when the railway authorities agreed to increase the number of wagons by 100 percent and extended such facility for a month to clear the stuck containers.

SYRIA

Lattakia, Oct 15 -- Waiting time presently 24 hours at Lattakia and ten days at Tartous. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Port Delays

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

Country/Port	Date of report	No. of vessels waiting and/or days delay
Australia		
Abbot Point	24-10-2005	Coal: 1 vessel berthed; 12 vessels due by 17/11; up to 1 day's delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Brisbane	24-10-2005	Coal: Fisherman Island coal berth: 4 vessels due by 9/11; up to 2 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Dalrymple Bay	24-10-2005	Coal: 2 vessels berthed and loading; 25 vessels due by 6/11; up to 15 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Dampier	24-10-2005	Iron ore: Parker Point: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 4 waiting; 8 vessels due by 5/11; up to 8 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; Parker Point 2: 1 vessel berthed and loading; 6 vessels due by 3/11; there will be a maintenance shutdown of approx. 96 hours starting ca. 25/10; East Intercourse Island: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 1 waiting to load; 11 vessels due by 9/11; ca. 36 hour maintenance shutdown scheduled to start ca. 26/10; up to 2 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; a shift to a lay-by berth for loaded vessels is always a possibility; shippers cannot guarantee that vessel will be able to load up to max. sailing draft available.
Gladstone	24-10-2005	Coal: R.G. Tanna coal terminal: 37 vessels due by 30/11; up to 3 days berthing delay expected subject to port congestion and cargo availability; plant shut down for repairs and maintenance on shiploader 2 from 28/11 to 8/12; Barney Point: 6 vessels due by 27/12; up to 1 day's delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Hay Point	24-10-2005	Coal: 2 vessels berthed and loading; 8 vessels due by 3/11; vessels usually berthing in order of arrival and cargo availability; approx. up to 3 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Newcastle	24-10-2005	Coal: Kooragang 4, 5 and 6: 2 vessel berthed and loading, 3 vessels off port awaiting coal; 14 vessels due by 14/11; 3-4 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; Dykes 4+5: 3 vessels berthed and loading; 9 vessels waiting off port; 39 vessels due by 24/11; maintenance will be carried out on reclaimers 3 from 06.30 hrs. 24/10 - 17.00 hrs. 29/10; 6-10 days delay expected prior to berthing due to planned maintenance at Kooragang terminal, coal product problems with some shippers berthed congestion and cargo receipt.
Port Hedland	24-10-2005	Iron ore: BHP Iron Ore Pty. Ltd., Mt. Newman (Nelson Point), "A" berth: 1 vessel berthed and loading; 5 vessels due by 30/10; a 54 hour maintenance shutdown is expected from ca. 25/10; up to 4 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; "B" berth: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 2 waiting; 5 vessels due by 30/10; up to 4 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; BHP Iron Ore Pty. Ltd., Goldsworthy (Finucane Island) "C" berth: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 1 waiting; 3 vessels due by 27/10; up to 3 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability "D" berth: 1 vessel berthed and loading; 2 vessels due by 27/10; 48 hour maintenance shutdown expected from ca. 24/10; 1 day's delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; Cockatoo Island: 1 vessel due 30/10; no delays expected.
Port Latta	24-10-2005	Iron ore: 1 vessel anchored; 1 vessel due 24/10; up to 2 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Port Walcott	24-10-2005	Iron ore: 2 vessels berthed and loading, 7 vessels waiting; 15 vessels due by 11/11; up to 14 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability. Line-up expected to change at short notice. Cargo grade shortages and stockpile problems may result in vessels berthing out of turn.
Azerbaijan		
Baku	24-10-2005	Oil products: Bay of Baku: no vessels; Azerneftiyag terminal: no vessels; Azer Trans terminal - Nobel avenue: 1 vessel berthed, completed discharging crude oil; 1 vessel due 25/10 to discharge crude oil; Sangachal district: no vessels; Transserve terminal: closed.
Brazil		
Rio de Janeiro	25-10-2005	Porto do Rio: 5 steel products loaders, 1 wheat discharger; Tecon: no vessels; Porto de Sepetiba: 2 iron ore loaders, 1 zinc discharger, 1 coal discharger, 2 steel products loaders, 3 other loaders/dischargers; 12 vessels due over the next 7 days.

Port Conditions

Rio Grande	25-10-2005	Two vessels berthed of which 1 calcium loader, 1 soya meal loader; 7 vessels waiting in roads; 13 vessels due over the next 10 days.
Santos	25-10-2005	Twenty-one vessels berthed of which 7 sugar loaders, 1 wheat discharger, 1 bulk LPG discharger, 3 fertiliser dischargers, 3 chemical products dischargers, 1 bulk oil loader, 1 pellets loader, 3 other loaders/dischargers, 1 full container loader/discharger; 22 vessels waiting in roads; 33 vessels due over the next 7 days; Private terminals: Terminal 37: 2 full container loaders/dischargers; Tecondi: 1 full container loader/discharger; Termares: no vessels; Rodrimar: no vessels; Cosipa: 1 fertiliser discharger, 3 steel products loaders; Ultrafertil: 1 fertiliser discharger; Cargill: no vessels; Santos Brasil: 2 full container loaders/dischargers; Cutrale: no vessels; Dow: 1 chemical products discharger. Four vessels berthed, 1 waiting in roads; 7 vessels due over the next 10 days.
Sao Sebastiao	25-10-2005	Three vessels berthed of which 1 malt discharger, 1 sugar loader, 1 other vessel; Terminal Vila Velha: 1 container loader/discharger; Tubarao: 2 iron ore loaders, 1 steel products loader, 1 other vessel; Praia Mole: 1 steel products loader, 2 other vessels; Portocel: 1 cellulose loader, 1 salt discharger; Ubu: 1 iron ore loader, 1 coal discharger; 29 vessels due over the next 7 days.
Vitoria	25-10-2005	
Bulgaria		
Bourgas	23-10-2005	Eight vessels in port operating, of which 3 loading (1 profiles, 1 coils, 1 wheat), 5 discharging (1 billets, 2 metals, 2 reinforced concrete); 2 vessels in roads, both to load ammonium nitrate; 8 vessels due, of which 6 to load (1 metals, 2 coils, 1 copper concentrate, 1 profiles, 1 bagged ammonium nitrate), 2 to discharge (1 metals, 1 iron ore).
Varna	23-10-2005	Varna East, Varna West, Electrical Power Station, Balchik: Thirty-five vessels in port operating of which 20 loading (3 sunflower seeds, 3 bulk wheat, 1 kaolin/other, 1 bulk sulphuric acid, 6 soda, 1 bulk cement, 1 scrap, 1 bulk silica sand, 1 bulk clinker, 1 hydrochloric acid, 1 bulk maize), 7 discharging (2 bulk coal, 1 iron, 1 petcoke, 1 soda, 1 liquid urea, 1 containers), 8 discharging/loading (4 containers, 1 containers/small consignments, 1 equipment in packing cases/ pipes/containers/miscellaneous bagged cargo, 2 iron); no vessels waiting in roads.
Egypt		
Adabiya	24-10-2005	Seven vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 2 general cargo, 4 bulk carriers, 1 containers.
Alexandria	24-10-2005	Thirty-one vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 21 general cargo, 6 bulk carriers, 1 tanker, 1 container vessel, 2 cruise vessels; 20 vessels dry-docked; 20 vessels at inner anchorage, 40 at outer anchorage.
Damietta	24-10-2005	Twenty-two vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 16 general cargo, 1 bulk carrier, 5 containers; 8 vessels at outer anchorage, none at inner anchorage.
Dekheila	24-10-2005	Sixteen vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 3 general cargo, 9 bulk carriers, 4 container vessel; 1 vessel at outer anchorage.
Port Said	24-10-2005	Five vessels berthed (loading/discharging), all containers.
Suez	24-10-2005	Eight vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 2 general cargo, 3 reefers, 3 passenger vessels; 4 tugs, 1 vessel dry-docked.
Suez Canal	24-10-2005	Twenty-five vessels transiting Northbound, 30 Southbound.
Estonia		
Tallinn	24-10-2005	Paļjassaare (formerly Kopli): 1 phosphates vessel loading at berth; no vessels waiting at anchorage; 1 vessels due, with 6 days berthing delay expected.
India		
Kolkata	24-10-2005	8 vessels operating at berth of which 5 vessels discharging (Timber Logs-3, Containers, Rape Seed); 3 vessels waiting to discharge (Rape Seed-2, Pulses); 2 vessels working at mid stream to discharge (Crude, Pulses); 1 vessel waiting at anchorage to load Iron Ore; 3 vessels under repair; 1 vessel under dry docked; 2 vessels due (Lubricant Oil, Containers).
Haldia	24-10-2005	15 vessels operating at berth of which 4 loading (Iron ore-2, Thermal Coal, Steel), 8 vessels discharging (PRXL, Coke-2, POL, Coal Tar, Rock Phosphate, Steel, RORO), 3 vessels loading and discharging Containers; 3 vessels awaiting berth to load; 4 vessels waiting at anchorage (1 to discharge, 3 to load); 3 vessels due (Containers-2, LAMN).
Paradip	24-10-2005	10 vessels operating at berth of which 3 vessels loading (Iron ore-2, Chrome Ore), 7 vessels discharging (Coking Coal, NC Coal, L. Coke-4, Sulphur); 6 vessels awaiting berth (2 to discharge, 4 to load).

Port Conditions

Visakhapatnam	24-10-2005	16 vessels operating at berth of which 5 loading (Iron ore-2, Thermal Coal, POL, B.F.Slag), 11 vessels discharging (Coking Coal, Project Cargo, Rock Phosphate, Ammonia Nitrate, Iron ore, DAP, P.Coke-2, POL, Sulphur, MOP); 18 vessels not ready to work and waiting at anchorage (13 to discharge, 5 to load); 1 vessel under repair/dry docked (MV Chin Shwe Haw at HSY Jetty which was collided with MV Uttar Kasi; 34 vessels due (Iron Ore-8, Steel-3, Granite Blocks-2, Food Grains, Naptha, MOP-2, DAP-2, Coking Coal-4, Pet Coke-2, I. Ammonia, Containers-3, Pet Coke, POL-2, Crude-2) .
Chennai	24-10-2005	12 vessels operating at berth of which 4 loading (Iron Ore, IOL, Naptha, Granite Blocks), 6 discharging (Project Cargo, C.P.Oil, Thermal Coal, Crude Oil, S.Coal-2), 2 vessels loading and discharging (Timber Logs/ Containers, Containers); 2 vessels awaiting berth (1 to discharge, 1 to load); 2 vessels not ready to work and waiting at anchorage (1 to discharge, 1 to load and discharge); 4 vessels due (C. Stone, Granite Blocks, Containers, MOP).
Tuticorin	24-10-2005	9 vessels operating at berth of which 2 vessels loading (Cement, Granite Blocks), 7 vessels discharging (Thermal Coal-2, MOP, Liquid Ammonia, Timber Logs); 3 vessels not ready to work and waiting at anchorage (2 to load, 1 to load and discharge).
Cochin	24-10-2005	6 vessels operating at berth of which 2 loading (Naptha, HSD), 1 vessel discharging Crude, 3 vessels loading and discharging Containers; 1 vessel awaiting berth to load
New Mangalore	24-10-2005	6 vessels operating at berth of which 3 vessels loading (POL Product-2, Iron Ore (P)), 3 vessels discharging (Urea, POL Product, POL Crude); 2 vessels waiting at anchorage (1 to discharge, 1 to load); 11 vessels due (POL Product-2, Timber, LPG, Granite Stone-2, Crude S.B.Oil, Phosphoric Acid, Iron Ore(P), Container, Soya Bean Oil).
Mormugao	24-10-2005	2 vessels operating at berth and loading (C.P.Coke, Alumina); 5 vessels working at mid stream and loading Iron ore; 5 vessels waiting at anchorage to load; 5 vessels under repairs/dry docked; 10 vessels due (C.P.Coke, Containers, S.Coal, Coking Coal, MOP, Iron ore-5).
Mumbai	24-10-2005	13 vessels operating at berth of which 7 loading POL-2, 10 vessels discharging (Containers, Other Bulk, Fertiliser (RM), General Cargo-4, POL-3), 1 vessel loading and discharging General Cargo; 13 vessels under repairs/dry docked; 3 vessels under arrest; 3 vessels waiting (under laid up berths not required for cargo operations); 38 vessels due(Containers-10, General Cargo-28).
J.N.P.T.	24-10-2005	6 vessels operating at berth of which 1 discharging Furnace Oil, 5 vessels loading and discharging Containers
Kandla	24-10-2005	11 vessels operating at berth of which 4 discharging (Timber Logs-2, Rock Phosphate, Fertiliser), 5 vessels loading (Cement, Rice, Agriculture Product-2, St. Coils), 2 vessels loading and discharging Containers; 4 vessels not ready to work waiting at anchorage (3 to discharge, 1 to load); 1 vessel under dry docked; 1 vessel under arrest.
Ennore	24-10-2005	1 vessel operating at berth and discharging Thermal Coal; 2 vessels due (POL (MV Jag Padma), Thermal Coal(MV Gem of Ennore)).
Israel		
Ashdod	26-10-2005	No labour problems. Four general cargo vessels loading at berth, 18 vessels discharging at berth (14 general cargo, 4 bulkers), 5 container vessels loading/discharging at berth; 8 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (3 general cargo, 5 bulkers), 2 vessels waiting at anchorage to load/discharger (1 containers, 1 tanker); 14 vessels due, with 2-3 days delay expected.
Eilat	26-10-2005	No labour problems. One car carrier loading/discharging at berth; 2 car carriers waiting at anchorage to load/dischARGE; 2 vessels due, with no delays expected.
Haifa	26-10-2005	No labour problems. Five vessels discharging at berth (4 general cargo, 1 bulkers), 6 vessels loading/discharging at berth (3 containers, 1 car carrier, 2 passenger vessels); 2 bulkers waiting at anchorage to discharge, 2 container vessels waiting at anchorage to load/dischARGE; 3 vessels under repairs/dry-docked; 17 vessels due, with 2-3 days delay expected.
Pakistan		
Karachi	25-10-2005	One rice vessel loading at berth, 12 vessels discharging at berth (1 crude oil, 1 coal, 3 DAP, 4 general cargo, 2 sugar, 1 fertiliser), 2 container vessels loading/discharging at berth; 1 container vessel waiting at anchorage to load, 9 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (1 containers, 2 fertiliser, 2 general cargo, 2 sugar, 1 MEG, 1 crude oil); no vessels bunkering, none under repairs/dry-docked, none awaiting orders; 7 vessels due (4 containers, 2 general cargo, 1 vehicles), with 2-3 days berthing delay expected.
Port Qasim	25-10-2005	Four vessels discharging at berth (1 palm oil, 1 wheat, 1 sugar, 1 jute), 2 container vessels loading/discharging at QICT berth; 3 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (1 sugar, 1 wheat, 1 palm oil).

Port Conditions

Poland		
Gdansk	24-10-2005	Seven vessels in port operating of which 6 loading at berth (3 coal, 1 general cargo, 2 bulkers), 1 tanker discharging at berth; 16 vessels under repairs/dry-docked; 19 vessels due.
Gdynia	24-10-2005	Ten vessels in port operating of which 4 loading general cargo at berth, 6 discharging at berth (2 general cargo, 1 grain, 2 bulkers, 1 tanker); 22 vessels under repairs/dry-docked; 43 vessels due.
Russia		
Novorossiysk	25-10-2005	Sixteen vessels in port operating of which 13 loading, 1 discharging bulk sugar, 2 discharging/loading (1 container, 1 pipes/steel billets); 6 vessels in roads all to load (2 steel billets, 1 bulk urea, 2 wheat, 1 D/O); 65 vessels due of which 63 to load, 2 to discharge (1 zinc ore, 1 coils); Oil terminal: 1 tanker in roads to load fuel oil; 7 tankers due all to load (6 crude oil, 1 diesel oil).
Slovenia		
Koper	24-10-2005	Port working normally; Eight vessels berthed of which 2 bulk carriers discharging iron ore/coal/solid chemicals/grain, 1 bulk carrier loading coal, 1 vessel loading sawn timber, 2 car carriers discharging/loading vehicles, 2 vessels discharging/loading containers; 15 vessels due over the next 2 days of which 3 vessels to discharge/load containers, 3 vessels to load sawn timber, 4 car carriers to discharge/load vehicles, 4 bulk carriers to load general cargo/coal, 1 bulk carrier to discharge ore/scrap.
Spain		
Bilbao	24-10-2005	Twenty-six vessels in port operating (3 tankers, 23 others), of which 8 loading, 9 discharging, 9 loading/discharging.
Sagunto	24-10-2005	Seventeen vessels in port operating of which 1 loading bulk fertiliser, 11 discharging (8 steel products, 1 anhydrous ammonia, 1 vehicles, 1 logs), 5 discharging/loading (2 steel products, 3 general cargo); no vessels outside commercial wharf; no berthing delays at present.
Sri Lanka		
Colombo	24-10-2005	Berthing/unberthing (pilotage) delays being experienced on breakbulk/conventional vessels. Delays to conventional vessels are due to the fact that container/feeder vessels are given priority at breakbulk berths if there is container congestion. Conventional cargo vessels at BQ 1 and 2 are facing navigation delays. Six container/feeder vessels loading at berth, 14 vessels discharging at berth (4 containers/feeders, 3 bagged fertiliser, 2 bulk palm oil, 1 bagged soya bean meal, 1 Ro/Ro, 2 bulk cement, 1 steel cargo); 1 bulk cement vessel waiting at anchorage to discharge; 7 vessels dry-docked, 1 at new tanker berth; 8 vessels due (7 containers/feeders, 1 bulk cement), with no delays expected.
Turkmenistan		
Turkmenibashi	24-10-2005	Oil products: 2 vessels berthed, 1 loading gasoline, 1 to load gasoil; 2 vessels in roads, of which 1 to load gasoil, 1 unknown cargo; 2 vessels due by 24/10, 1 to discharge crude oil, 1 to load unknown cargo.
Ukraine		
Ilichevsk	24-10-2005	Ten vessels in port operating, of which 3 loading (1 steel products, 1 grain, 1 sunflower oil), 4 discharging (3 steel products, 1 oil), 3 discharging/loading containers; 2 vessels in roads, both to load sunflower oil; 21 vessels due, of which 9 to load (6 steel products, 3 grain), 3 to discharge steel products, 9 to discharge/load containers
Mariupol	24-10-2005	Fourteen vessels in port operating, all loading, of which 4 steel, 1 wheat, 4 fire-clay, 1 barley, 1 coal, 1 sulphur, 1 ferro sulphate, 1 fertiliser; 9 vessels in roads, of which 8 to load (6 steel, 1 fire-clay, 1 coal), 1 to discharge/load containers; 47 vessels due, of which 44 to load (25 steel, 11 coal, 3 fire-clay, 2 wheat, 1 barley, 1 coke, 1 luggage), 3 to discharge (1 equipment, 1 feldspar, 1 magnetite).
United States		
Beaumont, TX	26-10-2005	Due to Hurricane Rita, Sabine Waterway is under the following restrictions: Channel open one-way daylight traffic only; allowable max transit draft 38 ft. FW until further notice; shoaling observed on some points along the Sabine Waterway; ports of the port of Beaumont/Port Arthur still without power and city services;. Louis Dreyfus terminal: elevator down due to Hurricane Rita damage.

Port Conditions

Galveston, TX	26-10-2005	ADM-Farmland terminal: 2-3 days delay expected.
Houston, TX	26-10-2005	LDC Dreyfus terminal: 3-4 days delay expected; Cargill terminal: 2-3 days delay expected.
Kalama, WA	26-10-2005	Kalama export terminal: 6 days delay expected; United Harvest terminal: 2 days delay expected.
New Orleans, LA	26-10-2005	Mississippi River terminal berthing delays: Cenex-Harstates/Myrtle Grove: 2-3 days delay expected. Cargill-Westwego: 2-4 days delay expected. ADM/Ama: 6-8 days delay expected. Bunge/Destrehan: 5-6 days delay expected. ADM/ Destrehan: 6-8 days delay expected. ADM/Reserve: 6-8 days delay expected. Cargill/Reserve: 1-2 days delay expected. ADM/Paulina: 6-8 days delay expected. Zen-Noh/Convent: 5-7 days delay expected. Cargill/Baton Rouge: No delays expected. Mississippi River mid-stream buoys - estimated berthing delays based on new vessel presented as load-ready and weather permitting.
Portland, OR	26-10-2005	Columbia Grain terminal: 2 days delay expected; CLD Irving terminal: 3 days delay expected.
Seattle, WA	26-10-2005	Louis Dreyfus (Pier 86) terminal: 2 days delay expected.
Tacoma, WA	26-10-2005	Temco terminal: 2 days delay expected.
Vancouver, WA	26-10-2005	United Harvest terminal: 2 days delay expected.

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