

CasualtyWeek

December 9 2005

Fifty attacks predicted off east Africa over next year

MIG sees Somalian waters as high-risk area, writes Thomas Turner — Tuesday December 06 2005

Piracy off the coast of Somalia has been repeatedly hitting the headlines over the past month following an attempted attack on the *Seabourn Spirit*, a luxury cruiseship some 100 miles out to sea.

But while an attack on a luxury passenger vessel represents a shift in target for the pirates — and certainly grabs public attention — the lack of security in Somalian waters has been a problem for some time. Indeed, repeated attacks by pirates on merchant vessels throughout the year have led MIG to steadily increase its risk rating for the waters.

The MIG Marine Piracy Assessment now predicts around 50 attacks taking place along the East African coastline in the next 12 months.

In the month leading up to the November 5 attacks, no less than five incidents of piracy were recorded by the International Maritime Bureau in Somalian waters. These included the hijacking of a UN food aid cargoship, a bulk carrier and a product tanker. And in the days following, two further incidents were reported: the hijacking of a general cargo ship and an armed attack on a ro-ro that left the bridge windows riddled with bullet holes.

The large distances from the Somali coastline at which many of these attacks have been reported have led to concerns that pirates may be launching operations from an offshore "mother ship". The

small, fast, vessels typically used in attacks have a limited range and as such, attacks over a hundred miles off a coastline are unusual.

This putative increase in sophistication and the growing frequency of attack has brought mounting calls for an increase in security. Sure enough, on November 25, Top Cat Marine Security announced it had been awarded a \$50m contract by the transitional Somali government to provide anti-piracy operations in the waters.

Escorts

However, it is unclear at this stage exactly what the scope of the New York City-based company's operations will be, and whether it will be actively hunting down pirates or simply providing security escorts for high-value cargoes.

The former of these possibilities has raised significant concerns about the legality and legitimacy of a private security company actively hunting down criminals, not least due to the US and UN embargoes on arms into Somalia. The latter possibility, however, seems unlikely to provide a significant long-term solution to the problem, dealing as it does with the symptoms rather than the causes of the problem.

But it is the causes of the problem that will prove trickiest to tackle. Somalia is a state in disarray. With a government that was until recently exiled in Nairobi and is now split between Jowhar and

Mogadishu, there is little effective government and power is effectively split between warlords. Security and the rule of law are barely existent and progress, through a UN-backed programme, is painfully slow.

An assassination attempt during a visit by Prime Minister Ali Mohamed Gedi to Mogadishu in early November left five people dead and provided a stark illustration of the depth of the problem.

With local warlords believed to be financing and profiting from pirate operations, the problem runs to the heart of Somalia's governance crisis. Whether a private security firm can enter such an arena and bring about lasting security improvements to the country's coastline remains to be seen, but it will certainly be a tall order.

MIG's Piracy Threat Assessment is a new tool designed to assist its clients in the marine and insurance industries in understanding the risks posed to their shipping/marine operations. It is one of a variety of bespoke services that MIG provides to facilitate the identification, understanding and minimisation of risk exposure across a number of industries world-wide.

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

Vessel	Type	Flag	Class	GT	DWT	Bit	Casualty
<i>CELTIC SPIRIT</i>	general	BHS	GL	2,978	4,001	1976	Reported cargo problems in lat 58 48.9N, long 02 31W, and listing 10 degrees Nov 27 and proceeding to Stornoway to restow. Tug <i>Anglian Prince</i> escorting to Stornoway, where arrived Nov 29.
<i>DOROTHEA</i>	general	VCT	RS	2,120	2,950	1981	Collided with a barge while leaving Antwerp Nov 28. Proceeded to berth 501 for inspection.
<i>FUNCHAL</i>	passenger	PMD	RP	9,563	2,975	1961	Reported Nov 28 lying at Safaga awaiting repairs to a damaged port engine. Passengers flown on to Australia
<i>INVINCIBLE</i>	product tanker	CYP	NV	28,223	47,070	1992	Had fire on main deck and accommodation while moored at Perama repair zone Nov 25. Extinguished by crew. Only material damages ascertained. Investigation under way.
<i>ISCHIA EXPRESS</i>	passenger	ITA	RI	1,192	245	1936	Reported partially sunk overnight Nov 24 at the port of Ischia, Naples.
<i>MICHEL</i>	general	NLD	BV	1,576	21,68	1993	Arrived Gijon Nov 26 under tow of tug <i>Alonso de Chaves</i> , due main engine problems. Repairs effected and awaiting clearance from harbour-master.
<i>MOBBY DICK</i>	general	HND	—	375	580	1952	Reported Nov 27 being abandoned by crew in lat 36 27N, long 26 23.9E, due flooding. Three merchant vessels and a rescue helicopter on scene. All five crew rescued. Towed to Levitha Island, where under inspection. Arrived Rhodes Nov 30 in tow.
<i>NADJA</i>	general	VCT	RS	2,441	2,957	1985	Grounded outside Terneuzen Nov 24 and salvage services rendered. Refloated and towed to Ghent. Sailed Nov 29.
<i>ORATECA</i>	edible oil tanker	DIS	NV	1,733	2,650	1982	Had engine problems in North Sea Nov 24. In tow in lat 53 49.8N, long 04 12.3E, Nov 25. Reported Nov 28 at Den Helder.
<i>PINEY POINT</i>	barge	USA	—	1,675	—	—	Grounded about 5 miles south of Richmond, in the James River Nov 28. Leaking 8,400 gallons of liquid asphalt. Investigation under way.
<i>RAWAA A.</i>	general	SYR	—	1,589	3,180	1964	Became not under command due engine damage between Skiathos and Evia Nov 26. Towed to Volos same day by tug <i>Nestor</i> . Awaiting inspection.
<i>RENNESOY</i>	ro-ro	NOR	—	3,997	788	1990	Grounded near the quay at Kvitsoy Nov 27. Refloated by tugs <i>Lars</i> and <i>Bison</i> and moored at Mekjarvik for inspection. No injuries reported.
<i>SARAH ROUSING</i>	general	DIS	GL	1,456	1,578	1979	In collision with general cargo <i>Silver Pearl</i> in the New South Lock, Kiel Canal, Kiel Holtenau, Nov 28. Sustained minor damage at bow. Proceeded. Arrived Copenhagen Nov 29.
<i>SILVER PEARL</i>	general	VCT	RS	5,270	6,240	1973	In collision with general cargo <i>Sarah Rousing</i> in the New South Lock, Kiel Canal, Kiel Holtenau, Nov 28. Sustained a gash to starboard side. Proceeded.
<i>TEEN</i>	bulker	MLT	NV	26,828	43,671	1995	Crane and Jib fell on to vessel while loading at New Mangalore Nov 24. 50 cm hole to deck sustained. Investigation under way.
<i>TIBER II</i>	passenger	ITA	RI	289	176	1988	Grounded Rome area, River Tiber, Nov 27. Salvage not completed.

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The following reports are reprinted from Lloyd's List



ABDUL RAHMAN (North Korea)

London, Nov 28 — Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: During the evening of Nov 26, general cargo *Abdul Rahman* which had anchored three nautical miles south of Mandili, Evia, to repair engine damage, sailed for Piraeus to bunker after issuance of class maintenance certificate from vessel's class.

Piraeus, Nov 28 — General cargo *Abdul Rahman* sailed on Nov 26, bound to Piraeus for bunkering. — Lloyd's Agents.

ADORACION (Panama)

Moji, Nov 28 — Chem.tank *Adoracion* sailed Shimonoseki Nov 26 for Yawata. — Lloyd's Agents.

AGGRESSOR (U.S.A.)

London, Nov 25 — Following received from Coast Guard Boston, timed 1540, UTC: Fishing *Aggressor* is still hard aground. Understand a salvage plan as yet to be approved.

London, Nov 30 — Following received from Coast Guard Boston, timed 1340, UTC: Fishing *Aggressor* is still aground and has now broken in two.

ALDRIN (Bahamas)

London, Nov 30 — General cargo *Aldrin* is still at Haugesund, not Kopervik as previously reported. Vessel is reported in lat 59 24 42.02N, long 05 15 20.51E, at 0831 today.

ALFASHIP (Bahamas)

Piraeus, Nov 28 — Crude oil tanker *Alfaship* arrived Piraeus Nov 25 from Russia. — Lloyd's Agents.

ALLIANCE (Germany)

Genoa, Nov 29 — Research *Alliance* sailed Genoa Nov 28 for Kiel. — Lloyd's Agents.

ALLORA (Honduras)

Gothenburg, Nov 24 — General cargo *Allora*, Gdansk for Otterbacken with sodium carbonate, ran aground late last night on the Luroe Archipelago in Lake Vanern. Tugs have not been able to approach the vessel, mostly due to the high winds in the area. No leakage has been observed. The vessel has a hole in its bow and is taking in quite a lot of water but there is no risk of it sinking. None of the vessel's tanks sustained any damage. The pumps were working last night and the situation was under control. Tugs are still unable to approach the vessel today, and the weather has prevented a diver's inspection. An investigation has commenced into the grounding. — Westax Marine Services AB.

London, Nov 24 — Following received from Gothenburg MRCC, timed 2100, UTC: General cargo *Allora* is still aground. A tug and a barge are

proceeding, with the barge to be utilised in taking off some of the cargo. It is hoped to attempt refloating tomorrow.

London, Nov 25 — Following received from Gothenburg MRCC, timed 1632, UTC: General cargo *Allora* is still aground. Salvage is being delayed due to bad weather.

Gothenburg, Nov 26 — Following received from Coast Guard and Roda/Svitzer Salvage Co., timed 1300 today: Salvage of general cargo *Allora* commenced. Part of the cargo on board to be discharged to another barge in order to lift vessel. After refloating she will be brought to Otterbaecken for complete discharge as per Bill of Lading. All costs involved will be for the owners account, it was decided by The Board of Shipping, director R.Hanzen. Probably the vessel will after complete discharging be brought into drydock for survey and special control. Coast Guard attended with equipment and extra pumps as well as divers stand by to check damage to bottom and hole in bow. — Westax Marine Services AB.

Gothenburg, Nov 26 — General cargo *Allora*: Awaiting barge with crane from Kristinehamn tomorrow to commence cargo discharge. It is anticipated it will take the whole of tomorrow before first attempt can be made to refloat vessel. Coast Guard confirms water ingress through a hole in vessel's bow into the cargo and pouring slightly into engine-room but generators and pumps working so far; problems if they stop. More equipment is being loaded at Coast Guard depot in Gothenburg right now. Total of 12 cubic metres in one centre tank — Coast Guard will commence emptying same during this afternoon and evening and finalise tomorrow. — Westax Marine Services AB.

Gothenburg, Nov 27 — General cargo *Allora*: Coast Guard have commenced removing bunkers from vessel. Also a barge arrived before noon today and commenced discharging cargo. The barge was fully loaded at 1600 hrs and went back to Otterbacken for discharge at quay. — Westax Marine Services AB.

London, Nov 29 — Following received from Gothenburg MRCC, timed 0955, UTC: General cargo *Allora* was pulled off the ground at noon yesterday and safely towed to Otterbacken.

Gothenburg, Nov 29 — General cargo *Allora* refloated at 1150 yesterday after two thirds of the cargo discharged, approximately 400 tons brought ashore with Danish vessel *Careful*, minimum use of tugs since bottom and vessels structure in such poor condition and risk for severe damage. Supported with two small tugs to Otterbaecken where arrived approximately 1600 to discharge the remaining 250 tons of cargo. The cargo purchased via Poland on basis that the shipper would arrange for transport and insurance to final consignee Sweden. The Inspectors from Swedish Board of Shipping claiming vessel in such poor condition and under

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Honduras flag allowing to sail under old certificates and rules. Polish Class and conditions. Presently under restrictions and to be investigated first/approved by Class and Swedish inspectors. The Board of Shipping/taxpayers to guarantee the costs for salvage. — Westax Marine Services AB.

London, Nov 30 — A SvitzerWijismuller report, dated Nov 28, states SvitzerWijismuller Salvage together with SvitzerWijismuller company Roda Bolaget in Sweden successfully refloated general cargo *Allora* during the first scheduled attempt. The salvage team of eight, consisting of Swedish and Dutch salvage experts, had to lighten the vessel of some 220 tons of the 620 tons of 'sodium ash-dense' cargo that was on board and achieved this satisfactory result at about 1115, local time, Nov 28. The grounding created for the size of the vessel considerable damage to its bow. After having been refloated the vessel was towed to and re-delivered in Otterbaecken, where it was discharged.

AMADA (North Korea)

Piraeus, Nov 28 — General cargo *Amada* remains at Kalamata port. ETD:Unknown. — Lloyd's Agents.

AN JIN (China)

Hanoi, Nov 25 — General cargo *An Jin* sank in the morning of Nov 22, about 140 miles off Vung Tau beach, Vietnam. Nine crew were saved by tug/supply *Pacific Cheetah* and anchor handling tug/supply *Seabulk Hawk*. These crew are now staying at Vung Tau city awaiting repatriation. The Salvage Centre of Vung Tau is still now looking for the remains of the missing 13 crew and notifying all the vessels around the accident position. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Nov 25 — A press report, dated today, states: Nine seamen who were rescued from the South China Sea after general cargo *An Jin* sank along the coast of Vietnam will be allowed to return home next week, according to the Chinese Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh City. One crewman on the vessel has been confirmed dead and 12 others, including the master, are still missing. "The weather at that time (of the casualty) was terrible, with heavy rain and wind blowing up waves nine meters high," said Huang Xiping, China's consul general in Ho Chi Minh City. "I talked with the surviving crew members and know that the cargo sank quickly — within five minutes." Two vessels working around a nearby oil drilling platform saw the *An Jin* go under and rescued nine of its crew members, two of whom were trapped in the vessel after the master gave the order to abandon the cargo. Singapore sent 10 rescue boats to search for the missing crew members shortly after the accident. The boats gave up their search yesterday. Some rescue efforts were still under way last night, however, as three vessels from Vietnam were patrolling the area and

the Vietnamese government had called for all craft in the area to keep an eye out for the missing crew. Helicopters were unable to join the rescue efforts as the weather was still too bad. A group of officials from Shanghai Yong Zheng Marine Co has been dispatched to talk to the relatives of the missing sailors and the one dead crew member to talk about compensation. "We are still investigating the causes of the accident and we do hope the families will understand that marine work is dangerous due to unforeseeable weather conditions," said company Manager Shen Hongwei. The company said it lost contact with the vessel Nov 22, eight days after it set out from Shanghai. It was later informed of the accident by Chinese diplomats in Vietnam.

ARION (Greece)

London, Nov 28 — Passenger ro/ro *Arion*, which grounded in Greek waters Feb 11 and was subsequently refloated Sep 16, was towed to Aliaga Oct 4 for demolition.

ASTRO ANTARES (Greece)

London, Dec 1 — Product tanker *Astro Antares* sailed New Orleans Nov 17.

ATHOS I (Cyprus)

London, Nov 28 — A press report, dated Nov 27, states: Time may have hidden the scars left by the heavy oil that spilled from crude oil tanker *Athos I* into the Delaware River last year, but government and conservation groups say tons of submerged oil and plenty of sticky questions linger. "You can still see it out there if you go out and dig a little," said Penns Grove, NJ, resident Philip Hocknell, who has a home along the river. The spill from the vessel ranks as the worst on the Delaware since a tanker reform law cleared Congress in 1990, and the fourth-worst since 1972. Investigators have blamed a submerged anchor for poking two holes in the vessel, releasing 264,355 gallons of Venezuelan crude oil just as the vessel was approaching an asphalt-oil refinery. Traces of the thousands of gallons of unrecovered tarry crude could trickle up from the water for generations. "We're not going to really know the full ramifications for a long time, and we may never know," said Maya K. van Rossum, who directs the Delaware Riverkeeper Network, a multistate conservation group. "There are going to be sub-lethal, toxic effects to the wildlife and the river for a long time. In terms of wildlife, it will perhaps contribute to weakened immune systems or impact the ability to reproduce, or may contribute to deformities," van Rossum said. Coast Guard officials earlier this week called an end to active clean-up work along most of the river, winding up an effort that cost more than \$175 million and employed as many as 1,800 workers while still leaving most of the oil in the river. Prevailing winds forced most of the oil onto New Jersey's side, Delaware Department of Natural

Resources and Environmental Control Secretary John A. Hughes said this week. Some oil did taint shorelines and wildlife in Pennsylvania and Delaware, disrupting fishing and waterfowl hunting and frustrating some conservation group members. "We didn't have very high natural resource damage here," Hughes said. "We do have some impacts." Tsakos Shipping and Trading of Athens, owner of *Athos I*, reported making a proper approach to a Citgo refinery dock, following established shipping channels at night during the lowest tide of the month. The company paid \$124 million of the clean-up cost, well above its \$45.5 million legal limit, and has reported that it wants to recover the money from parties responsible for the accident. The shipping company earlier this month closed the book on the vessel by selling it to interests in the United Arab Emirates for an undisclosed sum.

ATHOS MATACENA (Madeira)

See *Ladies Maticena*.

AYTAK (Turkey)

London, Dec 1 — Tug *Aytak*, Bourgas for Aliaga, passed Istanbul Nov 29.

BONANZA EXPRESS (Canary Islands)

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

BONNIE SMITHWICK (Bahamas)

London, Nov 27 — Bulk/oil *Bonnie Smithwick* arrived Hamburg Nov 20 from Port Cartier and sailed Nov 24 for Ventpsils. (See issue of Nov 15.)

BRIGHT SUN (South Korea)

Manila, Nov 25 — Manila-based Malayan Towing and Salvage Corp. said that it called off the search, Tuesday (Nov 22), after no trace of the vessel could be found. "Our tugs have been crisscrossing the area where the vessel is supposed to have sunk but nothing has turned up, not even debris," Capt Renato Torreno said. Malayan harbour tugs *Monarch* and *Stanford*, have been searching an area, 25 nautical miles off Currimao town, where the bulk carrier sank. — Lloyd's List Correspondence.

BUMI JAYA (Indonesia)

Chittagong, Nov 30 — General cargo *Bumi Jaya* is still lying at Chittagong outer anchorage, with no change in its situation. — Lloyd's Agents.

BUNGA MAS LAPAN (Malaysia)

Seoul, Dec 1 — Thirteen South Korean fishermen are missing after their vessel was in collision with c.c. *Bunga Mas Lapan* (7998 gt, built 1998) just off the southwestern coast of the Korean peninsula and sank, a rescue official said today. One person was plucked from the sea by a passing fishing vessel, but the others were missing three hours after the collision, a coast guard officer said by telephone. "We'll have to see, but the situation is not good," he said. — Reuters.

CALISO

London, Dec 1 — A press release from the Maritime & Coastguard Agency, dated yesterday, states: Falmouth Coastguard received a telephone call at 2030, Nov 29, from the manager of the World Cruising Club based at Cowes, on the Isle of Wight, reporting that one of the entrants of the ARC 2005 had reported that yacht *Caliso*, 13.25 metres, six persons, was taking on water in a position 300 miles west of the Cape Verde islands. The Sweden 42 class yacht, five British and one Swedish and skippered by Mark Matthews had informed the World Cruising Club that they had a four inch crack in the keel box and that they were taking on water. This morning the situation had deteriorated and the skipper made a decision that the best course of action was to abandon the vessel. Falmouth Coastguard broadcast a distress message via Inmarsat communications. This distress message was received by tanker *Endless*. This tanker diverted his course to rendezvous with the yacht arriving at 1700, this evening. The yacht was able to manoeuvre alongside the tanker and the crew were evacuated from the yacht and taken on board the tanker. The sailors will be landed at the tankers next port of destination in approximately eight days time.

CELTIC SPIRIT (Bahamas)

London, Nov 28 — Following received from Coastguard Stornoway MRSC, timed 1705, UTC: General cargo *Celtic Spirit* (2978 gt, built 1976). Tallinn for Warrenpoint, 4,639 cubic metres timber, 10 persons on board, reported cargo problems in lat 58 48.9N, long 02 31W at 0812, UTC, Nov 27. Vessel proceeding to Stornoway harbour to restow deck cargo. Salvage tug *Anglian Prince*, on scene at 1800, UTC, Nov 27. Vessel has a 10 degree list to port. Vessel constrained in ability to maintain passage plan due to limitations imposed by insecure timber deck cargo and prevailing weather conditions.

London, Nov 28 — Following received from Coastguard Stornoway MRSC, timed 1930, UTC, today: *Celtic Spirit* still proceeding to Stornoway under its own power. *Anglian Prince* is escorting vessel.

London, Nov 29 — Following received from Coastguard Stornoway MRSC, timed 1055, UTC: General cargo *Celtic Spirit* remains at anchor outside Stornoway harbour, in lat 58 11.2N, long 06 17.8W awaiting repairs.

London, Nov 29 — Following received from Coastguard Stornoway MRSC, timed 1648, UTC: General cargo *Celtic Spirit* was escorted into Stornoway harbour by tug *Anglian Prince* at 1515, UTC.

London, Nov 29 — Following received from Coastguard Stornoway MRSC, timed 1659, UTC: General cargo *Celtic Spirit* is currently restowing deck cargo at Stornoway before recommencing voyage to Warrenpoint.

CORAL GEM (Malta)

London, Nov 24 — Bulk *Coral Gem* (25074 gt, built 1995), Panama for Shanghai, discovered high temperature and abnormal sound in combustion chamber in main engine on Nov 15. Vessel berthed alongside Baoshan Wharf, Shanghai, Nov 22 to discharge and remove Nos 1, 2, and 6 cylinder pistons of main engine for checking. (Note — *Coral Gem* sailed Puerto Ordaz Oct 17 and passed Panama Canal Oct 23.)

DBL 152 (U.S.A.)

London, Nov 30 — A Coast Guard Port Arthur press release, dated Nov 29, states: Rough weather continues to hinder the salvage and recovery of tank barge *DBL 152*. Today, seas subsided enough for divers to begin reconnecting lightening hoses to *DBL 152*. Lightening is the process of transferring oil cargo using hoses and pumps. The majority of the oil from *DBL 152* will be lightened prior to the salving of the barge. Three cargo tanks of the double-hulled tank barge were damaged and leaked oil. The No.1 starboard cargo tank, containing approximately 300,000 gallons of oil, was damaged in the collision with debris on Nov 10. The No.1 port cargo tank and the No.3 starboard cargo tanks were breached sometime after the barge capsized on Nov 14. The cargo tanks contained approximately 440,000 gallons and 564,000 gallons of oil. The entire contents of all three damaged cargo tanks were 1,309,000 gallons of oil. Initial surveys indicate that a large portion of the oil in the damaged cargo tanks leaked out and settled on the ocean floor. Rough weather continues to delay the submerged oil survey and recovery operations. Responders are staging equipment to conduct sonar and video surveys of the submerged oil and are monitoring the movement, if any, of the oil on the ocean floor. Rough seas and the devastations of hurricanes "Katrina" and "Rita" have plagued the lightening, oil recovery and salvage efforts since operations began on Nov 11. More than half of the response days were lost due to rough weather. Also, after each weather front passed additional dive surveys on the barge were required before operations could resume. During the bad weather several of the response vessels had to seek safe harbour, more than 30 miles away. The availability of responders and response equipment has been greatly reduced due the effects of the hurricanes on the Texas and Louisiana coast. The Texas General Land Office continues to monitor Texas beaches for any indication of oiling. The TGLO, the Louisiana Oil Spill Coordinator's Office, the barge owner, the Coast Guard, and other agencies have developed a shoreline clean-up plan, which will be implemented if oil is found along the Texas or Louisiana coastlines. No oil from *DBL 152* has reached either the Texas or Louisiana coast. *DBL 152* struck some debris Nov 10. Company officials and the National Oceanic and

Atmospheric Administration have conducted a survey of the submerged platform with which the barge is suspected to have struck. The platform was damaged during the recent hurricane. The barge is now in lat 29 12.3N, long 93 28.1W.

London, Dec 1 — A Coast Guard Port Arthur press release, dated Nov 30, states: The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration completed a survey today revealing that tank barge *DBL 152* struck a submerged platform on Nov 10. The platform gouged a 35-foot long by 6-foot wide hole in the barge's starboard bow, puncturing both hulls and damaging the No.1 cargo tank. The platform West Cameron 229A, owned by Targa Midstream Services Limited Partnership, was a non-producing platform used to support pipeline inspection and operation. It is normally above the surface of the water but was damaged and sank during hurricane "Rita". Following the storm the company located their platform and marked it with unlit buoys. Response crews began lightening the fuel from *DBL 152*. At 1600 today, more than 400,000 gallons of oil had been lightened from the barge. Lightening is the process of off-loading oil cargo using hoses and pumps. The majority of the oil from *DBL 152* will be lightened prior to salving the barge.

DELAWARE (Georgia)

London, Nov 24 — General cargo *Delaware* was reported passing Istanbul, in an easterly direction, at 1620 hrs, Nov 23, on a reported voyage of Abu Kir for Azov.

DIAMOND PRINCESS (Bermuda)

See "Outbreak Of Virus On Bermuda Flag Vessel" under "Miscellaneous".

DONATELLO (Italy)

Messina, Dec 1 — Hydrofoil *Donatello* sustained considerable damage and had to be kept afloat with balloons. Not known what owners have decided about permanent repairs. — Lloyd's Agents.

DOROTHEA (St. Vincent & Grenadines)

Maassluis, Nov 28 — This afternoon at 1600 hrs, general cargo *Dorothea* (2120 gt, built 1981), collided with a barge when leaving berth 506 at Antwerp. The vessel is proceeding to berth 501 for inspection. No news about any damage. — Lloyd's Sub-agents

DYVI BALTIC (Hong Kong)

London, Nov 30 — A press report, dated Nov 29, states: Vehicle *Dyvi Baltic* (39043 gt, built 1989) is to undergo repairs to its rudder at Durban after cracks were discovered. The vessel had called at the port to deliver a consignment of motor vehicles and underwent inspection after problems with the rudder had been experienced. The inspection revealed a crack endangering the rudder and the safety of the vessel. As

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a result of the dry docks at Durban, East London and Cape Town being currently fully booked for weeks ahead, the owners have had to agree to a cofferdam being erected around the rudder. It is thought the ship will be out of action for at least a month. In the meantime *Dyvi Baltic* has gone to a layby berth at Durban's Point awaiting the construction of the cofferdam. (Note — *Dyvi Baltic* sailed Nagoya Nov 4 and arrived Durban Nov 23.)

EBERSWALDE (Germany)

London, Dec 1 — General cargo *Eberswalde*, 80 metres long and 8,20 wide vessel, home port Berlin, Emden to Haldensleben, loaded with 1000 tons of fertilizers, in Sachen-Anhalt when between Petkum and Gandersum had steering problems, at 0830, local time, Nov 29. The master of the vessel tried in vain to moor his vessel on the dolphins before the Emssperrwerk, but did not succeed. Most probably through the strong tide in the River Ems, the deeply loaded vessel struck a dolphin and sustained a leak in its hull. Just within a few minutes the cargo vessel sank to the bottom of the river. The two crew on board could save themselves by jumping into the vessels rowing boat and were picked up by the in Emden stationed buoylayer *Gustav Meyer*. The Emssperrwerke was not damaged, only the dolphin had slight damage. An investigation will be held by the river police on this accident. The sunken vessel is out of the fairway and is no threat to the other shipping traffic and is marked by two buoys. There is no harm yet from the 5000 litres fuel, which is in the tanks of the vessel. The Wasser- und Schifffahrtsamt Emden (WSA) is now talking with the insurance of the vessel, the owner and salvage companies. The vessel will be raised next week.

ENVOY (NIS)

London, Nov 25 — Passenger ro/ro *Envoy* (18653 gt, built 1979), on Harwich-Ymuiden service, broke from its moorings and drifted against the shore several times in severe gales last night, sustaining hull damage. At the time of the accident the vessel was moored in Ymuiden for brief technical maintenance and there was no cargo on board. There were no injuries. It is expected that it will take about a week before the damage is repaired and the vessel is ready to sail again.

EURO FJORD (Norway)

Trondheim, Nov 28 — General cargo *Euro Fjord* sailed Kristiansund at 1830, Nov 26, and arrived Kvernhusvik Shipyard, Hitra, assisted by a tug, at 0300, Nov 27. — Lloyd's Agents.

Trondheim, Nov 30 — Kvernhusvik Shipyard, Hitra, inform that they estimate to complete repairs to general cargo *Euro Fjord* before the Christmas holidays. — Lloyd's Agents.

EVERISE GLORY (Malaysia)

Manila, Nov 25 — Smit Salvage reported recently that the removal of the wreck of general cargo *Everise Glory* was completed on Nov 1. Smit Salvage said in a salvage report that it was contracted by Singapore maritime authorities to remove the wreck, which was posing a hazard to vessels navigating in the area where it sank, close to the Malaysia/Singapore boundary, some 7.5 nautical miles from the Horsburgh Lighthouse in the Singapore Strait. The removal operation began in mid-August. SMIT's floating sheerleg *Asian Hercules II* and the diving/work platform *Smit Ibis* were deployed to the casualty site. The plan was to cut the vessel into three sections, each weighing about 2,000 tonnes. After the cutting was completed, the sections were lifted from the seabed onto two barges. The wreck sections were then transported to a scrapyard. The final section was landed on the barge on Nov 1. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

FENIX (Panama)

Chittagong, Nov 28 — Local agents of bulk/c.c. *Fenix*, Pacific Ocean Lines Ltd., have informed us that the vessel sailed from Chittagong port at 1000 hrs, Nov 22, for Haldia, India, without undertaking any repairs. — Lloyd's Agents.

FERTILIA (Italy)

Jakarta, Nov 28 — Bulk *Fertilia* completed cargo discharge Nov 25 and sailed Cigading the same day, reportedly for Nha Trang. — Lloyd's Agents.

FILIPINAS ILOILO (Philippines)

Manila, Nov 25 — The Philippine Coast Guard report that ro/ro *Filipinas Iloilo* (2408 gt, built 1979) collided with a harbour pilot boat at the port of Iloilo, in central Philippines, at around 1135, local time, Nov 23. The ferry had just arrived from Cebu and was being guided by *Pilot No. 4* to her berth at the Iloilo Port terminal when it accidentally collided with the harbour boat. The wooden-hulled pilot boat was crushed and sank to the bottom of the harbour. The boat's master and engineer were able to jump into the water before the ferry rammed into them. Both crewmen were rescued by passing harbour boats. *Filipinas Iloilo* sustained only scratches to its hull and resumed normal operations between Iloilo and Cebu on the same day. The Coast Guard has scheduled a hearing next week to determine responsibility for the accident. *Filipinas Iloilo* is owned by Cebu-based Cokaliong Shipping Lines. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

FINNSAILOR (Sweden)

Landskrona, Nov 29 — Ro/ro/c.c. *Finnsailor* sailed Landskrona Nov 25 for Malmo. — Lloyd's Sub-agents.

FINNSTAR (Finland)

Naples, Nov 25 — A fire broke out on board passenger ro/ro *Finnstar* (42100

gt, built), presently under construction in the Fincantieri Shipyard, Castellammare di Stabia, Naples, at 1030, Nov 24. Vessel being built on behalf of Finnlines. She was launched about four months ago and at present she was being fitted out. As reported the flames came out of the lift area. Most probably the fire was caused due to a sparkle of a welder which probably ended up on some plastic material which caught fire. Actual cause still to be determined. At time of the event about 400 workers were on board, fortunately only four were slightly injured of which only one was brought to the hospital and soon after released. — Lloyd's Agents.

FUNCHAL (Madeira)

London, Nov 28 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: Lisbon-based Arcalia Shipping's passenger *Funchal* (9563 gt, built 1961) is lying in Safaga, Egypt, awaiting repairs to a damaged port engine. The vessel was enroute to Australia from Europe on a positioning voyage when it was stricken with mechanical difficulties. Its complement of passengers have been flown to Australia while its owners decide whether to make repairs in Safaga or bring the vessel to Suez.

GALINA (Cambodia)

Falmouth, Nov 29 — General cargo *Galina* is still at Falmouth under repair and detained. — Lloyd's Agents.

GAROYA SEGUNDO (Spain)

See "Spanish Fishing Vessels Seized by Norway" under "Seizures & Arrests."

GENERAL GROT-ROWECKI (Malta)

London, Nov 30 — Bulk *General Grot-Roweck* was reported still in port at Szczecin Nov 28, where arrived Nov 14.

GENMAR TRUST (Liberia)

London, Nov 29 — Bulk/oil *GenMar Trust* was reported in lat 52 27 10.97N, long 03 46 25.57E, at 1032 today.

GOLDEN BELLS 2

Belfast, Nov 30 — Fishing *Golden Bells 2* is still at Kilkeel. Repairs have not commenced as yet Repair work is estimated to take between 10 - 13 weeks. — Lloyd's Agents.

GREBE ARROW (Bahamas)

London, Dec 1 - While at Tiwai Aluminium Smelter Wharf, Bluff, Nov 10 general cargo *Grebe Arrow* (36008 gt, built 1997) had the shaft in the gearbox of the No.1 gantry crane shear. The hoist free-wheeled with 25 tonnes of aluminium ingots onto the tank top. The shaft has been sent for testing and repairs are being made to the crane. (Note — *Grebe Arrow* arrived Bluff Nov 9, sailed Nov 25 and arrived Newcastle, NSW, Nov 25.)

HELSE (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Nov 24 — General cargo *Helse* arrived at Police on Nov 23.

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HOPE (Croatia)

See "Croatian Vessel Blockaded Off Gdynia, Poland" under "Miscellaneous".

ILYA (St. Vincent & Grenadines)

Corunna, Nov 24 — General cargo *Ilya* completed repairs and sailed 1630 today bound Corinth for unloading. Part cargo, 1,782 tonnes of wood pulp, was discharged at Corunna. — Lloyd's Agents.

INVINCIBLE (Cyprus)

London, Nov 28 — Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: Fire broke out on board product tanker *Invincible* (28223 gt, built 1992), while the vessel was moored stern fast at Perama repair zone, Nov 25. The location of the fire was on the main deck and accommodation. The fire was immediately extinguished by the crew with the assistance of the Fire Brigade and personnel of Perama Port Authority. There were no injuries. An investigation is being performed by Perama Port Authority.

Piraeus, Nov 28 — Fire broke out at the main deck of product tanker *Invincible* on Nov 25, while the vessel was docked at Perama port, Piraeus. The fire was extinguished by crew members with the assistance of the local fire brigade. All crew members were reportedly healthy and secure. Only material damages were ascertained. Preliminary examination is being carried out by the Perama port authorities. — Lloyd's Agents.

INZENIERIS NECIPORENKO (Malta)

Freeport, Bahamas, Nov 25 — Ro/ro *Inzenieris Neciporenko* is still at Freeport, where repairs have commenced. — Lloyd's Agents.

ISCHIA EXPRESS (Italy)

Naples, Nov 28 — It is reported in local newspapers that passenger ro/ro *Ischia Express* (1192 gt, built 1936), partially sank during the night of Nov 24/25, while at the port of Ischia (Naples), "under normal controls prior to resuming sea". It is reported that water entered "the garage". The ferry is owned by "MedMar". — Lloyd's Agents.

ISLE OF INISHMORE (Republic of Ireland)

See "Irish Ferries Personnel" under "Labour Disputes".

JAGUAR (Poland)

London, Nov 29 — Tug *Jaguar* arrived Gdynia Nov 22.

JAMES PRIOR (U.K.)

London, Nov 29 — A press report, dated today, states: A Thames bridge which closed two months ago for safety reasons, causing major congestion, could reopen in January. Battersea Bridge has been shut to all traffic except buses and bicycles since it was hit by general cargo *James Prior* in September. It was thought the difficulties of replacing sections of the 115-year-old cast iron bridge might

mean it had to remain closed until spring, but Transport for London (TfL) says it can be repaired and tendering for repairs has been speeded up. The contract was awarded yesterday, on the understanding repair work would be speedy, and work is due to start next week. Engineers will use heated steel rods and plating to "stitch" the damaged sections of the Victorian cast iron bridge's structure back together. TfL's chief operating officer for streets, Peter Brown, said: "We are delighted that as a result of the close co-operation between Transport for London engineers, the London boroughs and our contractors, work will be commencing so soon. It will allow us to re-open this crucial link over the river much earlier than we originally expected." There has been much congestion since the bridge, which normally carries 1,300 vehicles an hour, closed to traffic.

JOHN E.RIGBY (Canada)

London, Nov 28 — Ferry *John E.Rigby* (232 gt, built 1976) with 15 persons on board, was reported to have run aground on the beach while docking at Deer Island in lat 45 01.30N, long 66 56.18W at 2120, UTC, Oct 30. Vessel was subsequently refloated on the tide.

JONATHAN SWIFT (Republic of IRELAND)

See "Irish Ferries Personnel" under "Labour Disputes".

JUAN J.SISTER (Canary Islands)

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

KAPITAN KUROPTEV (Malta)

See "Maltese Vessel Blockaded At Le Havre, France" under "Miscellaneous".

KARMSUND (Barbados)

London, Nov 27 — Information received from Sandnes, dated today, states: General cargo *Karmsund* ran aground in Rosfjorden, near Farsund, at 0200, local time, Nov 24. Vessel refloated and moored at Agnefest for discharging and inspections. No injuries to the crew of ten. The vessel was moored at Stavanger and drydocked at Stavangerdokken early Nov 26.

KAZUYOSHI MARU NO.3

See *Kinei Maru No.8*.

KENT NAVIGATOR (Gibraltar)

Montreal, Nov 24 — General cargo *Kent Navigator* (12804 gt, built 1977) contacted the berth Nov 22 while berthing at Three Rivers. Damage to the vessel and berth is minor. The vessel requires no repairs at this time, and will depart as planned. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Nov 24 — General cargo *Kent Navigator* struck wharf at Three Rivers in lat 46 20N, long 72 20W, at 1200, EST, Nov 22.

KINEI MARU NO.8 (South Korea)

London, Nov 29 — A press report, dated Nov 28, states: A 77-year-old

freighter captain from Hofu, Yamaguchi Prefecture, was arrested yesterday on suspicion of professional negligence resulting in death in connection with the capsizing of fishing *Kazuyoshi Maru No.3* (298 gt) last week that left two men dead, Japan Coast Guard officials said. According to the coast guard, Akiyoshi Noriyasu, skipper of general cargo *Kinei Maru No.8* (694 gt, built 1989), hit *Kazuyoshi Maru No.3* in waters off Hofu on the night of Nov 21. The bodies of the two men on the fishing vessel, 53-year-old Kazumi Kashima and his 51-year-old brother, Yoshio, were later recovered from the vessel. Noriyasu denied the allegations, saying he did not notice striking the other vessel, coast guard officials said. Investigations show that traces of blue paint found on the hull of *Kinei Maru No.8* matched that of *Kazuyoshi Maru No.3*, and the coast guard determined that the vessel left the scene after the collision.

KIPEROUSA (Malta)

London, Nov 24 — A press report, dated today, states: Almost 1200 large logs from the shipwrecked bulk *Kiperousa* remain unaccounted for, according to the salvage team handling the removal of the cargo. The total recovered cargo of about 20,000 tonnes of hardwood logs from Gabon will become available for sale at an auction to be held at East London in the near future. The original buyers of the logs, 20 Chinese importers have so far shown little interest in the recovery of the cargo which has been salvaged from the ship and beaches along the Eastern Cape coast. The cargo comprises about 14 varieties of West African timber that were destined to be reduced to veneer in China. Now it appears the timber will be sold to anyone with an interest and the right price. However according to the ship's manifest 1197 logs remain unaccounted for and are believed to be either in the ship's holds and under water, or they may have sunk at sea. It is thought that all the 'floaters' that washed overboard have been recovered although there are reports of some logs floating perpendicular in the water or slightly below the surface, which makes them difficult to see and a navigational hazard to ships and small boats operating anywhere along the coast from north of East London to Cape Agulhas. The shipwreck itself has been declared a hazard and should be marked on all charts.

KLICKITAT (U.S.A.)

London, Nov 30 — A press report, dated today, states: The North Olympic Peninsula's water link to the northern Interstate 5 corridor was severed yesterday morning passenger ro/ro *Klickitat* (1408 gt, built 1927) was idled by engine troubles. The situation, however, should be relieved by midday today when a similar-size vessel is brought in from the San Juan Islands. "There was an electrical problem with one of the vessel's engines," Susan Harris, Washington

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State Ferries spokeswoman, said yesterday. The disabled ferry affected six ferry runs yesterday and has the potential of affecting three or four scheduled ferry runs today. The problem was discovered while the vessel was en route from Whidbey Island's Keystone terminal to the Port Townsend dock, Harris said. At 1100 hrs, she was taken out of service and at about 1530 hrs, using its one good engine, the ferry was moved to the tie-up slip at the Port Townsend terminal for repairs.

London, Dec 1 — A press report, dated today, states: Ferry service between Port Townsend and Keystone resumed late yesterday morning when passenger ro/ro *Illahee* cruised in from the San Juan Islands to fill in for an out-of-commission passenger ro/ro *Klickitat*. In need of electrical repairs to one of its two engines, *Klickitat* at noon yesterday was pushed by a tug from its tie-up slip at Port Townsend to Washington State Ferries' Eagle Harbor maintenance facility, near the Bainbridge Island ferry terminal. "They thought that it might take a couple of weeks to get it fixed," said Susan Harris, Washington State Ferries spokeswoman. After seven ferry trip cancellations Tuesday (Nov 29) and yesterday, two of which were because of low tides, the *Illahee* resumed runs to Keystone at 1115 yesterday.

KONA WIND (Ecuador)

London, Dec 1 — Understand fishing *Kona Wind* departed Suva Oct 8 bound for Tauranga where repairs and maintenance were to be carried out. After this the vessel was proceeding to Tahiti to fish. At 1745, Oct 13, the crew checked the engine-room and found it to be flooded. The bilge alarm had not sounded and further inspection revealed a plastic/rubber connection in the sea water service line was broken. The engineer closed the sea water inlet valve but the engine was already flooded. A distress call was issued using Sat-C. At 1845 hrs, the distress call was cancelled. The crew managed to bail out the engine-room and considered it safe to start the second generator. They were then able to use the electric bilge pumps. At 2230 hrs, *Kona Wind* resumed its voyage to Tauranga.

KUKI MARU (Japan)

Yokohama, Nov 30 — General cargo *Kuki Maru* (199 gt) came into contact with Light Buoy No.2 in Wakamatsu Passage at 2320, Nov 29. As a result it capsized and sank. Reportedly a part of the hull is still floating in the passage. No oil spill or personal injury reported. — Lloyd's Agents.

L'ARPEUTEUR (U.S.A.)

London, Nov 25 — Following received from Coast Guard New Orleans, timed 1615, UTC: Research *L'Arpeuteur* (99 gt, built 1982) sank after striking an unknown underwater object in lat 28 36N, long 91 58W, yesterday.

LA VELLA (Cambodia)

London, Nov 27 — General cargo *La Vella*, Bourgas for Izmit, passed Istanbul Nov 25.

LADIES MATACENA (Madeira)

London, Nov 25 — Following received from Rome MRCC, timed 1225, UTC: Passenger ro/ro *Ladies Maticena* (3088 gt, built 1968) was in contact with passenger ro/ro *Athos Maticena* (7038 gt, built 1970) at Reggio di Calabria at about 2300, yesterday. Both vessels sustained minor dent damages.

LIFE BOAT ULLADULLA

See *San Giuseppe Star*.

MAERSK HOLYHEAD (Venezuela)

Caracas, Nov 24 — Lpg *Maersk Holyhead* in collision with bulk *Pequot*: Initial survey carried out on Nov 12, while *Pequot* was anchored at Maracaibo Bay. Attending: Ing. Jorg Seifert, Reederei F. Laeisz - Managing Owner - Superintendent. At the time of the survey divers inspection of the damages below the water line was effected. Vessel damage found as follows: Shell plating damage - heavily pushed up, distorted, ripped and turn open - extending from the bulbous bow to forecandle deck from approximately port side frame No. 261 around stem to starboard side frame No. 251. Bulbous bow upper half smashed, ripped and turn open as reported by divers. Bos'n deck floor plating heavily waved and/or ripped and open from stem to approximately 3,5 m aft. Starboard side hawse pipe smashed and sectioned, starboard anchor showing a broken fluke. Port side anchoring system appears to be in good order with some minor damages. Forecandle bulwark smashed, ripped and pushed up. Forward mooring bits, fore peak and bos'n deck vents affected. Collision bulkhead apparently suffered no damage. Fore peak was found with approximately 12 m water inside with oily remains on the top. A detailed report of damage will followed as soon as divers report and fore peak internal inspection were available. At the time of survey, ABS surveyor, vessel's Club surveyor were present on board, as well as local and foreign shipyard representatives in order to verify the visible extension of the damages and to bid for the repairs. Provisional repairs have to be effected at anchorage prior vessel's departure from Maracaibo. The proposed repairs basically consist of made watertight the fore peak from the bulbous bow which is bellow waterline and very difficult to repair due to the extension of the sustained damages, seal the bos'n deck ripped floor plates and built a wall at the forward section of the compartment to avoid water entering and protect the equipment installed in the compartment. Owner will submit the proposal to ABS approval. If approved, it will not be necessary discharge any cargo. It seems to be the best and less expensive alternative due to serious

difficulties and high expenses that could be expected if any cargo has to be discharged. — Lloyd's Agents.

MERAK (Georgia)

Naples, Nov 29 — General cargo *Merak* (1472 gt, built 1976) bound Haifa, while in navigation in the gulf of Naples, near Procida, had some engine problems and was towed to Naples Nov 27. At present the vessel is in port under repairs. — Lloyd's Agents.

METALLICA (Gibraltar)

London, Dec 1 — Following received from Gothenburg RCC, timed 1130, UTC: General cargo *Metallica* (3826 gt, built 1989) had engine problems just north of Gotland in lat 57 52.5N, long 18 47.8E, at 2030, Nov 30. Vessel nearly ran aground but was able to anchor. After two hours a tug arrived on scene and assisted vessel into a safe bay to effect engine repairs.

MICHEL (Netherlands)

Gijon, Nov 28 — General cargo *Michel* (1576 gt, built 1993) arrived Gijon at 0500 hrs, Nov 26, under tow of firefighting tug *Alonso de Chaves*, after suffering main engine problems. The vessel was in ballast at the time of incident. The vessel has already completed repairs and is awaiting Gijon harbour master inspection to obtain sailing clearance. It's next port of call is Aviles. — Lloyd's Agents.

MINERVA NIKE (Greece)

Maassluis, Nov 26 — Crude oil tanker *Minerva Nike* (57301 gt, built 2004), bound Primorsk, empty, struck lock side while departing Zandvlietlock, Antwerp, this afternoon. A crack was sustained in vessel's port side and vessel is awaiting inspection. — Lloyd's Sub-agents.

Zeebrugge, Nov 27 — Crude oil tanker *Minerva Nike* arrived Flushing at 0300, local time, Nov 27, from Antwerp. — Lloyd's Sub-agents.

MIRAC-3 (Turkey)

Venice, Nov 25 — At 1915, local time, Nov 24, general cargo *Silver* (3464 gt, built 1976), while anchored in Venice roads, was struck by general cargo *Mirac-3* (1211 gt, built 1977), which was leaving Venice port in ballast. Both vessels sustained damages and entered Venice port a.m. Nov 25. — Lloyd's Agents.

MOBBY DICK (Honduras)

London, Nov 27 — Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 1540, UTC: General cargo *Mobby Dick* (375 gt, built 1952), Odessa for Beirut with steel pipes, is being abandoned by its crew in lat 36 27N, long 26 53.9E, due flooding which commenced at 1330, UTC. A helicopter is on scene carrying out rescue operations. Three merchant vessels also on scene.

London, Nov 28 — Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 0835, UTC: All five crew from general cargo *Mobby Dick* have been rescued. Coast

Guard patrol vessels are proceeding to last reported position to establish whether the vessel is still afloat.

London, Nov 28 — Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: During the afternoon of Nov 27, while general cargo *Mobby Dick* (375 gt, built 1952) was sailing 25 nautical miles west of Tilos island, in the position lat 36 27N, long 26 53.9E, the master of the vessel requested assistance to abandon ship, due to flooding in the hold. Nearby ships were immediately notified and two salvage craft and two Coast Guard patrol boats proceeded to the area. A helicopter was despatched and that took off the five crewmembers and transported them to Rhodes. The vessel had sailed from Odessa bound for Beirut loaded with 450 tonnes of steel pipes. Weather conditions in the area at the time: winds: southerly force 7-8.

London, Nov 28 — Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 1450, UTC: General cargo *Mobby Dick* was taken in tow by tug *Megas Alexandros* to Levitha Island, where it anchored in lat 37 01N, long 26 28E. Inspection by divers under way.

London, Nov 29 — Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 1200, UTC: General cargo *Mobby Dick* is currently south of Kos and is expected to be towed tomorrow to Rhodes by tug *Megas Alexandros*.

London, Nov 30 — Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 1245, UTC: General cargo *Mobby Dick*, in tow of tug *Megas Alexandros*, arrived Rhodes anchorage about 0900, local time, today.

London, Dec 1 — Understand salvage services were rendered to general cargo *Mobby Dick* by Tsavlis Salvage (International) Ltd under Lloyd's Open Form.

MONTE MEIXUEIRO (Spain)

See "Spanish Fishing Vessels Seized by Norway" under "Seizures & Arrests."

NADJA (St. Vincent & Grenadines)

London, Nov 25 — Services rendered to general cargo *Nadja* (2441 gt, built 1985) by URS Salvage & Maritime Contracting NV and Multraship Salvage BV under LOF 2000 after it ran aground outside Terneuzen at 1900, Nov 24. Vessel refloated and towed to Ghent.

Zeebrugge, Nov 29 — General cargo *Nadja* sailed Ghent Nov 29 for Hull. — Lloyd's Sub-agents.

NAFTOCEMENT V (St. Vincent & Grenadines)

Piraeus, Nov 25 — Cement *Naftocement V* sailed from Samos on Nov 21 bound to Chios. General cargo *Super Georgia* remains in Samos port and reportedly will sail, weather permitting, with destination Piraeus for repairs. — Lloyd's Agents.

NAN HAI (Panama)

London, Nov 28 — Following received from Coast Guard New Orleans, timed

1520, UTC: Bulk *Nan Hai* (26123 gt, built 1996), upbound River Mississippi, in ballast, grounded at Mile 75 at 0315, local time, today. Vessel is still aground. No pollution reported.

London, Nov 29 — Following received from Coast Guard New Orleans, timed 1635, UTC: Bulk *Nan Hai* was refloated and cleared to proceed on voyage following classification society inspection.

NAPHT AL YEMEN 6 (North Korea)

Aden, Nov 29 — Product tanker *Napht Al Yemen 6* (4699 gt, built 1979) made contact with Aden Refinery Company's jetty at Little Aden, while berthing on Nov 28. The vessel sustained damage to its bow, holing the forepeak tank. The vessel is currently at the outer harbour anchorage awaiting repairs. — Lloyd's Agents.

NATIONAL STAR (Egypt)

Aleppo, Nov 28 — Our Tartous office have reported that at 1320, local time, Nov 24, general cargo *National Star* (5741 gt, built 1982) while entering Tartous port basin, struck general cargo *Statengracht* (16639 gt, built 2004), berthed at the quay, loading heavy lift equipment, causing dents to her lift No. 1 and damages to the forecastle of *National Star*. — Lloyd's Agents.

NDS PROSPERITY (Belize)

London, Nov 25 — Following received from Cape Town MRCC, timed 1200, UTC: General cargo *NDS Prosperity* is still effecting repairs off Saldanha Bay, awaiting spares.

London, Nov 30 — A press report, dated Nov 28, states: General cargo *NDS Prosperity*, which went to anchor about five miles off Saldanha Bay after losing all engine power, has completed repairs and is proceeding with its interrupted voyage.

NINA 1 (St. Vincent & Grenadines)

London, Nov 26 — General cargo *Nina 1* sailed Antwerp Nov 25.

NORD STAR (U.K.)

Glasgow, Nov 29 — General cargo *Nord Star* departed from Corpach and is currently under repair in Buckie, ETD uncertain at the present time. — Lloyd's Agents.

NORMANDY (Bahamas)

See "Irish Ferries Personnel" under "Labour Disputes".

NORTH KING (Panama)

London, Nov 30 — Following received from Den Helder RCC, timed 1035, UTC: Bulk *North King* (68619 gt, built 1981), Amsterdam for Brazil, is currently not under command in lat 52 02.3N, long 02 40.7E.

London, Nov 30 — Following received from Den Helder RCC, timed 1515, UTC: Bulk *North King* completed repairs and was back under way at 1142 today.

ORATECA (DIS)

London, Nov 25 — Following received from Den Helder RCC, timed 1144, UTC: Edible oil tanker *Orateca* (1733 gt, built 1982) is in tow of Coast Guard tug after it sustained engine problems in the North Sea, last night. Towage currently in lat 53 49.8N, long 04 12.3E bound Den Helder, ETA 2100, UTC.

London, Nov 25 — Understand salvage services rendered to edible oil tanker *Orateca* by Smit Salvage under LOF.

London, Nov 28 — Edible oil tanker *Orateca* is currently at Den Helder.

ORO 1 (Comoros)

Piraeus, Nov 29 — General cargo *Oro 1* (2657 gt, built 1976) listed at about 15 degrees on its starboard side due to ingress of water Nov 25. The vessel was berthed at Keratsini, Piraeus port, under detention. The water was pumped and the list was adjusted. No damages to nearby vessels were reported. — Lloyd's Agents.

OUR LADY OF RULE (Philippines)

Manila, Nov 28 — Ferry *Filipinas Maasin* has now resumed normal operations between Cebu and Maasin in Leyte province after undergoing repairs at Cebu Port. The vessel collided with ferry *Our Lady of Rule* on Nov 14 while leaving the port of Cebu. *Filipinas Maasin* sustained damage to its gangplank, catwalk and roof deck of the economy class. The vessel was laid-up for one day to undergo repairs. *Filipinas Maasin* is now en route to Maasin port from Cebu. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

OVERSEAS COLMAR (Marshall Islands)

London, Nov 30 — Following notice to mariners issued Nov 28: Tug towing crude oil tanker *Overseas Colmar*, bound Qingdao, in lat 45 47.6N, long 141 55.6E, at 0001, Nov 28. Eta Qingdao Dec 10 via Tsushima Kaikyo, Nishi Suido and Ckejudo, southward. speed about 5 to 6 knots. Length of tow about 1,000 metres.

PAN RIVER (Panama)

Moji, Nov 29 — General cargo *Pan River* arrived Hiroshima Nov 21 from Miyako and sailed Nov 23 for Busan. — Lloyd's Agents.

PANAGIA (Malta)

See "Somalia" under "Piracy".

PANAGIA TINOU (Greece)

London, Nov 28 — Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: During the morning of Nov 26, before arrival at the port of Tinos, passenger ro/ro *Panagia Tinou* (1787 gt, built 1976) sustained damage to the port main engine. At the time of the incident the vessel was performing the Andros-Tinos-Syros-Paros-Naxos-Folegandros-Sikino-Ios-Thirasia-Santorini-Anafi-Katapola-Anafi schedule. The Port Authority of Tinos permitted the vessel to perform one voyage to Piraeus without passengers or cargo in order to carry out repairs.

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The seven passengers were forwarded to their destinations on another vessel. During the afternoon of Nov 27, following successful repairs and issuance of a class maintainance certificate, The Port Authority of Piraeus permitted vessel to resume normal scheduling.

Piraeus, Nov 28 — Passenger ro/ro *Panagia Tinou* sustained failure in her left main engine on Nov 26, while approaching Tinos port. At the time the vessel was scheduled to perform the voyage Tinos-Syros-Paros-Naxos-Folegandros-Sikinos-Ios-Thirassia-Thira-Anafi-Katapola-Anafi. Her passengers were forwarded to their destinations by another vessel. *Panagia Tinou* proceeded the same day without passengers, to Piraeus for repairs. After completion of repairs and class inspection the vessel returned to service on Nov 27. — Lloyd's Agents.

PAPER MOON (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Nov 27 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: General cargo *Paper Moon* (2292 gt, built 1990) ran aground approaching Kiel morning hours of Nov 26 close to Neu-Stein, l/h Buelk. It had a load of paper and was heading for the Kiel Canal from the Baltic. Tugs *Bulk* and *Holtenu* succeeded in salvaging the ship after some hours. It is now anchored off Kiel Holtenu for further inspections. Investigations proved that the bridge officer had 2.63 promille alcohol when grounding the ship which had no pilot on board.

PAVEL MOCHALOV (Russia)

Bucharest, Nov 30 — General cargo *Pavel Mochalov* (2478 gt, built 1979) grounded Sulina Channel at 1825, Nov 29. The vessel had left Braila, bound for Poti at 1800, Nov 28. The cause of grounding is apparently that the vessel swung off the channel. Refloating operations of the vessel were carried out by the help of the tug *Tg. Ocna 5* on the same day, being completed at 2115 hrs. The vessel proceeded at sea this at 0915, morning to destination. — Lloyd's Agents.

PAVO (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Nov 30 — General cargo *Pavo* was reported still in port at Swinoujscie Nov 28, where arrived Nov 13.

PEQUOT (Liberia)

See *Maersk Holyhead*.

PHILIPP (Antigua & Barbuda)

Liverpool, Nov 28 — General cargo *Philipp* was towed into Birkenhead at 1250, Nov 19, and went into the Wet Basin Berth at Cammell Lairds. It has since been moved to No 5 Dock, Cammell Lairds, and is being repaired. — Lloyd's Agents.

PINEY POINT (U.S.A.)

London, Nov 28 — A press report, dated today, states: Tank barge *Piney Point* (1675 gt, built 1971) with more than one million gallons of hot liquid

asphalt ran aground this morning, leaking its load into the James River, officials said. It was not immediately known how much of the substance spilled into the river, said Lt. Gary Hutchison of the Henrico County Fire Department. The barge was carrying more than 1 million gallons of the cargo when it ran aground about 0430 hrs about five miles south of Richmond. One tank, holding 120,000 gallons of the 270-degree asphalt, was damaged, causing the leak, Hutchison said. The other tanks on board did not appear to be leaking, the Coast Guard said. County officials called in the Coast Guard, the Virginia Department of Emergency Management and the Environmental Protection Agency to help, Hutchison said. The barge, owned by Vane Line Bunkering of Baltimore, Md., was being pushed by a tug boat operated by Dann Marine of Chesapeake City, Md., Hutchison said. The Coast Guard was investigating what caused the barge to run aground, Hutchison said.

London, Nov 29 — A press report, dated Nov 28, states: A barge (tank barge *Piney Point*) filled with more than one million gallons of hot liquid asphalt ran aground today, leaking 8,400 gallons into the James River, officials said. Gerald Seeley Jr, a regional director of the state Department of Environmental Quality, said there was no evidence of any substantial damage to aquatic life. The Coast Guard was investigating what caused the barge to run aground. The accident happened before daybreak about five miles south of Richmond. One tank, holding 120,000 gallons of the 270-degree asphalt, sprang a leak. The other tanks on the barge did not appear to be leaking, the Coast Guard said. Firefighters and hazardous-materials crews worked to contain the spill with booms. The spill area was about the size of a football field, authorities said. The 250-foot barge was being pushed by a tugboat at the time. The leak closed a mile-long section of the river. The Coast Guard said clean-up of the spilled asphalt and salvage of the barge was expected to take several days.

London, Nov 30 — A press report, dated today, states: The Coast Guard is monitoring tank barge *Piney Point* that ran aground Monday (Nov 28) five miles south of Richmond on the James River. The barge leaked approximately 42,000 to 63,000 gallons of liquid asphalt. It was being pushed up river by a tug when it ran aground in the vicinity of Meade Landing State Park. The barge was transporting approximately 930,000 gallons of asphalt. Divers assessed damage to the hull yesterday, and a plan is being developed to patch the hole. The remaining cargo left on board is scheduled to be removed today.

London, Dec 1 — A press report, dated today, states: Salvage crews hope to complete today pumping liquid asphalt from tank barge *Piney Point* that ran aground on the James River south of Richmond, dumping as much

as 63,000 gallons of its cargo. A second barge was sent to the scene yesterday to begin the unloading, said Chief Warrant Officer Brandon Brewer, a Coast Guard spokesman. Plans called for reheating the 800,000 gallons or so of asphalt stored in the seven undamaged tanks and pumping it to the undamaged barge. Whatever asphalt remains in the eighth damaged tank will be left there, where it has congealed. It no longer was leaking into the water. Divers found a 12-foot-by-1-foot gash in the front of the barge that led to the lone damaged tank. "The time line calls for the pumping to take between six and 10 hours, depending on the consistency of the asphalt," Brewer said. After the damaged barge is removed, crews will begin recovering the asphalt that has settled under 20 feet of water on the river's bottom. No significant environmental damage has been reported. No citations have been issued so far to the barge or tug owners, said Jerry Crooks, chief investigator for the Coast Guard's Marine Safety Office in Norfolk. "But there has been an oil spill and we will be required by law to issue a civil penalty in this case," he said. In addition, those responsible for the spill must pay for the cost of the cleanup and all Coast Guard costs associated with the incident. "The quantity of the spill is worse than what we first thought, but the behavior of the material that has been spilled is ideal for cleaning it up," Crooks said.

PLATO (Barbados)

London, Nov 26 — General cargo *Plato* sailed Londonderry Nov 23.

QIHUA NO.6

See *Stefania*.

QUEENIE (Italy)

Caracas, Nov 30 — There has been no change in the situation of m barge *Queenie* over the past 12 months. The vessel is still lying unrepaired in dock No.13 at La Guaira under order of local court and port authorities. — Lloyd's Agents. (Note — *Queenie* was towed into La Guaira on Aug 14, 1993, with engine breakdown.)

RAWAA A. (Syria)

London, Nov 28 — Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: During the afternoon of Nov 26, while general cargo *Rawaa A.* (1589 gt, built 1964) was sailing between Skiathos and Evia, vessel became not under command due to engine damage. Immediately nearby vessels were notified, a Coast Guard patrol boat was despatched and a tug was expected. Previously the vessel had departed from Cyprus bound for Volos loaded with scrap. On board were 11 crewmembers who are in good health. The weather conditions in the area are good. Later tug *Nestor* arrived and towed *Rawaa A.* to Volos, arriving at 2350 hrs. The Port Authority of Volos prohibited departure pending issuance of a class maintainance certificate.

Piraeus, Nov 28 — General cargo *Rawaa A.* was rendered immobile, between Skiathos and Euboea island, on Nov 26, after experiencing mechanical failure. The vessel was loaded with a consignment of scrap iron and had sailed from Cyprus bound to Volos. The vessel was taken in tow by tug *Nestor* and towed to the port of Volos, arriving at 2350 hrs, Nov 26. All crew members were reportedly healthy and secure. The local port authorities have prohibited it from sailing until it has been inspected by a class surveyor. — Lloyd's Agents.

REI (North Korea)

London, Nov 30 — A press report, dated Nov 29, states: North Korean general cargo *Rei* (969 gt, built 1961) sank at the old Igoumenitsa port late yesterday afternoon, because of a dangerous listing, and large part of its shipment fell on the pier. The ship, which was "carrying bricks from Turkey", had docked sideways at the port and although port authorities tried their best, they failed to prevent it from sinking. The master and the eight crewmembers are on land and in good health. According to estimations, the ship sank because of an overload or cargo shift. To avoid any fuel leak, the Igoumenitsa Port Authority had placed floatable barriers around the ship.

London, Nov 30 — Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: While general cargo *Rei* was loading a cargo of bricks, for Albania, alongside the quay at Igoumenitsa port yesterday afternoon, the vessel took a dangerous list and part of the cargo fell on to the jetty. Following the incident a tug arrived and remained alongside the vessel. There were no injuries to the nine crew members. No pollution caused.

London, Nov 30 — Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 1120, UTC: General cargo *Rei* sank at Igoumenitsa port yesterday afternoon.

Piraeus, Nov 30 — General cargo *Rei* sank yesterday evening during loading operations at Igoumenitsa port. According to first evidence the vessel listed heavily due to overload or load displacement and subsequently sank. Part of the cargo was dropped on the pier. All nine crew members were reportedly healthy and secure. The vessel was scheduled to transport a cargo of building materials, bricks, to Albania. Preliminary examination is effected by the local port authorities. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Nov 30 — Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: Following a severe list general cargo *Rei* capsized and completely sank next to the quay but remains visible in the clear waters. Igoumenitsa port authority has notified the owner of the vessel to arrange for salvage and in the meantime antipollution contractors are on the scene to protect the environment. As there is no means in the vicinity to perform such a refloating operation it is expected for the vessel to remain there for some time.

RENESOIY (Norway)

London, Nov 27 — Information received from Sandnes, dated today, states: Ro/ro *Rennesoy* (3997 gt, built 1990) grounded near the quay when arriving Kvitsoy from Stavanger at 1250 today. There were no injuries to the 98 passengers or crew. Vessel was refloated by tugs *Lars* and *Bison* and moored to Mekjarvik near Stavanger for inspections.

RENUAR (Panama)

Montreal, Nov 24 — Repairs to bulk *Renuar* were completed and the vessel departed the anchorage at Seven Islands at 0700 hrs, Nov 24, bound Egypt. — Lloyd's Agents.

RICKMERS FINLANDIA (Isle of Man)

London, Nov 25 — Following received from Australia RCC, timed 0255, UTC: Ro/ro *Rickmers Finlandia* (8831 gt, built 2000) has been broken down in lat 36S, long 103E, for the last two days awaiting parts from owners. Believed vessel has a bearing problem.

London, Nov 29 — Following received from Australia RCC, timed 0024, UTC: Ro/ro *Rickmers Finlandia* completed repairs and proceeded at 0100, UTC, Nov 27, bound Port Alma.

ROSTOK (Russia)

Bucharest, Nov 30 — General cargo *Rostok*: The last piece of the wreck was removed from the Sulina channel on Nov 29. — Lloyd's Agents.

RT.HON.PAUL J.MARTIN (Canada)

London, Nov 28 — Understand that recently repaired bulk *Rt.Hon.Paul J.Martin* entered St. Lambert lock at 1700, local time, Nov. 27 and is heading for Toledo, Ohio, for delivery.

SAFE CONCORDIA (Panama)

Melbourne, Nov 28 — Semi-sub HL vessel *Safe Concordia* arrived at Melbourne anchorage on Sep 20 and is still at the anchorage. As repairs cannot be completed at Melbourne, arrangements have been made to tow the vessel to Westernport and load it onto another heavy lift vessel for transport to Singapore. The shift to Westernport is scheduled to take place on or about Dec 14. — Lloyd's Agents.

SALT HORSE

London, Nov 28 — A press report, dated today, states: The Royal Australian Navy is responding to a distress call from the yacht *Salt Horse* which is dismasted off Jervis Bay. On board are 12 crewmen, mostly off duty navy personnel. At 0500 today the yacht reported she had been making her way to Jervis Bay when she became dismasted. A vessel from the RAN HMAS Creswell has been deployed to assist the yacht.

London, Nov 28 — A press report, dated today, states: A Navy vessel is towing the yacht *Salt Horse* to Jervis Bay after its main sail blew out about 0500 today. A Defence Department spokeswoman said it was not known how many people were on board, but no one was injured.

SAMAR STAR (Philippines)

Manila, Nov 30 — Passenger ro/ro *Samar Star* resumed operations Nov 23 after undergoing a day of repairs to its cargo hold. A spokesperson for the Cebu-based Maypalad Shipping Lines, owner and operator of the vessel, said that the vessel only sustained minor damage from the fire which swept its cargo hold on Nov 21 while docked at Cebu. The vessel is now in transit between Cebu and Liloan, after which it will proceed to Cabigiti, also on the island of Cebu. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

SAN GIUSEPPE STAR

London, Nov 28 — A press report, dated today, states: Police have launched efforts to rescue trawler *San Giuseppe Star*, disabled with three people on board, and coastal patrol vessel *Life Boat Ulladulla*, with four volunteers on board, currently stranded between Ulladulla and Bateman's Bay, on the south coast. At 1830 last night the trawler radioed for help after her steering became locked. On board are a 43-year-old master and two crew hands. The coastal patrol boat was deployed to assist and located the trawler at 0500 today but it too has developed mechanical problems. Port Kembla Water Police and Eden Water Police are currently conducting the rescue operation, which is being coordinated from the State Marine Search and Rescue Co-ordinator Centre at Balmain. The Port Kembla Water Police vessel departed at 0600 hrs and is expected to take five hours to reach the stricken vessels. Eden Water Police, which deployed at 0700 hrs, is also expected to take five hours because of difficult conditions at sea. The weather conditions for the area are storm warnings with seas expected above 6 metres and winds between 45 to 50 knots.

London, Nov 28 — A press report, dated today, states: Coastal patrol boat *Life Boat Ulladulla* has been towed to safety after breaking down in rough seas during a failed rescue mission off the far south coast of New South Wales. The patrol boat set out at 0500, AEDT, today to go to the assistance of trawler *San Giuseppe Star* stranded at sea between Ulladulla and Batemans Bay. Port Kembla Water Police went to the rescue and towed the patrol boat into Ulladulla Harbour about 1230 today. Eden Water Police are expected to tow the trawler back to harbour this afternoon.

SARAH ROUSING (DIS)

London, Nov 29 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: General cargo *Sarah Rousing* (1456 gt, built 1979) was in collision with general cargo *Silver Pearl* (5270 gt, built 1973) in the New South Lock of the Kiel-Canal in Kiel-Holtenua, Nov 28. *Sarah Rousing*, entering the lock, did not stop fast enough and hit the stern of *Silver Pearl*. The hull of the *Silver Pearl* suffered a gash on the right side. Both vessels which were underway into the Baltic Sea coming

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

from the North Sea anchored on Holtenau roads. Until the damage was assessed both vessels were arrested by the police. After an emergency repair the *Silver Pearl* was allowed to resume its voyage some hours later. The *Sarah Rousing* had only minor damage at the bow and meanwhile also was allowed to leave Kiel towards the east.

Copenhagen, Nov 30 — General cargo *Sarah Rousing* arrived Copenhagen Nov 29 from Helsingborg. — Lloyd's Agents.

SARAH SPENCER (Canada)

London, Nov 30 — At 0130 hrs, Nov 25, barge *Sarah Spencer* (14708 gt, built 1959), in tow of tug *Jane Anner IV* experienced a fire on an engine turbo charger, while at Sarnia. The fire was extinguished by the crew with no injuries or pollution.

SD TRIUMPH (Panama)

London, Nov 30 — Bulk *SD Triumph* sailed Vancouver Nov 24.

SEA HAWK-2 (Malta)

Piraeus, Dec 1 — General cargo *Sea Hawk-2* remains at Mytilene port. As we were informed by the port authorities, the vessel was surveyed and the class certificate issued permits voyage under 5 (fresh breeze) beaufort scale winds. Current weather condition in Mytilene area force 7 (strong wind). — Lloyd's Agents.

SEA MAGNOLIA (Panama)

London, Nov 24 — Following received from Coast Guard Seattle, timed 2115, UTC: Bulk *Sea Magnolia*: Understand ballast water was leaking from an adjacent ballast tank through a crack into vessel's No. 1 cargo hold. Vessel remains at Seattle.

London, Nov 28 — Bulk *Sea Magnolia* sailed Seattle 0612, Nov 25, and was reported at anchor 2.3 nautical miles from Seattle, in lat 47 37 26.52N, long 122 22 16.74W, at 1215, Nov 28.

SHANGHAI PRIDE (Panama)

London, Nov 30 — Understand salvage services were rendered to general cargo *Shanghai Pride*, under Lloyd's Open Form, by Wijsmuller Salvage BV/Sri Lanka Shipping Company Ltd.

SICHEM FENOL (Malta)

London, Dec 1 — Understand salvage services were rendered to chemical/oil carrier *Sichem Fenol* (4441 gt, built 1985), in ballast, by Kotug International BV under Lloyd's Open Form dated Nov 25. (Note — *Sichem Fenol* sailed Rotterdam 2230, Nov 24, returned 0325, Nov 25, sailed again at 1200, Nov 26 and passed Cape Finisterre Nov 29 bound Safi.)

London, Dec 1 — Following received from Den Helder RCC, timed 0835, UTC: Chemical/oil carrier *Sichem Fenol* left Rotterdam and due to weather conditions and strong current had to anchor and was later assisted back to port.

Maassluis, Dec 1 — The pilot service was suspended due to windforce 12 (hurricane) and because of the wind chemical/oil carrier *Sichem Fenol* almost run into the pier just outside the Hook of Holland. Therefore tugs of Kotug were necessary to guide it into Rotterdam harbour again. — Lloyd's Sub-agents.

SILVER (St. Vincent & Grenadines)

See *Mirac-3*.

SILVER PEARL (St. Vincent & Grenadines)

See *Sarah Rousing*.

SITC BANGKOK (Turkey)

London, Nov 29 — C.c. *SITC Bangkok* refloated Nov 27-28. Understand vessel is proceeding to Ho Chi Minh City.

London, Dec 1 — C.c. *SITC Bangkok* was refloated at 1855, Nov 28 by tug/supply *Pacific Champion*.

SMIT RHONE (Netherlands)

London, Nov 30 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: Tug *Smit Rhone* (353 gt, built 2000) sailing in Dutch Amazone Harbour, Rotterdam, sustained engine-room fire. Tug *Texelbank* in the vicinity assisted — tug safely brought alongside and CO2 system activated. RPA patrol vessels RPA 15 & RPA 16 proceeded to scene. RPA 15 assisted fire brigade extinguishing fire. Cause of the fire is under investigation. (Note — *Smit Rhone* in lat 51 57.42N, long 04 82.2E at 0037, Nov 30.)

SNARVEIEN (Norway)

London, Nov 27 — Information received from Sandnes, dated today, states: Passenger *Snarveien* (265 gt, built 2005), Askoy for Bergen, experienced engine stoppage after a rope stopped the propeller at 1045, local time, today. The rope was removed by divers and the vessel was back in service at 1115, local time.

SNORRE A

London, Nov 24 — A press report, dated today, states: Norway's national prosecutor today ordered Statoil ASA to pay a record 80 million kroner, US\$12 million; euro10 million, fine as a penalty for a natural gas blowout on oil platform *Snorre A*. The state-controlled company has 30 days to decide whether to accept the fine in what safety authorities said was one of the worst incidents in the history of the Norwegian offshore industry. In assessing the largest corporate fine ever ordered in Norway, the prosecutor said Statoil had failed to follow rules and documentation, carry out well safety measures or adequately assess risks and plan operations. The prosecutor said it did not find grounds to fine any individual or other companies in the incident. In its own statement, Statoil said it has already taken comprehensive steps to improve safety and operations at Snorre and elsewhere. It said it will review the prosecutor's findings before deciding whether to challenge the fine.

SPERCHIOS (Liberia)

London, Nov 25 — Following received from Coast Guard San Juan, timed 1550, UTC: Product tanker *Sperchios* remains at anchor in Guayanilla Bay.

London, Nov 30 — A SvitzerWijsmuller Salvage report, dated Nov 25, states: The ICALL organisation, which includes SvitzerWijsmuller Salvage, assisted the owners of product tanker *Sperchios* after it grounded off Puerto Rico's south coast on Nov 21. Immediately salvage staff from SvitzerWijsmuller Salvage and the Resolve Marine Group were sent in to the site with US and Dutch salvage team members arriving at the location still the same night. In quick succession a salvage plan was developed and set in motion which met with the approval of the US Coast Guard which included a part cargo transfer and a refloating operation using tugs with further pollution response craft from fellow ICALL member NRC on site. These operations were successfully completed as early as 2.5 days after the grounding in the early afternoon of Nov 23.

SPIRIT OF ALPHA (Panama)

London, Nov 25 — A SvitzerWijsmuller Salvage BV report, dated today, states: SvitzerWijsmuller Salvage BV succeeded in refloating bulk *Spirit of Alpha* around midnight, local time, last night during the first planned and controlled attempt that was executed off Padang, Sumatera. In order to achieve a refloating condition about 4,500 tons of cargo needed to be lightered from the vessel as part of the salvage activities. Salvage personnel from the SvitzerWijsmuller offices in Indonesia, Singapore and the Netherlands had been mobilised in to take charge of the operations as well as a tug/barge combination to receive the to be lightered cargo. The SvitzerWijsmuller salvage tug *Albatros* was also mobilised from Singapore with dedicated salvage equipment on board, amongst others with grabs to be used in the cargo transfer. Cargo handling operations were executed in between the frequent tropical rain showers. About 2230, local time, Nov 24, the operations started with two tugs, the *Albatros* being the lead tug. Considerable manoeuvring of the vessel was required to move it along the refloating path that was set out and at 2320, local time, the casualty was finally refloated. It was subsequently anchored at the anchorage for (dive) inspections and stabilisation whereafter it is planned to start reloading the lightered cargo, while keeping it segregated from the non-touched cargo in the holds.

London, Nov 30 — SvitzerWijsmuller Salvage report yesterday at about 1600, local time, re-delivered the bulk *Spirit of Alpha* back to its owners off Padang, Sumatra, Indonesia. The lightered cargo that was taken out to enable refloating of the vessel was re-loaded and dive surveys had indicated

that the vessel was in a proper condition to complete her loaded original voyage. Vessel has departed more or less immediately after the re-delivery. The salvage team will be mobilised back to their respective bases in Indonesia, Singapore and The Netherlands. The SvitzerWijsmuller salvage tug *Albatros* will further depart with the bulk of the salvage gear back to its base in Singapore.

STAINLESS DOLPHIN (Panama)

Piraeus, Nov 25 — Chemical/oil carrier *Stainless Dolphin*, in tow, sailed from Stylys on Nov 12 for Tartous, Syria. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Nov 26 — Chemical/oil carrier *Stainless Dolphin* arrived Piraeus Nov 22.

STATENGRACHT (Netherlands)

See *National Star*.

STEFANIA (Malta)

London, Nov 24 — Bulk *Stefania* (35722 gt, built 1981), which was under repair alongside the berth at Shanghai Shipyard, was struck by vessel *Qihua No.6* Nov 23.

STEFANIA I (Malta)

London, Nov 30 — Following received from Coast Guard Cleveland, timed 1450, UTC: Bulk *Stefania I* (16775 gt, built 1985), loaded, struck railway bridge over Maumee River at Toledo at 1420, UTC, today. Bridge was undamaged, while damage to vessel believed superficial. Vessel is continuing passage to berth at Toledo, where Marine Safety Agency will carry out inspections.

London, Nov 30 — Following received from Coast Guard Cleveland, timed 1510, UTC: Bulk *Stefania I* sustained only paint scraping damage as it was only a glancing blow against the bridge.

STENA FORERUNNER (Sweden)

London, Nov 25 — Information from Kiel, dated today, states: In the evening of Nov 23 a fire occurred on board tro/ro *Stena Forerunner* (24688 gt, built 2003) lying in the Kiel-Holtenu locks of the Kiel Canal. It was smouldering in a switchboard. Due to effective fire fighting by the crew it was extinguished quickly and only a little damage was caused. *Stena Forerunner* was able to continue its voyage.

London, Nov 29 — Ro/ro *Stena Forerunner* arrived and sailed Hamina Nov 25. Vessel subsequently arrived Antwerp Nov 28.

STOLT ASPIRATION (Liberia)

See *Thorngarth*.

STORMAN ASIA (Madeira)

London, Dec 1 — Following received from Stavanger RCC, timed 1115, UTC: Ro/ro *Storman Asia* (3032 gt, built 1976), loaded, had engine breakdown in lat 63 09N, long 06 57E, at 0200, Nov 30. Vessel was towed into Kristiansund at 0705 same day.

SUMIWAKA MARU NO.57 (Japan)

See *Tonpu*.

SUPER GEORGIA (Greece)

See *Naftocement V*.

SUPERFLYTE (New Zealand)

London, Nov 30 — A press report, dated today, states: A crack in the exhaust pipe caused ferry *Superflyte* (578 gt, built 1996) to cut one of its engines during a Coast Guard charter trip in the Firth of Thames last night. A passenger reported a fire, but the head of Fullers, Douglas Hudson, says the smoke was only the result of the cracked exhaust. Mr Hudson said the ferry will be back on the water as soon as repairs to the exhaust are carried out.

Wellington, Nov 30 — Fullers Ferries says there's no link between the latest problem on one of its ferries and engine problems with the same vessel just over a year ago, which led to a fire. A crack in the exhaust pipe caused ferry *Superflyte* to cut one of its engines during a Coastguard charter trip in the Firth of Thames last night. A passenger reported a fire, but the head of Fullers, Douglas Hudson, says the smoke was only the result of the cracked exhaust. Mr Hudson said the nine-year-old vessel is one of the most advanced ferries available and will be back on the water as soon as repairs to the exhaust are carried out. He said the engine fire in August last year was found to be a manufacturing fault - but there was nothing to suggest a link with the latest problem. — Lloyd's Agents.

TALBOR (Norway)

London, Dec 1 — Following received from Bodo RCC, timed 1140, UTC: Fishing *Talbor* (1514 gt, built 2001) had engine breakdown in lat 68 00N, long 12 42.17E, at 1750, local time, Nov 30. Vessel has been taken in tow by a rescue vessel and is expected at Bodo in around seven hours from now. Current speed is five knots.

TARIFA (Spain)

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

TASNUI (South Korea)

London, Dec 1 — Trawler *Tasnui* (236 gt, built 1979) had fouled propeller 80 nautical miles south-east of Bluff Oct 13. *Tasnui* was taken under tow by fishing *Melilla 201* towards Bluff. At 0300, Oct 14 tug *Hawoko* took over the tow. (Note — *Tasnui* arrived Lyttelton Oct 16 and sailed Oct 17.)

TEEN (Malta)

Kochi, Nov 30 — Bulk *Teen* (26828 gt, built 1995) berthed at New Mangalore port at 0120, local time, Nov 23, to load about 42,000 tonnes of iron ore fines to China. Loading operations commenced at 0700. At about 0200, Nov 24, during the loading operations at Hatch No.4, Crane No. 4, engaged for the purpose, gave way due to overloading and the crane along with its jib fell on to the wharf. Winch operator Mr. Vasu, aged 41 years who was inside the operator's cabin sustained serious injuries, was rushed

to the hospital but at around 0300 hrs he was declared dead. The operator belongs to the New Mangalore Port Trust and was engaged by the stevedore. The accident caused a 50cm hole in the deck of the vessel. The crane will be detached and taken to Dubai for repairs. *Teen* is detained by MMD. P&I Survey is in progress. Complaints have been registered against the Traffic Manager, Dy. Traffic Manager, Asst. Traffic Manager, Dock Safety Officer of New Mangalore Port and HML Agencies, Mangalore (Stevedores). — Lloyd's Agents.

THORNGARTH (U.K.)

London, Nov 30 — A press report, dated Nov 28, states: Firefighting tug *Thorngarth* (365 gt, built 1983) collided with chemical/oil carrier *Stolt Aspiration* (7901 gt, built 1987) on the River Mersey on Apr 13 because its master was unfamiliar with the vessel and lacked training, an accident report says. *Thorngarth* sustained significant damage in the collision, and one of its engineers broke an arm. Damage to *Stolt Aspiration* was minimal and there was no pollution or other injuries. Accident investigators said there had been a number of similar accidents and have since issued fresh advice to tugs. The Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) report said *Thorngarth* was one of two tugs assisting the tanker into Birkenhead Docks in the early hours of Apr 13. The tug was struck on its starboard side as the tug master attempted to correct the vessel's position in front of the tanker. The accident report said the accident was one of a number of similar incidents involving tugs in a four-month period, all attributable to a lack of training.

TIBER II (Italy)

Rome, Nov 29 — Passenger *Tiber II* (289 gt, built 1988) grounded Rome area, River Tiber, Nov 27. Salvage still not completed. Extent of damage still unknown. — Lloyd's Agents.

TONPU

Yokohama, Nov 30 — Pusher tug *Sumiwaka Maru No.57* (413 gt, built 2001) and barge *Tonpu* (3747 gt) ran aground near the Goto Retto at 0110, today. The vessels capsized after refloating from the shallow by their own power. Five crews have been rescued except for master of pusher tug. No oil spill. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Nov 30 — A press report, dated today, states: Barge *Tonpu*, loaded with 3,900-cubic metres of stones, left Kabashima in Goto at around 2300, yesterday, and was on its way to the Port of Imizu in Toyama Prefecture, capsized off the Goto Islands in Nagasaki Prefecture early today, the local office of the Japan Coast Guard (JCG) said. At around 0100 hrs, the barge towed by tug *Sumiwaka Maru No. 57*, capsized after running aground off Shioyazaki in Kamigoto, JCG officers said. Captain of the tug Tairyō Iwamoto, 53, went missing after the accident. The JCG

Sasebo office dispatched patrol boats to the scene to search for Iwamoto and officers found him dead in the vessel at around 0900 hrs. Five of his crew members escaped on a lifeboat and survived.

TORGELOW (St. Vincent & Grenadines)
See "Somalia" under "Piracy".

TRANS ASIA I (Philippines)
Manila, Nov 28 — Ro/ro *Trans Asia I* has resumed normal operations between Cagayan de Oro Port and Cebu. Trans-Asia officials said that the vessel underwent repairs immediately after arriving at Cagayan de Oro port in Mindanao on Nov.21. This involved draining its fuel tanks of the water which had seeped in and contaminated its fuel supply. Repairs were completed in a few hours and the vessel was able to depart for Cebu on the same day. The vessel was adrift for a short period before arriving at Cagayan de Oro after its engine stalled due to contaminated fuel. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

TRINITY SEA (Canada)
London, Nov 24 — Tug/supply *Trinity Sea* was reported arriving at Halifax on Nov 18 and sailing from the port later the same day.

TRIZAN (North Korea)
London, Nov 25 — Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: During the morning of Nov 24, inspections revealed that general cargo *Trizan* which had grounded on the coast of Potamias, Thassos the previous day, had sustained a transverse crack in No. 3 Hold and the vessel was separated in two parts. Part of the cargo of cottonseed had been lost into the sea and covered the coast to an extent of about 5x200m. Personnel from the Municipality of Thassos undertook the clean-up operation. There has been no oil pollution observed so far and the private company undertaking the salvage and antipollution works has taken precautions and placed oil booms around the vessel and their two tugs.

London, Nov 26 — Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 1246, UTC: General cargo *Trizan* remains aground.

London, Nov 28 — Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 1500, UTC: General cargo *Trizan* is still aground with salvors on scene.

London, Nov 29 — Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 1230, UTC: General cargo *Trizan* is still aground.

London, Nov 30 — Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 1235, UTC: General cargo *Trizan* is still aground in same position, broken in two.

ULYSSES (Republic of Ireland)
See "Irish Ferries Personnel" under "Labour Disputes".

UMFOLOZI (Cyprus)
London, Nov 28 — C.c. *Umfolozi* sailed Walvis Bay Nov 22 for outer anchorage.

VULCAN (U.S.A.)
London, Dec 1 — A press report, dated today, states; Six crew members swam to safety yesterday evening after their tug *Vulcan* (298 gt, built 1953) lost power and was in danger of going over a dam on the Ohio River. The U.S. Coast Guard and firefighters in Wetzel County, W.Va., said the master, Matt Dillon, managed to run the nine coal-laden barges ashore and prevent the tow and barges from going over the dam before abandoning ship. The incident occurred about 1930 hrs as *Vulcan* was travelling south and about to enter the Hannibal Locks and Dam, which spans the river between New Martinsville, W.Va., and Monroe County, Ohio, about 40 miles south of Wheeling, W.Va. Dillon's wife, Carolyn, said he told her that he and the five crew members "all jumped in together, then locked together so they wouldn't lose anyone, and swam to shore." She described *Vulcan* as one of the largest boats in the fleet of Mon River Towing Inc. in Speers. "The pilot, from my understanding, was able to steer the barges onto the shore because he was afraid they would go through the locks and cause flooding downriver," said New Martinsville fire Chief Larry Couch. "The boat then swung around and struck the north bulkhead of the lock walls," he said. The men were examined by paramedics from New Martinsville Emergency Medical Services. Coast Guard Lt. J.G. Jesse Garrant said a crew of investigators from Pittsburgh were en route to New Martinsville last night. Garrant said he understands that none of the barges sank and Couch said it appeared that most were still tied to the tow.

WILSON MAR (Malta)
Poznan, Nov 28 — Repairs to general cargo *Wilson Mar* are coming to an end. Estimated time of sailing is Dec 20. — Lloyd's Agents.

YEMEN STAR (Yemen)
Aden, Nov 29 — Non specific tanker *Yemen Star I*, which grounded at Socotra, arrived Aden Nov 22 and is awaiting drydocking to carry out repairs. Understand vessel was holed in the pump-room. — Lloyd's Agents.

YM VENUS (Malta)
Ponta Delgada, Nov 29 — Chem.tank *YM Venus* (3841 gt, built 2005) has arrived at Ponta Delgada outer anchorage for repairs to its main engine turbo charger. The estimated time for completion of the repairs to the turbo charger is unknown. — Lloyd's Agents.

YUE SHAN (Panama)
Fremantle, Nov 11 — Bulk *Yue Shan* arrived Port Hedland Oct 10 from Shanghai and sailed Oct 12 for Beilun. — Lloyd's Agents.



SOMALIA
London, Nov 28 — A press report, dated Nov 27, states: Pirates have freed bulk *Panagia*, seized nearly 40 days ago off the coast of Somalia, Ukraine's Foreign Ministry said today. The vessel's 22 crew members were safe after being freed late yesterday, and by noon today, the vessel was 90 miles away from Somalia's east coast, the Foreign Ministry said in a statement. It was not immediately clear if the US\$700,000 ransom demanded by the pirates had been paid, although earlier officials in Kiev had said the Ukrainian company was ready to pay. The vessel was carrying iron ore from South Africa to Turkey when it was seized on Oct 18. The Foreign Ministry said the vessel was escorted away from the Somali coast overnight by a French vessel, and the Defence Ministry expressed thanks to French officials for their assistance. President Viktor Yushchenko also spoke by telephone with the vessel's master and wished them a safe journey back home, the Foreign Ministry said.

London, Nov 30 — A press report, dated today, states: Pirates have released a Kenyan-owned freighter hijacked last month off the Somali coast. The gunmen released general cargo *Torgelow* after tribal leaders intervened to free the ship and its crew of 10. At least six other vessels are still being held by pirates including a Thai-owned sugar freighter and three fishing vessels and two Arab dhows. The company, which chartered the ship to ferry 850 tonnes of general cargo to Mogadishu from the Kenyan port of Mombasa, told Reuters news agency by phone that no ransom had been paid. "The ship is now in our hands. They released it condition-free after elders intervened," said Mohamed Ali Waranle of the Mogadishu-based Taksan Shipping agency. There have been 32 pirate attacks off the Somali coast since March this year, according to the International Maritime Board.



AFRICAN PRIDE (Panama)
London, Nov 29 — A press report, dated today, states: A Nigerian court has postponed the next hearing in trial of crewmen from product tanker *African Pride* until Dec 14, UNESCO goodwill ambassador Ara Abramyan said today. Abramyan said Nigeria's judicial authorities had taken the

pause to "correct technical faults in the legal procedure." Earlier, lawyers told Abramyan that the court would review the seamen's case. The hearing of the case was to have taken place today. The case has been dragging on since the spring of 2004.

AGIOS ARSENIOS (Greece)

See under "Tsoukalas Naftiki Eteria."

AGIOS DIONYSIOS (Greece)

See under "Tsoukalas Naftiki Eteria."

AUDREY

London, Dec 1 — A press report, dated today, states: A new plea is to be submitted in a Bahrain court next week to send home four stranded Filipino sailors. They have been marooned off Bahrain onboard their decaying tug *Audrey* for more than five months, because of a financial dispute between the owner and the company which chartered the ship. But the Dubai-based businessmen involved have reportedly vanished and lawyers are to ask the court to lift an order that the crew must stay aboard. A Bahrain surveyor is to inspect *Audrey* on Saturday to determine its condition and his findings will be submitted to the court, it was revealed yesterday. The ship was seized in Bahrain during a dispute between Filipino owner Richard V Jorge and the company which chartered it, Inventra General Trading Dubai. Inventra's Bahraini lawyer has reportedly been unable to reach his client, Yasser Marzook, for months and Mr Jorge has left Dubai and returned to the Philippines, according to sources. Philippine Embassy officials assured the seamen yesterday that they would be appointing a Bahraini lawyer to represent them in court and try to get their salaries, even if they are already back in the Philippines. "It is important for us to get these sailors home in time for Christmas," said embassy consular assistant Ramon Nerida. A surveyor has volunteered to inspect the 36-year-old ship, to determine whether it can be saved or if it should be scrapped. The move was revealed by Bahrain International Seafarers Society (BISS) chairman Captain Ali Haji Hasan and The Mission to Seafarers (Dubai) seafarers welfare officer Reverend Stephen Miller yesterday, after they met at the BISS Seafarers Centre, in Mina Salman. Rev Miller, who is in Bahrain after being alerted by the London-based International Transport Workers Federation about the sailors' plight, said the request to the court would include a suggestion that the ship be sold. "With the owner back in the Philippines and charter's lawyer saying his client has not returned any of his emails or calls, then this case cannot proceed," he said. It was estimated that *Audrey* is worth about \$200,000 and if sold as scrap, it could fetch up to \$100,000. The embassy is to arrange with Bahrain Coastguard, immigration and port authorities to bring the seamen

ashore temporarily, to sign power of attorney papers so lawyers can act on their behalf. "Signing the power of attorney would need to be done in person and not on the ship," said Rev Miller, who accompanied Mr Nerida yesterday to meet with potential lawyers.

BALTIC MELODY (Liberia)

London, Nov 24 — Ref *Baltic Melody* arrived at Guayaquil at 1200 hrs, today.

BIGA (Canary Islands)

Bilbao, Dec 1 — General cargo *Biga* is still under embargo at Bilbao. — Lloyd's Agents.

BOREAS (Cyprus)

Bilbao, Dec 1 — General cargo *Boreas* is still under embargo at the port of Bilbao. — Lloyd's Agents.

CAN GIO (Honduras)

London, Nov 25 — A press report, dated Nov 24, states: A Vietnamese ship that had been detained for more than a year in Tanzania will finally return tomorrow to Ho Chi Minh City for the first time since the ordeal. General cargo *Can Gio* was unloading goods at Vinashin Port in the south-eastern Khanh Hoa Province and would leave for Ho Chi Minh City for repairs on Tuesday (Nov 22) night, Pham Ngoc Son, deputy general director of the vessel owner, SEA Sai Gon Shipping Ltd, said. Son said five of the 11 crew had remained on board through the 13 months detention from July 2004. SEA Sai Gon sent six others to Tanzania in August this year to bring the vessel home. He said it would take *Can Gio* two days to do the trip from Nha Trang to Ho Chi Minh City, double the normal time. "The vessel has suffered damage after more than a year without maintenance." But he said it would return to sea after repairs. SEA Sai Gon, a joint venture between Danish and Vietnamese companies, plans to file a lawsuit claiming US\$1.1 million compensation for the loss it suffered due to the vessel's detention.

London, Nov 27 — A press report, dated today, states: General cargo *Can Gio*, which was recently freed after a 13-month detention in Tanzania, sailed into Ho Chi Minh City yesterday. Pham Ngoc Son, deputy director of the Sea Saigon Shipping Company, which owns the vessel, said economic loss from the seizure could amount to US\$1.5 million. The company is seeking compensation from Tanzania.

CAPE ENDURANCE (Panama)

Cape Town, Nov 25 — Standby safety vessel *Cape Endurance*: The port of Cape Town confirms that the vessel is still at this port. — Lloyd's Agents.

CAPTAIN JOY (Syria)

Limassol, Nov 30 — General cargo *Captain Joy* (1451 gt, built 1973), which arrived at Limassol on Nov 22, has been detained by the Marine Dept. — Lloyd's Agents.

DIAMOND REEFER (Belize)

London, Dec 1 — Ref *Diamond Reefer* arrived Male Island Oct 6. (Note — *Diamond Reefer* was reported seized after being found to be carrying 2,000 tons of illegally caught fish at Jakarta, Jan 9, 2004.)

FAROUK M. (North Korea)

Limassol, Nov 28 — General cargo *Farouk M.* sailed Larnaca Nov 26 for Alexandria. — Lloyd's Agents.

FISHING VESSELS SEIZED BY AUSTRALIA

Fremantle, Nov 29 — Fishing *Volga* is still in Jervis Bay. — Lloyd's Agents.

INDIAN FISHING VESSELS APPREHENDED BY PAKISTAN

Karachi, Nov 26 — Pakistan's Maritime Security Agency said it has apprehended three Indian fishing boats along with 17 crew members on board on Nov 25 for fishing illegally in Pakistani water. According to a press release of MSA, its ship was on routine patrol in the Eastern Maritime Region when it found these boats illegally fishing about 50 km inside Pakistan's EEZ. The Indian fishermen have been warned time and again not to indulge in illegal fishing but they repeatedly come in our EEZ to explore benefit from rich fish resources at the mouth of Indus Delta. Later, the apprehended fishermen were handed over to Docks Police for further legal action. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

INDONESIAN FISHING VESSELS INTERCEPTED BY AUSTRALIA

London, Nov 26 — A press report, dated Nov 23, states: Two Indonesian boats suspected of poaching shark have been intercepted off the Kimberley coast off Western Australian, after a joint effort between Customs, WA Fisheries and local fishermen. Authorities were alerted yesterday, when crew on board a Broome vessel spotted a foreign boat off Cape Leveque. The state patrol vessel *Walcott* reached the area at first light this morning, after negotiating rough conditions for a day to reach the location. A Coastwatch plane helped in the search.

London, Nov 26 — A press report, dated today, states: Two suspected illegal fishing boats, believed to be poaching shark fin in West Australian waters, have been towed into Broome. The two boats, intercepted on Thursday (Nov 24) by the WA Department of Fisheries patrol vessel *Walcott*, arrived at Willie Creek, near the Kimberley town of Broome yesterday. Customs Coastwatch district manager Peter Costantino said officers would spend the next couple of days interviewing the nine crew to establish their identity.

MAYA V (Uruguay)

Fremantle, Nov 29 — Fishing *Maya V* is still in Jervis Bay. — Lloyd's Agents.

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

NAVIGATOR

Cape Town, Aug 25 — Tug/supply *Navigator*: The port of Cape Town has no information regarding this vessel. — Lloyd's Agents.

PAN YUN BO 1 (China)

London, Nov 25 — General cargo *Pan Yun Bo 1* is still at Western Anchorage No.1, Hong Kong, under detention.

SPANISH FISHING VESSELS SEIZED BY NORWAY

London, Nov 28 — A press report, dated today, states: Norwegian police ordered a Spanish trawler to post a bond for 13 million kroner (US\$1.95 million; Euro1.65 million) Friday (Nov 25) for illegal fishing before it could leave an Arctic port. Fishing *Monte Meixueiro* (1790 gt, built) and trawler *Garoya Segundo* (1761 gt, built 1989) are at the centre of a diplomatic spat between Oslo and Madrid after they were arrested last weekend by Norway in Arctic waters. Spain does not accept Norway's right to arrest or impose fines on Spanish ships in the waters Norway claims around the Svalbard Islands, and has complained to the European Union. Police in the northern port of Tromsø ordered the owners of *Monte Meixueiro* to pay 12.8 million kroner (US\$1.91 million, euro1.64 million) for the estimated value of illegally caught halibut, plus a 500,000 kroner (US\$74,500, euro64,000) fine for the ship owner and 100,000 kroner (US\$15,000, euro12,800) for the captain. Tromsø police attorney Ida Munch-Ellingsen said Norway presumes Spain will challenge the fines in courts, and set a Mar 27 court date. Norway unilaterally set up a 200 nautical mile fisheries zone around its Svalbard Islands, north of the mainland, in 1977. However, few other countries accept the claim. Under Norwegian rules, up to seven percent of a trawler's catch at this time of year can be halibut, while Tromsø police said most of the *Monte Meixueiro's* catch, some 363 tons, was halibut. "It was 88% of the catch," Munch-Ellingsen said. "It is illegal to primarily go after halibut." Spanish authorities have not questioned that the *Monte Meixueiro*, as well as the *Garoya Segundo* in a separate case, need to be investigated and possibly fined. However, Spain, with EU backing, said it was up to Spanish authorities to pursue legal action against its own ships in the Svalbard zone, which Madrid sees as international waters. The *Monte Meixueiro* can leave the Arctic port as soon as it posts a bank guarantee for the amount claimed by Norway, police said.

TIOMAN (Honduras)

Jakarta, Nov 28 — Product tanker *Tioman* is still under arrest. — Lloyd's Agents.

TSOUKALAS NAFTIKI ETERIA

Piraeus Nov 29 — General cargo *Agios Dionyssios* was set for auction on Oct 10, which was not successful. A new auction has not been set. General

cargo *Agios Arsenios* was released and remains at Larimna, ETD unknown. — Lloyd's Agents.

UNMANIFESTED CARGO SEIZED, SOUTH NINEPIN ISLAND, HONG KONG

London, Nov 28 — A press report, dated Nov 27, states: Marine Police arrested eight men and seized \$10 million worth of suspected smuggled goods east of South Ninepin Island early this morning. At about 0700 hrs, officers of the Small Boat Division stopped a cargo vessel off South Ninepin Island with eight Hong Kong men on board. About 400 boxes of computer components including hard disc drives, laptops, projectors and computer chips with a total market value of more than \$10 million was found in the vessel. The crew could not produce a manifest for inspection so the eight men, aged between 32 and 50, were arrested for attempting to export unmanifested cargo. The Customs & Excise Department will follow up the case.

VOLGA

See "Fishing Vessels Seized by Australia."

Pipeline Accidents**IRKUTSK REGION, RUSSIA**

London, Nov 30 — An oil pipeline ruptured in Russia's Irkutsk region last night leaking more than six tonnes of fuel in a 1.5-kilometres area, the regional emergencies department said. Authorities immediately stopped oil pumping in the damaged stretch of the western Siberia-Angarsk pipeline and set up a crisis headquarters. Cleanup works have commenced. Preliminary reports said the accident might have been caused by illegal tapping of the pipeline. A criminal case has been opened.

NEA PERAMOS, GREECE

London, Nov 29 — A press report, dated today, states: Five workers were hurt in an explosion yesterday while working on an oil pipeline in Nea Peramos, outside of Athens, in an accident that their co-workers said was a result of safety standards not being met. Three of the men, suffering from burns and head injuries, were hospitalized but were not in a critical condition, authorities said. The other two were allowed to go home after being treated for mild injuries. The men were conducting repair work on a pipeline that belongs to petrol refiner Hellenic Petroleum. Their co-workers said the explosion was probably caused by a spark from one of the hammers the men were using when they should have been supplied with rubber hammers. Hellenic Petroleum said it is investigating the accident.

TODD COUNTY, KENTUCKY, UNITED STATES

London, Nov 25 — A press report, dated Nov 24, states: Kentucky State officials are investigating a pipeline rupture in northern Todd County that released about 42,000 gallons of a petroleum product into a field and a nearby waterway. The eight-inch pipeline, owned by BP Amoco PLC, broke yesterday, according to a statement today from the state Department for Environmental Protection. The pipeline was carrying Xylene, a petroleum-based compound. The rupture was caused by a bulldozer that came in contact with the pipe, the statement said. The compound poured into a field ditch and a section of the Pond River. Pumps were removing the substance from the water, the statement said. The leak was discovered when operators noticed a drop in pressure. State officials said leak caused a fish kill in the waterway.

Pollution**HOUSATONIC RIVER, MASSACHUSETTS, UNITED STATES**

London, Nov 27 — A press report, dated Nov 26, states: Three years after General Electric Co. agreed to pay \$7.5 million to Connecticut to dredge cancer-causing PCBs from the Housatonic River, the work has not been done. An advisory group charged with coming up with a plan hasn't met in a year. The CT Trustee Sub-Council, the state entity that oversees the advisory group, has cancelled all but two of its meetings since December 2003. The delay, state officials say, is an unintended consequence of a review of all state contracts that grew out of the Rowland Administration scandals. "We shouldn't just think because Connecticut got \$7-8 million in the settlement that the PCB problem went away," Curtis Read of Bridgewater, whose lab, Hydro Technologies, tests Housatonic sediments for PCBs, told WNPR-FM. Veronica Varela, who represents the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the sub-council said the effort "hit a roadblock" just as it was about to firm up the contracts that would have allowed the dredging to begin. Lynn Werner of the Housatonic Valley Association, a member of the advisory board, said the Rowland resignation and subsequent contract review "put a huge kibosh on moving ahead with any kind of speed." Connecticut and Massachusetts each received \$7.5 million five years ago to clean PCBs from their sections of the Housatonic downstream from GE's Pittsfield, Mass. plant. GE used PCBs, or polychlorinated biphenyls, in the manufacture of electrical transformers in Pittsfield from the 1930s until 1977,

when the government banned their use. GE, which acknowledged in 1981 that the PCB pollution came from its transformer plant, has finished dredging the half-mile of the river that is closest to the plant. Over the next two years, Massachusetts and federal regulators will decide how much of the remainder of the river there should be excavated, with the total costs expected to run into the hundreds of millions of dollars. Dan McGuiness, executive Director of the Northwestern Connecticut Council of Governments, said people are frustrated not only by the lack of progress in Connecticut, but also by the lack of communication from the state Department of Environmental Protection.

NORNE OILFIELD, NORWEGIAN SEA

London, Nov 28 — Output from the Norne oilfield in the Norwegian Sea will remain off line while Statoil investigates a spill from the production vessel. The Norwegian company has started an internal investigation into a spill from the Norne floating production storage and offloading vessel, which was shut down for modifications. Statoil estimates 280 barrels, or 45 cubic metres, of oil were accidentally discharged from the vessel during work to tie in new production wells. This is the company's largest spill this year and is regarded in Norway as a serious incident. Statoil reported the spill last week to the Petroleum Safety Authority, which is expected to carry out its own investigation. As an early conclusion of Statoil's own investigation, the Oslo-listed group thinks the spill came from the produced water system. "We had modifications work going on when the spill occurred," said a Statoil spokesman. "It looks as if oil has gone into the produced water facility and then discharged to the sea." The vessel was shut down briefly for connecting satellite wells, which come under the Nkr3.6-billion (\$540 million) Urd project, but is likely to be closed for the rest of this month during the investigation. The spill was seen from drill platform *Transocean Arctic*, which is drilling and completing Urd wells nearby, and observed by helicopter. Statoil said no discharge response services were deployed and the spill is dissolving so should not be a risk to coastlines.

SONGHUA RIVER, CHINA

See "Petrochemical Plant, Jilin Province, China" under Fires & Explosions."



AUSTRALIA

London, Nov 25 — A press report, dated today, states: Hail in central-

western NSW this week has caused Aus\$7 million (US\$5.1) worth of damage to crops and also delayed harvesting. The chairman of the NSW Farmers Association Horticulture Committee, Peter Darley, said today that three nights of hail in Orange had destroyed fruit in several cherry and apple orchards. "Certainly you're looking at about two-thirds of the apple and cherry crops in Orange which have been damaged," Mr Darley said, adding that some were totally destroyed. "There's about Aus\$7m to Aus\$7.5m worth of damage.

London, Nov 26 — A press report, dated today, states: Around 1,000 homes across Tasmania are without power this morning, after last night's rough weather. Heavy rain and thunderstorms hit the West Coast and more than 30 mm of rain fell in Devonport. Among the problems were falling trees in the Huonville area, which brought down four power poles. Aurora crews are also replacing transformers in Smithton and the outer Launceston area.

London, Nov 27 — A press report, dated today, states: More than 12,500 homes and businesses are without power this afternoon after a line of severe thunderstorms passed over parts of south-east Queensland. Energex spokeswoman Michelle Wells says the worst affected areas are in the eastern and southern parts of Brisbane, Caboolture to the city's north and Ipswich to the west. She says it will take some time to repair the damage.

London, Nov 29 — Selected inward and outward movements are being permitted at Newcastle harbour entrance. At 1900, local time, last night, pilots had declared conditions as "heavy". This was revised at 0600, this morning, when conditions were described as "moderate". Seas are continuing to drop and pilots are hopeful that there will be no more delays.

London, Nov 29 — A press report, dated today, states: State Emergency Service crews will be working through the night to repair damage caused by this afternoon's severe thunderstorm which struck south-east Queensland. Strong winds and heavy hail lashed suburbs in Brisbane's south and west, from Ipswich to Logan. The storm caused blackouts across the city and about 1,200 homes and businesses are still without power. The SES says the worst hit areas are Algester, Forest Lake and Sunnybank Hills. SES spokesman Mike Morrison says there have been more than 100 calls for assistance, with residents reporting roof damage and fallen trees and branches. The storms caused damage to a shopping centre in Brisbane's south. The Sunnybank Hills Shopping Centre was closed after having part of its roof torn off.

London, Dec 1 — A press report, dated today, states: Two people were hit by lightning and part of a major road collapsed as wild storms battered Queensland's Sunshine Coast today. Police said part of Noosa Drive

collapsed on Noosa Hill, in Noosa, and powerlines were brought down by landslide. The road was closed and traffic was expected to be diverted for several days while mud and debris were cleared away and repairs made. Shops and restaurants were flooded in Hastings Street, in Noosa's main business district, which was closed briefly before being allowed to reopen. A spokesman for electricity distributor Energex said 5000 homes lost power when high winds, lightning strikes and more than 260mm of rain hit the Noosa Shire this afternoon. To the north, another 3000 homes were blacked out in the Gympie area. The heavy rain also caused concerns at Narangba, north of Brisbane, where a chemical plant fire containment pond overflowed into a nearby creek. The pond had been holding contaminated run-off from the Aug 25 fire at Binary Chemicals. But Environment Minister Desley Boyle said there was likely to be only a minimal impact on waterways in the area as the level of contaminants in the ponds had reduced in the time since the fire. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) said today it had taken control of cleaning up the site of the former factory which was destroyed in the blaze. On the Gold Coast today, home owners were mopping up after more than 20 houses were flooded at Currumbin.

CHINA

London, Dec 1 — Losses caused by inclement weather in northwest China's Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region have amounted to 257 million yuan (US\$31.7 million) this year, the local meteorological bureau reported yesterday. In the first 10 months this year, the autonomous region's average temperature was slightly higher than the same period of last year. Rainfall was less in most of the region. Meanwhile, record severe dry spells hit the Yellow River-irrigated area throughout the autumn, spring and summer. In addition to drought, the region also suffered from other disasters including frost, tornados, rainstorms, floods, hail storms and landslides. On early morning of May 6, this year, a severe frost fell on Yinchuan, capital city of the autonomous region, which damaged most of the winter and spring wheat, flax and corn seedlings. Apricot orchards were also damaged. On May 30 a force 11 tornado struck Pengyang County injuring 36 people and destroying 90 percent of the area's green trees.

EUROPE

London, Nov 27 — A press report, dated Nov 26, states: Sudden snowstorms have gripped northern Europe, causing several cold-related deaths and cutting power to tens of thousands of homes. Rail and road networks ground to a halt with hundreds of commuters stranded in the Netherlands and people having to be rescued from vehicles in England. Tourists in Paris could not visit the

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Eiffel Tower for four hours because of icy conditions on its metal walkways. As much as 20cm of snow fell overnight in some countries. The worst had reportedly passed by this afternoon but warnings were issued for continuing ice and snow and slippery road conditions tonight. Three homeless people in the French capital froze to death, one of them inside the car where he had been living. According to French news agency AFP, a fourth man froze to death outside a church in the Belgian capital, Brussels. Snow disruption was reported from the west of Germany to the south-west of England: Power cuts left 250,000 people without power in Germany's most populous state, North-Rhine Westphalia, while 19,000 households lost electricity in France's Vendee region. Flights in and out of airports in Paris, Brussels and the German city of Duesseldorf were all affected. The Netherlands recorded serious traffic jams, with hundreds of people sleeping in their cars after waiting up to 10 hours alongside motorways, while 1,000 motorists were stranded for hours in Cornwall, England. Spain closed several mountain passes and urged motorists to fit tyre chains in the north.

London, Nov 29 — A press report, dated Nov 28, states: Italian officials were on alert today as severe winter weather threatened to swell rivers in some cities including Rome, prompting evacuation preparations. "We're not in a state of emergency, but in a state of alert," said Guido Bertolaso, head of Italy's Civil Protection unit. "We're very worried about the next disturbance that could arrive tomorrow." Heavy rains and snow throughout Europe are prompting authorities to warn of avalanches, flooding and blackouts throughout the region. In Belgium, the first winter snow and the resulting electricity blackouts and ice on the roads caused two deaths and several injuries, news agency Ansa reported. Rome was almost flooded at the weekend (Nov 26-27) as heavy rainfall swelled the banks of the Tiber River, prompting emergency services to prepare to evacuate parts of the city, according to a statement from the region of Lazio, where the capital city is located. Should the water level rise to 16 metres from its usual six-metre height, the river could overflow its banks, La Repubblica said, citing city officials. In Rome, where the level of the Tiber rose above 14 metres, officials opened five metro stations to provide shelter for homeless people who live on the banks of the river, according to La Repubblica. Fireman started evacuating several hundred people from houses near the Tiber late yesterday. Some roads have been closed in the central part of Italy and in Fiumicino, a coastal town near Rome's airport, as water levels reached a 50-year high, Bertolaso said. In Umbria, some areas of the Tiber overflowed north of Rome, Ansa reported. A 70 year-old man was rescued by helicopter in Umbria when

the banks of the river flooded, washing his car into the river, La Repubblica said. Two people were injured when a pine tree fell across a highway near Naples, Ansa reported.

London, Nov 29 — A press report, dated today, states: Some 25,000 Germans were without electricity today after a fifth night of power cuts brought about by snow, ice and wind hitting transmission lines in the country's west. Utility RWE said electricity for around 40,000 people in a rural district near the Dutch border had been cut for several hours overnight when cables laden with snow had to be switched off to avoid accidents. "Those were precautions which are no longer necessary," said a spokesman for the company, which supplies power to Germany's most populous state of North-Rhine Westphalia. "As for the rest, our technicians are working flat out and we hope to have connected as many customers as possible by tonight. The restoration of supplies comes before any other questions about money," he said. The crisis has embarrassed German power companies which boast about having one of the world's most reliable power networks, with a large proportion of cables underground. But unusually heavy snow and gusty winds overstretched power lines and damaged 50 pylons. Up to 250,000 people were without power at the weekend. RWE has rejected liability for the cuts saying it was force majeure and citing weather experts who said the 50 cm of sudden snowfall last week was a once-in-a-century occurrence. But consumer organisations say customers must be compensated for the inconvenience and for any loss of business.

HURRICANE "KATRINA"

London, Nov 30 — A press report, dated today, states: Lloyd's, the world's biggest insurance underwriting market, raised today its estimation of net loss from Hurricane Katrina to 1.9 billion pounds (2.8 billion euros) from 1.4 billion.

London, Nov 30 — A Smit Salvage BV report states: Drill platform *Ocean Warwick*, broke loose in Main Pass and drifted 66 nautical miles, before stranding on Dauphin Island. Divers cutted away the remains of the legs, the rig was then deballasted, refloated and towed to Atlantic Marine dock yard Mobile, Alabama. After having cleaned debris the operation was terminated on Nov 1. A SMIT team is still busy with drill platform *Hercules 25* (2503 gt, built 1980), it broke off its lower legs, drifted and is now positioned off Breton Sound, Louisiana. The workscope for this project is: oil removal, lighten deck load, remove upper and lower legs, deballast and refloat the platform.

INDIA

London, Nov 24 — A press report, dated today, states: The toll in rain-related incidents in Tamil Nadu since the onset of the North East Monsoon on Oct 12 has mounted to 167. While

158 people were killed up until Nov 17, nine deaths were reported during the fresh spell of rain, official sources said today. Two people were electrocuted — one in Ariyalur and the other in Chennai — a few days ago, while seven deaths were reported from Madurai, Tiruverkaku in suburban Chennai and from Cuddalore and Tiruchirapalli districts during the last 24 hours. In wall collapses, three people were killed in Madurai district and one each in Cuddalore and Tiruchirapalli districts. At Thiruverkadu on the outskirts of Chennai city, two people were electrocuted when they came into contact with a snapped live wire today. Meanwhile, a Tiruchirapalli report said three people were feared washed away in flash-floods in a jungle stream in Maniyankurichi village near Siruganur. The search is under way to find them. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa said on Nov 17 that 158 people had been killed in rain-related incidents in the state.

Chennai, Nov 25 — Flash floods swept a bus off a bridge in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu today, drowning at least 30 passengers, police said. Another 30 passengers were rescued by local villagers and police after the bus was pushed into a swollen river by raging waters at Janaveli village, some 450 km south of Chennai, the state capital, formerly known as Madras. "The bus is still stuck in the slush of the river bed and there are bodies in the vehicle," K. Sellamuthu, a senior state government official, said. Since Monday (Nov 21), heavy rains — caused by a low-pressure area in the Bay of Bengal — have lashed Tamil Nadu, causing widespread flooding. Over 30 people have died, mostly due to wall collapses and electrocution from fallen power lines. State officials said at least 200,000 people have been displaced from their homes in coastal districts. — Reuters.

ROMANIA

Bucharest, Nov 25 — Constantza Port was closed again at 0830 hrs, today, due to bad weather. Winds are south-southeasterly, force six-eight, seas, six-eight feet. Mangalia port was re-opened at 1600 hrs, Nov 24, but was closed again at 0800 hrs, this morning, due to the same bad weather conditions. Midia port and the Sulina Channel have remained, and are still, closed. — Lloyd's Agents.

Bucharest, Nov 25 — Constanza, Mangalia and Midia ports were re-opened at 1200, today. — Lloyd's Agents.

Bucharest, Nov 28 — The Sulina Channel was re-opened at 0610 hrs, Nov 26. — Lloyd's Agents.

RUSSIA

London, Nov 30 — A press report, dated today, states: The towns of Nevelsk, Chekhov, Tomari and six inhabited localities in the Dolinsk, Nevelsk, Anivsk and Korsakov districts were partially left without electricity by the cyclone that has

swept over Sakhalin. Communications were disrupted with five other inhabited localities. Three high-voltage electric lines, damaged by violent wind bursts and enveloping wet snow, had to be cut off. The warm cyclone, which came to Sakhalin and the Kuriles from China, has brought wet snowfalls and heavy rains to the island, Itar-Tass reports from Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk. The Poronaysk and Makarov districts were covered by a 20-cm-thick layer of snow last night. Automobile traffic was paralysed. The Southern Kuriles are now suffering from pouring rains. Wind velocity is 32 metres per second on some stretches of the Sakhalin coast. The storm, now raging in the Tatar Strait, has brought to a standstill the ferry crossing, by means of which cargoes from mainland Russia are being delivered to Sakhalin. The special diesel electric ferryboats, used to ship cargoes from the port of Vanino in Russia's Khabarovsk Territory to the Sakhalin port of Kholmsk, are staying moored for the second day running in safe gulfs near Vanino. More than 20 passenger cars got stuck last night in the Lovetsky mountain pass, through which Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk is linked with the port of Nevelsk. Specialists of the Sakhalin Search and Rescue Detachments of the Ministry for Emergency Situations were sent there on cross-country vehicles to help the unfortunate. Ministry rescuers are now searching for four anglers on Lake Tunaicha, who ventured to sail out in perilous weather. The engine of their motorboat had failed. More than one hundred bulldozers, graders and other road machines are being used all over the island to clear the roads. Dangerous avalanches of snow can be expected in the highland areas. Snow has blanketed eight districts in the central and southern parts of the island. The cyclone is gaining strength in the northern part of the island, where snowstorms have begun and visibility is less than 500 m. Wind velocity on the littoral ranges from 25 to 30 metres per second. The cyclone will rage on Sakhalin and the Kurile islands up to Dec 2, Sakhalin meteorologists predict. Thirty-six teams of electricians reported for work on Sakhalin today to restore the damaged power transmission lines. They number 253 specialists. The wet snow has damaged the cables of twelve transmission lines. Power supply had to be cut off 48 times during the night from Nov 29 to 30. Power supply has been restored to the inhabited localities of Vestochka and Okhotskoye. But the inhabited localities of Sosnovka, Pokrovka, Oktyabrsky, Zaozerny, Bykov, Dolinsk, Makarov and Uglezavodsk are still without electricity. Poor visibility and difficult highland terrain interfere with the work of the repair teams, since it is very difficult to detect ruptures of high-voltage lines in such conditions. However, traffic on the Sakhalin railroad was not stopped although all the railway services had to work most intensely due to horrible

weather. Special attention is being paid to the cleaning of tracts, platforms, stations and switches. In the meantime, Itar-Tass reports from Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky that the cyclone on Sakhalin and the Kurile islands with its heavy snowfalls and stormy winds is now heading for the southern part of Kamchatka. Emergency services of the region and the ships near the coasts of the peninsula were warned about the impending storm. Recordings show that wind velocity in the southernmost part of Kamchatka is now up to 28 metres per second. The storm is expected to grow within the next few hours, weather forecasters note. Heavy snowfalls are expected on the coast of the peninsula tonight and tomorrow. There may be snow blizzards in Yelizovsky and Ust-Bolsheretsky districts and also in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky. Wind velocity on the coast will reach 25-30 metres per second.

THAILAND

Bangkok, Nov 25 — Torrential rains and tropical storms have closed traffic at the airport on the southern Thai resort island of Samui, stranding hundreds of passengers, an airport spokeswoman said today. All 38 Bangkok Airways flights between Bangkok and Samui in the Gulf of Thailand were cancelled today after four flights from Bangkok the previous night were diverted to Phuket Island, which is on the other side of the coast in the Andaman Sea. Floods on some roads on the island prevented passengers from travelling to the airport that is littered with fallen coconut trees and rubbish from the sea, said the spokeswoman, who declined to be identified. Despite the airport shutdown, ferries still ran between the island and mainland Surat Thani province where passengers could travel back to Bangkok and other parts of the country, she said. The eastern part of the southern Thai peninsula is coming to the end of its monsoon season. "It has been raining continuously in the past 30 hours with more than 200 mm (7.9 inches) so far," Samui district chief Thirayuth Eamtrakoon told Reuters while visiting flood-hit residents. Bangkok Airways, which also owns and operates the airport, expected to resume its flights tomorrow if rain stopped last night, the spokeswoman said. Torrential rains in the past three days have hit eight southern Thai provinces, killing three people, including a five-year-old boy, the government said in a statement. — Reuters.

London, Nov 26 — A press report, dated today, states: At least six people have been killed in southern Thailand by flooding that has forced the evacuation of 1000 families, government officials said today. Heavy rains were expected to continue following downpours over the past two days that damaged roads and devastated fisheries and thousands of hectares of agricultural land, the

Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Department said. Some 25,000 households in nine southern provinces have been affected by the floods, with 1000 families evacuated from the hardest-hit areas. Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, who is on a visit to the south, said today that provincial officials have assured him the flooding is under control. But the meteorological department has warned people in the provinces to be prepared for more possible flash floods and mudslides, with the situation remaining particularly bad in Samui and Chumphon provinces.

London, Nov 27 — A press report, dated today, states: Interior Minister Air Chief Marshal Kongsak Wanthana will visit flood-stricken Surat Thani province in the South today, to inspect damage there and at popular Koh Samui (Samui Island) resort, where an estimated Bt300 million of damage has occurred. Officials are now clearing rocks and mud covering several roads on Koh Samui while relief workers have already distributed food and other essential items to flood victims ahead of a planned visit by the interior minister tomorrow. Some roads on the island are still under floodwaters as deep as 50-80cm, but Koh Samui municipal authorities have already begun collecting garbage from beaches. Warakorn Ratanaruk, mayor of Koh Samui, explained that roads on the island remained under deep floodwaters because the 30 water pumps supplied by the Irrigation Department needed to be installed with accompanying drainage pipes, which were not available. He said that initial estimates of the damage on Koh Samui alone would be not less than Bt300 million (US\$7.5 million). Meanwhile, flooding conditions in Pak Payoon district of Phatthalung and in nearby Nakhon Si Thammarat provinces had improved considerably. Officials in Nakhon Si Thammarat reported that 21 districts in the province were hit by floods, four persons died, 67,949 families were affected, 773 roads and 19 bridges were damaged. They said damages on the farmland alone were estimated at more than Bt20 million.

London, Nov 28 — A press report, dated today, states: Heavy rain and floods have stranded hundreds of tourists, including Australians, in southern Thailand including the popular islands of Ko Tao and Ko Samui. Disaster relief operations have been ongoing for several days, but authorities say that up to 3,000 local people and foreign tourists remain cut off. Thailand's Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Department said the floods, which have killed seven local people, continue to plague the districts of Surat Thani, Phatthalung and Chumphon. There have been no reports of tourists being injured. Relief operations are concentrating on Ko Tao, where resort operators and tourists were without electricity. Food and water supplies were also running low. About 200 tourists were shipped

from the island to the mainland on Sunday. They had been trapped on Ko Tao for almost a week after a ferry service was disrupted by heavy rains and strong waves. A Thai Royal Navy patrol boat delivered 15,000 litres of petrol to Ko Tao after receiving emergency calls from islanders who said they were running out of petrol for generators to produce electricity. Few tourists visit the island in the Gulf of Thailand during the rainy season. On Ko Samui, officials said several parts of the island, including the main tourist magnet of Chaweng beach, remain inundated. Ko Samui mayor, Varakorn Rattanak, estimated the cost of damage on the island at more than 300 million baht (about A\$15 million). On another island Ko Pa-ngan, officials said floods and road damage was hampering relief efforts.

TROPICAL CYCLONE "BAAZ"

London, Nov 30 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: Tropical cyclone "BaaZ" near lat 12.6N, long 84.2E at 0600, UTC, today. Movement for the past six hours 295 degrees at two knots. Position accurate to within 60 nautical miles. Maximum sustained winds 40 knots, gusts 50 knots. Forecast position lat 13.0N, long 83.4E at 1800, UTC, today. Maximum sustained winds 45 knots, gusts 55 knots. Forecast position lat 13.5N, long 82.5E at 0600, UTC, Dec 1. Maximum sustained winds 50 knots, gusts 65 knots.

London, Dec 1 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today, states: Tropical cyclone "BaaZ" near lat 12.9N, long 83.8E at 0600, UTC, today. Movement for the past six hours 270 degrees at two knots. Position accurate to within 60 nautical miles. Maximum sustained winds 45 knots, gusts 55 knots. Forecast position lat 12.9N, long 83.1E at 1800, UTC, today. Maximum sustained winds 45 knots, gusts 55 knots. Forecast position lat 13.0N, long 81.8E at 0600, UTC, Dec 2. Maximum sustained winds 45 knots, gusts 55 knots.

TROPICAL CYCLONE "BERTIE"

See Tropical storm "Alvin".

TROPICAL STORM "ALVIN"

London, Nov 25 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: Tropical storm "Alvin" ex tropical cyclone "Bertie" in lat 14.4S, long 88.6E. Storm force winds 50/55 knots and high to very high seas within 30 nautical miles, radius of the centre extending up to 45 nautical miles in the southern semi-circle. Gale force winds 35/45 knots and very rough to high seas within 60 nautical miles radius of the centre, extending up to 100 nautical miles in the southeastern quadrant. Forecast position lat 14.6S, long 87.2E, at 1800, UTC, today. Maximum winds 50 knots. Forecast position lat 14.6S, long 86.0E at 0600, UTC, Nov 26.

TROPICAL STORM "DELTA"

London, Nov 25 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today, states: Tropical storm "Delta" centre located near lat 23.7N, long 39.3W at 0900, UTC, today. Position accurate within 20 nautical miles. Present movement toward the south-west or 220 degrees at three knots. Maximum sustained winds 55 knots with gusts to 65 knots. Forecast position lat 23.6N, long 39.4W at 1800, UTC, today. Maximum wind 55 knots, gusts 65 knots. Forecast position lat 24.0N, long 39.0W at 0600, UTC, Nov 26. Maximum winds 55 knots, gusts 65 knots.

London, Nov 28 — A press report, dated Nov 27, states: Tropical storm "Delta" gained strength in the central Atlantic today but was expected to weaken before reaching the Canary Islands, forecasters said. The storm had top sustained winds near 70 mph, four mph below hurricane strength, the National Hurricane Centre said. At 1600, EST, the storm was centred about 645 miles west of Las Palmas in the Canary Islands and was moving north-east at about 26 mph. It was expected to lose the characteristics of a tropical storm before reaching the Canary Islands tomorrow but still could have strong winds, the hurricane centre said.

London, Nov 28 — A press report, dated today, states: Tropical Storm "Delta" gained strength in the central Atlantic but would likely weaken before reaching the Canary Islands today, forecasters said. "Delta" had top sustained wind near 65 mph, up from 40 mph yesterday. At 0400, EST, "Delta" was centered about 345 miles west-north-west of La Palma in the Canary Islands and moving near 29 mph.

Madrid, Nov 29 — Hundreds of thousands of people were without electricity and phone services were disrupted today after a powerful storm ripped through Spain's Canary Islands, killing seven in the popular holiday destination. The death toll rose after strong winds blew a man off his roof, which he was apparently trying to repair on the island of Fuerteventura as the storm approached, emergency officials said. Storm "Delta" also claimed the lives of six African migrants who drowned off the Canary Islands on Monday as powerful waves swept their makeshift boat. Each year, thousands of migrants try to reach the Canary Islands from Africa and many die in the attempt. The islands of Tenerife and La Palma were worst hit by the storm which had passed over by mid-morning. Uprooted trees and landslides forced the closure of a number of roads in the picturesque islands. About 223,000 customers had no electricity, and the lack of power was also affecting some telephone services. Several ports and airports were temporarily closed. The former Tropical Storm "Delta" became a winter storm as it neared Africa yesterday but the 25th named cyclone of the busiest Atlantic hurricane

season on record still brought heavy rain and winds higher than 120 kms per hour. Authorities urged residents to stay at home if possible. Schools were closed for the day today. The storm was also expected to hit Morocco. — Reuters.

Tenerife, Nov 29 — Passenger ro/ro *Juan J.Sister* (22409 gt, built 1993) moored at the Rivera quay, during a very strong gust of wind broke all its mooring lines and was pushed by the wind across the dock basin to the South quay where tug *Tarifa* (267 gt, built 1979) was moored. Due to the strength of the wind and momentum of *Juan J.Sister* crushed the tug against the quay and the *Tarifa* sank. Passenger ro/ro *Bonanza Express* (5191 gt, built 1999), due to the strong winds and heavy seas, hit the quay at La Estaca (El Hierro) and has damaged port side hull and will undergo repairs at Las Palmas. We have been informed of a great number of small pleasure crafts/sailing yachts in various Marinas on the island of Tenerife that have suffered considerable damages. — Lloyd's Agents.

Tenerife, Nov 30 — The incidents involving passenger ro/ro *Juan J.Sister*, tug *Tarifa* and passenger ro/ro *Bonanza Express* took place during the night of Nov 28/29. — Lloyd's Agents.

TROPICAL STORM "EPSILON"

London, Nov 29 — A press report, dated today, states: Tropical Storm "Epsilon" formed today in the central Atlantic, where it was a threat only to shipping, forecasters said. The 26th named storm of the busiest Atlantic hurricane season on record was expected to be absorbed by other weather systems and shouldn't affect land, said Jennifer Pralgo, a meteorologist at the National Hurricane Centre in Miami. At 1000 hrs, "Epsilon" had top sustained winds of about 45 mph. It was centered about 845 miles east of Bermuda and about 1,395 miles west of the Azores Islands. It was moving west near eight mph and was expected to continue that movement for at least 24 hours.

London, Nov 30 — A press report, dated today, states: The Atlantic hurricane season ends today, but Tropical Storm "Epsilon" could still cause dangerous surf conditions in Bermuda, forecasters said. It was not expected to hit Bermuda or any other land, according to forecasters at the National Hurricane Center in Miami. At 0400, EST, "Epsilon" had top sustained winds of near 50 mph. It was centered about 725 miles east of Bermuda and about 1,520 miles west of the Azores Islands. It was moving west at about 7 mph.

London, Nov 30 — Following received from Meteorological Office, dated today: Tropical storm "Epsilon" centre located near lat 31.2N, long 52.5W at 0900, UTC, today. Position accurate within 20 nautical miles. Present movement toward the west or 265 degrees at six knots. Maximum sustained winds 45 knots with gusts to

55 knots. Forecast position lat 31.0N, long 53.5W at 1800, UTC, today. Maximum winds 45 knots, gusts 55 knots. Forecast position lat 31.5N, long 54.0W at 0600, UTC, Dec 1. Maximum winds 55 knots, gusts 65 knots.

London, Dec 1 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: Tropical storm "Epsilon" centre located near lat 30.2N, long 52.1W at 0900, UTC, today. Position accurate within 25 nautical miles. Present movement toward the east-northeast or 75 degrees at 10 knots. Maximum sustained winds 55 knots with gusts to 65 knots. Forecast position lat 30.9N, long 50.9W at 1800, UTC, today. Maximum winds 50 knots, gusts 60 knots. Forecast position lat 32.0N, long 49.2W at 0600, UTC, Dec 2. Maximum winds 50 knots, gusts 60 knots.

TROPICAL STORM "GAMMA"

London, Nov 30 — A press report, dated today, states: Chiquita Brands International Inc. said today that flooding in Central America will hurt its banana production and distribution for at least several months, resulting in a fourth-quarter charge of \$13 million to \$18 million. About 4,000 acres of company banana farms in Honduras and more than 1,200 acres of banana farms owned by independent growers have been hit by heavy rains from Tropical Storm "Gamma", Chiquita said. The most heavily damaged areas could be out of production for more than a year, the company said. "The loss of our Honduran production, combined with the ongoing impact of Hurricane "Stan" on purchased fruit volumes in Guatemala and other weather problems this season, has created product shortages in North America through the first quarter 2006," said Bob Kisting, president and chief operating officer of Chiquita Fresh. The company said it is trying to identify alternative sources to meet demands. Chiquita expects a mostly non-cash charge in the fourth quarter for asset writedowns and flood-related costs. The Cincinnati-based company is one of the largest banana producers in the world and a major supplier of bananas in Europe and North America. Its Fresh Express division is a leading supplier of packaged salads to grocery retailers, foodservice providers and quick-service restaurants.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

London, Nov 28 — A press report, dated today, states: The ports of Das Island and Zirku Island re-opened for vessels' operations over the weekend. The ports had closed during the past week due to adverse weather conditions. Das Island re-opened at 1600 hrs, Saturday (Nov 26) and Zirku Island at 0600 hrs, yesterday.

UNITED KINGDOM

London, Nov 29 — A press report, dated today, states: The final cost of repairing three bridges damaged by flash floods in the North York Moors

will be more than £2m. The Church, Chapel and Shaken bridges in Hawnby were among the worst affected when water rushed off the moors and the River Rye burst its banks in June. Repairs to Shaken Bridge and provision of a temporary structure to maintain transport links to the village account for more than £1m of the total bill. All repair work is expected to be completed by the end of summer 2006. A spokesman for North Yorkshire County Council said the repair of Church bridge was almost complete and a temporary structure had made Chapel Bridge passable, but work is ongoing to rebuild and repair Shaken bridge, which was virtually destroyed by the floods, he added.

UNITED STATES

London, Nov 25 — A press report, dated today, states: The record-breaking rains that caused extensive damage in Sitka in Alaska Tuesday (Nov 22) have stopped. The torrential rain that started Tuesday caused power outages and mudslides throughout south-east Alaska. Nearly five inches fell in some parts, forcing the evacuation of about a dozen homes. Clean-up operations are still under way but it looks like the main danger has passed, according to engineer Mike White in Sitka. "The situation now is that the rain has subsided, the flooding has subsided. Damage assessment has been pretty much taken care of at this point and all the crews that were involved in the clean-up have gone home," White said. A car was also partly submerged at the Sawmill Creek Plaza during the rainfall.

London, Nov 28 — A press report, dated today, states: Tornadoes and thunderstorms ripped through eastern Kansas and Arkansas yesterday, killing a motorist and damaging homes and businesses in several counties. In Kansas, a tornado damaged more than 30 homes at Fort Riley and briefly knocked out power to the military base. Tornadoes were reported in six other counties in east-central Kansas, as well, though the damage was minor, according to the Kansas Division of Emergency Management. "We were fortunate nobody was hurt," said Fort Riley spokesman Maj. Christian T. Kubik. In central Arkansas, about 40 miles northwest of Little Rock, a suspected tornado struck a lumberyard near Plumerville, scattering wood across Interstate 40 and overturning vehicles. One person was killed when a car headed west on the interstate was tossed into the opposite lanes and overturned, state police spokesman Bill Sadler said. "Whether the lumber played a role in this, that is still under investigation," Sadler said. About 14 miles to the south, Perry County emergency workers rescued another person who was trapped in a damaged home in Perryville, also believed to have been hit by a tornado. In Morrilton, just west of the lumberyard, Mayor Stewart Nelson said crews were searching for missing people late into

yesterday night. Garland County Sheriff Larry Sanders said his officers had received reports of other residents trapped in damaged homes southwest of Little Rock. Debris made the roads impassable for police and other rescue workers in several areas, Arkansas Department of Emergency Management spokeswoman Kelly Robinson said. She said the state had received calls reporting destroyed or damaged homes in Cleburne, Fulton and Garland counties. Six homes were destroyed in Pike County, according to the sheriff's office there. At least two homes were destroyed in Van Buren County. Structure damage was reported to police in the Perry County town of Cherry Hill. At least 7,500 homes were without power across Arkansas, Entergy spokesman James Thompson said.

London, Nov 29 — A press report, dated Nov 28, states: Travellers trying to get home after Thanksgiving were stranded across the Plains today as the region's first big snowstorm of the season closed hundreds of miles of highways, cutting visibility to zero and piling up drifts six feet high. Snow driven by winds up to 69 mph fell from North Dakota to the Texas Panhandle, shutting down schools, post offices and South Dakota state government. Four deaths were blamed on slippery roads in South Dakota, Nebraska and Kansas, and a fifth person was killed when a tornado picked up and hurled a car in Arkansas. More than 400 miles of eastbound Interstate 70 was closed, from Denver to Salina, Kansas, with no word on when it might reopen. Westbound lanes were open in some areas. Denver International Airport was spared, and had an estimated 158,000 travellers yesterday, one of the busiest travel days of the year. "We had some wind, that's it," said airport spokesman Chuck Cannon. The Colorado portion of I-70 was dry today, but the highway was impassable in western and central Kansas because visibility was nearly zero. Colorado halted eastbound traffic because there are so few places to stop and wait on the state's sparsely populated eastern plains. Almost 1,000 people spent last night in shelters along I-70, said Joy Moser, a spokeswoman for the Kansas Division of Emergency Management. Even though the blizzard warning for north-west and north-central Kansas expired this afternoon, shelters remained open in anticipation of more stranded travellers. "You can't even see," said Bill Kanitig of the Sherman County sheriff's office. "The highway is snowpacked, and it's slick and everybody's sliding off." Numerous other highways were also closed across the Plains, including a 250-mile stretch of I-90 across South Dakota, and a 60-mile stretch of I-80 in Nebraska. Wind, snow and ice in the Dakotas snapped electrical lines — coating some cables with ice a few inches thick — and knocked out power to much of the eastern parts of the states. Electricity was not expected to be restored for some areas until at least tomorrow, South Dakota

Governor Mike Rounds said. In Fairmount, ND, electricians attempted to hook up generators to the town's water system this afternoon. "There is no power to the well system," said Fairmount Fire Chief Dave Jacobson. "We still have water but it's getting pretty low here." Minnesota Department of Public Safety spokesman Kevin Smith said that despite the efforts to sand the major roads in north-western parts of the state, "the wind is polishing the roads to glaze in about 20 minutes." The storm was heading towards the Great Lakes and retaining most of its power, said National Weather Service meteorologist Fred Stasser. The same storm whipped up tornadoes that destroyed at least eight homes in Arkansas yesterday and damaged more than 30 homes at Fort Riley, KS. Grass fires driven by the storm system's wind blackened thousands of acres in Texas and Oklahoma. Several homes were destroyed in the two states and hundreds of families had to evacuate in Oklahoma.

London, Nov 30 — A press report, dated Nov 29, states: Crews today gradually reopened major highways that had been closed by the Plains' first blizzard of the season, stranding post-Thanksgiving travellers. Thousands of people remained without electricity. Five deaths were blamed on slippery roads in Minnesota, South Dakota, Nebraska and Kansas. A sixth person was killed by a tornado spun off by the huge storm system in Arkansas. Remnants of the system headed over the upper Great Lakes today after the storm dumped snow as far south as the Texas Panhandle. As much as 20 inches of snow fell at Kennebec, SD, while Chamberlain, SD, was choked by drifts up to eight feet high. Utility officials estimated that 50,000 customers were blacked out across eastern South Dakota today, and many communities in North Dakota had no electricity. Nebraska also had scattered outages. The morning's low at Grand Forks, ND, was 14 deg Fahrenheit. South Dakota Governor Mike Rounds said today that electricity might not be restored to some areas for a few days as roads blocked by drifted snow kept utility crews from finding all the damaged lines. Power companies in North Dakota said it could take days to restore power. It was the worst storm to hit eastern and central South Dakota in nearly a decade, Rounds said. Firefighters in Fairmount, ND, offered the town's roughly 400 residents rides to the community centre, which has a backup generator, but the blackout also shut down the town's pumps. "We still have water but it's getting pretty low here," Fairmount Fire Chief Dave Jacobson said. Utility crews were out early today working to restore electricity in northwestern Minnesota. Interstate 94 was closed overnight for about 100 miles across eastern North Dakota from Fargo to Jamestown, but the Highway Patrol reopened it this morning. I-29 was also reopened from Fargo south to the South Dakota line,

and South Dakota authorities said their section would reopen by midday. South Dakota officials said traffic also would be restored on I-90, which had been closed for nearly 200 miles across the state. In Nebraska, I-80 was reopened along a 200-mile stretch, the state road department said. At least 600 travellers were still stranded today at community shelters in central Nebraska's Dawson County, said emergency manager Brian Woltdt. Colorado and Kansas had reopened more than 400 miles of eastbound I-70 between Denver and Salina, KS, after two days.

London, Dec 1 — A press report, dated Nov 30, states: Power company crews were making progress today in turning the lights back on for thousands of customers who were blacked out in the Dakotas by this week's blizzard, and most highways had been reopened. Utilities faced staggering damage from the ice and snow that the storm plastered onto power lines and poles. "There are places where there are miles of poles down," said Otter Tail Power Co spokeswoman Cris Kling. Otter Tail still had about 5,000 customers without power in the Dakotas and Minnesota this morning, down from an earlier figure of 18,000, which "was probably a low estimate," Kling said. In South Dakota, about 29,000 customers in 77 cities and towns plus some rural areas remained without power or had only intermittent power this morning, Governor Mike Rounds said. That was down from about 50,000. Rounds said the blizzard brought down about 8,000 utility poles and 10,000 miles of transmission line in his state. In some of the hardest-hit areas, power may not be restored for five to 10 days, the South Dakota Rural Electric Association said. North Dakota National Guard officials said they provided five small generators to the town of Fairmount, which was without power, and another generator to run water pumps in Hankinson. The Minnesota National Guard had provided a large generator to supply limited heat and light for the west-central Minnesota town of Wolverton, where about 20 residents spent last night and early today in the fire hall-community centre. Dakota Valley Electric Co-operative, which serves some 5,000 mostly rural customers in south-eastern North Dakota, was among the hardest hit by the blizzard that struck on Monday (Nov 28), said operations manager Craig Rysavy. The North Dakota Highway Patrol had reopened sections of Interstates 94 and 29 that were closed because of poor visibility and slippery pavement during the storm. Snowploughs had reopened all two-lane and interstate highways in South Dakota, officials said. Crews had to clear about 400 miles on I-90 and I-29 and more than 6,000 miles of other state roads. Storm-closed sections of interstates across sections of Nebraska, Kansas and eastern Colorado had been reopened earlier. At least five deaths were blamed on slippery roads in

Minnesota, South Dakota, Nebraska and Kansas. A sixth person was killed by a tornado spun off by the big storm system in Arkansas.

Earthquakes



CHILE

London, Nov 29 — A moderate 5.6 earthquake occurred at 1633, UTC, today. The magnitude 5.6 event has been located in Coquimbo, Chile.

CHINA

London, Nov 26 — A report, dated today, states: A moderate earthquake occurred at 0049, UTC, today. The magnitude 5.5 event has been located in the Hubei-Jiangxi border region, China, lat 29.66N, long 115.72E, depth 10 km.

London, Nov 26 — A press report, dated today, states: At least 14 people died and more than 370 were injured when an earthquake measuring 5.7 on the Richter scale struck early today in east China's Jiangxi Province, state media reported. Fourteen were confirmed killed in the quake, which struck near the city of Jiujiang, state television reported. State-run Xinhua news agency had earlier cited the ministry of civil affairs as saying more than 370 injured had been counted as of 1155 hrs, 1455, AEDT, three hours after the quake. The data seemed to tally roughly with numbers provided by local officials talking to AFP by telephone. The quake struck at 0849 hrs, the China National Seismic Observation Network said, according to the state-run Xinhua news agency.

IRAN

London, Nov 27 — A report, dated today, states: A strong earthquake occurred at 1022, UTC, today. The magnitude 6.1 event has been located in southern Iran in lat 26.84N, long 55.83E, depth 35 km.

London, Nov 27 — A press report, dated today, states: A powerful earthquake has hit southern Iran, shaking a major port city and prompting fears of casualties. The 5.9-magnitude quake struck Qeshm Island, home to 120,000 people, and the city of Bandar Abbas, state media said. There were unconfirmed reports that two villages in Hormuzgan province were destroyed by the quake, and of damage to property elsewhere. The quake, which struck at 1353, 1023, GMT, was felt in the neighbouring Gulf states of Oman and the United Arab Emirates.

Tehran, Nov 27 — Ten people were killed and 50 injured when an earthquake razed mud-brick villages on the Gulf island of Qeshm off Iran's south coast today, officials and state media said. Iran's official news agency IRNA said the quake, with a magnitude of 5.9, shook southern Iran

for about 10-15 seconds at 1353 hrs (1023, UTC). Tahereh Irankhah, a volunteer with the Red Crescent in Qeshm, said the main hospital on the island was struggling to keep up with the number of patients. "The number of people injured is very high, and people are in the corridors. We need tents and blankets," she said. State media said there were three strong aftershocks. State television quoted the disaster centre in the province of Hormuzgan, which administrates Qeshm, saying 10 people were killed. Regional Governor Heidar Alishvandi said 50 were injured. Mohsen Kazemi from Iran's Red Crescent relief agency said the four hardest hit villages were Tonban, Gavarrzin, Khaledin and Gourian. Qeshm is the biggest island in the Gulf and is a free-trade zone in southern Hormuzgan province with a population of about 120,000. The US Geological Survey said the quake registered 6.1, and placed it about 58 km south-west of the Gulf port of Bandar Abbas. There is a large refinery at Bandar Abbas, but state television quoted Iran's OPEC governor, Hossein Kazempour Ardebili, as saying the country's oil output and production facilities had not been affected by the quake. The tremor was also felt in the neighbouring United Arab Emirates. Witnesses in high-rise buildings said they felt the ground shake for about a minute. Many residents left their buildings and waited on the streets. — Reuters.

London, Nov 28 — A press report, dated today, states: An earthquake measuring 5.5 on the Richter scale hit the island of Qeshm off southern Iran yesterday, hours after a larger, fatal tremor hit the same area the official Irna agency reported. There were no immediate reports of damage or casualties following the earthquake, which happened at 1711, GMT, the agency said. The first tremor, at 1023, GMT, killed nine people and injured around 70 on the Gulf island, home to some 100,000 people and situated off the coast from the large port city of Bandar Abbas. Iranian state television put the intensity of that quake at 5.9 on the Richter scale. The US Geological Survey put the magnitude slightly higher at 6.1 while a seismic observatory in the French city of Strasbourg put it at 5.6.

MARIANA ISLANDS REGION

London, Nov 28 — A strong 6.0 magnitude earthquake occurred in the Mariana Islands region at 1641, UTC, today. The hypocentral depth was estimated to be 46 km.

London, Nov 30 — A magnitude 5.5 earthquake occurred in the Mariana Islands at 0454, UTC, today. The hypocentral depth was estimated to be 54 km.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

London, Nov 23 — A 6.0 earthquake occurred in eastern New Guinea region, Papua New Guinea at 1511, UTC, Nov 22. The depth was estimated to be 68 km.

PHILIPPINES

London, Nov 25 — An earthquake measuring 6.1 on the Richter scale hit sea waters south of the Philippines at 1336, today. According to the Hong Kong Observatory, the epicentre of the quake was initially determined to be lat 5.9N, long 126.4E, about 160 kilometres south-southeast of Davao, Mindanao Island.

SEA OF OKHOTSK

London, Nov 24 — A 5.7 earthquake occurred in the Sea of Okhotsk at 1933, UTC, yesterday.

TAIWAN

London, Nov 30 — A press report, dated today, states: An earthquake measuring 5.7 on the Richter scale hit the northern part of Taiwan at 0641, Hong Kong time, today (2241, UTC, Nov 29). The epicentre was reported to be 28 km north-east of Ilan County. The quake was also felt in Taipei.



MOUNT GALERAS, COLOMBIA

Bogota, Nov 24 — The Galeras volcano in south-eastern Colombia shot fire early today in a small eruption, prompting the government to step up evacuations of about 9,000 people living nearby. "There was an eruption," said government volcano expert Martha Calvache. "People saw a sudden blaze from the volcano that was stronger than recent activity we saw in August and September." People around the town of Pasto were urged to leave as pressure in the volcano grows. Evacuations started last week in Narino Province when scientists first warned an eruption was possible. — Reuters.

MOUNT KARTHALA, COMOROS ISLANDS

London, Nov 25 — A press report, dated today, states: Ash blanketed the Comoros capital today after the Indian Ocean archipelago's Mount Karthala erupted for the second time this year, spewing smoke and cinders over the nation's main island of Grand Comore. Officials said there was no sign that the eruption overnight had resulted in potentially devastating lava flows, but authorities announced precautions to deal with health hazards caused by ash and possible gas emissions. "There was an explosion at the top of the Karthala volcano around 2200, last night," Abbas Mhadjou, the director general of semi-autonomous Grand Comore's interior ministry, said. "The explosion was confined to the summit and there was no lava," he said after meeting with scientists from the Mount Karthala Observatory to assess the impact of the eruption. UN personnel on the island were advised to prepare for any eventuality, including possible evacuation.

London, Nov 28 — A press report, dated today, states: Nearly 120,000 people on the main island of the Comoros archipelago in the Indian Ocean have been left without safe drinking water after last week's eruption of the Mount Karthala volcano, officials said today. The Mount Karthala National Observatory recommended that residents of Grand Comore observe caution as the 2,361-metre mountain continued to rumble. Ash from the eruption blanketed the island on Thursday (Nov 24) and Friday, killing at least one infant, infiltrating homes, shops and offices and contaminating water in cisterns during the height of the dry season. "We have two problems with water: one, we are in the dry season, and two, the reserves in many private cisterns are now polluted," minister of state for defense Abdu Madi Mari said. He said cistern water supplies for some 120,000 residents mainly from rural villages near the volcano had been contaminated by the ash, which has also raised fears of respiratory ailments. An assessment by local authorities found that about "as many as 118,000 persons living in 75 villages may be affected by the contamination of water tanks," the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said. Authorities on Grand Comore, the largest of the three semi-autonomous islands in the Comoros, have appealed for international assistance to help in distributing potable water to those in need, Mari said.



AFGHANISTAN

Kandahar, Nov 23 — Afghan police today found the body of an Indian man who Taliban insurgents said they kidnapped and executed, a provincial official said. The body of the engineer, who had been working on a road project, was found on a dirt road in the southern province of Nimroz, said Mohammad Hashim, a district chief in the province. The engineer, P.M. Kutty from India's state-run Border Roads Organisation, was abducted from his car along with an Afghan driver and two guards in Nimroz on Saturday (Nov 19). A Taliban spokesman, Qari Mohammad Yousuf, claimed responsibility for the kidnapping yesterday and said Kutty had been killed after a deadline for his company to announce its withdrawal from Afghanistan had passed. The spokesman said today that Kutty's body had been dumped beside a road. Kutty's driver was released but the Taliban spokesman said the fate of the two guards had yet to be decided. In another incident, yesterday a U.S. soldier and an Afghan interpreter were killed when a roadside bomb

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struck their armoured vehicle in the central province of Uruzgan during an anti-militant operation by U.S.-led troops. — Reuters.

Jalalabad, Afghanistan, Nov 24 — Two Afghan policemen were killed today when a bomb exploded in a car inside a police headquarters in an eastern district, an officer said. The car belonged to a local official who had just arrived at the police building in Khogyani district of Nangarhar Province, when the bomb went off. The official who had come for a meeting on drug trafficking was wounded in the blast. Two policemen who were nearby died. — Reuters.

AZERBAIJAN

Baku, Nov 26 — Police in Azerbaijan's capital today used truncheons and water cannon to break up a protest by opposition supporters complaining of vote fraud in an election earlier this month. A reporter said police drove protesters from the square on Baku's outskirts where about 10,000 people had been holding a rally. However, running battles continued in the streets leading away from the square. Police were beating protesters with truncheons but some were responding by attacking police with stones and pieces of wood. The reporters said dozens of protesters were arrested and loaded into police buses. Police moved in after the protesters remained in the square after the deadline given by the authorities for them to disperse. Opposition parties have been holding frequent demonstrations since a parliamentary election on Nov 6 that Western observers said was marred by vote fraud. The protests until now were peaceful. The vote handed a big majority in parliament to supporters of President Ilham Aliyev, who succeeded his father Haydar in an election in 2003. That vote was also followed by violent clashes between police and opposition supporters. — Reuters.

BANGLADESH

London, Nov 24 — A press report, dated today, states: An opposition-sponsored general strike today aimed at forcing new elections shut down stores and schools and disrupted traffic across Bangladeshi cities and towns. The opposition Awami League party and its 13 smaller allies called the nationwide dawn-to-dusk strike. The opposition has accused Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's four-party coalition government of corruption, incompetence and authoritarianism - allegations the government denies. Zia has vowed to remain in power until her five-year term expires in October next year, paving the way for new elections within three months. In Dhaka, the capital city of 10 million people, streets were almost empty and most public transportation not running. Commuters either walked in sunny weather or rode tricycle rickshaws that were allowed by the strike organizers to operate. In Dhaka, some protesters threw stones at a few

buses that defied the strike, witnesses said. Police detained several demonstrators, they said. General strikes are a common opposition protest tactic in Bangladesh. They sometimes turn violent, with clashes between strike supporters and opponents or police.

Dhaka, Nov 29 — Six people were killed and 65 wounded by suspected suicide bombings in two Bangladesh cities today, apparently the latest in a wave of attacks by militants fighting to turn the country into a sharia-based Islamic state. Police said three people, including two of their colleagues, were killed and 15 wounded by blasts at a police checkpoint outside a court building in the port city of Chittagong. They said the third person who died was believed to be the bomber. Another blast, in a court complex in Gazipur, 20 miles north of the capital, Dhaka, killed three people and wounded nearly 50, police said. Local hospital sources said the wounded included lawyers. "The bombers apparently turned more violent as we set up checkpoints trying to reinforce security at court premises," said Majedul Huq, police commissioner in Chittagong. He said the blasts were probably the work of suicide bombers, who had explosives strapped to their bodies or hidden in bags. — Reuters.

Dhaka, Nov 30 — Police in Bangladesh said today they had detained 22 suspected Islamist militants following suicide bomb attacks at court buildings which killed nine people. Among those detained were the father and two brothers of Abul Bashar, a suspected suicide bomber who was wounded in yesterday's blast at a police checkpoint outside a court building in the southern port city of Chittagong. Three people died in that blast. A short time later a bomber entered the court complex in Gazipur, 30 km north of Dhaka, donning a black robe to disguise himself as a lawyer, and set off the bomb strapped to his body, police and a witness said. He died along with five other people. A total of 65 people were wounded in the two blasts, which police and lawyers said were part of a campaign by Islamic militants to scare the judiciary before it puts rebels detained for other bombings on trial. Bangladesh has been hit this year by a wave of bombings blamed on militants demanding Islamic law in the mainly Muslim democracy. Police said today's arrests were made in north-eastern Sylhet and north-western Jaipurhat districts. They did not provide any further details. Hundreds of people from two outlawed Muslim groups, Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen and Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh, have been arrested this year. The State Minister for Home Affairs Lutufuzzaman Babar said earlier this month that there were reports that the Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen had set up a 2,000-strong suicide squad. Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, who was touring the coastal Patuakhali district when yesterday's bombs exploded, vowed

tough action against those involved in the attacks. "The bombers were enemies of Islam and enemies of the country. We will do everything and anything needed to stop them," she told a rally. Lawyers held protests and boycotted courts across the country on Wednesday, demanding action by the government. They called for a day-long general strike for tomorrow, backed by opposition political parties. Police said the latest attacks showed that militants were becoming more sophisticated. "The bombs that exploded yesterday were the most powerful we have seen. We can't immediately say what kind of explosives they used but they were highly destructive," said a police officer. "The terrorists have not only acquired advanced technology and training but also changed their operational tactics." Police said the attacks were the second time suicide bombers had struck this month, but with greater force. Two judges were killed in a bomb attack carried out by a suspected suicide bomber in the coastal town of Jhalakathi on Nov 14. — Reuters.

London, Dec 1 — A press report, dated today, states: Schools and offices shut down in Bangladesh today in response to a strike called by lawyers demanding greater security after suicide bomb attacks at court buildings killed nine people. The attacks in two cities on Tuesday (Nov 29) were blamed on Islamic militants who are demanding the introduction of sharia law in the impoverished Muslim democracy. Lawyers and police said the militants also seemed to be singling out the judiciary to sow fear before it puts rebels detained for other bombings on trial. "The strike has taken hold in the country. People want to get rid of this anarchy let loose by the so-called Islamists," Mahboob-e-Alam, the President of the Supreme Court Bar Association, told reporters. The streets of Dhaka and other cities were mostly deserted, witnesses said, as most people stayed indoors today, the last working day in the country before the two-day weekend. "We have taken adequate measures to head off any possible violence," said an officer of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police. Police have arrested 22 people for the bombings in the southern port city of Chittagong and Gazipur, a town outside the capital.

BURUNDI

Bujumbura, Nov 24 — Burundi's government forces have killed 41 fighters from the last remaining rebel group and captured 50 over the past few weeks, an army spokesman said. In clashes that undermine the country's transition to peace, 23 rebels belonging to the Forces for the National Liberation (FNL) were killed in their stronghold in Bujumbura, and a further 18 were killed in the north-west Cibitoke province, army spokesman Adolphe Manirakiza said late yesterday. He said that while 50 rebels had been captured, around 60 rebels and some 800 of their young

recruits had voluntarily surrendered during the clashes. "The army has also seized nine machine guns, six hand grenades and an important quantity of ammunition," Manirakiza told journalists. He also accused the FNL of beheading eight civilians. There was no immediate comment from the FNL. — Reuters.

COLOMBIA

London, Nov 25 — A press report, dated Nov 24, states: Soldiers captured a senior guerrilla commander suspected of carrying out more than a dozen kidnappings and other terrorist attacks over the past two decades, the military said today. Arcesio Lamus, leader of the Bolshevik Front of the National Liberation Army, was captured during a gumbattle yesterday near Villa Hermosa, about 140 miles west of Bogota. His group is the smaller of Colombia's two leftist rebel groups known as the ELN. No casualties were reported among government forces. A 14-year-old rebel fighter was also captured but the rest of the group escaped. Gen. Alberto Suarez, commander of the army's 5th Division, called Lamus "a very important member of the ELN's national leadership," who orchestrated more than 15 kidnappings, destroyed energy towers and planted at least two car bombs. His capture comes just days after the ELN ordered one of its commanders to meet with government officials to try to restart peace talks. Previous government attempts to negotiate peace with the ELN have ended in failure. (See issue of Nov 23.)

London, Nov 28 — A press report, dated Nov 27, states: Leftist rebels attacked energy towers in Colombia for a third time in a week today, leaving a major Pacific port and several other towns without electricity, officials said. In the latest strike, at dawn today, suspected fighters of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, dynamited energy pylons outside Galapa, 650 kilometres north of Bogota, cutting electricity to the town and its outlying villages, Atlantic state police said. Meanwhile, rebel activity prevented repair crews from restoring service to the Pacific port of Buenaventura, whose 600,000 residents were plunged into darkness earlier this week when the FARC hit a cluster of energy towers linked to a major circuit at a nearby reservoir, the Pacific Energy Company said. The army said that it had sent troops to dislodge a group of rebels near the destroyed pylons and that clashes had broken out, though no casualties were reported. Guerrillas also planted mines on paths leading toward the reservoir, the army's Buenaventura-based 3rd Brigade said in a statement. Yesterday, the FARC blew up a bridge outside Tibu, 480 kilometres northeast of Bogota in oil-rich Norte de Santander state, cutting road access to the regional state capital, said Tibu mayor Bernardo Betancur. The rebels also placed an explosive charge beneath an energy tower outside Tibu,

but the device failed to destroy the tower, Betancur said. Colombia has more than 18,000 of the 50-metre tall electrical towers stretched across its vast and mountainous territory. Rebels blew up 121 electrical towers last year, down from a high of 483 in 2002, according to the government.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Kinshasa, Nov 23 — Congolese troops have launched an offensive to end militia raids which have displaced 50,000 people in the remote eastern province of Katanga, the military and UN sources said today. However, some UN sources warned that undisciplined troops were killing civilians as well as militiamen in at least one operation. Diplomats said the army had killed several hundred Mai Mai militia in operations launched this month to end pillaging by around 2,000 former government-backed fighters in an area known as the "Triangle of Death." "The operations are continuing well. We have killed some Mai Mai. We have recovered ten areas from the Mai Mai and we have freed the population that was being terrorised," General Widi Mbulu Divioka, Congo's army commander in Katanga, said. The army said it had killed 57 militiamen in a separate UN-backed operation over the weekend (Nov 19-20) in the district of Ituri in the far north-east. The clash happened south of Bunia, the main regional town, army spokesman Felly Shindano said. UN peacekeepers, who provided back-up but were not involved in the fighting, said they had similar figures for the dead but said the army appeared to have fired indiscriminately, killing civilians as well as gunmen during the operation. — Reuters.

INDIA

Srinagar, Nov 23 — Three policemen were killed and three wounded today when suspected Islamic guerrillas stormed a barracks in Kashmir's main city of Srinagar, police said. Two rebels were also killed in the hour-long battle. "Two Fidayeen (suicide attackers) hurled grenades and fired automatic weapons before they stormed the building. Both were eliminated," federal police officer Ranjit Sinha told reporters. No group has claimed responsibility for attacking the police barracks in a former cinema taken over by security forces. — Reuters.

London, Nov 28 — Indian troops have shot dead three suspected Islamic militants along the quake-ravaged de facto border dividing Kashmir, as rebels shot dead a municipal councilor and his cousin, officials say. The municipal councilor Ghulam Hassan and his cousin Zahoor Ahmed were shot dead after militants stopped their car near Bandipora, 70 kilometres north of the summer capital Srinagar. "Hassan's wife and son were not harmed by the militants," a police spokesman said, adding the killing had sparked fear around Bandipora. Kashmiri militants

are opposed to Indian-held elections in Kashmir, and have targeted people who took part in municipal polls in 2004, the first held in the disputed territory for 26 years. Hassan belonged to the Peoples Democratic Party, which swapped power with the Congress party earlier this month under a power-sharing coalition agreement. Late yesterday Indian troops shot dead three rebels along the de facto border splitting Kashmir between India and Pakistan. "The three were shot dead when they entered into the Indian territory (of Kashmir)," an army statement said.

IRAQ

Baghdad, Nov 22 — A suicide car bomb blast killed 18 people, including 10 police, in the northern city of Kirkuk today and mortars landed near the US ambassador to Iraq during a ceremony in Saddam Hussein's hometown of Tikrit. The bomber detonated his explosives-laden car next to a group of police vehicles on the main road leading south from Kirkuk to Baghdad shortly after sunset. Police Colonel Borhan Tayyib Taha said 28 people were wounded in the blast. Ambulances ferried the worst cases to hospitals in Kirkuk. Police said they expected the toll to rise as many of those injured were badly wounded. Kirkuk is a mixed Arab, Kurdish and Turkmen city that has seen frequent episodes of violence, some the result of tensions between the separate communities, all of whom claim ownership of the city, which lies close to vast oil reserves. The blast follows a string of suicide bombs across the country in the past five days in the build up to elections set for Dec 15. At least 180 people have been killed since Friday (Nov 18), including 77 Shi'ite Muslims blown up in twin suicide bombings on mosques in the mixed Kurdish and Shi'ite city of Khanaqin. Today's attack came hours after insurgents fired two mortars at a complex of palaces built by Saddam in Tikrit, where US Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad was attending a ceremony handing the palaces back to the Iraqi government. No one was injured by the blasts, which the US military said failed to detonate properly, but television pictures showed US soldiers and Marines, as well as Khalilzad and other dignitaries, diving for cover during a panicked few seconds. General George Casey, the top US commander in Iraq, was also attending the ceremony. — Reuters.

London, Nov 23 — A press report, dated today, states: Gunmen wearing Iraqi army uniforms broke into the home of a senior Sunni leader today and killed him, his three sons and his son-in-law on the outskirts of Baghdad, his brother and an interior ministry official said. Khadim Sarhid al-Hemaiyem was the leader of the Sunni Batta tribe and the brother of a parliamentary candidate in the Dec 15 election, the official Maj Falah al-Mohammedawi said. Another of the slain man's brothers said the family had been attacked before. "A group of

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gunmen with Iraqi army uniforms and vehicles broke into my brother's house in the Hurriyah area and sprayed them with machine gun fire, killing him along with three sons and his son-in-law," said his brother, Nima Sarhid Al-Hemaiyem. "His eldest son was assassinated one month ago in the Taji area, northern Baghdad, when unidentified men shot and killed him." Al-Mohammedawi said government forces were not involved and the investigation was focused on insurgents. The slaying follows a big push by US officials to encourage Sunni Muslim participation in the upcoming election, which will install the first non-transitional government in Iraq since the 2003 invasion. Some Sunni-led insurgent groups have declared a boycott of the election and have threatened politicians who choose to participate in it. Also today, the US military announced a new operation with Iraqi troops in predominantly Sunni western Iraq. The operation launched yesterday in Ramadi, 70 miles west of Baghdad, is aimed at preventing insurgents from interfering with voting there, a US military statement said. It is the third operation in Ramadi since Nov 16. US Marines yesterday announced the end of a major operation to secure towns along the Syrian border used by al-Qaida to smuggle foreign fighters into Iraq. Ten US Marines and 139 insurgents were killed in "Operation Steel Curtain," which began Nov 5 with about 2,500 US troops and 1,000 Iraqi soldiers, a military statement said. US commanders plan to establish a long-term presence in the area to prevent al-Qaida and its Iraqi allies from re-establishing themselves in the towns of Husaybah, Karabilah and Obeidi along the Euphrates River. In a positive development, a senior government official said a representative of an unidentified insurgent group responded to an offer by President Jalal Talabani to talk with those willing to lay down their arms. Presidential adviser Lt Gen Wafiq al-Samarai told Qatar's Al-Jazeera television last night that he had received a call from someone "who claimed to be a senior official of the resistance." "I informed him that I would welcome him in a meeting to hear from him, but this doesn't indicate our acceptance of their demands," he said. Al-Samarai, a former head of military intelligence under Saddam, did not identify the caller, and it was unclear whether the overture represented a breakthrough. A suicide bomber struck a busy commercial street in Kirkuk yesterday, leaving 22 dead and another 23 people wounded, after insurgents lured police to the scene by shooting an officer, officials said. Half the dead were police who rushed to the scene after gunmen killed a fellow officer, according to police Brig Gen Sarhad Qader. More than 160 Iraqis, most of them Shiites, have died in a wave of spectacular suicide operations across Iraq since Friday (Nov 18).

Baghdad, Nov 24 — A car bomb exploded near Iraqi police outside a hospital in a town south of Baghdad today, killing 19 people and wounding dozens, doctors at the local hospital and witnesses said. The explosives-packed car was parked in front of Mahmoudiya's General Hospital and blew up as two patrols of Iraqi police pulled up outside, witnesses said. Doctors at the hospital said 34 people were also wounded in the blast. It was not clear if it was a suicide car bomb attack. Mahmoudiya is in a violent region south of Baghdad dubbed the Triangle of Death for the high number of attacks. It is part of a belt of mixed Sunni and Shi'ite towns in the area where sectarian tensions have spilled over into violence, leading to fears Iraq could be sliding toward a full-blown civil war. — Reuters.

Baghdad, Nov 24 — A car bomb blew up outside a hospital where Iraqi police were gathered in a town south of Baghdad today, killing 31 people and wounding more than 20 others, doctors, police and witnesses said. The explosives-packed car was parked in front of the General Hospital in Mahmoudiya, just south of Baghdad, and blew up after two patrols of Iraqi police pulled up outside, witnesses said. The head of the emergency room at the hospital said 31 people were killed and 28 wounded in the blast. Police sources put the death toll at 30 with around two dozen wounded. It was not clear if it was a suicide car bomb attack. The bombing is the latest in an apparently stepped-up campaign of militant violence over the past week and in the run-up to parliamentary elections set for Dec 15. Since last Friday (Nov 18), nearly 200 people have been killed in a series of suicide bombings and car bomb blasts, including 77 killed when bombers strapped with explosives blew themselves up inside two Shi'ite mosques in the northern town of Khanaqin. Many of the attacks have borne a sectarian element, with Sunni Arab insurgents targeting Shi'ite Muslim communities. Mahmoudiya is in a violent region south of Baghdad dubbed the Triangle of Death for the high number of attacks. It is part of a belt of mixed Sunni and Shi'ite towns where sectarian tensions have spilt over into violence, leading to fears Iraq could be sliding towards a full-blown civil war. Earlier, Iraq's Defence Ministry said soldiers had found a car west of Baghdad that was filled with booby-trapped children's toys packed with hand-grenades and explosives. A government spokesman said two people had been detained. — Reuters.

London, Nov 25 — Three insurgents were killed and one was arrested during an Iraqi army and intelligence raid on a farm in Safwan near the Iraqi-Kuwait border today, a Defence Ministry adviser said. An Iraqi soldier also died in the clash. In another incident, a U.S. soldier died in a tank accident south of Baghdad yesterday, the U.S. military said today. — Reuters.

Tikrit, Iraq, Nov 26 — A suicide car bomber attacked a petrol station north of Baghdad today, killing three people and wounding nine, Iraq police said. The explosion occurred at a station on a minor road running between Samarra, a city about 100 km from Baghdad, and Duluiya, a town just to the south-east of Samarra. The insurgency is strong in the area and US military vehicles and other travellers are frequently attacked. However, it was not clear what the precise target of the bomber was. — Reuters.

Baghdad, Nov 27 — Four Western aid workers, two believed to be from Canada, one from Britain and one from the United States, have been kidnapped in Iraq, the organisation they were working for said today. The British and US embassies in Baghdad both said they were investigating reports that their nationals had gone missing. There is no Canadian representative in Iraq. "We are aware of the report and are investigating as a matter of urgency," a spokeswoman for the US embassy in Baghdad said, a message echoed by a British embassy spokeswoman. A Foreign Office spokeswoman in London named the missing Briton as Norman Kember, from north-west London. She said British officials were "urgently investigating" reports that Kember had been kidnapped, but had no more details. Kember was representing a number of aid groups in Iraq, the BBC quoted his wife, Pat, as saying. The humanitarian workers are thought to have been snatched from a violent neighbourhood of western Baghdad yesterday. A representative of their group in Baghdad said they had received no word on their condition and had no information on the group that had seized them. — Reuters.

London, Nov 28 — A press report, dated today, states: Two Britons and an Iraqi have been killed in an attack by gunmen in Iraq as they travelled to holy sites. The pair and at least three other foreigners were shot on a minibus near Baghdad as they travelled to Karbala. The group were British Asians from London on a pilgrimage and they were carrying British passports. The shooting comes as hostage experts hunt for a kidnapped British aid worker who went missing with three other westerners in Baghdad on Saturday (Nov 26). A multi-national hostage team is trying to find Norman Kember, a retired professor in his 70s. The Britons killed in the separate attack were shot at when the minibus they were in neared a checkpoint in the Dora neighbourhood, Police Captain Talib Thamir told Associated Press. One of the survivors of the attack said that as they travelled on a dual carriage way at about 40kmh, he heard what sounded like fireworks. He said all the glass in the minibus shattered as they were shot at for about one minute.

London, Nov 29 — A press report, dated today, states: Al-Jazeera broadcast an insurgent video today

showing four peace activists taken hostage in Iraq, with a previously unknown group claiming responsibility for the kidnappings. The Swords of Righteousness Brigade said the four were spies working undercover as Christian peace activists, Al-Jazeera said. The station said it could not verify any of the information on the tape. The aid group Christian Peacemaker Teams has confirmed that four of its members were taken hostage Saturday (Nov 26). German TV broadcast photos today showing a blindfolded German woman being led away by armed captors in Iraq. Six Iranian pilgrims, meanwhile, were abducted by gunmen north of Baghdad. The pictures of Susanne Osthoff were taken from a video in which her captors demanded that Germany stop any dealings with Iraq's government, according to Germany's ARD television. Germany has ruled out sending troops to Iraq and opposed the U.S.-led war. Two U.S. soldiers assigned to Task Force Baghdad were killed when their patrol was hit by a roadside bomb north of the capital, the U.S. command said. At least 2,109 members of the U.S. military have died since the war began in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. A suicide car bomber killed eight Iraqi soldiers and wounded five more when he drove into an army patrol today in Tarmiyah, 30 miles north of Baghdad, police Lt. Ali Hussein said. President Bush told reporters in El Paso, Texas, he would make decisions about U.S. troop levels in Iraq based on the advice of his military commanders. "If they tell me the Iraqis are ready to take more and more responsibility and that we'll be able to bring some Americans home, I will do that," the president said. "It's their recommendation." Lt. Gen. Martin Dempsey, who manages the training of Iraqi security forces, told National Public Radio today that 212,000 people in the police and army are trained and equipped, although he suggested that more needed to be done. "Now you know they lack some capabilities that we still have to provide them and will continue to have to provide them for a period of time," Dempsey said. "They're short officers because we brought in some senior officers, and we grew some junior leaders but not enough. They require about 8,000 junior leaders and they're hovering just now about 4,500 or so. We're focused very carefully now on logistics, communications and the generation of an officer corps," he said. The video on Al-Jazeera showed four men and a British passport belonging to Norman Kember. The British government and the Christian Peacemaker Teams have both said Kember, a 74-year-old Briton, was among the four activists taken hostage. Christian Peacemaker Teams said it would not identify the other three for their protection. A white-haired man shown in the passport photograph also was seen sitting on the floor next to three other men in the video, which had a date stamp

indicating it was recorded Sunday (Nov 27). The corner of the video showed two crossed black swords and the name of the insurgent group written in red Arabic script. Christian Peacemaker Teams issued a statement saying the four were working on behalf of Iraqi civilians. The group said it has had a team in Iraq since October 2002, working with U.S. and Iraqi detainees and training others in non-violent intervention and human rights documentation. Kember and another person were part of a visiting delegation, while two members of the group's Iraq-based staff also were taken, the statement said. The group said the team in Iraq was working on documenting detainee abuses, referring Iraqis to human rights organizations and accompanying Iraqi civilians as they interact with coalition troops and Iraqi government officials. The U.S. Embassy has confirmed that an American is missing in Iraq - presumably one of the aid workers. A Canadian official has said two Canadians were in the group. The statement said those taken hostage knew the risks when they went to Iraq. Osthoff and her driver have been missing since Friday and, "according to current information, we have to assume it is a kidnapping," German Chancellor Angela Merkel said in Berlin. She added that the Foreign Ministry has set up a crisis team to help secure the pair's release. Osthoff, 43, is a fluent Arab speaker and a trained archaeologist who has worked since 1998 for the Munich-based management consulting firm FaktorM, which said on its Web site that she has "organized and supported the distribution of aid goods in Iraq since 1991." She was in Iraq working to help German organizations distribute medicine and medical supplies. Germany's Central Council of Muslims called for Osthoff's immediate release. The Iranian pilgrims were abducted today near Balad, 50 miles north of Baghdad, police Maj. Falah Mohammedawi said, but it was not clear if the six were going to or coming from Samarra, a central city that houses a shrine to two Shiite saints. Iraq and Iran, predominantly Shiite countries, reached an agreement earlier this year on pilgrim visits, which excludes trips to Shiite shrines in Baghdad and Samarra because of the dangerous security situation. The pilgrims appear to have been violating that agreement. Since May, abductions have fallen off considerably, mainly because many Western groups left Iraq and security precautions for those remaining have been tightened, with foreigners staying in barricaded compounds and moving only in heavily guarded convoys. The last American to be kidnapped was Jeffrey Ake, a contract worker from LaPorte, Ind., who was abducted on April 11. He was seen in a video aired days afterward, held with a gun to his head, but there has been no word on his fate.

London, Nov 30 — Gunmen have opened fire on a minibus north of Baghdad, killing nine people and

wounding two. A police official said 10 masked gunmen carried out the attack near the town of Baquba, some 65 kilometres from the Iraqi capital. Iraqi and US officials expect a surge in guerrilla violence in the run-up to national elections on Dec 15 when Iraqis will vote for their first full-term government since the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003. Sunni Arab guerrillas are waging a campaign of suicide bombings, shootings and assassinations in a bid to topple the present Shiite and Kurd-dominated government, which is backed by Washington.

London, Dec 1 — A press report, dated Nov 30, states: US and Iraqi troops launched an operation in western Iraq to clear insurgents from a suspected safe area used to make car and roadside bombs, the military said today. The campaign came as President Bush defended his Iraq policy in a major speech, saying more Iraqi security forces are increasingly taking the lead in battle but that "this will take time and patience." About 1,500 US Marines from the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit, 500 US soldiers and 500 Iraqi soldiers were taking part in Operation Iron Hammer near Hit, 85 miles west of Baghdad, a US Marine statement said. The forces would concentrate efforts in the Hai Al Becker region, where US and Iraqi troops rarely patrol, it added. "The Hai Al Becker region is suspected to be an al-Qaida in Iraq safe area and base of operations for the manufacture of vehicle car bombs, roadside bombs," the military said. It added that the area is believed to be a stopping point for insurgents travelling down the Euphrates River from Syria into Iraq. Meanwhile, in the central town of Baqouba, unidentified gunmen opened fire on a minibus early today, killing nine construction workers and wounding two, police said. Following a new wave of kidnappings in which five Westerners were abducted since the weekend (Nov 26-27), German Chancellor Angela Merkel vowed that her government will "not let ourselves be blackmailed" by those who took a German archaeologist hostage. "The government is doing everything in its power to bring the German citizen and her driver as soon as possible to safety," Merkel said. Kidnappers have threatened to kill Susanne Osthoff and her Iraqi driver, who were kidnapped on Friday, unless Germany halts all contacts with the Iraqi government. German TV station ARD showed images of what appeared to be Osthoff and her driver blindfolded on the floor beside armed and masked militants. The other four abducted Westerners were members of Christian Peacemaker Teams, a group that has had activists in Iraq since October 2002. The group listed those abducted as Tom Fox, 54, of Clearbrook, Virginia; Norman Kember, 74, of London; and James Loney, 41, and Harmeet Singh Sooden, 32, of Canada. Al-Jazeera yesterday broadcast video of the four men held by a previously unknown group calling

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itself the Swords of Righteousness Brigade. The group claimed they were spies working under the cover of Christian peace activists. The latest attacks are part of a new wave of kidnappings police fear is aimed at disrupting the Dec 15 parliamentary elections. Iraq was swept by a wave of kidnappings and beheadings of foreigners in 2004 and early 2005, but such attacks have dropped off in recent months as many Western groups have left and security precautions for those who remain have tightened. Insurgents, including al-Qaida in Iraq, have seized more than 225 people, killing at least 38. It was unclear whether the recent kidnappings were the work of a single group or simply coincidental. However, police believed they may be part of an insurgent campaign to discredit the government and disrupt the elections. US and Iraqi officials hope a big turnout in the election will undermine the insurgency and improve chances for the United States and its partners to begin reducing troop levels in Iraq next year.

IRAQ-KUWAIT

London, Nov 24 — A press report, dated today, states: State-owned Kuwait Airways Corp has won a lawsuit ordering Iraqi Airways to pay more than \$319 million in invasion-related compensation, an official said yesterday. "The amount will be in excess of \$400 million when interest is calculated," KAC spokesman Adel Buresli told said. The ruling was issued by a British court last week. The damages were awarded by the court for four Kuwaiti passenger aircraft stolen by the Iraqi carrier during the 1990-91 occupation of the emirate and which were destroyed during the Gulf War, he said. So far, KAC has won damages totalling \$750 million for stolen aircraft and spare parts since filing lawsuits against the Iraqi carrier in 1991, Buresli said. The amount along with interest is currently estimated at \$980 million, he said. The emirate has so far not received any part of the compensation and is awaiting the formation of a permanent legitimate government in Baghdad. In 2000, KAC won \$795 million in damages from a case filed in London against insurance companies. In October, 2003, Kuwait turned down an out-of-court settlement by Iraqi Airways which offered to pay \$150 million for a lawsuit demanding \$890 million. KAC operates a fleet of 15 Airbus and two Boeing 777 aircraft.

ISRAEL

London, Nov 23 — A press report, dated Nov 22, states: Israeli said its warplanes struck in Lebanon today in what Israeli Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz described as the largest-scale Israeli response to cross-border attacks by Lebanese guerrillas since 2000. Mofaz spoke just hours after Israeli fighter jets attacked a command post of Hezbollah guerrillas in south Lebanon and after army bulldozers entered Lebanon to demolish a Hezbollah post just north of the community of Ghajar. Hezbollah and the Lebanese army

denied Israeli warplanes struck in southern Lebanon today. Israeli warplanes struck a number of Hezbollah targets yesterday, Israeli security officials said. The Israeli strike came a day after the Lebanese guerrilla group Hezbollah fired mortars and rockets toward the Israeli-Lebanese border, wounding 11 Israeli soldiers and damaging a house in an Israeli border community. The shelling sent thousands of Israeli civilians into bomb shelters. Israeli return fire killed four Hezbollah guerrillas. Ibrahim Gambari, the UN undersecretary-general for political affairs, blamed Hezbollah, saying the exchange started on the Lebanese side of the border. "The violations show once again the importance of the government of Lebanon extending its control over all of its territory and exerting its monopoly on the use of force," Gambari said in a statement released by his office. The United States also accused Hezbollah of provoking the fighting and urged the Lebanese government to take charge of the area. Hezbollah's Al-Manar television today aired videotape showing scenes from Monday's clashes. The tape showed a fire at the Israeli military position of al-Abbassiyeh after a hit by Hezbollah rockets, the announcer said. It also showed a volley of Hezbollah rockets hitting the Israeli military outpost in the border village of Ghajar. Yesterday's Hezbollah attack "was the largest-scale, most hostile since the departure of Israeli forces from Lebanon in 2000," Mofaz said in remarks broadcast on Israel Radio. The Israeli response "was the widest against attempts by Hezbollah to escalate the situation." Mofaz said Israel hit targets that "had not been attacked since the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon," including Hezbollah command, intelligence and communication posts. The defence minister also said Hezbollah apparently suffered the greatest number of casualties since Israel's pullout from Lebanon. The fighting marked a sudden surge in violence, the first cross-border fighting in five months. The United States accused Hezbollah of provoking the fighting, and urged the Lebanese government to take charge of the area. Lebanon has requested that UNIFIL, the UN peacekeeping force stationed in the country, appeal to Israel to persuade it not to further retaliate for the Hezbollah strikes, Israel Army Radio said. Israeli army chief Lt Gen Dan Halutz confirmed that Lebanon had turned to UNIFIL, but would not elaborate. Hezbollah frequently targets Israeli troops in the Chebaa Farms area, which the Iranian-backed group says should have been returned by Israel when it withdrew from south Lebanon. Israel says it captured the area from Syria in 1967 and will discuss its control of the land only in any future peace talks with the Arab country.

Beirut, Nov 23 — Hizbollah guerrillas clashed with Israeli troops on the Lebanese border today, in the second round of fighting in south Lebanon in

three days, Hizbollah sources said. The fighting was taking place near the border village of Mais El-Jabala, they said. There was no immediate word on casualties. — Reuters.

Jenin, West Bank, Nov 24 — An Islamic Jihad leader in the West Bank surrendered today to Israeli troops who mounted a day-long siege of his hideout, the Israeli army said. Iyad Abu el-Rob, the Palestinian militant group's chief in the Jenin area, gave himself up along with an aide after the soldiers fired rockets at a five-storey building where the two men were hiding and began demolishing part of the structure. An Israeli military source said Rob had plotted three suicide bombings in Israel including an attack in October that killed six Israelis in the town of Hadera and four other assaults which were thwarted. Describing Rob as "a senior Islamic Jihad terrorist", the army said in a statement he came out waving a white flag and troops who entered the hideout found assault rifles, grenades and ammunition clips. During the course of the Jenin raid yesterday, Israeli troops killed one Palestinian and wounded 12 while quelling stone-throwing protests, Palestinian security sources said. The army said troops had opened fire after coming under attack from gunmen who fired automatic weapons and threw fire bombs and other explosives at them. Two Israeli paramilitary border policemen were wounded. — Reuters.

London, Nov 25 — A press report, dated today, states: An official ceremony has taken place to mark the re-opening of the border between the Gaza Strip and Egypt. Israel has relinquished control of the crossing at Rafah, which will now be run by the Palestinian Authority - under the supervision of EU monitors. For the first time, Palestinians control a gateway to the outside world that is vital for Gaza's economy. The crossing will actually be opened to Palestinians coming from and going to Egypt tomorrow. Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas declared the crossing open at a ceremony and said it was "a dream come true" for the Gaza Strip's 1.3 million residents. The EU's envoy to the Middle East, Marc Otte said the opening would mean an "enormous step forward toward the freedom of the Palestinian people". Gaza has no sea port and the Israel has not agreed to allow the international airport to reopen, so the Rafah border is Gaza's gateway to the outside world. Israel closed the Rafah crossing on September 7, shortly after withdrawing from Gaza, citing concerns that it would be used to smuggle weapons and militants from Egypt into the Palestinian Territories. Since then, the crossing has barely been open at all. The Israelis worry that Islamic militants might infiltrate Gaza and threaten Israel. They have insisted on the right to monitor the crossing point on television screens from a base a few kilometres away. Earlier this month, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice brokered a deal between Israel and Egypt allowing key border crossings into the Gaza Strip to

be re-opened. Under the agreement, there are limits to Palestinian authority at the border. Palestinians will control the border, but EU monitors will have the authority to detain vehicles or individuals if they feel they have not been properly checked. Israeli security officials will watch all movements at the crossing on TV screens, but they will not have veto power over individuals moving through. While exports will not be supervised by the Israelis, the flow of goods into Gaza will remain entirely under its control at the border crossing at Kerem Shalom. Palestinians will be able to travel in bus convoys between Gaza and the West Bank from December, and in lorry convoys a month after that. There are plans for a sea port, although the Israelis have refused to allow the international airport to re-open. On Wednesday (Nov 23), the head of the team of EU monitors, Italian military police General Pietro Pistolese, said the crossing would only be open for four hours a day until the number of monitors increases from 20 to between 50 and 70.

IVORY COAST

Bouake, Nov 24 — A U.N.-backed plan to reunite Ivory Coast has worsened a political deadlock and a clearer strategy is needed to restore peace, the leader of the West African country's rebels said today. A U.N. resolution last month was supposed to lay the foundations for elections in the world's top cocoa grower by next October but the opposing sides have been unable to agree on a new prime minister to lead the process. President Laurent Gbagbo's mandate ended on October 30 but the U.N. resolution lets him stay for up to a year to work towards polls in the country split in two by a 2002 civil war, with the help of a premier to be awarded unspecified wide-ranging powers. "This resolution is ambiguous. Its failure could be foreseen," Guillaume Soro, the rebel movement's political chief, told Reuters in an interview at his home in Bouake, the rebel stronghold in the north of the country. He called for a new agreement to state exactly what powers Gbagbo should keep following the end of his official five-year mandate and exactly what powers the new prime minister would be given. "The resolution says nothing about this," Soro said. "It's a question of writing new resolutions since (this one) failed," he said. "We need more clarity and transparency in the next resolution, otherwise the blockage will continue and the choice of a new prime minister won't happen soon." Three African presidents who have been mediating in Ivory Coast's crisis failed on Tuesday (Nov 22) to forge a consensus on who the new premier should be, although they narrowed the list of candidates to two. Nigeria's Olusegun Obasanjo and his counterparts from South Africa and Niger, Thabo Mbeki and Mamadou Tandja, whittled down the shortlist from 16 names presented by all sides

in the conflict. But they said neither name was acceptable to all the parties and have promised to return next week. The rebels, who seized the north after a failed attempt to oust Gbagbo in 2002, want Soro to take up the post, arguing he would counterbalance the president's power and be more effective in pushing ahead with disarmament. Soro said the rebels were not considering backing any other candidate to break the impasse, and he accused the international community of producing a vague resolution which threw all sides into debate over its meaning. "If I am prime minister, it's already the start of the reconciliation between the two belligerents. Nothing is impossible," he said. But Gbagbo's supporters are unlikely to accept him and opposition political parties have fielded their own candidates. The RHDP opposition alliance said today it wanted the three African presidents to choose the new premier themselves, in consultation with U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan. "The RHDP points out to the international community the consequences of this institutional vacuum ... and asks it immediately to assume its responsibilities and put an end to the suffering of the Ivorian people," it said in a statement. — Reuters.

Bouake, Nov 25 — Ivory Coast's rebels are using cocoa smuggling to help fund their military operations but are not drawing money from illicit diamond trading, the rebellion's political leader told Reuters in an interview. Guillaume Soro said cocoa grown in the rebel-held north of the world's top producer was being exported through neighbouring countries rather than through Ivory Coast's own ports so that the government could not boost its funds by taxing the beans. "I took the decision that cocoa should not go to the ports of San Pedro and Abidjan because we are in a war situation. It is not for us to send it down to Abidjan and give (President Laurent) Gbagbo the means to buy weapons to fight us," Soro said late yesterday at his home in the rebel stronghold of Bouake. "That would be stupid. That is why we decided the cocoa should go up and leave through other ports — Guinea, Togo and Ghana," he said. "We have set up a tax system and this money is used for the rebellion." U.N. experts said last month the rebels were smuggling more and more cocoa, cotton and diamonds to neighbouring countries for sale on the black market, making Ivory Coast one of a host of African countries that have suffered from resource wars. The U.N. experts said in a report to the U.N. Security Council that millions of dollars of rough diamonds were being mined and exported from riverbeds in the rebel zone, in violation of a government ban on the trade. Soro acknowledged that diamonds were being mined by locals in the area around Seguela, in the east of the rebel-held territory, but denied that the proceeds were going towards the rebel campaign, as the U.N.

experts said they believed. "The diamonds in Seguela are exploited in an artisanal way by the population who live there. They exploit them for their own needs and the U.N. can't have issues with that," Soro said. Ivory Coast's national development research institute (BNETD) estimates that between 15-20 percent of the country's cocoa production is smuggled abroad. This year's crop has been forecast at more than 1.3 million tonnes. Some buyers exporting cocoa through the government zone continue to buy beans in rebel-held areas, including the main towns of Man and Vavoua, but are forced to make additional payments at dozens of roadblocks known locally as "cash points". — Reuters.

NEPAL

Kathmandu, Nov 22 — Nepal's Maoist rebels said today they were ready to end years of violence and rejoin the political mainstream. The move confirms a breakthrough announced by Nepali political leaders visiting New Delhi last week. But the rebels did detail their conditions for ending the fighting. Nepal's seven main parties recently met the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-M) to discuss ending years of war and creating a united political front against King Gyanendra, who sacked the government and took power in February. "The CPN-M expresses its commitment to march ahead peacefully into a new political mainstream," Maoist chief Prachanda said in a statement. He said the rebels would continue talking with the parties about how they could rejoin the political process. His announcement came days after the parties said the Maoists were ready to accept multiparty democracy and end violence. "We are committed to end the autocratic monarchy and establish full democracy through a forward-looking political solution," Prachanda's statement said. Prachanda said the rebels had not yet agreed to join the parties in street protests against the king. — Reuters.

London, Nov 30 — A press report, dated today, states: The fragile truce in Nepal for the last three months survived another peril as the Maoists decided not to resume their armed struggle despite an attack by the army that killed two underground "military" leaders. The three-month ceasefire, declared by the Maoists in September, expires Friday. In a statement issued today, Maoist chief Pushpa Kamal Dahal aka Prachanda said the Royal Nepalese Army had yesterday launched an aerial attack in Jinabangma village in Rolpa district in midwestern Nepal, considered a rebel bastion. Prachanda said members of the underground "People's Liberation Army" were holding a meeting when the army fired indiscriminately from the air, resulting in the death of the two leaders. Prachanda identified them as Khim Bahadur Thapa aka Sunil, self-styled division commander of the rebel

“army”, and a “battalion vice-commander” Nirmam. The Maoist leader said the army had launched the aerial attack in retaliation for an earlier attack by the guerrillas. Maoists in Damahachaur village in Salyan district in midwestern Nepal fired at a MI-17 helicopter carrying supplies for soldiers yesterday.

NIGERIA

Yenagoa, Nov 28 — Nigeria’s army deployed hundreds of troops to oil-producing Bayelsa state overnight as a pre-emptive security measure amid rising tensions over the impeachment of the state’s governor, the army said. Brigadier General Elias Zamani told Reuters that armed militant youths had moved into the area to protect the state’s governor Diepreye Alamieyeseigha and that he feared fighting could break out unless security was strengthened. “The area has been tense, there have been attempts by the house for impeachment. Militant youths have been moved into that place armed with weapons,” Zamani told Reuters by telephone. “There are different groups. They way things are going it could escalate to where different groups start fighting. So it’s a pre-emptive step to save lives and property.” Soldiers set up road blocks in the Bayelsa state capital Yenagoa this morning, searching vehicles. Bayelsa produces a quarter of Nigeria’s 2.4 million barrels per day of oil output. Another military official said the governor was using militant youths dressed in military uniforms to protect him since his police escort was withdrawn. Alamieyeseigha fled money laundering charges in London earlier this month and returned to Nigeria where he has immunity while in office. The Bayelsa state house of assembly has taken steps to impeach him, but the motion is unlikely to achieve the two-thirds majority required to pass. Alamieyeseigha has accused the federal government of persecuting him because of his ethnic Ijaw origin, and of trying to cause mayhem in the state as a pretext to impose a state of emergency, which would strip him of his powers. Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo stepped up the pressure on Alamieyeseigha by denying his officials access to the state’s monthly budget allocations. The state’s accountant-general was arrested by anti-fraud police in Abuja last week and other officials are wanted for questioning.

PHILIPPINES

Manila, Nov 23 — Philippine troops and about 100 suspected Muslim militants exchanged heavy gunfire deep in the mountains of the southwestern island of Jolo, killing one soldier and an unknown number of rebels, the army said today. Brigadier-General Alexander Aleo, commander of the military’s counter-terrorism task force, said fighting broke out late yesterday when soldiers ran into a large group of Abu Sayyaf rebels in

the mountains near Indanan town. The clash was the first contact with the rebels since a week ago, when troops in Panamao town came under mortar barrages. “We lost only one but our troops may have inflicted a heavy toll on the enemy side,” Aleo said. “Sporadic fighting continued through the night.” Abu Sayyaf, the smallest of four Muslim rebel groups in the southern Philippines, is suspected of links with al Qaeda and the regional militant network Jemaah Islamiah. Abu Sayyaf has been blamed for a wave of bombings in the south and Manila since 2002. Aleo said five soldiers had been killed and 25 wounded since Nov 11, when troops hunting a one-armed, horse-riding Abu Sayyaf commander clashed with a group of rebels near Indanan town. An estimated 25 rebels had been killed, but only three bodies were found at the scene. Nearly 5,000 residents of three villages around Indanan fled their homes and farms. The military has been searching for Radullan Sahiron, the Abu Sayyaf chief on Jolo, after police apologised for arresting a man who turned out to be a lookalike missing the wrong arm. Sahiron was wanted for a series of high-profile kidnappings, including the abduction of 21 tourists and resort workers from Sipadan island in Malaysia in 2000. — Reuters.

Manila, Nov 24 — One Philippine soldier was killed as renewed fighting with suspected Islamic militants with ties to al Qaeda entered a second day on the remote southwestern island of Jolo, an army general said today. Brigadier-General Alexander Aleo, commander of the military’s counter-terrorism task force, also said two soldiers were wounded in the clashes with Abu Sayyaf rebels in mountains near Indanan town. “Fighting was very intense,” Aleo told reporters. “We’re not giving our enemies any breathing spell. We’ll pursue and hit them hard with everything we’ve got.” Army howitzers pounded rebel positions in the mountains near Indanan and Patikul towns as the air force prepared OV-10 ground assault planes for bombing sorties, if the weather permitted. Aleo said troops inflicted heavy casualties on the rebels, citing intercepted radio traffic and soldiers’ accounts. He said soldiers were battling about 150 Abu Sayyaf rebels and disgruntled members of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), a larger Muslim separatist group that signed a peace deal with the government of the country in 1996. — Reuters.

Manila, Nov 25 — Philippine soldiers killed about 15 suspected Islamic militants with ties to al Qaeda in a ground assault after a wave of air strikes on the southwestern island of Jolo, an army general said today. Brigadier-General Nehemias Pajarito, a brigade commander, said troops overran positions of the Abu Sayyaf rebels yesterday around the perimeter of a well-entrenched hideout in the mountains near Indanan town. Two Italian-made S-211 trainer jets fitted

with rockets and bombs and two U.S.-made OV-10B ground assault planes conducted air strikes yesterday before the hour-long gunbattle. “The enemy casualties were the result of a ground assault, not by the air strikes,” Pajarito told reporters. “But the bombing runs helped soften the targets, destroying concrete bunkers and forcing the rebels to come out from their trenches.” Fifteen rebels had been killed, based on intercepted radio traffic and accounts by soldiers, but Pajarito said the toll could be much higher. He said six soldiers were wounded in the assault on the third day of fighting in the mountains near Indanan and Patikul towns. — Reuters.

Manila, Nov 28 — Philippine soldiers killed four suspected members of a Muslim militant group linked with al Qaeda in an operation to flush out militants from the remote southwestern island of Jolo, an army general said today. The Abu Sayyaf militants were resting in a wooded area when an army patrol hunting their one-armed, horse-riding local commander ran into them and opened fire. Hundreds of troops are battling about 150 Abu Sayyaf rebels and rogue members of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), a larger Muslim separatist group that signed an Indonesian-brokered peace deal with the government in 1996. Brigadier-General Alexander Aleo said troops had found three abandoned rebel camps in the mountains near Indanan town and seized bomb-making materials and anti-tank projectiles used to make crude mines. The military has been hunting Radullan Sahiron, the Abu Sayyaf chief on Jolo. He has a bounty of 5 million pesos on his head. — Reuters.

Manila, Nov 29 — Communist rebels launched fresh attacks in the Philippine countryside, killing five soldiers and militia members in two incidents, an army spokesman said today. Major Gamal Hayudini said a team of militiamen was checking reports about the presence of armed men in a farming village in the town of Montevista on the southern island of Mindanao when about 30 communist guerrillas fired at them. Two militiamen were killed and two wounded in a 20-minute battle as army reinforcements arrived to pursue the rebels from the New People’s Army (NPA), which is active in 69 of the country’s 79 provinces. “Our troops recovered crude landmines,” Hayudini told reporters, adding the rebels may have been planning a major attack when the militiamen interrupted them. In the other incident, three soldiers were killed when an army platoon ran into a large NPA force in Pinukupuk town in the northern province of Kalinga. The military said extra troops were rushed to the area to recover the bodies of the dead soldiers and pursue the rebels, who fled into the mountains. There has been a rash of NPA-related incidents in rural areas recently, killing nearly 20 army and police officers in attacks in the

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last week alone. Rebel spokesman Gregorio Rosal, alias Ka Roger, said the attacks “clearly show the growing armed strength and wide mass support of the NPA”. But the military disputed the rebel claim, saying security operations in the first six months of this year resulted in the reduction in NPA strength by at least six percent from 8,240 fighters in 2004 to 7,709 in June. President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo has ordered troops to hunt the rebels “without let-up” after nine soldiers were killed by a landmine in the central Philippines last week. Talks between the government and the National Democratic Front (NDF), the NPA’s political arm, stalled last year when Manila declined demands to help persuade Washington to remove the rebels from U.S. and European terrorism blacklists. — Reuters.

SPAIN

Madrid, Dec 1 — A bomb exploded at the headquarters of transport company Azkar in the Basque country, northern Spain in the early hours of today, causing damage but no injuries, police said. Police blamed Basque separatist guerrillas ETA for the explosion which damaged the wall and offices in the complex, and shattered glass in neighbouring houses. “At the moment all the indications are it was an ETA bomb,” a police spokesman said. Spain’s government fuelled speculation of a breakthrough in the long-running Basque conflict in May with an unprecedented offer to talk to ETA if it stopped violence. In a statement last week, ETA urged the international community to help bring about a negotiated solution, but Spain’s ruling Socialist Party dismissed the statement. — Reuters.

SRI LANKA

London, Nov 28 — A press report, dated Nov 27, states: Sri Lanka’s top rebel leader issued an ultimatum to the country’s new government today: address the grievances of the Tamil minority or face a renewed struggle for independence. Velupillai Prabhakaran, head of the Tamil Tigers rebel group, said President Mahinda Rajapakse must propose a framework that satisfies the political aspirations of the country’s 3.2 million ethnic Tamils, who seek a separate homeland in the northeast. He did not set a date for the government’s response. “If the new government rejects our urgent appeal, we will, next year, in solidarity with our people, intensify our struggle for self-determination, our struggle for national liberation to establish self-government in our homeland,” Prabhakaran said during his annual speech on the day the Tigers pay homage to guerillas killed in fighting. There was no immediate government reaction, but Sri Lanka’s top military general said troops were ready to defend the country. “We are always committed to the cease-fire but if they withdraw and attack us we are not going to just sit and watch. We are going to retaliate,” Lt. Gen. Shantha

Kottegoda told The Associated Press. Prabhakaran’s speech came two days after Rajapakse rejected rebel demands for a homeland and promised to overhaul a 2002 cease-fire to curb violence and child recruitment by the Tigers. The conservative leader, voted into office this month, also vowed to revive stalled peace talks with the rebels.

SUDAN

Juba, Sudan, Nov 22 — Rebel attacks on civilians in southern Sudan are preventing aid workers from helping the vast region recover from two decades of war, aid workers and officials said today. Rebels from Uganda’s Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) killed three people yesterday in a Sudanese village south of Maridi, near the border of Democratic Republic of Congo, UN sources said. Earlier this month they also killed two mine clearance workers in the south, preventing key roads from reopening in one of the poorest areas in the world. “They are trying to cut off the supply routes,” said a UN source. The LRA, operating from bases in southern Sudan, has terrorised civilians in northern Uganda in a long war to overthrow Uganda’s president, Yoweri Museveni. However, a recent agreement between Uganda and Khartoum to allow Ugandan troops to chase LRA fighters anywhere in south Sudan has forced them to go on the run in smaller cells. The rebels are now heading west from those bases into more densely populated areas of Sudan where they might do even more damage, aid workers said. David Gressly, a UN aid worker, said recent attacks had closed off a vast area for UN workers, now restricted to emergency operations only. — Reuters.

Khartoum, Nov 29 — A Darfur rebel faction said it attacked a town in West Darfur state today, killing 37 soldiers and police, to push for its inclusion in peace talks due to open in the Nigerian capital Abuja later in the day. The Sudanese army confirmed troop movements in the area where the rebels said they carried out their attack but gave no further details. A source in the aid community confirmed an attack on a police station in the town of Sirba and said three policemen had been wounded. The rebels, the breakaway National Movement for Reform and Development, (NMRD) are not represented at the African Union-sponsored talks and say they no longer respect a ceasefire they signed with the government, after Sudanese armed forces attacked their positions near the border with Chad. “This morning at 0630 hrs we attacked and took control of Sirba town in West Darfur. We are now in control of the town,” Khalil Abdallah, the political leader of the group, told Reuters from Darfur. He said the rebels had killed 37 troops and police and taken six vehicles. “For one year we are cooperating with the African Union and still we are not part of the negotiations in Abuja,” he said, giving as the reason why the

group had attacked the town. Abdallah said the group was also retaliating for government strikes on their bases in the Jabel Moun area near the Chadian border earlier this month. He said the more than 6,000 AU troops monitoring a shaky ceasefire in the remote west of Sudan were doing nothing to rein in Khartoum’s security forces. The NMRD’s demand to take part in the Abuja peace talks came as representatives of the two main Darfur rebel groups and the government prepared to open the seventh round of negotiations. — Reuters.

YEMEN

London, Nov 30 — A press report, dated today, states: At least 16 rebels have been killed in renewed fighting with security forces in Yemen’s restive Saada province, police said today. A police official said at least six rebels were killed late yesterday and another 10 today in clashes around the Jebel al-Nusf area in the northern province of Saada. More than 500 soldiers and policemen, tanks and armoured vehicles sealed off parts of the province and prevented journalists from entering. The renewed fighting between government forces and followers of slain Zaidi leader Hussein Badr Eddin al-Huthi comes after rebels killed eight policemen in Saada on Monday (Nov 28), according to tribal sources. Yemen’s President Ali Abdullah Saleh accused the rebels of not respecting the terms of a pardon he issued in September following Huthi’s death at the hands of the army and nearly three months of deadly fighting.

Labour Disputes



ARGENTINA

London, Dec 1 — A press report, dated Nov 30, states: Workers at Argentina’s Spanish-owned flagship airline, Aerolineas Argentinas, vowed today to extend their week-long strike despite government and company efforts to promote an accord. Pilots and technicians demanding a 45% wage hike met in a raucous union assembly, at which they decided to reject the company’s offer to reinstate more than 300 fired workers if they negotiated an agreement. The airline, owned by Spain’s Interinvest, flies to Miami, New York, Madrid and Rome as well as 33 domestic destinations. The strike has led to most flights being cancelled since Friday (Nov 25), affecting more than 50,000 passengers. The government has threatened to take legal action against the striking unions if they do not participate in government-ordered obligatory talks before midnight today, 0300, GMT, tomorrow. Demands for wage hikes echo similar appeals by

workers at different industries throughout Argentina to compensate for inflation, which economists expect to surpass the government's target of 11% for 2005. Five other unions at Aerolíneas Argentinas are not striking and some of their members have urged their colleagues to return to work.

AZERBAIJAN

London, Nov 30 — A press report, dated Nov 29, states: Workers raised the pressure on US oil services giant McDermott by launching a new strike over wages at the company's Azerbaijan operation, workers said. As hundreds of striking workers exited an oil rig construction facility in Primorsk, 20 km south of the capital Baku late yesterday, they told Agence France-Presse they would continue the protest until the company met their demands. The strike came a week after McDermott staff halted work for a day in the former Soviet Republic's first organised campaign against directors of one of the many Western oil firms operating here. McDermott had said earlier that it would respond today to demands for wage increases of up to 30% after Azerbaijani employees complained of pay cuts that did not affect foreign staff. The company issued a press release yesterday evening after workers took action however, saying it would allow for longer working hours which would translate into a 22% pay increase starting in early December and another increase of 12% in January.

London, Nov 30 — A press report, dated today, states: Some 2,000 employees of a U.S. oil field contractor in Azerbaijan ended a strike and returned to work yesterday after securing higher wages, the company and workers' representatives said. The workers at the McDermott Caspian Contractors, a contractor for British oil giant BP's Azerbaijan subsidiary, refused to show up to work Monday (Nov 28) evening to protest a company decision they said decreased their salaries by almost 50%. But the strike, the latest in a series of labor protests at the firm since early last week, ended yesterday after talks produced an agreement. McDermott Caspian Contractors said in a statement that it had agreed to raise wages by 20% from December and by a further 12% from January.

BANGLADESH

See under "Political & Civil Unrest"

BELGIUM

London, Nov 25 — A one-day strike interrupted production at the Volkswagen plant on the outskirts of Brussels today as trade unions protested planned government changes to Belgium's retirement policy. Some 70 employees showed up for work this morning at the Vorst plant, the unions said, adding that people would not be prevented from resuming work during the day if they wished to do so. In all, some 5,600 people work at the plant. The government wants to push Belgium's

early retirement threshold from 58 to 60 — part of a plan to keep people working longer in order to maintain the country's vaunted welfare system.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Bangui, Nov 25 — The main trade union for civil servants in the Central African Republic (CAR) has said that many of its members would continue a strike that began in October as the government has not paid them salary arrears as agreed. "The strike will not come to an end unless the government fulfils its promise," Noel Ramadan, a representative of the country's largest trade unions, the Union syndicale des travailleurs de Centrafrique (USTC), said today. In an agreement signed on November 12 with the union, the government promised to pay two months salary arrears by November 25. However, CAR Labour Minister Jacques Bothy told IRIN on Friday, "There are administrative problems that have made it impossible to withdraw the money from the bank." He said workers should be paid by next week but added: "For technical reasons the government is only in a position to pay one month's [arrears]". Civil servants in various ministries had been boycotting work in the hope of pressuring the government into paying the money as promised. Today, some 50 USTC union members gathered at the union's headquarters to express their frustration. — Reuters.

FRANCE

London, Nov 25 — A 72-hour tug strike (with a possible extension) has been announced by the Les Abeilles towage company at the port of Le Havre, from 0800, local time, Dec 2. During the strike period, tugs will be available in case of an emergency, but not for commercial operations. The reason for the strike is the installation of a new towage company (SNRH) at the port.

INDIA

London, Nov 30 — A press report, dated today, states: Oil tanker operators in Jammu and Kashmir yesterday evening decided to withdraw their indefinite strike following an assurance from Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad to appeal against a court order prohibiting movement of old vehicles in the state. As the day-long hectic parleys of the transporters with the inspector general (Traffic) and divisional administration failed to yield any result, Azad invited them for talks. After a 30-minute meeting with the chief minister, leaders of the oil tankers association announced withdrawal of the strike, which had begun Saturday (Nov 26) and threatened to cripple the state's road transport. The tanker operators' associations were protesting the Oct 28 notification issued by the Jammu and Kashmir State Transport Authority banning commercial vehicles older than 15 years, after a directive from the Jammu and Kashmir High Court. Official sources

said that Azad assured the transporters that the government would appeal before the Supreme Court against the order of the Jammu and Kashmir High Court. The High Court order, issued Oct 28, is to come into effect Dec 28. Before the strike was called off, it was threatening to bring road transport in the state to a standstill as almost 70% of the petrol pumps ran out of supply yesterday. According to transport authorities, all petrol pumps in Kathua and Udhampur districts were dry. In Jammu 95% fuel stations were out of stock by Monday evening and in Srinagar five out of the 20 petrol pumps were dry. The public transport system was almost on the verge of collapse in Jammu with 27 of the 35 petrol pumps in Jammu city dry.

IRISH FERRIES PERSONNEL

London, Nov 24 — A press report, dated today, states: A confrontation broke out at Pembroke Dock today on board passenger ro/ro *Isle of Inishmore* (34031 gt, built 1997). Irish Ferries began implementing its redundancy programme for Irish crew members and it said today that it "will take on board the personnel who will eventually replace the current staff who wish to avail of the voluntary redundancy offer." A group of Latvian seafarers, who have been hired at rates of pay lower than the Irish employees, entered the vessel today assisted by security personnel. The vessel was due to depart at 1430 hrs for Rosslare but has not yet left. Irish crew members have locked themselves in the engine-room. They are seeking to have security personnel brought off the vessel.

London, Nov 25 — A press report, dated today, states: Two vessels operated by Irish Ferries are still stuck in port at Pembroke Dock and Holyhead, after a row over staffing prevented them sailing. It is understood the dispute began over the firm's use of security guards as new workers were introduced on board. Some crew members claim the company is planning to replace existing staff with overseas workers. A spokesman for Irish Ferries said it had been completely open about what it was doing over crewing the ships. Passenger ro/ro *Isle of Inishmore*, which was due to run between Pembroke Dock and Rosslare, and Passenger ro/ro *Ulysses* running from Holyhead to Dublin, were still in port this morning. It is understood the dispute began yesterday afternoon after new staff, including several eastern Europeans, were taken on board the *Isle of Inishmore* which was due to set sail at 1430 UTC. A number of Irish Ferries crew members claim the company plans to replace existing staff with workers from overseas who are willing to work for lower wages. In a statement Irish Ferries said that it would be "changing its crew structures to international norms which will bring it into line with its competitors". It said it had launched a voluntary redundancy scheme for existing staff

in September and that 90% of seagoing staff had applied. Irish Ferries said that, from yesterday, the personnel who would replace the crew taking voluntary redundancy were being taken on board to "familiarise themselves with all required aspects of ships' operations to enable them to assume their positions in due course". A spokesman for the firm said it was a cost-cutting exercise and that the company had been completely open about what it was doing in regards to crewing. He said talks were underway and he hoped the ships would sail soon. The general secretary of the seamen's union of Ireland, Bob Carrick, said the crews were upset at the presence onboard of security guards, employed by Irish Ferries to oversee the visit of the new staff. "The crew are clearly saying to the company take off those security people and they will sail the ship," he said. "They will sail with the foreign crew on board on the ship but they will not sail with those security people." An Irish Ferries spokesman said the security guards were there to protect the ship, its crew and passengers.

London, Nov 26 — A press report, dated today, states: Irish Ferries have cancelled all weekend crossings due to industrial action as the tense stand off between the company and workers shows no signs of abating. Siptu members remain in control of two of the company's vessels which have been prevented from setting to sea now for two days. The worker's union is now threatening to mount blockades of ports unless the security personnel and agency crews are removed.

London, Nov 27 — A press report, dated Nov 26, states: Irish Ferries may have to cancel the sailing of passenger ro/ro *Normandy* (25745 gt, built 1982) from France tonight. The Irish Ferries dispute was set to escalate further when port workers said they would not handle a ferry due to arrive from France tomorrow. International maritime law states that a ship may not embark from a port if the destination port is not available to them. *Normandy* was due to leave on an overnight crossing to Rosslare, but port workers there, and their counterparts in Dublin, announced they would turn the vessel away when it arrived.

London, Nov 28 — A press report, dated Nov 27, states: An Irish Ferries stand-off was in its fourth day today, with union claims that 30 crew members were barricaded in vessels at Pembroke Dock and Holyhead. They are protesting at plans to replace staff with cheaper workers from abroad. The dispute is set to escalate after port workers said they would not handle a ferry arriving from France today. Taoiseach Bertie Ahern criticised Irish Ferries' handling of the row, but the company said it had to bring in foreign staff in order to remain competitive. Passenger ro/ro *Normandy* left Cherbourg at 2330, UTC, yesterday and was due to dock in Rosslare at 1645 today. However, port workers in Rosslare, and their

counterparts in Dublin, announced they would turn the vessel away when it arrived. There were reports suggesting that the vessel could head to Cork instead. They were the latest developments in a row which began on Thursday (Nov 24) when some crew members seized control of passenger ro/ro *Isle of Inishmore* (34031 gt, built 1997) after new eastern European crew members boarded. *Isle of Inishmore* had been due to run between Pembroke Dock and Rosslare. Another vessel, passenger ro/ro *Ulysses* (50,938 gt, built 2001), which was due to go from Holyhead to Dublin, also remained in dock. Irish Ferries said the workers were there to familiarise themselves with the vessel and their roles and the security personnel were put there to ensure the continued access of company staff and port officials. Norrie McVicar, of the International Transport Federation, complained because officials of the National Union of Marine, Aviation and Shipping Transport Officers were not allowed on board at Pembroke Dock. Some crew had asked for union help. Mr McVicar said about 15 crew were barricaded on each vessel in Holyhead and Pembroke Dock. Unions said the existing staff were upset by the manner of the security guards' appearance. They said the men had boarded in Ireland as passengers, but had then changed into their uniforms in the toilets as the vessel approached Wales. Irish Taoiseach Bertie Ahern described the company's approach as "a retrograde step". "This is not in line with Irish industrial relations, they are trying to turn back the clock," said Mr Ahern. "About everything that they have done in their handling of this I fundamentally and totally disagree with." Irish Ferries has said it had been completely open about what it was doing over bringing in new crews as part of a cost-cutting exercise. It said it was justified in employing security staff. Spokesman Alf McGrath said: "The security measures were necessary because in December of last year the Services, Industrial, Professional and Technical Union staged two strikes and totally locked up the vessel in Holyhead, and would not allow regulatory agencies or any management on to the vessel. So we have a duty and responsibility to protect our assets." Bob Carrick, general secretary of the Seaman's Union of Ireland, said up to 90% of the crew had agreed to voluntary redundancy terms which had allowed the firm to bring in new workers. However, Mr Carrick said the wishes of the remainder to keep their jobs and terms of conditions should be respected. He said: "That's not a choice, if somebody says you can keep your job but we're going to slash your wages in half." Around 70 crew members are thought to be on board *Isle of Inishmore*. Police said they were keeping a minimal presence at the port in Pembroke. Irish Ferries has told passengers it does not expect services to resume until tomorrow. A spokesman said there were "no plans

for formal talks between the management and workforce, but managers are represented on both ferries and so there is the possibility of dialogue".

London, Nov 28 — A press report, dated today, states: Dozens of exhausted passengers were finally able to disembark in Dublin this morning from passenger ro/ro *Normandy*, the ship caught in the middle of the spiraling Irish Ferries industrial dispute. The 113 passengers had spent more than 24 hours on the vessel, which left Cherbourg on Saturday (Nov 26) evening bound for Rosslare. The ship had to be diverted to Dublin after port workers in Rosslare would not allow the ferry to dock. Their refusal was a show of solidarity with Irish Ferries staff who are fighting against a plan by the company to replace 550 seafarers with cheaper foreign workers. As they disembarked, passengers said they had been treated well by Irish Ferries but had seen travel plans disrupted as a result of the dispute.

London, Nov 29 — A press report, dated today, states: Renewed attempts to find a basis for talks in the increasingly bitter Irish Ferries dispute will be made today by the Labour Relations Commission. Representatives of the company and Siptu met the LRC separately yesterday for an initial round of exploratory discussions, but no progress was made towards a resolution. LRC chief executive Kieran Mulvey said last night the commission was continuing to assess the positions put to it by both parties with a view to finding a framework for negotiations. A continuing stand-off, he warned, would have consequences not only for the company and its staff, but also for the wider business community. "Ultimately this dispute will have to be resolved in some shape or form around the negotiating table by mutual agreement or understanding," he said. There was little sign yesterday, however, that such an agreement was likely in the near future.

London, Nov 30 — Irish Ferries yesterday afternoon withdrew security personnel from two vessels, generating hopes for a breakthrough in the dispute that has seen officers on the ships barricade themselves in the engine-rooms since last Thursday. The company and the union are at loggerheads over plans to replace 540 predominantly Irish national seafarers with low-cost, mainly Latvian crews. Last week, security guards from the company boarded passenger ro/ro *Ulysses* and passenger ro/ro *Isle of Inishmore* — both alongside in Wales — in a bid to force to changes through. Now the guards have been ordered off, in anticipation of a "reciprocal gesture" from Irish union Siptu, which represents officers. However, it was unclear what Irish Ferries has in mind. According to British union sources that have been watching the situation, Siptu is unlikely to agree to hand the vessels back to company

control without further reassurances over its concerns. One RMT official said: "We believe the heavies were under so much pressure that they wanted to come off the vessels themselves. They should not have been there in the first place, they were illegal under ISPS," he added. So serious has the situation become that Irish Ferries could face collapse unless the dispute is resolved quickly, one of the country's most senior politicians has warned. Deputy prime minister Mary Harney, who is regarded as a pro-business figure, called on both sides to "pull back from the brink" and to find a solution. The dispute will also have an impact on the Irish economy, as the company carries an estimated 25% of Irish exports. John Whelan, chairman of the Irish Exporters' Association, said: "Some companies are trying to charter aircraft. That is costly, but if it means keeping clients, then it has been done."

London, Dec 1 — A press report, dated Nov 30, states: Irish exporters and hauliers have warned jobs are being put at risk by the dispute at Irish Ferries. The halting of four Irish Ferries vessels — passenger ro/ro *Ulysses*, passenger ro/ro *Isle of Inishmore*, passenger ro/ro *Normandy* and ro/ro *Jonathan Swift* — has cut ferry capacity into the Republic by a third. The Irish Exporters' Association said the Irish manufacturing industry may be forced to start cutting jobs before Christmas unless a resolution can be found. IEA chief executive John Whelan said this morning the loss of inward freight will start to run down some of the manufacturing facilities, depending on what buffer stock they had in place. "It will probably run for about two weeks and the backlog situation will have become quite extensive at that stage," he told RTE Radio this morning. "Unless other operators come into the Irish Sea, we will start seeing orders being lost at a fairly substantial rate and it wouldn't be long before job cutbacks will then be necessary." Mr Whelan noted the Irish manufacturing sector had lost 30,000 jobs in the past two years. "These companies are trying to hang on to markets. They are in a position where they will not be able to meet the sales demand and there are other competitors who are just waiting for the opportunity," Mr Whelan said. The Irish Road Haulage Association also warned that the dispute posed a huge threat to the Irish economy. "The continuing dispute is now having a serious impact on the haulage sector and a severe impact on exporters at a critical time of year," IRHA spokesman Jimmy Quinn said. "The current situation cannot be allowed to continue as it is now having disastrous effects on our industry and now our country".

ITALY

London, Nov 25 — A press report, dated today, states: Public service workers in Italy are staging a strike in protest at the government's

proposed budget. Public transport will be worst affected with no train services in the morning and flights grounded for four hours after midday. The strike has been called by Italy's three biggest unions who have 12 million members between them. They say they expect government offices to be closed all day and health workers will only be providing emergency cover. Banks and post offices will also be affected. But the biggest problems will be felt on public transport which will shut down for four hours in all major cities. Air traffic will also be disrupted in the middle of the day. Alitalia has cancelled over 200 flights. The protest is against the budget going through parliament. The unions say it is making savage cuts in the wrong areas and will not help encourage growth. Protesting musicians will be playing simultaneous renditions of Verdi's Requiem in cities across the country.

London, Nov 26 — A press report, dated today, states: From Venice to Palermo, life in Italy was severely disrupted yesterday as workers walked out in protest at spending cuts in the proposed 2006 budget. The biggest disruption was in the air with national carrier Alitalia forced to cancel 230 flights, 125 of them on international routes, as staff stopped work from 1200 to 1600 hrs. The strike also affected public transport, government offices, hospitals, banks and post offices, while a one-hour stoppage was called in public schools. By the end of the morning, the unions estimated that several hundred thousand workers had taken part in the strike and that the stoppages were observed by 80% of public service employees. The main protest marches rallied 100,000 people in Milan, more than 80,000 in Rome and more than 30,000 in the Sicilian capital Palermo. In Rome, transport staff walked out at 0930 hrs while stoppage times varied from region to region with public transport in Venice halted for three hours from 1000 hrs and Naples the stoppage ran for two hours from 1000 hrs. The action was called by Italy's three main unions who represent some 12 million members.

NIGERIA

London, Dec 1 — Port workers are expected to stop work today at the beginning of an indefinite strike against the government's port concessioning programme. A last minute meeting was being held today in an effort to avert the strike but when this went to publication there was no indication of any success in avoiding the action. According to Anthony Nted, president of Maritime Workers Union of Nigeria, workers have run out of patience and the only way out for them is to begin an indefinite work stoppage. He instructed members of the union that unless government accedes to their demands by morning, workers should begin shutting down the ports. He called for the action to be peaceful and

to avoid violence but said no vessels should be loaded or discharged. No amount of compensation would compensate for the social disruption that privatisation will bring to union members, he told members. Despite the union having lowered its initial demands regarding the size of severance packages, government was continuing to ignore its request.

RUSSIA

London, Nov 28 — Workers at Ford's Russian assembly plant located near St. Petersburg ended their week-long go-slow strike today, but labour union officials said action may resume if pay demands were not met. The plant was one of the first to be opened in the country by a foreign carmaker and plans to turn out 36,000 Ford Focus models this year. It is Ford's only plant in Russia. The go-slow - a form of protest when employees deliberately work with less effort to win concessions - started at the St. Petersburg plant last week after workers demanded a pay rise. "Production has fallen in the past week," said a spokeswoman for Ford in Russia without giving any numbers. "The company is looking for ways of protecting its clients from additional costs of car deliveries." Separately, a source close to the company told the agency that Ford was considering importing Focus models from factories elsewhere in Europe to meet demand. Another company source said that workers decided to halt industrial action after learning that officials could shut down the factory altogether if production levels continued to shrink.

SOUTH KOREA

London, Dec 1 — A press report, dated today, states: Unionized workers at Citibank Korea Inc. launched a two-day strike today to protest the bank's alleged discrimination against former employees of KorAm Bank. Citibank Korea was launched in November 2004 as a result of the merger between the local banking unit of U.S.-based financial giant Citigroup and KorAm, then the country's seventh-largest lender. The strike is led by a union representing 2,500 former KorAm employees. "We have no choice but to strike since the management has been insincere in the past collective bargaining talks," the union said. The bank's management said it cannot accept the union's demands. "If we accept all the demands from the union, it will cost us an additional 130 billion won (US\$125.7 million) every year," the management claimed. Unionists went on a one-day strike in early November. The two sides have held 17 rounds of negotiations since Aug. 16, but failed to narrow their differences. To minimize inconveniences for customers, Citibank Korea plans to open 156 units, with 81 of them operating normally, out of a total of 253 branches.

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

Awards & Settlements

**BRAIN DAMAGE, UNITED STATES**

London, Nov 25 — A press report, dated today, states: A federal judge has awarded \$60 million to a couple from Hialeah, Florida, whose son suffered severe brain damage when he was born in a Jacksonville Navy hospital two years ago. The award is believed to be the largest ever under the Federal Tort Claims Act. It allows private citizens to sue the federal government for the negligent conduct of government employees. The award also may be the last of its kind. A new law passed in Florida in late 2003 caps pain and suffering damages at \$1 million. The government is likely to appeal the case or renegotiate the settlement. The process could take months or years. Kevin Bravo Rodriguez is now two years old. He is unable to see, speak or swallow, move his arms and legs or respond to any stimulus except pain. Doctors say he will not live past age 21. His parents said doctors waited too long to perform a caesarean section to deliver their son at the Mayport Naval Station obstetric clinic.

BREACH OF DUTY TO ACT IN CLIENTS BEST INTEREST, CANADA - A&S

London, Nov 29 — A press report, dated today, states: Torys LLP, one of Canada's most prominent law firms, has tentatively agreed to pay a settlement of more than US\$30-million to Hollinger International Inc. for its role in a series of deals that saw Conrad Black and some of his deputies pocket tens of millions of dollars. If a formal agreement is signed, it will mark one of the largest payments ever made by a law firm to settle allegations that it failed to act in a client's best interests. People familiar with the discussions said the two sides are working on drafting documents for the agreement and that Hollinger International could announce the lucrative settlement as early as next week. A spokesman for Hollinger International, a Chicago-based newspaper owner, declined to comment. Torys has 330 lawyers in Toronto and New York, and it is unclear whether the firm's partners will be required to personally contribute to the settlement. Torys is a member of a private insurance exchange that is funded by a number of other major Canadian law firms and reinsured by a variety of insurance companies. It is believed that the exchange, called the Canadian Lawyers Liability Assurance Society, has enough reserves and insurance coverage to absorb most of the costs of the settlement. Although the settlement will be a public relations blow for Torys, competitors said they

believe the firm's strong reputation and blue-chip roster of corporate clients including Brookfield Asset Management Inc., Rogers Communications Inc. and Thomson Corp. will help it weather the storm. "This settlement allows the firm to put all the controversy behind it so that it can carry on," said a senior official with a rival law firm. People familiar with the discussions said Hollinger International notified Torys in writing earlier this year that it intended to launch a suit against the firm on the grounds that it breached its duty to act in the company's best interests during transactions that enriched Lord Black. Torys was retained as Hollinger International's chief law firm in 1999, and a team of senior partners and associates in New York and Toronto managed the relationship until Lord Black resigned from the company in 2003 and the company parted ways with the law firm. At the heart of the allegations are the multiple roles Torys played as an adviser to Hollinger International and two of Lord Black's holding companies when Hollinger International sold \$2.1-billion of newspapers assets to CanWest Global Communications Corp. in 2000. It is highly unusual for law firms to simultaneously advise separate parties during a transaction, without client consent, because it is virtually impossible to show undivided loyalty to more than one client. People familiar with the case said that Torys allegedly failed to inform Hollinger International that it was also advising Lord Black's companies, Ravelston Corp. and Hollinger Inc., during the CanWest transaction. The company has faulted Torys for not sounding the alert that \$51.8-million of proceeds from the CanWest sale was transferred to Lord Black, his private holding company and three of his deputies when the deal closed. The large personal payments are the centrepiece of criminal charges levelled against Lord Black and his executives by the U.S. Department of Justice earlier this month. It is also understood that the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission is reviewing Torys' role in the CanWest transaction as part of a broader examination of Hollinger International's disclosure practices. Typically such large personal payments are required to be disclosed to shareholders on a timely basis. But the \$51.8-million of transfers to Lord Black and his executives were only publicly revealed in 2002, six months after the CanWest deal closed, when a U.S. law firm spotted the unusual transfers during the course of a financing review. A special committee of Hollinger International directors criticized Torys and the company's auditor KPMG in a report last year for failing to alert the board of directors about a number of questionable transactions involving Lord Black. Torys has also been named in a Canadian class-action suit that alleges the law firm, Lord Black,

KPMG and others failed in their duty to protect the interests of Hollinger International shareholders.

CLASS-ACTION SETTLEMENT, UNITED STATES

London, Nov 28 — A press report, dated today, states: Dutch retailer Ahold has reached a deal to settle a class action suit in the US after it inflated earnings by more than 1bn euros (\$1.2bn; £684m). The firm, the world's fourth-biggest food retail and foodservice group by sales, said the deal would see it pay \$1.1bn to eligible shareholders. It means there will be a charge in its third-quarter figures of 585m euros after tax, Ahold added. Three former Ahold top executives last year settled fraud charges brought by US regulator the Securities and Exchange Commission. Ahold had previously admitted that it fraudulently inflated promotional allowances at Foodservice, improperly consolidated joint ventures and also committed other accounting errors and irregularities. The settlement will cover all common shares bought from 30 July, 1999 to 23 February, 2003, providing compensation of between \$1 and \$1.30 per qualifying share. Ahold said if payments went to plan, cash would be distributed by an administrator in 2007.

DEATH DUE PLANE CRASH, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Nov 25 — A press report, dated today, states: The family of a Highgate banker killed in a plane crash involving an RAF helicopter have won a record £5million payout from the Ministry of Defence. Hugh Paton, 43, was killed after his Cessna plane crashed while landing at St Mawgan RAF base near Newquay in Cornwall on June 23, 2001. Mr Paton, who was flying the plane, managed to pull his wife Julia and his daughters Elizabeth and Charlotte from the plane's wreckage. But he suffered 70 per cent burns and died nine days later in hospital. The Paton family put in a £10million claim against the Ministry of Defence (MoD) claiming the crash was caused by an RAF Sea King helicopter manoeuvring too close to the runway. The MoD had denied blame for the accident and a three week trial at the Royal Courts of Justice in the Strand was expected to start on Monday (Nov 28). But last Friday (Nov 18) the two sides agreed an out of court payment of £5million. Julian Chamberlayne, the Paton family's solicitor, from firm Stewarts, said: "We believe this is the single highest accident award ever. Most of the award is due to the expected loss of earnings from Mr Paton, who was a very highly regarded investment banker at the top of his profession." Mrs Paton, now 49, and her two daughters, 16 and 19, had set off with Mr Paton on the morning of June 23 from Elstree airfield in Hertfordshire. Mr Paton, a qualified barrister who was a guest lecturer at Cambridge University, flew the family to Cornwall where they planned to have lunch at a

restaurant in Padstow. As the Cessna approached the airfield with permission to land on a fine day with good visibility, the Sea King loomed into Mr Paton's view. In written argument to the court, Mr Charles Haddon-Cave QC, counsel for the family, said Mr Paton had to take emergency action as the helicopter "made as if to cross the runway." At a preliminary hearing last Friday Mr Haddon-Cave said while the MoD still denied liability, it accepted it would have appeared to Mr Paton that the Sea King was "going to impinge on the runway" before the accident. An MoD spokesman said: "The allegation is that the Sea King was hovering too close to the runway, but we have reached this settlement without any admission of liability."

FRAUD, UNITED STATES

London, Nov 30 — A press report, dated Nov 23, states: A US judge has ordered French firm Artemis, belonging to Francois Pinault, to pay the California insurance commissioner nearly \$190 million in damages plus interest in connection with the fraudulent purchase of US insurer Executive Life, a judicial source said. "The court finds that Artemis shall restore to the Commissioner one half of the foregoing benefits, or \$189,806,288, plus interest calculated at 7%," Judge Howard Matz said in his order. "The parties shall stipulate to the interest calculation and by not later than Nov 30, 2005, they shall file a joint statement specifying the amount to be entered in the final judgement," he added. The trial was one of the final chapters in a complex saga going back to the early 1990s arising mainly from the bankruptcy of Californian insurer Executive Life, a drama that scarred thousands of US policyholders and strained US-French relations. One of Pinault's attorneys said that Artemis had already paid \$185 million in December, 2003, as a deposit, and that that amount should be subtracted from the fine imposed by the judge. "Basically, almost all the amount is already out of Artemis' pocket," said attorney James Clark. "The commissioner sought just under \$1.3 billion. We feel overall quite good about it." The scandal surrounding the Executive Life purchase resulted in one of the largest criminal settlements in US history in December, 2003, in which the French parties paid a total of \$771 million in fines and in sums set aside for the resolution of the civil case. It was followed by a complex civil trial that began in February and resulted in the jury ruling in May that Artemis had conspired with Credit Lyonnais and other investors to hide the bank's illegal role in the purchase of the failed insurer. California Insurance Commissioner John Garamendi claimed that the then state-owned Credit Lyonnais used French insurer MAAF as a front to buy Executive Life, violating a California law barring foreign governments from controlling insurance firms. In addition, a US

federal law banned banks from owning more than 25% of a non-banking business. Artemis was in turn accused of acquiring and profiting to the tune of \$2.5 billion after buying Executive Life's valuable — and allegedly ill-gotten — junk-bonds. Credit Lyonnais and the French state settled the case on the eve of the start of the trial in February for \$600 million, but Artemis and Pinault — one of Europe's richest men — refused to strike a deal. They maintained they were never involved in the Executive Life purchase and therefore could not be held responsible. However, after the complex and messy three month trial, the jury in May found that Artemis — but not Pinault — had conspired to profit from the illegal deal and in July the same panel imposed the punitive damages. In the earlier criminal settlement, the French state paid \$475 million, of which \$375 million were set aside for an eventual civil settlement, while Artemis handed over \$185 million, \$110 million of which was set aside for policy holders. Garamendi praised the ruling, saying it brings the total owed by Artemis to at least \$250 million. The final decision in the case brings the total amount ordered or settled on behalf of Executive Life policyholders to approximately \$900 million. In May, a Los Angeles jury returned a verdict awarding the policyholders \$700 million in punitive damages against Artemis. Judge Matz, however, threw out that award in October. "I am currently considering our appeal options regarding the decision to throw out the jury verdict for punitive damages," said Garamendi.

IMPROPER MUTUAL FUND TRADING, UNITED STATES

London, Nov 29 — A press report, dated today, states: Federated Investors has agreed to pay \$100 million to settle a state and federal investigation into improper mutual fund trading by selected groups at the expense of individual investors, New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer and U.S. regulators said yesterday. Pittsburgh-based Federated is one of the nation's largest investment managers, with assets under management of more than \$207 billion, according to the firm's Web site. It is the 14th firm to settle improper mutual fund trading charges since 2003.

INVESTMENT OF PENSION FUNDS, UNITED STATES

London, Nov 30 — A press report, dated Nov 29, states: As many as 150,000 employees and retirees of the former Kmart Corp. would share \$11.75 million in a proposed settlement of a lawsuit against ex-company officials over the investment of pension funds in Kmart's now worthless stock. The agreement involves those who participated in Kmart pensions from Mar 15, 1999, to Mar 6, 2003. Court documents say the people involved lost between \$28 million and \$300 million. "The

settlement is fair, reasonable and in the best interest of the class and should, therefore, be approved," Glen Connor, a Birmingham, Ala., lawyer for one retiree who filed a class-action lawsuit, said in court papers filed yesterday. The papers asked Detroit U.S. District Judge Avern Cohn to approve the deal. Connor's client, Quincie Rankin, is a former employee of Kmart in Fairfield, Ala. Rankin sued ex-Kmart Chief Executive Charles Conaway and other former executives and board members in March 2002. The suit said the company officials invested Kmart pension money in Kmart stock after the company filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection on Jan 22, 2002. It said the officials failed to exercise proper care for the pension money. The settlement would be paid from proceeds of a \$25 million insurance policy from National Union Fire Insurance Co., the Detroit Free Press said. Kmart emerged from Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in 2003 as Kmart Holding Corp. In March, the Troy-based company combined with Sears, Roebuck and Co. to form Sears Holdings. The new company is based in Hoffman Estates, Ill. In August, the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission filed civil charges of securities fraud and aiding and abetting securities fraud against Conaway and former Kmart Chief Financial Officer John T. McDonald. The SEC said the executives made "materially false and misleading" disclosures to shareholders before the retailer's bankruptcy filing. The agency's complaint filed in U.S. District Court in Detroit also accused the men of aiding and abetting violations of rules that require publicly traded companies to file quarterly reports and to include material information in the reports so they are not misleading. Lawyers for Conaway and McDonald have said that their clients acted in good faith.

NOISE FROM AIR BASE, JAPAN

London, Dec 1 — A press report, dated Nov 30, states: A Tokyo appeals court today ordered the Japanese government to pay more than \$27 million in compensation to residents affected by noise from a US air base, raising the amount awarded by a lower court. The Tokyo High Court, however, rejected the plaintiffs' demands for state compensation for future damage and the suspension of early morning and late night flights from Yokota Air Base in Tokyo's western suburbs, court spokeswoman Miho Tanabe said. Tokyo's district court in 2002 ordered the state to pay \$20.1 million to nearly 5,000 residents as compensation for past damages. "It's been a while since the Supreme Court acknowledged that noise from the Yokota base is unbearable and it is outrageous that there has not been any compensation framework worked out," Judge Hiromu Emi said, blaming the state for "neglect" in not doing something about the jet noise, Kyodo News agency said. Emi, however,

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rejected the plaintiffs' demands to suspend the flights, saying that was beyond the jurisdiction of the Japanese government. Yokota is home to US Forces Japan, the 5th Air Force and the 374th Airlift Wing. Under a bilateral security pact, Tokyo provides land for bases and recognises US sovereignty over them. The United States maintains nearly 50,000 personnel in Japan, mostly on the southern island of Okinawa, and residents have long complained about noise, pollution and crimes associated with the military. In a separate lawsuit by different plaintiffs, Japan's top court in 1993 ruled that the noise from Yokota is beyond the bearable limit, and it ordered the Japanese government to compensate residents for past noise.

PATENT INFRINGEMENT, UNITED STATES

London, Dec 1 — A press report, dated Nov 30, states: Wireless e-mail giant Research in Motion has taken a big hit in its long-running legal dispute with NTP. The company now faces the prospect of paying more than a billion dollars to get itself out of trouble and the threat of a massive network shutdown still looms overhead. Today, Judge James Spencer of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia refused to hold the warring companies to a previous \$450 million settlement. The decision means that RIM might have to pay out big bucks to settle the case. If they don't settle, Spencer could enforce an injunction banning BlackBerry sales in the U.S. That would cripple RIM's business, cutting it off from the market that provides 70% of its \$1.35 billion in sales. Earlier this month, RIM Co-Chief Executive James L. Balsillie said the company had developed a workaround for the service that would not violate any contested patents. But the fix has yet to be publicly demonstrated, and even if it does work, it could be costly, inefficient and still result in service blackouts. Observers of the case say that with the threat of a shutdown looming, RIM might have to pay out a billion dollars or more to settle with NTP. Research in Motion currently has more than \$1.2 billion in cash. But RIM's troubles likely won't end with a settlement. The company also faces the prospects of lawsuits from shareholders angry that it spent so much time and money to fight NTP's claim and didn't settle years ago for significantly less money. RIM's stock is down more than 20% from a year ago, and trading of its shares was halted for part of this morning's trading session. It's currently down \$3.42, or 5.27%, at \$61.50. The ruling is the culmination of a messy legal dispute stretching back more than 15 years. In 1990, inventor Thomas Campana came up with a method for delivering e-mail wirelessly, patented the ideas, and in 1992, co-founded NTP to protect them. But the company never released a product. Not long after, Research in Motion's BlackBerry device began

grabbing the attention of Type-A personalities everywhere, and in 2000, NTP sent a letter to RIM pointing out their patents and asking for a licensing fee. NTP says it got no response and filed suit. A year later, a U.S. District Court found in favour of NTP and awarded it \$23.1 million in damages, but the case continued on appeal. In 2003, Judge Spencer found for NTP, boosting damages and fees to \$210 million. He also granted an injunction banning BlackBerry sales in the U.S., but put a hold on that order pending further appeal. Since then, the case has plugged along through various courts and appeals without resolution. In March, it appeared the conflict was coming to an end; RIM and NTP announced that they had reached a settlement. RIM would pay \$450 million to NTP. But by June, the deal had fallen apart, with RIM claiming the two companies couldn't reach a final agreement. In October, a federal appeals court declined to reconsider its earlier rulings, and five days later, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to intervene. That meant the case was returning to the U.S. District Court in Virginia. Meanwhile, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office had been working independently to review the case and issued preliminary rejections for the contested patents. But that decision has to go through an appeal process before it's finalized. RIM wanted the court to wait for the Patent Office's ruling and to enforce the earlier \$450 million settlement. But Judge Spencer has now declined to do either. In Wednesday's court filing, he said would soon hold hearings on issues of injunctive relief and appropriate damages. It remains likely that RIM will now pay off whatever it has to in order to keep its service up and running without interruption.

PERSONAL INJURIES, UNITED STATES

London, Dec 1 — A press report, dated today, states: A jury has awarded a record \$36.5 million to the family of a 6-year-old boy who is blind, brain damaged and suffering from cerebral palsy since he was injured during his delivery via a surrogate mother at Hartford Hospital. The hospital is 60% liable; the attending physician, Dr. Peter J. Doelger, an obstetrician/gynecologist with offices in Avon, Bloomfield and Hartford, 40%. The previous record was a \$27 million verdict in 1999 against Yale-New Haven Hospital and Yale University. A six-member jury in Waterbury Superior Court reached the verdict last week in the case of Nicholas Cowles, born Feb 10, 1999. Nicholas' parents, Thomas and Sheila Cowles, now divorced and living in Farmington and Avon respectively, brought the case on behalf of their son. The jurors found Doelger failed to interpret strips from a monitoring device that indicated the fetus was in distress, court records show. The difficult delivery continued so long, the fetus suffered from a dangerous

increase in blood acidity; the child should have been delivered by Caesarean section long before it was, the jurors concluded. The hospital was deemed liable, the jury said, because its nurses failed to alert Doelger to the distress signals, the records show.

PRICE-FIXING, UNITED STATES

London, Dec 1 — A press report, dated Nov 30, states: De Beers agreed today to pay \$250 million to settle class action suits brought against it in the United States for price fixing. The settlements will "bring an end to a number of disputes" and allow it to pursue "global interests," the Johannesburg-based company said. De Beers paid a \$10 million fine after pleading guilty to price-fixing charges in an Ohio court in July, opening the door to a return to the United States for the first time in more than half a century. The United States accounts for 55% of retail diamond sales and has been closed to De Beers since the first anti-trust complaint was filed after World War II. The settlement proposal still has to be approved by Judge Stanley Chesler in the U.S. District Court of New Jersey, according to a De Beers statement.

ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENT, UNITED STATES

London, Nov 24 — A press report, dated Nov 23, states: A Wyoming County jury has awarded a Meshoppen couple \$3.25 million verdict, the largest award in county history. The jury awarded \$2.5 million in non-economic damages to Cindy White for injuries she suffered as a result of a car accident in 2001 and \$750,000 to Mrs. White's husband, David White, for "loss of society and companionship." The accident occurred April 24, 2001, near the intersection of Jenkins-Stark Road and Route 6 in Tunkhannock. Mr. White was heading west on Route 6 in the left lane of the four-lane highway. His wife was in the passenger seat. Jay R. Robinson II of Tunkhannock was travelling east on Route 6, and failed to yield the right of way, and was struck by the Whites' vehicle. Mrs. White was taken by ambulance to Tyler Memorial Hospital in Tunkhannock for treatment and discharged. She later required a cervical fusion at Community Medical Centre for a severe cervical disc herniation in her neck. She subsequently has had substantial problems swallowing due to the rubbing on her esophagus from the plate inserted to stabilize the spine as a result of the accident.

SECURITIES FRAUD, UNITED STATES

London, Dec 1 — A press report, dated Nov 30, states: Jewellery retailer Friedman's Inc. will pay \$2 million into the U.S. Postal Inspection Service's Consumer Fraud Fund to settle allegations of securities fraud, federal regulators said today. The Securities and Exchange Commission alleged in a statement that Friedman's, which filed for bankruptcy

protection in January, “systematically inflated earnings to meet Wall Street’s expectations” from 2001 to 2003.

SEXUAL ABUSE, CANADA

London, Nov 24 — A press report, dated Nov 23, states: Canada has offered to pay more than C\$2bn (US\$1.7bn) compensation to indigenous people who were abused at government-funded residential schools. Some 80,000 people who attended the schools over decades are eligible. About 15,000 of them have begun legal claims against the government and Church, which ran the schools - to be dropped if they accept the deal. The draft package must still be agreed by the courts but has been welcomed by indigenous leaders. Thousands of former pupils at the 130 boarding schools have made allegations of physical and sexual abuse spanning seven decades. The schools were set up in sparsely populated areas in an attempt to assimilate Canada’s indigenous peoples - known as the First Nations - into mainstream society. Attendance was mandatory and children were forcibly removed from their families and forbidden from speaking their language. Most of the schools were shut down by the mid-1970s, with surviving students now 60 years old on average. Many victims have already died. Under the terms of the draft deal, each claimant will be eligible to receive C\$10,000 and then an additional \$3,000 for each year they attended beyond their first year. Those aged over 65 can apply for a fast-track advance payment of \$8,000. National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations Phil Fontaine said the settlement was the biggest in Canadian history. “Today marks the first step towards closure on a terrible, tragic legacy for the thousands of First Nations individuals who suffered physical, sexual or psychological abuse,” he said. “While no money will ever heal the scars, we hope this settlement package will bring comfort and a sense of victory and vindication for the children and grandchildren of survivors... It’s been a wonderful day.” The deal also includes C\$60m for a truth and reconciliation process designed to promote awareness of what happened in the schools. Justice Minister Irwin Cotler described the abuse which took place as “the single most disgraceful, racist and harmful act in our history”. He said he hoped the settlement would mark a turning point for Canada. The government has already settled about 2,800 of the 15,000 lawsuits already filed, paying out C\$110m in compensation.

STOCK-TRADING ABUSE, UNITED STATES

London, Nov 24 — A press report, dated Nov 23, states: A California judge yesterday approved an unusual legal settlement that will require Oracle Corp CEO Larry Ellison to donate \$100 million to charity and pay

another \$22 million to the attorneys who sued him for alleged stock trading abuses — forcing Ellison to dig deeper into his pockets than he originally wanted. Barring an appeal, the \$122 million settlement made final by San Mateo Superior Court Judge John Schwartz closes the books on a shareholder lawsuit filed nearly four years ago on behalf of Oracle, one of the world’s largest software makers. The civil complaint revolves around a \$900 million gain that Ellison generated by selling some of his Oracle stock shortly before the company’s shares plummeted in 2001. Like many other high-tech companies, Oracle’s sales sagged badly that year amid the aftershocks of the dot-com implosion that wiped out hundreds of companies. Oracle’s shares plunged by 52% in 2001, wiping out about \$85 billion in shareholder wealth.

UNLAWFUL KILLING, UNITED STATES

London, Dec 1 — A press report, dated Nov 30, states: Relatives of a black woman shot to death in an attack by a mob of whites during a week of racial violence in York, Pennsylvania, in 1969 will receive \$2 million from the city under a tentative settlement, according to a published report. The Patriot-News of Harrisburg reported today that the two children and two sisters of Lillie Belle Allen would get a total of \$200,000 annually for a decade. The deal would end their federal lawsuit against the city, four former police officers and the estate of a fifth former officer. A status conference on the case is set for Friday before a federal judge. Allen, a 27-year-old woman from Aiken, South Carolina, was killed after she and other family members drove into a white neighbourhood. Her case went unsolved for more than 30 years until prosecutors convened a grand jury and uncovered new evidence. The city’s former mayor, Charlie Robertson, was accused of inciting the violence and went on trial in the killing along with two other men in 2002. Robertson was acquitted; the others were convicted of murder. Seven others pleaded guilty or no contest to lesser charges.

WRONGFUL DEATH, UNITED STATES

London, Nov 30 — A press report, dated today, states: The long legal battle over the death of a San Jose mother, killed by a San Jose police officer, is over. The Mercury News reports the city has agreed to pay \$1.8 million to the family of 25-year-old Bich Cau Thi Tran. In July 2003, an officer shot and killed her as she waved an Asian-style vegetable peeler that he mistook for a cleaver. The shooting prompted outrage in the local Vietnamese-American community. It still must be submitted to the trial judge for approval. The breakdown of the settlement is as follows: \$800,000 to be invested in an annual allowance

for Tran’s two sons. \$200,000 will be used for housing or a down payment for a home for the boys. \$100,000 goes to Tran’s parents \$725,000 goes to pay for attorney fees and court costs.

Railway Accidents



CHICAGO, UNITED STATES

London, Nov 24 — A press report, dated today, states: National Transportation Safety Board investigators interviewed emergency workers, hoping to learn why a commuter train slammed into vehicles at a backed-up intersection, injuring 16 people, officials said today. The train struck five vehicles and set off a chain reaction during yesterday’s evening rush hour that ultimately involved as many as 15 vehicles, Metra spokeswoman Judy Pardonnet said. Pardonnet said today that 13 of the 16 injured were taken to hospitals and three people remained hospitalised this morning. Two of the people were in serious condition and the condition of the third was unknown, she said. She had said cross gates appeared to be working properly when the train went through the intersection but witnesses gave conflicting reports yesterday as to whether the gates were up or down. Christina Rodriguez said she was driving eastbound when her car and several others were trapped between the crossing gate arms that came down. She saw the lights of the commuter train bearing down on her before she jumped out of her car and ran. “I tried to move (my car), but I couldn’t. Nobody moved,” she said. “Too many tried to get in” the gates, she said. John Pease, 32, who lives across from the accident site, said he did not see any warning lights flashing when he looked out his apartment window and saw the end of the accident. “The gates were definitely up,” Pease said, adding that he saw the gates come down after the crash. The train, which left Chicago’s Union Station at 1625 hrs headed for Antioch, was probably carrying between 400 and 500 passengers when the accident happened, Pardonnet said. Three of the injured were on the train, the others outside. The rail crossing cuts through a busy diagonal intersection that runs into Chicago.

FOREST PARK, ILLINOIS, UNITED STATES

London, Nov 24 — A press report, dated today, states: Federal Railroad Administration investigators are trying to determine how a Canadian National Railways freight train carrying hazardous materials derailed Tuesday evening (Nov 22) in Forest Park, authorities said yesterday. No one was injured in the derailment and no chemicals spilled, said agency

spokesman Warren Flatau. The agency, which is working with Forest Park and other local authorities, may not know the cause until next week, he said. About 1940 hrs, four cars of the freight train separated from the tracks while traveling southbound through the village on the CSX Railways tracks, Forest Park police said. The incident happened about 50 yards south of Madison Street. One tanker carrying phenol and two carrying propane were undamaged. A fourth car carrying plastic pellets sustained moderate structural damage, police said.

**INVERNESS, SCOTLAND,
UNITED KINGDOM**

London, Nov 26 — A press report, dated today, states: Nine people have been taken to hospital after a train derailed in Inverness this morning. They suffered minor injuries after the train derailed due to a landslide. An RAF helicopter was at the scene, but it was not known whether it would be needed to rescue other passengers.

London, Nov 27 — A press report, dated today, states: Engineers have cleared a stretch of rail line which was closed following a derailment yesterday. Nine people suffered minor injuries when a landslip derailed the front carriage of an Inverness to Edinburgh train near Moy in the Highlands. Network Rail said the line was now fully open, although a speed restriction has been put in place at the accident site. Initially it was thought the line could have been closed until tomorrow. Rail engineers launched a massive operation to remove the three-carriage train and check the line.

London, Nov 28 — A press report, dated Nov 27, states: Engineers have cleared a stretch of rail line which was closed following a derailment yesterday. Nine people suffered minor injuries when a landslip derailed the front carriage of an Inverness to Edinburgh train near Moy in the Highlands. Network Rail said the line was now fully open but a five mph restriction has been put in place at the accident site as a precaution. Initially it was thought the line could have been closed until tomorrow. The stretch of line between Inverness and Aviemore in the Highlands was closed for almost 24 hours following the derailment at about 0720, UTC, yesterday. There were 94 people on board the train and the nine casualties, including the driver, were airlifted to Raigmore Hospital in Inverness by Royal Air Force helicopter. Despite being injured the driver managed to walk to a nearby road to raise the alarm. The train had been moving slowly through a cutting when the accident happened. Network Rail said a thaw following a period of freezing weather had caused the landslip. Rail engineers launched a massive operation to remove the three-carriage train and check the line and had first estimated that it could take

two days to clear. However, a spokeswoman for First ScotRail confirmed that the stretch of line had reopened at 0500, UTC, today.

KILOSA DISTRICT, TANZANIA

London, Nov 30 — A press report, dated Nov 29, states: Three people were killed when two trains collided in Kilosa District on Sunday (Nov 27). Morogoro Regional Police Commander Stephen Ngowi said yesterday that the accident occurred at around 2300 hrs at Munisagali station and involved two freight trains. One of the trains careered down the tracks and slammed into a stationary train after its brakes apparently failed. Ngowi named one of the dead as Victor Salum and said the bodies of the other two victims had not yet been identified. The bodies were moved to Kilosa District Hospital. Four people were seriously injured in the accident and admitted to Morogoro Regional Hospital. Ngowi said it was not clear whether the victims were in the trains or whether they were standing near them at the time of the collision.

**LAUREL, MONTANA,
UNITED STATES**

London, Dec 1 — A press report, dated Nov 29, states: A train derailment that spilled 439 tons of corn in Laurel early on Saturday (Nov 26) was caused by a fracture in one of the rails, a spokeswoman for Montana RailLink said yesterday. Lynda Frost said the derailment, which happened at around 0300 on Saturday, happened after the 103-car train rolled across a section of broken rail. Four cars in the middle of the train tipped over in front of the Laurel Ridge Motel and spilled corn across East Main Street. That section of track is inspected at least once a month, but the fracture was not detected, she said. The damaged sections of rail have been fixed. Train traffic resumed at around 0800 on Sunday. The train was travelling at nine mph when the cars derailed. About 102 tons of spilled corn were salvaged and sold to a company in Huntley, Frost said. The remaining corn was given to local farmers for animal feed. Montana RailLink officials are still trying to determine which cars will have to be scrapped and which can be repaired. Clean-up at the scene continued late yesterday. Frost said RailLink uses a rail detector that regularly scans the tracks for invisible defects on the rail as a way prevent derailments. "Over long periods of time, it breaks down," Frost said. The fracture that caused Saturday's accident was not found beforehand, she said.

MERSIN, TURKEY

London, Nov 24 — A press report, dated today, states: One of the people injured when a passenger train crashed into a vehicle carrying workers in the southern Turkish province of Mersin died today. Nazmiye Ciftci was hospitalised in

southern city of Adana but his life could not be saved despite all efforts. Meanwhile, 29 people who were injured in the train crash are currently under treatment in hospitals in Adana, Mersin and Tarsus.

**MOMENCE, ILLINOIS,
UNITED STATES**

London, Nov 25 — A press report, dated Nov 24, states: Two freight trains collided south of Chicago this morning, injuring three crew members and forcing the evacuation of homes down wind of the tracks after flammable alcohol leaked from a tanker car, authorities said. A Union Pacific train was headed to Little Rock, Ark., when it struck the Norfolk Southern train, headed to Pittsburgh, Union Pacific spokesman Mark Davis said. He said two houses about 55 miles south of Chicago were evacuated because of the leak. The spilled alcohol was contained by afternoon, Kankakee County Emergency Services and Disaster Agency said. In all, five locomotives and 45 train cars derailed, Davis said. He said the three injured crew members, all with Union Pacific, had minor injuries. The cause of the crash was under investigation.

**MONAMORA BRIDGE,
BANGLADESH**

Karachi, Nov 27 — Bangladesh Railway said the two wagons of the Lalmonirhat-bound goods train coming from Akhaura slipped off the tracks on Monamora Bridge at 1100 yesterday in southern Bangladesh. As a result, rail links suspended between Dhaka and the eastern zone for five hours. Train services resumed after a relief train cleared the line at about 1600 hrs. A number of passenger trains, including Dhaka-bound Subarna Express and Mohanagar Express and Chittagong-bound Karnaphuli Express and Nasirabad Express, remained stranded at different stations. A five-member committee headed by traffic Inspector Mujibur Rahman was formed to investigate the accident. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

**PANSKURA STATION,
WEST BENGAL, INDIA**

London, Nov 25 — A press report, dated today, states: At least 20 passengers were injured when Sambal-Howrah Express dashed against the rear of a Kharagpur-Howrah local train at Panskura station in West Bengal's East Midnapore district this morning. Most of the injured were passengers of the local train whose vendor and a passenger coaches were derailed under the impact of the collision, South Eastern Railway chief public relations officer Debashish Chandra said. The incident was caused due to failure in the auto signalling system, railway sources said adding all train services on the section have been suspended after the accident. The Howrah-bound train "slightly dashed" against the rear of the local train on the same line which also bound for Howrah at around 0840 hrs. Senior

Railway officials rushed with a relief train to accommodate the stranded passengers.

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON, UNITED STATES

London, Nov 28 — A press report, dated Nov 27, states: Two Seattle monorail trains clipped each other on a curve yesterday evening, forcing the evacuation of 84 passengers from the mile-long, 43-year-old elevated line between downtown and the Seattle Centre. Officials said two people were hospitalised with minor injuries. "We heard a screeching sound - metal on metal - and glass breaking," said John Gahagan, of Mukilteo, Wash. Several people slid off their seats. Several blocks of Fifth Avenue were closed after the accident, said Helen Fitzpatrick, a fire department spokeswoman. The Police Department will investigate the crash, Pruitt said. The National Transportation Safety Board would probably also investigate, he said.

WAKEENEY, KANSAS, UNITED STATES

London, Dec 1 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: It could take crews a few days to clean up coal a Union Pacific train spilled when it derailed in western Kansas yesterday, a spokesman for the railroad said. Twenty-two of the train's 104 cars jumped the tracks near WaKeeney while heading east yesterday morning. Neither of the train's two crew members was injured, Union Pacific spokesman Joe Arbona said. A section of track spanning almost two football fields was replaced, and trains were again travelling on the track as of 0740, today.

Robberies & Thefts



CASH, BANK, BELFAST, NORTHERN IRELAND

London, Nov 30 — A press report, dated Nov 29, states: Two people have been arrested in connection with the multi-million pound Northern Bank robbery in Belfast. A 24-year old man and a 22-year-old woman are being questioned. Up to £26.5 million was stolen in the robbery last December, which the IRA has been accused of carrying out. Earlier this month, three people were charged in connection with the incident, but not for actually carrying out the raid. The cash was stolen from the headquarters of the bank at Donegall Square five days before Christmas. A small amount of money seized by police across the border in Cork is believed to have come from the robbers' haul, but the bulk was never recovered. The Northern Bank was forced to issue redesigned bank notes in a bid to make the stolen money worthless.

Computer Systems



SOBER VIRUS

London, Nov 23 — A scam involving emails appearing to come from the FBI or CIA has unleashed a computer virus that spread rapidly worldwide, US officials and security experts say. The FBI released a statement on its website noting that the agency was not the source of the emails. But experts said that the virus was propagating because the authors made the message appear authentic. The FBI statement said recipients of this or similar messages "should know that the FBI does not engage in the practice of sending unsolicited emails to the public in this manner." The messages appear to be sent from an email address such as mailfbi.gov, postfbi.gov, adminfbi.gov or a similar address, and direct the recipient to open an attachment to answer a question. The opening of the file activates the virus and causes it to spread to others. The Internet security firm Sophos said similar emails may appear to come from the Central Intelligence Agency, but that both contain a strain of the Sober virus that has been spreading worldwide. In a four-hour period, the worm "has accounted for over 61 per cent of all viruses reported to Sophos, making it currently the most prevalent virus spreading across the world." "This variant of the Sober worm may catch out the unwary as they open their email inbox this morning," said Graham Cluley, senior technology consultant at Sophos. "Every law-abiding citizen wants to help the police with their inquiries, and some will panic that they might be being falsely accused of visiting illegal websites and want to click on the unsolicited email attachment. All users should be reminded to follow safe computing guidelines, and PCs should be kept automatically updated with the latest anti-virus protection." The email says: "We have logged your IP address on more than 30 illegal websites," and directs the recipient to open an attachment to respond to questions.

London, Nov 24 — A press report, dated today, states: A Windows virus that warns users about illegal net use is spreading online. The bug-bearing message claims to come from either the FBI, CIA or German BKA police agency, and warns users they have been detected visiting illegal sites. Those opening a questionnaire attached to the message will be infected by a variant of the well-known Sober virus. Anti-virus firms have caught millions of copies of the malicious program, suggesting a lot of people have fallen for the fake warning. The Windows virus started circulating on Nov 22 and mail

filtering firm MessageLabs said it caught almost three million copies of the Sober variant in the first 24 hours of the outbreak. By the end of yesterday Postini said it had netted more than seven million copies of the bug. The virus travels in an e-mail message with the subject line of "You visit illegal websites" or "Your IP was logged". The body text of the message makes it appear as if the recipient has been caught by the FBI, CIA or BKA browsing 30 illegal sites and asks them to fill in an attached form about this activity. Anyone clicking on the attached form gets a fake error message while, in the background, the virus starts plundering an infected PC for e-mail addresses to send itself to. Responding to the outbreak the FBI said: "These e-mails did not come from the FBI." It added: "Recipients of this or similar solicitations should know that the FBI does not engage in the practice of sending unsolicited e-mails to the public in this manner." The virus also comes in varieties that purport to hold a video of Paris Hilton, fake password change notices and e-mail error messages. It can only infect those using Windows PCs. F-Secure said the outbreak was the "biggest of the year" and Symantec said the virus was spreading very fast in the wild. Statistics gathered by Trend Micro suggest that most victims were in North America. The spread of the virus slowed yesterday but anti-virus firms urged users to update their protection and not to click on attachments to unsolicited e-mail messages.

Miscellaneous



CROATIAN VESSEL BLOCKADED OFF GDYNIA, POLAND

London, Nov 24 — Bulk *Hope* arrived at Gdynia at 2210 hrs, Nov 17 and sailed at 1405 hrs, Nov 23, bound for Ventspils.

FLOODING IN COAL MINE, HEBEI PROVINCE, CHINA

London, Nov 25 — A press report, dated today, states: Survival chance still exist for 17 miners who were trapped underground in a coal mine flooding accident yesterday in Wu'an City, north China's Hebei Province, rescuers said on today. At around 1000, yesterday morning, Gaocun Coal Mine at Shangtuancheng Township of Wu'an City was flooded, trapping 17 miners who were working underground. Officials revealed the miners might be able to escape to higher ground in the laneway of the shaft. An initial investigation shows that the 17 miners were in a position 40 metres higher than the flood water level in the laneway, so they still have chance to survive, said the technical staff engaging in rescue work at the site. Currently, rescuers are pumping

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water out of the laneway and the water level is lowering significantly, rescuers said. The coal mine is a legitimate one with government-issued certificate for mining, the city source said, adding the rescue work is still going on.

Beijing, Nov 26 — Rescuers searched today for 18 Chinese miners trapped by underground flooding after their bosses fled the scene and abandoned them to their fate, China's official Xinhua news agency said. Rescuers are hopeful the men at the Gaocun mine in northern China's Hebei Province may still be alive as water levels have fallen 200 metres since the flood Thursday (Nov 24), the report said. Police are meanwhile hunting three mine managers who disappeared along with a group of technicians soon after the flood, leaving rescue teams without a guide to the underground warren, it said. The teams had to rely on the memories of other mine workers to negotiate the shaft and tunnels. A weak power supply also prevented the use of powerful pumps, Xinhua said. — Reuters.

HOPE (Croatia)

See "Croatian Vessel Blockaded Off Gdynia, Poland" under "Miscellaneous".

MALTESE VESSEL BLOCKADED AT LE HAVRE, FRANCE

Paris, Dec 1 — Anti-nuclear protesters climbed on to a dockyard crane today to try to prevent general cargo *Kapitan Kuroptev* (4998 gt, built 1998) loading at the northwestern French port of Le Havre, saying its cargo contained dangerous nuclear waste. The environmental group Greenpeace said five of its supporters were still on the crane about 11 hours after climbing it around 2300, GMT, but police were gradually removing other protesters from the port. Three protesters were arrested, the organisation said. French nuclear energy firm Areva, responsible for the nuclear site from which the material came, dismissed Greenpeace's concerns that the cargo was unsafe for transport. "It's a normal operation," said Areva spokesman Charles Hufnagel. He said the cargo contained depleted uranium which was being sent to Russia for enrichment to make nuclear fuel. Depleted uranium was not highly radioactive and posed no risks, he said. The vessel *Kapitan Kuroptev* is due to take the cargo to the Russian port of St Petersburg. Le Havre port authorities declined comment. — Reuters.

OUTBREAK OF "BIRD FLU"

London, Nov 23 — A press report, dated Nov 22, states: The US and Asian ban on British Columbia poultry will have a minimal effect on the Canadian economy because British Columbia exports less than 10% of its flock, Canadian officials said today. The US, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Japan banned poultry from mainland British Columbia yesterday after a duck tested positive for bird flu, and

Canadian officials said today that the same strain — nonfatal to humans — had been found at a second farm in the area. They said the virus was not the strain in South-east Asia that has been blamed for more than 60 human deaths. British Columbia only exports about 6-7% of its poultry to other countries, said provincial Agriculture Minister Pat Bell Dr. Brian Evans, Canada's chief veterinary officer, noted that the virus in British Columbia was different from the one in Asia, but acknowledged, "We're dealing in an extremely hypersensitive environment in the world." The Canadian Food Inspection Agency slaughtered about 56,000 birds on the farm in Chilliwack, just outside of Vancouver, where the illness was first discovered, as a precaution. The H5 virus there is a low-pathogenic North American strain, unlike the deadly H5N1 strain in Asia. Federal officials have assured Canadians that the strain of the flu found in British Columbia poses no threat to human health. Dr Cornelius Kiley of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency said an H5 strain of the flu was found on one of four other quarantined farms. Preparations were under way to cull the birds at the second farm. "We have multiple positives on the second farm," Kiley said, declining to specify how many cases had been found. He said the second discovery revealed a low pathogenic case of the flu that causes only mild disease in birds. He said the situation was not worsening and there was no new risk to the public. Canada is expected to produce a report in coming days with detail on additional testing in the area of British Columbia where the diseased birds were found, and depending on the report's results, the could narrow its ban to a smaller region, said Jim Rogers, a spokesman for the Department of Agriculture. The US bans imports of poultry from any country where the high-pathogenic virus from Asia has been found. Those countries include Cambodia, Romania, China, Russia, Indonesia, South Korea, Japan, Thailand, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Laos, Vietnam and Malaysia.

London, Nov 23 — Russia's veterinarian authorities confirmed yesterday that some 250 swans had died of bird flu in the southern region of Astrakhan in the past week. "Tests showed that nearly 250 swans had died of bird flu" in the Volga River delta in southern Russia, Yevgeny Nepoklonov, deputy head of the Federal Veterinarian and Phytosanitary Control Service, said. "Villages in the Volga delta are under quarantine, and domestic birds are staying indoors," Nepoklonov said. The Astrakhan veterinarian service said swan deaths started near the Astrakhan Nature Park a week ago. The region's chief veterinarian, Alexander Vasilyev, said many birds had gathered in the Volga River delta but only swans born in spring died. "They might have been weakened by the long voyage," he said. The Agriculture Ministry said four other

regions are still affected by the bird flu — Altai, Kurgan, Chelyabinsk and Tambov regions — but quarantine is expected to be lifted in previously infected localities in the Altai, Tambov and Chelyabinsk regions later this week.

Beijing, Nov 24 — China reported a bird flu outbreak in the remote western region of Xinjiang, bringing to 21 the number of outbreaks since mid-October. China, which said late yesterday that a second person had died of the deadly H5N1 virus, has already culled more than 20 million birds this year to contain the spread of the disease. The new outbreak occurred at a family farm when 2,000 birds died on November 15, but H5N1 was not confirmed until yesterday, the Ministry of Agriculture said in a statement on its Web site. Authorities have culled 84,000 birds within a two mile radius of the outbreak, the ministry said, in line with standard practice. China has bought in police and army units to hold back to spread of bird flu, and has threatened fines and other punishments for local officials and people who cover up disease outbreaks or obstruct prevention efforts. The government has also announced plans to vaccinate billions of birds and state media has said that a human vaccine is ready for clinical trials. China has confirmed three human cases of bird flu. The third person, a nine-year-old boy, recovered. His dead sister is a suspected case. — Reuters.

Jakarta, Nov 25 — Hundreds of chickens have died of bird flu in Indonesia's Aceh in recent weeks, the first cases detected in the province, an official said today. Syamsul Bahri, director of Animal Health at the Agriculture Ministry, said the outbreak surfaced among backyard chickens in three areas largely spared from the December 26 tsunami that left 170,000 people dead or missing. There had been no suspected human cases in Aceh, he said. Indonesia has recorded seven confirmed human deaths from the H5N1 avian virus since July. The outbreak occurred in Aceh's eastern coast districts of Bireuen and Pidie as well as an inland area that shares a border with North Sumatra. Bahri said the outbreaks had not been detected in or near tented camps and barracks where hundreds of thousands of survivors of the tsunami disaster are still living. Up to 200 chickens in the infected areas had been culled and hundreds more vaccinated to prevent the outbreak spreading. "The most important thing is to handle the outbreak in the first stage and isolate the areas." Bahri added. The virus has been detected among poultry in two thirds of Indonesia's 33 provinces. — Reuters.

London, Nov 28 — A press report, dated Nov 27, states: A turkey has tested positive for the H5 subtype of bird flu in eastern Romania, officials said yesterday. The turkey came from a small farm in the village of Scarlatesti, Agriculture Minister

Gheorghe Flutur said. Authorities will begin culling all domestic birds in the village, which is located near several large lakes. A quarantine will also be imposed on the village. There was no immediate information on whether authorities would carry out further tests to establish whether the turkey was infected with the deadly H5N1 strain. "We think the virus was brought by migratory birds," Flutur said. Romania has already confirmed the H5N1 strain of avian flu in three villages in the Danube Delta, but Scarlatesti is outside the delta region. The virus has devastated poultry stocks and killed at least 68 people in parts of Asia since 2003. In Europe, birds have tested positive for H5N1 in Romania, Russia, Croatia and Turkey.

London, Nov 29 — A press report, dated today, states: Bird flu outbreaks were confirmed in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region and in Hunan Province, the Ministry of Agriculture said yesterday. Only three human cases have been reported - two deaths and one recovery. About 290 fowl died at a farm in Shanshan County in Xinjiang on Nov 22, the ministry said. Regional veterinary authority confirmed it was the deadly H5N1 strain three days later. In Hunan Province on Nov 18, a village in Yongzhou city reported that 402 poultry died, and provincial authorities confirmed an outbreak of bird flu on Nov 25. The state bird flu lab confirmed the two outbreaks yesterday. Authorities have culled about 52,000 birds within three km of the Shanshan farm and 13,500 within three km of the Yongzhou outbreak. Meantime, the World Health Organisation yesterday started investigating two bird flu deaths in Anhui Province. Both victims, women farmers, were in contact with sick and dead poultry. Studies show the H5N1 strain of virus separated from China's human cases of bird flu has mutated, compared with the strain found in Vietnam's human cases, said the health ministry yesterday. Lab tests found the H5N1 strain of virus separated from recent human cases is highly homologous with that found in poultry samples from the bird flu in outbreak sites, said the ministry. However, compared with the virus strain from the human cases in Vietnam, the genetic order of H5N1 in China's human cases has mutated "to a certain degree," the health ministry spokesman Mao Qun'an said. "But the mutation cannot cause human-to-human transmission of the bird flu," he said. Mao said since the H5N1 bird flu first broke out in 1997, most human cases have been reported in Hong Kong, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Indonesia and the Chinese mainland. No human case has been found in Europe so far. The major channels of human infection involve direct contact with infected poultry or their secretions and excretion.

Manila, Nov 29 — The Philippines main international container port has imposed a quarantine on vessels coming from bird-flu affected

countries. The Manila International Container Terminal announced today that "no foreign vessel coming from or which passed through countries with reported outbreaks are allowed to berth at the MICT until health officials declare the vessel and its crew bird flu-free." Vessels coming from these countries will only be allowed up to the Manila Bay basin area. A quarantine team will then be ferried to the vessel to conduct medical examinations onboard. So far no cases of bird flu have been reported in the Philippines. The MICT, as a transit point for international containers, has beefed up its safety measures especially for vessels coming from countries with reported of bird flu outbreaks. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

London, Nov 30 — A press report, dated Nov 29, states: China's financial hub Shanghai today started screening international passengers for bird flu amid global fears that the virus could mutate into a more powerful form. Acknowledging that separation from Asia by thousands of kilometres of sea offers little protection, Australia and New Zealand also took steps to ward off a bird flu disaster. At least 68 people have died from bird flu since it emerged in Asia in 2003 — nearly two-thirds of them in Vietnam, according to the World Health Organisation. So far, most human cases of the disease have been traced to contact with infected birds. However, experts fear a human flu pandemic if the deadly H5N1 bird flu virus mutates into a form that passes easily between people. The Shanghai city government announced new rules today, requiring all passengers leaving or entering Pudong International Airport to declare if they had close contact with poultry, birds, bird flu patients or suspected cases over the past week. They will also be screened with an infrared camera for high temperatures, and must declare coughing, fever or shortness of breath. People with temperatures over 38 deg Celsius will be further examined, the official Xinhua News Agency reported. China, which has the world's most chickens, has called bird flu a "serious epidemic." It has reported 22 outbreaks among poultry so far and three confirmed human cases of bird flu. Two of them died and one recovered.

Jakarta, Nov 30 — A dead Indonesian woman has tested positive for bird flu but there was no evidence two brothers who died were also victims of the virus, the Health Ministry said today. The 25-year-old woman who died yesterday had been treated at Jakarta's main hospital for bird flu patients, said Endang Mamahit, a senior ministry researcher. "We have conducted the test and the results show positive," Mamahit told Reuters, adding that the presence of the deadly H5N1 virus had to be confirmed by a laboratory in Hong Kong affiliated with the World Health Organisation (WHO). If confirmed, it would be Indonesia's

eighth death and take the death toll in Asia to at least 69. There has been concern over the case of two brothers from Bandung in West Java who died this month just days before their 16-year-old sibling was admitted to hospital infected with H5N1. They were diagnosed with typhoid fever, but were never tested for bird flu. Indonesia ruled out any firm link to bird flu in the deaths of the two, aged 7 and 20. Their brother has survived. — Reuters.

OUTBREAK OF VIRUS ON BERMUDA FLAG VESSEL

London, Nov 29 — A press report, dated today, states: Doctors are battling to contain a highly contagious gastrointestinal virus among almost 4000 passengers and crew on passenger *Diamond Princess* (115875 gt, built 2004), which will soon head to Australia. A total of 179 Australians are on the vessel, which is on a 16-night cruise from Beijing to Singapore. Some of the 2618 passengers and 1115 crew were asked to stay in their cabins to prevent the virus spreading, and strict hygiene rules for food handling have been imposed throughout the ship. Passengers have been urged to avoid using public toilets on the ship, to wash their hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, and to avoid touching their mouth. First warnings of possible problems came as passengers boarded the fully booked ship in Beijing on Nov 20. In a health advisory delivered to every cabin, Princess Cruises fleet medical officer Grant Tarling said there was a worldwide increase in the incidence of a mild gastrointestinal illness caused by the highly contagious Norovirus which had affected a small number of cruise ships. An advisory on day four confirmed 37 passengers affected, and called for meticulous personal hygiene to prevent the spread of the virus. The ship's Horizons Court buffet, which handles thousands of meals daily, has banned passengers from serving themselves. Special hand-sanitising units are in use throughout key areas of the ship. Dr Tarling said the virus caused a mild stomach upset, with vomiting and diarrhoea lasting up for up to three days, and remained contagious for 48 hours after recovery.

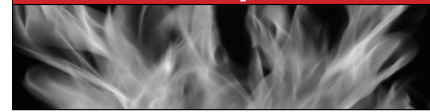
London, Nov 30 — A press report, dated today, states: Passengers on board passenger *Diamond Princess*, including more than 180 Australians, are continuing their holiday in the South China Sea following the outbreak of a gastric bug. A total of 58 passengers fell ill and were asked to stay in their cabins after the outbreak of norovirus, a gastrointestinal bug, hit the vessel three days ago. Six people were still ill today and confined to their rooms. P&O spokesman John Richardson said the outbreak had been contained and those still sick should be out of quarantine within a few days. The remaining 2650 passengers and 1115 crew have been urged to maintain strict hygiene to prevent another outbreak of the bug.

Mr Richardson said a passenger probably came aboard with the infectious virus without showing signs they were ill.

VIARSA I (Panama)

Fremantle, Nov 29 — Fishing *Viarisa I* is still at Jervoise Bay. — Lloyd's Agents.

Fires & Explosions



CHEMICAL PLANT, CHONGQING AREA, CHINA

London, Nov 25 — A press report, dated today, states: An explosion at a chemical plant in south-west China killed one worker and forced thousands of people to evacuate their homes, according to state-controlled media organisations. The explosion happened yesterday morning at Yingte chemical plant at a town near Chongqing. A female worker died and more than 10,000 residents were evacuated. An initial explosion went off near barrels of benzene, sparking a second one which spewed a yellow cloud into the air. Officials ordered people to stop using water from taps and started gathering water and air samples.

COAL MINE, QITAIHE, HEILONGJIANG PROVINCE, CHINA

Beijing, Nov 28 — An explosion in a coal mine in China's north-eastern province of Heilongjiang has killed 30 miners and trapped another 149, state media said today. The blast was reported yesterday at Dongfeng Coal Mine, run by a branch of the Heilongjiang Longmei Mining (Group) Co Ltd, the Xinhua news agency quoted the provincial coal mine safety administration as saying. More than 40 miners escaped overnight, but 221 were working underground at the time of the blast, Xinhua said. Investigators said a coal-dust explosion had knocked out all ventilation systems in the pit, it said, adding that the main system resumed operation today. — Reuters.

London, Nov 28 — A press report, dated today, states: An explosion tore through a coal mine in northeast China, leaving at least 51 miners dead and 100 missing, state media reported today. Some 220 miners were underground when the blast occurred late yesterday in Qitaihe, a city in Heilongjiang province, the official China News Service said, citing the local coal mine safety administration. Seventy miners had been rescued by today, the news agency said. It said the cause of the blast was under investigation.

London, Nov 28 — A press report, dated today, states: Coal dust caught fire in a mine in north-east China, sparking an explosion that killed at least 68 people and left 79 missing,

the government said today. Seventy-four miners had been rescued by today. Xinhua said a 269-member rescue team was searching for the trapped miners.

London, Nov 28 — A press report, from Australia, dated Nov 29, states: An explosion at a coal mine in remote north-eastern China has killed 134 workers and left another 15 trapped underground, China News Service said, amid frantic rescue efforts to find survivors. After a day of intense rescue efforts, 72 survivors had been pulled from the rubble, said the semi-official China News Service. China News Service said rescue teams of 380 people were involved in the search for those still trapped.

London, Nov 30 — A press report, dated today, states: The death toll from Sunday's (Nov 27) explosion at a Heilongjiang Province coal mine rose to 146 yesterday as rescuers found the bodies of eight more workers. Rescuers continued to search for the remaining five missing miners, but their survival was doubtful because of high concentrations of poisonous gas in the underground tunnels, said Song Kaicheng, an engineer at the Qitaihe branch of the Longmei Mining (Group) Co Ltd, owner of the mine where the explosion occurred. When the blast ripped through the Dongfeng Coal Mine in Qitaihe at 2140 on Sunday, 221 miners were working underground, said Zhang Chengxiang, director of the provincial coal mine safety bureau. More than 70 were rescued as some 380 men were sent down into the mine to locate the stranded workers. Investigators said the accident was caused by a coal-dust explosion, which knocked out all ventilation systems in the pit. The main ventilation system resumed operation on Monday morning, said Zhang. Shi Guicheng, deputy president of the Qimei Group General Hospital, said 47 of the rescued miners were suffering from gas poisoning. "Many of the injured are recovering after treatment in a hyperbaric oxygen chamber," said Shi, who added that some miners were also suffering from post-traumatic stress syndrome. One of the miners suffered head injuries, and he was also treated in hospital for gas poisoning, said Shi. Shi said four additional medical specialists were scheduled to join the three who are treating the injured miners. The state-owned mine, founded in 1956, produces half a million tons of coal a year. The family of each victim will receive compensation ranging from yuan 200,000-220,000. China News Service said efforts to identify the victims' bodies would start today.

London, Dec 1 — A press report, dated Nov 30, states: The death toll from Sunday's (Nov 27) explosion at the Dongfeng coal mine rose to 161 late today, with at least 10 miners and possibly 33 missing. Early reports said 221 were underground when the accident occurred, based on the number of miners' lamps handed out, but state media said the official

attendance roll indicated 254 workers were on duty. The explosion was blamed on coal dust that ignited, state media said, but there was no official word on whether misconduct or human error was suspected.

COTTON MILLS, SINDH PROVINCE, PAKISTAN

Karachi, Dec 1 — A huge fire broke out in a privately owned cotton mills in Sindh Province of Pakistan yesterday. As a result, about 77,558 maunds of cotton bales were reduced to ashes in a fire in the Ali cotton factory, Moro, on Wednesday (Nov 30). Fire tenders from Moro and Naushahroferoze put out the fire. The extent of loss could not be ascertained immediately. However, the factory management claimed a loss of about Rs 80 million (\$1.33 million). — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

FACTORY, BRANTHAM, SUFFOLK, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Nov 30 — A press report, dated Nov 29, states: A man suffered severe burns after fire broke out following an explosion at a factory near the Suffolk/Essex border. About 50 firefighters from Suffolk and Essex were called to Wardle Storeys in Brantham in Suffolk today. A man in his 50s was taken to the Broomfield Hospital, Chelmsford, with severe burns to his face and chest. A cordon has been placed around the single-storey building on Factory Lane. The rail line between Norwich and London was closed for a short time. The Suffolk Fire Service said the fire was out by about 1800, GMT. Crews were still damping down at the site.

FACTORY, TAIPEI, TAIWAN

London, Nov 25 — A press report, dated Nov 24, states: A fire broke out at the factory of Motech Industries in the Tainan Science-Based Industrial Park (Taipei) on November 23, with initial damaged estimated at NT\$42 million (US\$1.3 million), according to the solar cell maker. Motech indicated that a schedule for resumption of production is still being ascertained but that it would outsource production to fellow players to ensure timely shipments. If the fire was caused just by a chemical gas leak, industry observers believe Motech will be able to resume production in one month. However, if the fire involved related plasma enhanced chemical vapor deposition (PECVD) equipment, one of the most costly pieces of equipment in solar cell production, Motech may have to delay production by at least half a year. The fire broke out the same day the company filed with the Taiwan Stock Exchange (TSE) to raise NT\$1.5 billion (US\$45 million) in funding by issuing new shares. The raised funds would be utilised to expand capacity, the filing stated. Due to the fire, though, the fund raising will be put off, said Motech. With an industry-wide polysilicon shortage, Motech may source for capacity from Japan-based makers including Sharp, Kyocera, and Sanyo Electric since they

have already established footholds in the industry, according to industry sources.

MARINA, MONMOUTH COVE, UNITED STATES

London, Nov 27 — A press report, dated today, states: An early morning fire damaged or destroyed several pleasure boats yesterday at the Monmouth Cove Marina in the township's Port Monmouth section. A passing motorist reported the blaze to police at 0337 hrs, according to police. At the time the fire was reported, three boats already were ablaze. The fire was extinguished by late morning, but not before it had destroyed four boats and damaged two others, authorities said. The blaze may have been caused by a battery charger or an extension cord on one of the boats, police said. Andrew Nunes-Vais, marina supervisor for the Monmouth County Park System, which owns and administers Monmouth Cove Marina, said the boats lost in the fire ranged from Grady Whites to Bayliner and Doral, and the average length was 26 feet. The Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office, the Middletown Police Department and fire companies are investigating the fire.

NUCLEAR POWER STATIONS, RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL

London, Nov 26 — A press report, dated Nov 25, states: A fire in an electrical transformer forced the closure of Brazil's Angra I and Angra II nuclear power stations early this morning, state-owned nuclear electricity company Eletronuclear said. The fire triggered the automatic protection system, which immediately shut down the nuclear electricity generation units of the two nuclear power stations, located in Rio De Janeiro state, Eletronuclear said. The accident happened outside the Angra II plant and was not related to the nuclear generators, said the company, adding that no abnormalities have been recorded inside the plant. Angra II will remain closed until investigators find the cause of the fire. The automatic system disconnected Angra I automatically, although it has no problems inside or outside. It will resume electricity generation straight away, Eletronuclear said. The south-east of Brazil will not have access to the 1,350 megawatts of electricity generated by the two plants, but other generation sources will make up for the loss, it said.

PETROCHEMICAL PLANT, JILIN PROVINCE, CHINA

London, Nov 25 — A press report, dated today, states: A blast at a Chinese plant 12 days ago sent the equivalent of 10 tanker-loads of toxic chemicals into the Songhua river, Chinese state media report. About 100 tonnes of lethal substances entered the Songhua as a result of the blast in Jilin, and the leak is now passing through the city of Harbin. All taps are off in Harbin but the water supply may be restored on Sunday (Nov 27)

after being shut down for three days. Harbin's 3.8m residents are undergoing their third day without water. An 80-km contaminated stretch of water reached Harbin at about 0300 hrs yesterday and was expected to take 40 hours to pass. Levels of the chemical benzene are ten times higher than considered safe. There is plenty of bottled water, wells are being dug and supplies are being driven in, but one local paper says some people have been trying to steal water to fuel their heating systems. Another reports that inhabitants were still fishing, despite the threat to their health. Officials are hoping the poisonous chemicals will dissipate as they flow down the river towards Russia. The toxic leak is now expected to reach the Russian border in about two weeks. China's biggest oil company, which owns the chemical plant upriver in Jilin where the explosion occurred 12 days ago, has apologised. Zeng Yukang, deputy general manager of China National Petroleum Corp (CNPC), expressed "sympathy and deep apologies" to the people of Harbin. Chinese state officials blamed CNPC for the contamination and defended the government's handling of the emergency. Zhang Lijun, of the environmental protection administration, said no decision had yet been made about whether to sue the company. (See issue of Nov 25.)

Harbin, China, Nov 26 — A surge of toxic chemicals pouring down the river through a north-eastern Chinese city was expected to have passed through by early tomorrow morning, bringing respite from a water crisis that has plagued residents. As the nine million people in Harbin suffered a fourth day without running water, soldiers and workers raced to ensure the city's water would be safe to drink when taps were turned back on, installing new filters at treatment plants, state media said. The pipe network was shut down on Tuesday evening (Nov 22) to protect Harbin residents from up to 100 tonnes of cancer-causing benzene compounds spilt into the Songhua River from which Harbin pumps its water. An explosion at a chemical plant upstream triggered the release of the toxins. The spill could affect hundreds of thousands more people in China alone as it heads downstream and then crosses into Russia, although officials say the concentration of toxins will fall as other tributaries join the river, the "China Daily" reported. Benzene levels in Harbin were down to 2.3 times officially acceptable levels today compared to 30 times yesterday morning, the city government website said. However, the passage of the 80-km slick, flowing at around 2 kph, has been slowed by low water levels and lumps of ice that have already formed on the freezing water. Late yesterday, teams used picks and crowbars to break up the ice. Harbin city officials told local newspapers they had prepared a plan to restore tap water to residents but urged caution. "Don't immediately drink the water," says the

plan, which calls on residents to be alert to any unusual odour or colours in the water. State television said some water would start flowing again in the early hours of Monday morning. — Reuters. (See issue of Nov 28.)

London, Nov 27 — A press report, dated today, states: Mains water supplies in the Chinese city of Harbin have resumed five days after they were cut due to a toxic chemical spill. Provincial governor Zhang Zuoji took the first drink after supplies were reconnected, Xinhua news agency said. An 80km stretch of contaminated water passed through the city of 3.8m people after 100 tonnes of benzene spilled into the Songhua river. The contaminated water is due to reach Russian cities downstream in two weeks. Beijing has begun an inquiry into the spill caused by an explosion at a petrochemical factory on Nov 13. Inspections yesterday evening revealed that water quality in the Songhua river upstream of Harbin had returned to national standards, Xinhua reported. The restoration of supplies at 1800 today came five hours earlier than expected. However correspondents pointed out it was not immediately clear whether this would continue or whether it was for the whole city. Guidance on how safe it is to drink the water is to be available locally over the next few days. TV stations will use a traffic light-style system to inform residents about water quality. A red indicator will mean the water is unusable, yellow that it is suitable for bathing only, and green that the supply is fit for drinking. To quicken the clean-up, water was discharged into the Songhua from nearby reservoirs to dilute the spill while the army installed new filters at Harbin's water plants. Tests showed levels of nitrobenzene in the river, Harbin's main source of water, had dropped below the official safety limit. The toxic leak passed Harbin early this morning, said Lin Qiang, a spokesman for the provincial environmental protection bureau. As it flows downstream, it is likely to contaminate Russia's Amur river, which feeds water to more than 500,000 residents of the Khabarovsk region. In Khabarovsk, residents have been urged not to panic while the authorities plan to limit the damage from the approaching spill. As soon as the presence of benzene is detected, a state of emergency will be introduced in Khabarovsk, Russian TV said. Cold and hot water supplies will be cut off for at least 40 hours and schools, childcare organisations and restaurants will close.

Beijing, Nov 29 — Thousands of children returned to school in Harbin today a week after a toxic spill in a river obliged officials to cut tap water to the Chinese city. It now threatens supplies for more than a million Russians downstream. An explosion at a chemical plant in the north-eastern province of Jilin on Nov 13 poured 100 tonnes of cancer-causing benzene compounds into the Songhua river

above Harbin, a city of nine million people. Officials turned off the taps in Harbin before the 80-km slick arrived. It has since cleared the city but will arrive at a major city in Russia's far east within days. Water supplies returned to Harbin, capital of Heilongjiang province, on Sunday (Nov 27) after five days. The city's 400,000 primary and secondary school students went back to their classes today after a week-long break with many bringing bottled water from home, state media said. Last weekend China apologised to Russia for the river water crisis. It has now agreed to provide monitoring equipment to its neighbour and help train Russian personnel as the toxic slick nears the Siberian border, the Chinese State Environmental Protection Administration said on its Website. "The governments of both countries do not wish for this incident to bring any harm to Sino-Russia relations," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao told reporters. "Both sides will continue to make efforts and strengthen co-operation to minimise possible harm caused by the pollution," Liu said, adding that the two countries had not discussed the issue of compensation. China welcomed assistance from international organisations, he said without elaborating. Russia's environmental watchdog said yesterday the toxic slick could reach the first Russian settlements in the next two to three days. The Emergencies Ministry said it could start affecting the major Siberian city of Khabarovsk by Dec 10-12. Russian television footage showed shop staff unloading bottled water supplies while scientists pushed aside lumps of ice to test the Amur river, which is fed by the Songhua. More than one million people could be affected. Although officials say the slick should be less toxic by the time it crosses into Russia, chief state epidemiologist Gennady Onishchenko has noted that the dangerous compounds would have been diluted faster had the river been in full flow rather than half-frozen. Russia is airlifting 50 tonnes of carbon for use in water treatment plants along the Amur, Russian media were quoted as saying. Benzene poisoning causes anaemia, other blood disorders and kidney and liver damage. In Bayan county in suburban Harbin, tests showed the level of nitro-benzene in the water at 0.1994 milligrams per litre, 10.73 times acceptable levels, the environment administration said. — Reuters.

London, Dec 1 — A press report, dated Nov 30, states: Another town on a poisoned Chinese river shut down its water system today after Communist Party members went door-to-door giving out bottled water in an effort to show that China's leaders can protect the public from the latest environmental disaster. Running water to about 26,000 people in Dalianhe, on the outskirts of the northeastern city of Yilan, stopped at

1800 hrs as a slick of toxic benzene on the Songhua River approached, said an employee at the county government offices. "It will last three days," said the employee. The government said Yilan itself should not be affected because the city of about 110,000 people gets its water from wells instead of the river. The benzene arrived a day after Harbin, a major industrial centre upstream, declared its water safe to drink after the system supplying 3.8 million people was shut down for five days. The spill caused by a deadly Nov 13 chemical plant explosion has embarrassed President Hu Jintao's government, which has promised to clean up the environment and do more to help ordinary Chinese. In Yilan, television broadcast hours of reports Wednesday on the water shutdown, including a government statement warning the public not to use river water. The show of openness contrasted sharply with complaints that officials upstream tried to hide the chemical spill and initially lied about the reason for shutting down Harbin's water. News reports showed police and party members in red armbands going door-to-door in freezing weather, handing out leaflets and giving cases of drinking water to the elderly and poor. The 50-mile-long slick is making its way towards Russia and is expected to reach the major border city of Khabarovsk on Dec 10-12. The Songhua flows into the Heilong River, which becomes the Amur in Russia and runs through Khabarovsk, one of the largest cities in the sparsely populated Far East. Residents have scooped up bottled water in stores, leaving many shops with only carbonated water. People in the city already are stocking up on water at homes, filling bathtubs and any container they can find. In Yilan, the government notice promised to "safeguard market and social stability" - a warning to merchants not to raise prices for bottled water. "Both the county government and residents have stored enough water for at least five days," said another employee of the county government headquarters. He said the county had dug five wells and would be distributing water by truck. Yilan closed riverfront parks to keep the public away from the poisoned water. The city lies at the intersection of the Songhua and Mudan Rivers, a famous scenic spot. Experts say the damage is likely to be long-lasting but the full effects will not be known until at least early next year with the thaw of river ice believed to contain benzene. "The benzene will remain in the ice until spring, and the situation will be dragged out," said Ilya Mitasov, a Moscow-based spokesman for the World Wide Fund for Nature. He told a Moscow news conference that a higher than normal level of benzene had been detected in the river, but it was not determined "whether it's ours or Chinese." The river could take 10 years or more to flush out pollutants absorbed by mud and microorganisms,

said Zhang Qingxiang, an environmental expert at Shanghai's East China University of Science and Technology.

POWER STATION, COLUMBUS, OHIO, UNITED STATES

London, Nov 29 — A press report, dated Nov 28, states: An explosion at a power station in Columbus early today sent fireballs into the sky and knocked out electricity to about 35,000 customers. Investigators said two transformers blew up when two power lines touched. Firefighters using foam had the blaze under control in about two hours. Six families were forced from their homes while officials checked for dangerous fumes, and several schools without power were closed. The families were allowed to return home within an hour of the 0530 hrs blast at American Electric Power. Many traffic lights were knocked out, slowing rush-hour traffic. There were no immediate reports of any accidents. By afternoon, 26,000 customers remained without power, the utility said.

PREMISES, ATTALLA, ALABAMA, UNITED STATES

London, Nov 28 — A press report, dated Nov 27, states: Officials estimated \$1 million in losses from a fire that destroyed two Attalla businesses. Thomas Cultured Marble and Co. and Outback Welding burned late Thursday (Nov 24). Fire Marshal Ray Cumby said the cause of the blaze remains under investigation. In the all-night effort to put out the blaze, firefighters had to deal with propane, acetylene, oxygen and tires burning at the welding shop. Firefighters from nearby Rainbow City and Reece City helped Attalla crews battle the fire, which was under control about 0400 hrs, Friday (Nov 25). No injuries were reported.

PREMISES, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA

London, Dec 1 — A press report, dated today, states: Business owners were "utterly devastated" as a fire destroyed up to 10 stores in a south-western shopping centre overnight. Investigators will today examine damage to Wattle Grove Plaza to establish whether the fire was caused by arson or followed an attempted ram-raid. Police said 10 stores were damaged by the blaze which began at the Village Way complex about 0200, AEDT, but fire brigade said only seven shops were involved. Up to 40 fire fighters worked for more than two hours to contain the blaze and save a Coles supermarket covering a large part of the complex. The blaze is believed to have started in a video store, where a car was also found driven through the front glass windows. It then quickly spread to the roof and other stores including a bakery, pizzeria, boutique and takeaway food outlet. Fire brigade Inspector Gordon Boath said business owners were at the scene earlier this morning surveying the damage.

**REFINERY, YORKTOWN,
VIRGINIA, UNITED STATES**

London, Nov 25 — A press report, dated today, states: Fire crews in Yorktown spent this morning battling a blaze at the town's oil refinery. The fire lit up the early morning sky with intense flames and continued to billow thick smoke through much of the morning. According to authorities, the fire started just before 0100 hrs in a combination unit at the refinery. The fire was contained to that area. Officials say six people usually work in the combination unit. No one was hurt. Fire investigators have not said what they believe sparked the blaze.

London, Nov 26 — A press report, dated today, states: Four fire departments converged on Yorktown for more than 10 hours yesterday to put out a blaze at the Giant Industries refinery. One building was heavily damaged, and it was still cooling down before the cause could be ascertained. As a result, Giant shut down all of the processing units, which hasn't happened since September 2003 as a precaution before Hurricane "Isabel" hit. Refinery emergency personnel were the first on the scene and were followed by units from York's Department of Fire & Life Safety, Newport News and Poquoson. Assistant fire Chief Michael Player said the fire began just before 0100 hrs in a combination unit in the refinery. By 1000 hrs, it had been contained to the single unit and was completely out by 1130 hrs, Player said. At the time the fire started, around six refinery personnel were working in the combination unit. No refinery employees or firefighters were injured. At around 1330 hrs, fully 12 hours later, firefighters were still hosing down the site. "Firefighters are still cooling the area, and no one has been able to get in there and examine the damage," Player said. "As soon as it is cooled down, the fire marshal's office and Giant officials will go in to try to determine what happened."

**RESTAURANT, SANTA CLARA,
CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES**

London, Nov 28 — A press report, dated Nov 26, states: County firefighters today knocked down a second-alarm blaze inside a restaurant at a Santa Clarita strip mall that wrought a total of \$2.25 million worth of damage, a county fire department inspector said. Fire personnel, including 75 firefighters, were dispatched shortly after 0530 hrs, to the Don Cuco Restaurant at 27247 Camp Plenty Road. They reported seeing heavy fire coming through the roof of the single-story structure, and the fire was knocked down shortly before 0700 hrs, according to County Fire Inspector Ron Haralson. "The roof has collapsed and it's totally burned away," he said. There were no injuries reported, Haralson said. The fire wrought \$1.5 million worth of damage to the structure and \$750,000 worth of damage to its contents. The cause of the fire was under investigation.

**SHOPPING DISTRICT,
ANNAPOLIS, UNITED STATES**

London, Nov 26 — A press report, dated Nov 25, states: A fire erupted in an Annapolis candy store and quickly spread through three buildings in shopping area full of holiday revelers this evening. One firefighter suffered minor injuries, but no other injuries were reported. The first alarm came at 1915 hrs, Annapolis Fire Capt. Joseph Martin said. Firefighters believed they had the blaze contained by 2200 hrs but said they were still fighting to get it under control. A full block of Main Street about a block from the state Capitol that is popular among restaurant and bar guests was evacuated as some 75 firefighters battled the blaze. In all, three brick, row-style buildings that house shops and restaurants caught fire. At one point, there was concern that the roof of one of the buildings would collapse, and firefighters were briefly ordered out, Martin said.

London, Nov 27 — A press report, dated today, states: A five-alarm fire tore through three late 19th-century buildings in the heart of Main Street, Annapolis. Friday (Nov 25) night's fire was under control shortly before midnight, and all three buildings remained standing yesterday. But after fire inspectors and structural engineers spent the day assessing the damage, city officials condemned the center building, which houses Zachary's Jewellers, and ordered that its three-storey white cinder-block facade be demolished this morning. "The structural engineer looked at it and said that the facade is just very dangerous," city spokeswoman Jan Hardesty said. The other two buildings, she said, were declared salvable. Fire inspectors continued to look for the cause of the fire last night. Harvey Blonder, who owns the building occupied by Zachary's as well as one of the other buildings and has a long-term lease on the third, said the damage could run into millions of dollars. Of the buildings damaged Friday, Zachary's, at 122 Main St., appeared hardest hit. Windows on the first floor were shattered. From the street, the interior appeared blackened and strewn with charred debris. The Candy Factory, at 118 Main, and Main Street Ice Cream, at 128 Main, also were significantly damaged. The three buildings, each three stories, are attached, making access difficult for firefighters.

**WAREHOUSE, FORT SMITH,
UNITED STATES**

London, Nov 25 — A press report, dated Nov 24, states: Fire fighters in Fort Smith are battling a major blaze at a local warehouse. They've been battling the blaze at C and J Printing since a little after 0100 this morning and they expect to be there until at least sometime tomorrow. Crews say all the paper in the warehouse makes fighting the fire a tough task. And that they may have to bring out a backhoe to tear the building apart so they can have a better view of the

flames to stomp the fire out completely. No one was injured, but fire crews estimate the fire to cause US\$2 to 3 million worth of damages.

WILDFIRES, UNITED STATES

London, Nov 29 — A press report, dated Nov 28, states: A second day of windy weather hampered crews today as they tried to control grass fires that had destroyed homes and forced hundreds of people to evacuate in parts of Oklahoma and Texas. Strong north-westerly winds, with gusts to near 50 mph, were expected to continue through the day, part of a huge storm system that also produced blizzard conditions on the central and northern Plains, the National Weather Service said. Hundreds of families had been evacuated and five buildings, including homes, were destroyed by three fires in McIntosh County in east-central Oklahoma, state Emergency Management spokeswoman Michelann Ooten said. "There have been houses lost across the state, but we don't have an exact number," she said. She also did not have an exact number on how many people had been evacuated. A wildfire in south-central Oklahoma's Stephens County destroyed more than 10 buildings and forced authorities to evacuate several hundred residents of outlying areas into the centre of Velma, while others fled to Duncan, officials said. Residents had also been evacuated near the small town of Chouteau, east of Tulsa. The wind also fanned grass fires in at least six northern Texas counties yesterday. One Texas fire began west of Cleburne, about 30 miles south of Fort Worth, and spread north into neighbouring Tarrant County, burning 1,000 acres and 24 structures along the way, Johnson County Sheriff's Department spokeswoman Cpl Pam Jetsel said. She said the destroyed structures included six homes.

**5N-BFN**

London, Nov 25 — A press report, dated today, states: The head of a team probing the crash of Bellview Airlines Boeing 737-2L9 5N-BFN which killed 117 people in Nigeria last month said yesterday that the aircraft's black boxes had not been found and may have been destroyed when the aircraft slammed into the ground. Angus Ozoka, the head of Nigeria's Accident Investigation and Prevention Bureau, would not say how much longer the investigation into the Oct 22 crash could last. There has been little indication of what could have caused the crash, although some aviation experts have said the aircraft may have been downed by lightning. Asked whether the black boxes could

have been destroyed in the impact, Ozoka said: "Of course, if you see the way mighty engines were disfigured and compressed." He said some strips of casing from the black boxes were discovered, further indicating the data recorders may have been smashed into pieces. The US National Transportation Safety Board sent a five-member team to assist the inquiry. It included investigators from Boeing and engine manufacturer Pratt & Whitney. The US team ruled out terrorism as a cause of the crash, an official at Nigeria's aviation ministry said.

London, Nov 30 — A press report, dated Nov 29, states: Bellview Airline management has so far paid compensation to 30 families who lost their relations in the (Boeing 737-2LP 5N-BFN) crash of Oct 22 at Lisa in Ogun State. One hundred and Seventy-seven passengers died in the crash. Lisa, the site of the aircraft crash, is also set to have two boreholes in two of its villages which would be commissioned in December. The Chief Executive Officer of Bellview Airlines, Mr. Kayode Odukoya, who disclosed these yesterday shortly after a courtesy call on President Olusegun Obasanjo at the State House, however, said a lot of families have been contacted, just as documentation of papers for payment of compensation is on-going. Odukoya said the airline is "already sinking boreholes and the boreholes should be commissioned in the first or second week of December. We are actually drilling two boreholes for two villages in the Lisa area." Giving insight into how far the airline has gone in the payment of compensation to families who lost dear ones in the crash, he said "compensation has actually started. Most of the families have been reached out to. Those that have completed documentation, they are being processed. You know there are 177 families. So it will take some time. But, the process is on." He noted that "we have paid about 30 families. You know, as families come forward and complete the forms. We have a very strong epi-centre in Lagos that I will encourage you to visit to see how we are handling the families."

9A-BAD

London, Nov 30 — Antonov 2R, operated by Krila Kvarnera, 9A-BAD, crashed at Rijeka Airport, Nov 23. Damage to aircraft is substantial.

C-GNQY

London, Nov 29 — On Nov 25, the twin Otter aircraft, C-GNQY, operating as air Labrador 201, was en route from Postville, Labrador to Rigolet, Labrador and as the aircraft descended through 3,000 feet, severe turbulence was encountered. The captain elected to divert to Goose Bay rather than try and land in Rigolet. When the aircraft was on short final for Goose bay the rear window on the right side of the cabin fell out.

CRASH, ATLANTA AREA, NEBRASKA, UNITED STATES

See N5596F.

CRASH, BELGRADE AREA, OHIO, UNITED STATES

London, Dec 1 — A press report, dated Nov 30, states: A twin-engine Cessna 425 crashed five miles north of Belgrade last night while approaching Gallatin Field airport, killing the pilot, Gerald Shiffer, an Ohio businessman who was alone in the aircraft. The aircraft crashed at about 1745 hrs on a ranch near the intersection of Dry Creek and Cactus roads, Federal Aviation Administration safety inspector Jim Cooney said. The aircraft landed on its belly. The nose and tail of the aircraft were dislodged from the passenger area, which was still intact, and the windows in the cockpit were broken. Shiffer had radio contact with Salt Lake City's traffic control while approaching Gallatin Field from the west. He was placed in a holding pattern, FAA spokesman Allen Kenitzer said, and told to radio Gallatin Field. But he disappeared from the radar screen over the Horseshoe Hills north of Manhattan around 1740 hrs and radio contact ceased. Gallatin Field officials became alarmed when they didn't hear from him, Airport Director Ted Mathis said, and the airport was closed for about 40 minutes. Flights then resumed when it was determined that the missing aircraft was not going to land. A search-and-rescue team of 30 people began looking for the lost aircraft in northern Gallatin County last night, Undersheriff Jim Oberhofer said. Rescue efforts were eventually halted a few hours later because of darkness and snow. A private citizen found the aircraft at about 0800 today and reported its location to authorities, Oberhofer said. More than 15 officials from the county and local fire departments responded to the crash site, eventually pulling Shiffer's body from the cockpit at about 1130 hrs. The National Transportation Safety Board and FAA began investigating the wreck this afternoon and as of tonight still had no explanation for what caused the crash. Investigators will be at the crash site tomorrow.

CRASH, BOZEMAN, MONTANA, UNITED STATES

London, Nov 30 — A press report, dated today, states: A small plane flying from Iowa to Montana has crashed near the airport in Bozeman (Montana), killing the pilot. The Federal Aviation Administration says the twin-engine Cessna crashed yesterday around 1740 hrs, about three and a-half miles north of the airport. The F-A-A says the pilot was the only one on board. The Cessna was flying to Bozeman from Algona (Iowa). The F-A-A and the National Transportation Safety Board are investigating.

CRASH, KADUNA AREA, NIGERIA

London, Nov 29 — A press report, dated today, states: A US-registered private jet crashed shortly after take-off from Nigeria's northern city of Kaduna yesterday, killing the pilot and a passenger on board, Nigerian aviation officials have said. The executive jet, a Beechcraft 200, is owned by a Nigerian businessman identified as Alhaji Idime. The cause of the accident was not yet known, though accident investigators are expected to visit the scene of the crash.

CRASH, KADUNA, NIGERIA

Lagos, Nov 28 — A private aircraft crashed today in the northern Nigerian city of Kaduna killing both people on board, aviation officials said today. The Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) said the U.S.-registered Beechcraft-200 owned and operated by a Nigerian businessman crashed shortly after take-off en route to the capital Abuja. "There were two people on board, the pilot and a lady. They all died in the crash," NCAA spokesman Samuel Adurogboye said. Adurogboye said accident investigators had already moved to the crash site to determine the cause while the U.S. authorities had also been informed. Beechcraft is a marque of the Raytheon Aircraft Co. — Reuters.

CRASH, SIERPC COUNTY, POLAND

London, Nov 28 — A private aircraft crashed yesterday in the Polish county of Sierpc in central Mazowsze province, about 100 km north-west of Warsaw, killing the pilot immediately. The tragedy occurred when it was cloudy with poor visibility. The pilot lost control of the aircraft when it was approaching a 220-metre-high television tower in the county. Police cordoned off the area soon after the crash. The television tower suffered no damage in the accident, and the aircraft was identified as a private aircraft from Warsaw.

CRASH, WINCHCOMBE, GLOUCESTERSHIRE, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Nov 29 — A press report, dated today, states: A woman whose plane crashed in bad weather in Gloucestershire was traced by the signal from her mobile phone. The 53-year-old, from Bicester, Oxfordshire, phoned 999 yesterday and told the operator all she knew was that she was somewhere in the Cotswolds. Officers could not search for her from the air because of low cloud, falling snow and wind. They eventually located her in a field the Corn Dean Lane area of Winchcombe using sirens and flashing lights. She kept in contact with officers, telling them when she could see their torches. The woman, who had been alone in the single-engine light aircraft, was taken to Cheltenham General Hospital and treated for

hypothermia and a hip injury. Police said the Air Accidents Investigation Branch had been informed of the incident.

EMERGENCY LANDING, Khabarovsk Airport, Russia

London, Nov 25 — A Tu-205 passenger liner made a safe emergency landing at the airport of Khabarovsk in Russia's Far East, the Emergency Situations Ministry said today. None of the 131 passengers and nine crew members aboard the plane was hurt in the accident, caused by a failure in the aircraft's nose landing gear. The airliner, bound for Moscow, was ordered to circle the airport for five hours to expend fuel to aid landing. A special commission has been set up to investigate the accident.

EMERGENCY LANDING, New Delhi, India

London, Nov 25 — A press report, dated Nov 24, states: A Federal Express cargo plane made an emergency landing at the Indira Gandhi International airport at New Delhi, following a technical snag in the aircraft. The Boeing 747, which took off from the airport at 1945 hrs, was forced to return at 2134 hrs, airport officials said. The plane reportedly developed some engine trouble. However, the officials refused to specify the exact nature of the problem. They also declined to comment on where the aircraft was headed and what it was carrying. The officials said a full alert was declared at the airport and ambulances and fire tenders deployed.

EMERGENCY LANDING, Sofia, Bulgaria

London, Nov 25 — A press report, dated today, states: An Al-Italia Boeing-767, flying from Dubai to Italy, with 146 people on board, made an emergency landing in the Bulgarian capital of Sofia, today after problems were reported with one of the plane's engines. According to initial information, one of plane engines stop functioning during the flight and the pilots requested Sofia Airport for an emergency landing. Bugarian Transport Ministry spokeswoman Vera Deianova said the plane landed safely and all passengers and crew were safe and uninjured.

EMERGENCY LANDING, South Bend Airport, United States

London, Nov 30 — A press report, dated Nov 29, states: An aircraft load of people had barely left South Bend Airport this morning when they were forced to turn around. Something was wrong with one of the aircraft's two engines, so the commuter aircraft made an emergency landing. The 42 people on-board flight 5872 were headed to Detroit then on to Knoxville and had barely taken off when pilots discovered a problem with the aircraft. At about 0815 hrs, pilots realised that the engine on the starboard side had quit. Passengers reported hearing a

thumping sound and smelling something burning. No one was hurt during the emergency landing and passengers were able to rebook on another flight. The aircraft was towed to a hangar so technicians could figure out what caused the engine to fail. The aircraft involved in the incident was a Canadair regional jet that can seat 50 people. The line is operated by a Northwest Airlink subsidiary called Pinnacle Airlines.

GROUNDING OF ZIMBAWEAN NATIONAL AIRLINE

London, Nov 24 — A press report, dated Nov 22, states: Zimbabwe's financially troubled national airline has resumed flights after the company's entire fleet was temporarily grounded due to lack of fuel, state radio reported today. Hundreds of passengers were left stranded at Harare International airport yesterday after Air Zimbabwe cancelled all local and international flights due to a shortage of Jet A1 fuel, the official "Herald" newspaper said. In an interview with state radio today, the airline's vice-president, Jonathan Kadzura, said authorities were working to normalise the situation at the beleaguered airline. "We got into a situation where fuel was simply not available," he said. "We know that the immediate thing to be done is to ensure that the airlines get sufficient fuel, which we are moving to normalise. We can assure our travelling public that the position in Zimbabwe will change and flights will be maintained and flights will take off on time, with no disruptions whatsoever," he added. A reservations clerk with Air Zimbabwe said: "Flights are normal now. We resumed flying yesterday."

HK-4374X

London, Nov 28 — A press report, dated Nov 27, states: Ice on the wings of a Colombian plane that crashed on August 16, killing the 160 people on board, has been determined as a cause behind the tragedy, according to the El Colombiano newspaper. The passenger plane's black box had recorded the cabin crew discussing bad weather conditions and the possibility of ice on the wings, the newspaper reported today, citing the US National Transport Security Board (NTSB). The results were released after investigations made by the NTSB using data supplied by Venezuela's Air Accident Investigation Committee. The twin-engine McDonnell Douglas MD-82 aircraft of Colombia's carrier, the West Caribbean Airways (WCA), was flying from Panama City to Martinique, the French-owned island in the Caribbean, when it crashed over Venezuela, killing the 152 passengers and its eight crew members on board. The NTSB report said that "both engines show evidence that the rotors were turning at high speed at the moment of impact." The crew had said it was not an emergency, but had requested a new flight altitude from Venezuelan controllers on the ground.

"The report shows that what happened was an accident, not problem with the plane, as the media have said," WCA director general Captain Jorge Perez told El Colombiano.

INCIDENT AT DUBLIN AIRPORT, Republic of Ireland

London, Dec 1 — A press report, dated today, states: Passengers and crew were evacuated from an Aer Lingus plane at Dublin Airport today after smoke was spotted in the cabin. The flight was schedule to leave for Milan at 1920 hrs (yesterday) but had been delayed due to bad weather. An Aer Lingus spokeswoman said the emergency chutes on the aircraft had been deployed and the 61 passengers and six crew were evacuated. "All the passengers are safely inside in the terminal building and we're investigating the cause of the smoke in the cabin," she said. One of the flight crew was slightly injured when she hit her foot while being evacuated in the emergency chute. Aer Lingus is putting alternative arrangements in place for the passengers.

INCIDENT AT NOTTINGHAM EAST MIDLANDS AIRPORT, United Kingdom

London, Nov 25 — A press report, dated Nov 24, states: An investigation is under way after two aircraft touched wings as one of them was manoeuvring at Nottingham East Midlands Airport. An Easyjet flight to Alicante touched the wing tip of a parked Thomas Cook Airbus 320 which was standing empty this morning. Six crew and 110 passengers were on board. No-one was hurt but both aircraft suffered minor damage. All the passengers were flown out on replacement aircraft.

N17233

London, Nov 29 — Boeing 737-284 N17233, operated by Continental Airlines, was struck by a contract van at 0455, Nov 25, while parked at the gate at Houston, Texas, with no crew on board. The aircraft sustained substantial damage. The one person in the van was injured.

N2455T

London, Nov 30 — Navion NA-145 N2455T crashed near Imperial, California, at 0010, Nov 28. The aircraft was destroyed. The one person on board was killed.

N2703F

London, Nov 28 — A press report, dated Nov 27, states: Federal investigators have faulted the pilot for an October 2004, aircraft crash that killed two of the three men on board. The Cessna 182J (N2703F) struck a tree before it went down as it was approaching the Springfield-Branson Regional Airport. The pilot, Moussa R. Pessar, of Greenfield Center, New York, and Paul B. Premsagar, of Scotia, NY, were killed. The pilot's brother, Scholomo S. Pessar, of Paramus, New Jersey, was critically injured. The report from the National

Transportation Safety Board determined the pilot failed to maintain proper altitude and obstacle clearance. Pessar had just bought the aircraft in San Diego and was flying it back to New York when it went down. The pilot had been in contact with the airport tower shortly before the crash and had discussed whether the aircraft could land. Witnesses reported the aircraft was flying at an altitude of 150-200 feet before it went down in Greene County farmland after hitting a 45-50-foot-tall tree. No mechanical problems were uncovered during a post-accident inspection, the report found.

N546BC

London, Nov 24 — Authorities confirmed today that off-road racer Jason Baldwin was among four people killed in the crash of Cessna T210N (Centurion II) N546BC off the California coast. Others on board the aircraft were identified as pilot Daniel M. Neuman of Foothill Ranch and Baldwin's longtime friends Richard Lee Olauson, 36, of Long Beach, and Jeffrey TenEyck, 35, of Jackson Hole, Wyoming. Divers recovered the bodies Tuesday (Nov 22), three days after the aircraft sank in about 200 feet of water off Dana Point. Investigators determined that all four men died in the crash. "There was no health reason that caused the pilot to crash," said Jon Fleischman with the Orange County Sheriff's Department.

N5596F

London, Nov 28 — A press report, dated today, states: Three people died yesterday when a single-engine aircraft crashed into a broadcast tower near the south-central Nebraska town of Atlanta. Authorities did not release the victims' identities, but dispatcher Gary Wagner of the State Patrol's North Platte office said two adults and a child were killed. The 1968 Piper 140 aircraft is registered to an owner from Illinois, Wagner said. The crash occurred at about 1045 when the aircraft collided with a broadcast tower owned by Nebraska Educational Radio and Television. No injuries were reported to people on the ground. Phelps County Sheriff Tom Nutt said the aircraft crashed into a wheatfield about 200 yards from the tower, which is located off US Highway 6. The tower landed on a building that houses broadcast equipment, causing roof damage, Nutt said. The building contents did not appear to be damaged, Nutt said. The NET tower carries public radio and television programming to a large portion of central Nebraska. Both services were knocked off the air. Witnesses said debris was scattered over two farm fields. The Federal Aviation Administration was investigating. It was unclear if weather was a factor in the crash. Rain and high winds were reported in the area at the time of the crash.

London, Nov 29 — Piper PA-28-140 (Cherokee) N5596F crashed near Atlanta, Nebraska, at 1648, Nov 27,

while on a flight from Denver, Colorado, to Morris, Illinois. The aircraft was destroyed. The three persons on board were killed.

N6485R

London, Nov 29 — A press report, dated today, states: A body thought to be that of a Tattall County woman missing after a small aircraft crashed Sunday (Nov 27) was found yesterday amid wreckage strewn on the side of a remote North Georgia mountain. The woman's husband, who piloted the aircraft, was found on a nearby hiking trail, burned but able to walk, after spending Sunday night alone near the crash site. Randy Hackle was found walking about 0845 yesterday along the Coosa Backcountry Trail by visitors to Vogel State Park in Union County, about 1.2 miles south of the crash site. They took him to park offices and called for help. Hackle was transported to Northeast Georgia Medical Center in Gainesville and treated for burns and other injuries. Later in the day, he was transferred to a hospital in Augusta for further treatment. Searchers around Slaughter Mountain, in the Blood Mountain Wilderness Area, found the crash site and the body about 1040 hrs. Officials would not initially identify the body. But family members and co-workers said yesterday before the remains were found that searchers were looking for Barbara Hackle the pilot's wife. The aircraft, a 1966 two-seater Piper 140, was found broken in pieces by a Georgia Department of Natural Resources search team, said DNR spokeswoman Kim Hatcher. "There appears to have been some sort of fire or explosion," Hatcher said. "There was no report of any engine trouble, or a distress call," Griffin said. Hatcher said the aircraft clipped a few trees before crashing to the ground. The aircraft, which was based at the Metter airport, had left Sunday from a small airport in Murphy, N.C., on a flight to Metter, Hatcher said.

London, Nov 30 — Piper PA-28-140 (Cherokee) N6485R crashed near Blairsville, Georgia, at 2040, Nov 27, while on a flight from Blairsville, to Metter, GA. The aircraft was destroyed. One of the two persons on board was killed and the other was seriously injured.

N666DE

London, Nov 28 — A press report, dated Nov 26, states: Catastrophic engine failure was behind the crash of a Piper PA-32-200 (Cherokee Six) (N666DE) on Wednesday morning (Nov 23) that claimed the lives of a Fort Worth couple, investigators said yesterday. Charles F. Rosenbaum and his wife Linda had taken off from an airport in Palm Beach Gardens with plans to visit relatives in Roanoke, Virginia. Investigators determined the aircraft piloted by Rosenbaum, an experienced flyer, with his wife the only passenger, broke down in mid-air when a connecting rod failed and blew a piston right off the engine, according

to the Brevard County Sheriff's Office. As they flew near Titusville, Rosenbaum radioed for help but remained in control of the aircraft and tried to slow it down. Seconds before crashing, he attempted to use a brake manoeuvre called a flare to open the aircraft's wingflaps. He managed to slow the aircraft from a speed of 200 mph to 100 mph before slamming into a patch of woods east of Interstate 95.

N6858P

London, Nov 27 — A press report, dated Nov 26, states: A small aircraft with engine trouble crashed at the end of a residential street in Lincoln Park shortly after takeoff today, injuring the pilot and passenger, police said. The aircraft had just left nearby Lincoln Park Airport when its engine cut out, police Sgt. John Clements said. The pilot told authorities he tried to return to the airport but crashed into a wooded area. No one on the ground was injured. The pilot and passenger suffered relatively minor injuries, police said. People who live near the crash site said the aircraft came close to hitting two houses before it smashed into the trees less than a mile from the airport.

London, Nov 29 — Piper PA-24-180 (Comanche) N6858P crashed in Lincoln Park, New Jersey, at 1653, Nov 26, following take-off from Lincoln Park Airport. The aircraft sustained substantial damage. The two persons on board suffered minor injuries.

N913AW

London, Nov 30 — A press report, dated Nov 29, states: A fuel truck at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport hit the starboard engine of a Boeing 757 America West aircraft this morning, grounding the aircraft and causing the airline to cancel a flight to Phoenix. No one was on board the aircraft, which was parked at Gate A2. There were no injuries in the accident and no fuel leaked, said Bob Parker, spokesman for the airport. The accident, which occurred shortly before 0700 hrs, put a small crease and a puncture in the outside cover of the engine, Parker said. While the damage was minor, it involved a critical part of the aircraft so it was grounded. The cause of the accident is under investigation, Parker said.

London, Dec 1 — Boeing 757-225 N913AW, operated by America West, was struck by a fuel truck at 1445, Nov 29, while parked at the gate at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, Washington. The aircraft sustained substantial damage. The five persons on board were not injured.

ZK-DZG

London, Nov 30 — NZ Aerospace FU-24-950 ZK-DZG, operated by Super Air Ltd, was reported missing Nov 22 while on a flight from Kaikohe to Whangarei. Following an extensive search the aircraft was found destroyed in Pukenui Forest. The two persons on board were killed.

Product Recalls

BABY MILK, EUROPE

London, Nov 23 — A press report, dated Nov 22, states: Nestle SA, the world's biggest food company, said today it had recalled hundreds of thousands of gallons of baby milk from France, Portugal, Spain and Italy after traces of ink from the packaging were found in the product. Nestle spokesman Francois-Xavier Perroud said the substance posed no health risk and disputed an Italian official's claims that it appeared to be toxic. Routine tests in Italy in the autumn had revealed the presence of isopropylthioxanthone in its Latte Mio and Nidina 1 and 2 milk brands, he said. Perroud said most of the milk, up to 530,000 gallons, was recalled in Italy, and "much smaller" amounts in France, Spain and Portugal. "We are sad that the packaging material that we bought from a reliable source did not live up to the standards that we expect," Perroud said. "We are replacing every single contaminated product that you can lay your hands on." Earlier today, authorities in Italy said they ordered the confiscation of about eight million gallons of the baby milk. Cristina Attina, an official with forest rangers in Rome whose duties include overseeing food safety, said a batch of milk due to expire in September, 2006, had been contaminated by a chemical that leaked from the packaging. It said the substance appeared to be toxic. Nestle Italy said it had withdrawn the milk in question from the Italian market and that new milk using alternative packaging had since been distributed. Nestle's office in Spain, where Perroud said the milk was packaged, said recalls there were precautionary and that the substance was not dangerous. "In the quantities that this chemical is found in the food, it is not a health risk and there is a broad scientific consensus about that," Perroud said. "It is simply a chemical and chemicals have no business in food."

London, Dec 1 — A press report, dated Nov 30, states: Packaging firm Tetra Pak has said it will stop making milk and fruit juice cartons using the printing chemical ITX after it contaminated some products. The firm, which makes the soft, square cartons, took out a full page advertisement in Italian newspapers to announce the decision. It came after ITX was found in several different kinds of baby milk. Tetra Pak insisted that despite the move, all the products packaged in its cartons were safe to drink. ITX, or isopropylthioxanthone, is a chemical used in the printing process for packaging. A BBC correspondent in Rome said Tetra Pak was stopping all manufacturing in Europe of packaging for milk and fruit

juices where there had been evidence of ITX getting into the contents. Earlier this month, Swiss-based food giant Nestle ordered the recall of baby milk from France, Spain, Portugal and Italy after tests suggested there may have been ITX contamination. The move came after Italy's forestry police, which is responsible for agriculture, seized two million litres of milk for infants on Nov 9. Yesterday, an Italian consumer group said it had found ITX in other products including fruit juices. Tetra Pak said the chemical would be completely removed from its carton range by the end of January.

CHILDRENS NECKLACES AND ZIPPER PULLS, UNITED STATES

London, Nov 30 — A press report, dated today, states: A California company is voluntarily recalling about six million children's necklaces and zipper pulls that pose a serious risk of lead poisoning, the Consumer Product Safety Commission said today. The painted metal jewelry contains high amounts of lead, which can be toxic if swallowed. There have been no reports of incidents or injuries associated with the Chinese-made jewelry sold by the Stravina Operating Co. of Chatsworth, Calif. The CPSC announced the recall after Stravina alerted it that the two products contained lead, commission spokeswoman Julie Vallese said. The recalled necklaces are silver-colored with individual names painted in a variety of colors attached to a 16-inch cord. The recalled zipper pulls include nameplates similar to those on the necklaces but hang from a silver-colored metal clip designed to attach to backpacks, key rings or zippers. The jewelry was sold through discount, party, grocery and drug stores from March 2002 through to September. Retail prices varied between \$2 and \$4.

CIRCULAR SAWS, UNITED STATES

Washington, DC, Nov 29 — The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in co-operation with Porter-Cable, of Jackson, Tenn., today announced a voluntary recall of about 196,000 Porter-Cable 7¹/₂-inch MAG-Saw Circular Saws. Consumers should stop using recalled products immediately unless otherwise instructed. The lower guard on these saws could stick in the open position, posing a risk of severe lacerations to consumers. No incidents/injuries reported. The recall involves Porter-Cable 7¹/₂-inch MAG-Saw Circular Saws with model numbers 324MAG, serial numbers 10001through 108962, 325MAG, serial numbers 10001through 014712, 423MAG, serial numbers 10001through 100371, and 424MAG, serial numbers 10001through 012690. The model and serial numbers are located on a label on the top of the saws. Units marked with a "T" at the location shown below have been inspected and are not affected by this recall. "Porter-Cable" is written on the side of these saws. Sold at major home center and hardware stores nation-

wide from March 2004 through November 2005 for between \$130 and \$160, depending on the model. Manufactured in the United States. Consumers should stop using the circular saws immediately and contact Porter-Cable for the location of the nearest service center to receive a free inspection and repair, if necessary. — Consumer Product Safety Commission.

DAEWOO MOTOR VEHICLES

London, Nov 27 — A press report, dated today, states: More than 700 Matiz minicars are to be recalled by South Korea's third biggest carmaker, GM Daewoo Auto and Technology, because of defective air bags. The move, which will start tomorrow, has come at the orders of the country's construction and transportation ministry, AFP news agency reported. A total of 734 cars are affected by the recall, and all were produced between Jul 1 and Oct 18. The Matiz is the best-selling minicar model in the GM Daewoo line-up. The model was launched by General Motors in 2002 when global number one carmaker bought most of Daewoo Motor's assets.

GARMENTS, JAPAN

London, Nov 25 — Gunze Ltd. will recall 310,000 of its garment products, including a new lineup of underwear designed for Japan's "Warm Biz" energy-conservation campaign, as they could irritate skin, company officials said today. Subject to the recall is "Warm Biz" underwear for both men and women, which went on sale for this winter season, and some pajamas, the officials said. They said the Osaka-based company has received 38 complaints from customers in connection with the defect. Gunze said too many medical agents meant to enhance the garments' temperature-control functions were attached on the products in the manufacturing process. The leading underwear maker, listed on the Tokyo Stock Exchange's First Section, notified its corporate clients about the recall yesterday.

HARLEY DAVIDSON MOTORCYCLES, WORLDWIDE

London, Nov 23 — Harley-Davidson Motor Company has issued a voluntary safety recall on 2006 model year Dyna series motorcycles built between Jun 9 and Oct 19, 2005. Approximately 13,400 motorcycles are included in the recall. The transmissions in the affected motorcycles have a defect which under certain circumstances may allow them to go into a false neutral position even though the neutral indicator light is illuminated. As part of its Initial Care Program for 2006 Dyna motorcycles, the Company will provide owners with free pick-up and delivery, if desired. This service will commence and recall kits will be available at dealerships beginning the week of December 12, 2005. The Company estimates that the costs associated with this voluntary recall will be less than \$5.0 million

and it will reserve these costs in the fourth quarter of this year.

OSCILLATING ELECTRIC TOWER FANS, UNITED STATES

Washington, DC, Nov 22 — The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in co-operation with Haier America Trading LLC, of New York, N.Y., today announced a voluntary recall of about 150,000 oscillating electric tower fans, manufactured by Metropolitan Electrical Appliance Co. Ltd., of Hong Kong. Consumers should stop using recalled products immediately unless otherwise instructed. Internal electrical arcing in the fan can cause a fire hazard. Haier has received eight reports of fires or flames associated with this electric fan, including minor property damage and one report of minor burns. This recall involves a Haier oscillating electric tower fan, model FTM140GG. The gray tower fan has three speed settings and a 120-minute shut-off timer. "Haier" is printed on a silver label near the top of the front of the tower. The model number is printed on the lower back of the fan. No other Haier fans are included in this recall. Sold at discount department stores nationwide from February 2004 through November 2005 for between \$20 and \$30. Manufactured in China. Consumers should immediately stop using the tower fan and call Haier for instructions on how to obtain a \$30 coupon redeemable for the purchase from Haier of any available product. Consumers who previously received a \$10 mail-in rebate will get a \$20 coupon. — Consumer Product Safety Commission.

SUZUKI/MAZDA/NISSAN MOTOR VEHICLES, JAPAN

Tokyo, Nov 24 — Japanese auto makers Suzuki Motor Corp., Mazda

Motor Corp. and Nissan Motor Co. will recall a combined 359,589 minivehicles in Japan built by Suzuki to fix faulty transmissions, a recall report issued to the government showed today. The affected cars are Suzuki Alto, Mazda Carol, Nissan Moco and other minicars, all built by Japan's top minivehicle maker — under an original equipment manufacturer deal for the Mazda and Nissan models — between November 2000 and June 2002. There was no report of any accident resulting from the defect, which in the worst case scenario could cause the bearing in one of the gear shafts to break, resulting in the sudden deceleration of the vehicle. A Suzuki spokesman said the company does not disclose estimated recall costs. The 660cc vehicles are only sold in Japan. — Reuters.

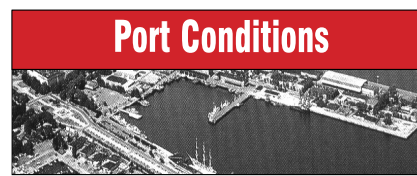
SYNTHESIZERS, UNITED STATES

London, Nov 29 — The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission has reported that a product safety recall was conducted voluntarily by Yamaha Corporation of America, of Buena Park, Calif., in co-operation with the CPSC, of approximately 1,100 S90 ES Synthesizers. The "unit" could emit loud white noise when turned off and turned on again under high temperature conditions, which could possibly damage a consumer's hearing. No injuries have been reported. The product was sold at musical instrument retailers and dealers from August 2005 through to October 2005 for a manufacturer's suggested retail price of \$2,599.

TELEVISION WALL MOUNTING UNITS, UNITED STATES

London, Nov 28 — The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission,

in cooperation with Sanus Systems, of St. Paul, Minn., today announced a voluntary recall of 14,000 VisionMount VMSA swing-arm television wall-mounting units. The recall is due to an undersized shaft within the wall mounting unit can cause the product's main support component to loosen. As a result, the unit and the television it is supporting can fall from the wall, posing a risk of injury to consumers. Sanus Systems has received one report of significant loosening in the product's main support component. No incidents or injuries relating to unit failure have been reported. The products are sold by audio video stores from December 2004 through May 4, 2005 for about \$350.



ITALY

Genoa, Nov 28 — Port situation Nov 28: Genoa: One roll-on roll-off vessel waiting for berth, average delay in berthing 24 hours. No delays at Savona or La Spezia. — Lloyd's Agents.

UNITED STATES

London, Nov 30 — Due to dive operations, there will be no vessel movements in the Houston Ship Channel between City Dock 32 and Valero Marketing (old Eagle Asphalt) from 0900 to 1200, local time, tomorrow.

Port Delays

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

Country/Port	Date of report	No. of vessels waiting and/or days delay
Australia		
Abbott Point	28-11-2005	Coal: 1 vessel berthed, 1 waiting; 10 vessels due by 18/12; up to 1 day's delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Brisbane	28-11-2005	Coal: Fisherman Island coal berth: 3 vessels due by 23/12; no delays expected.
Dalrymple Bay	28-11-2005	Coal: 3 vessels berthed and loading; 28 vessels due by 8/12; up to 15 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Dampier	28-11-2005	Iron ore: Parker Point A berth: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 2 waiting to load; 6 vessels due by 4/12; 2-5 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; Parker Point B berth: 7 vessels due by 7/12; up to 2 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; East Intercourse Island: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 2 waiting to load; 8 vessels due by 3/12; 2-6 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Geraldton	28-11-2005	Iron ore: 2 vessels anchored waiting to load; up to 2 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Gladstone	28-11-2005	Coal: R.G. Tanna coal terminal: 1 vessel berthed and loading; 37 vessels due by 12/1; up to 10 days berthing delay expected subject to port congestion and cargo availability; plant shutdown for repairs and maintenance on shiploader 2 from 28/11 to 8/12; Barney Point: 7 vessels due by 27/12; no delays expected; shiploader shut down for repairs and maintenance from 12-15/12.
Hay Point	28-11-2005	Coal: 1 vessel berthed and loading; 12 vessels due by 8/12; up to 3 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Newcastle	28-11-2005	Coal: Kooragang 4, 5 and 6: 2 vessels berthed and loading; 54 vessels due by 14/12; 5-9 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; 12 vessels off port awaiting berths; Dykes 4+5: 2 vessels berthed and loading; 22 vessels due by 15/12; 6-8 days delay expected prior to berthing due to planned maintenance at Kooragang terminal, coal product problems with some shippers berthed congestion and cargo receipt; 5 vessels off port awaiting berths.
Port Hedland	28-11-2005	Iron ore: BHP Iron Ore Pty. Ltd., Mt. Newman (Nelson Point), "A" berth: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 1 waiting; 7 vessels due by 5/12; up to 3 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; shiploader will be closed for 48 hours for maintenance from ca 28/11; "B" berth: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 2 waiting; 7 vessels due by 8/12; up to 3 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; BHP Iron Ore Pty. Ltd., Goldsworthy (Finucane Island) "C" berth: 2 vessels due by 1/12; up to 1 day's delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; "D" berth: 1 vessel berthed; 6 vessels due by 1/12; up to 2 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; Cockatoo Island: 1 vessel due 16/12; no delays expected.
Port Walcott	28-11-2005	Iron ore: 2 vessels berthed and loading, 3 vessels waiting to load; 17 vessels due by 10/12; up to 11 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Whyalla	28-11-2005	Iron ore: 8 vessels due by 23/12; no delays expected; wharf maintenance is taking place on fender piles at ore jetty berth from 10-30/11 inclusive.
Azerbaijan		
Apscheron	25-11-2005	Oil products: Dubendi terminal: 1 vessel berthed, both discharging crude oil; 2 vessels due by 26/11, both to discharge crude oil.
Baku	25-11-2005	Oil products: Bay of Baku: no vessels; Azerneftiyag terminal: no vessels; Azer Trans terminal - Nobel avenue: 1 vessel due 25/11 to discharge gasoil; Sangachal district: no vessels; Transserve terminal: closed.
Bulgaria		
Bourgas	28-11-2005	Thirteen vessels in port operating, of which 9 loading (4 coils, 1 wheat, 1 barytes, 1 pig-iron, 1 copper concentrate, 1 sunflower seeds), 4 discharging (1 salt, 1 gasoil, 1 billets, 1 coals); 4 vessels in roads, of which 3 to load (1 general cargo, 1 bulk ammonium nitrate, 1 coils), 1 to discharge iron ore; 15 vessels due, of which 11 to load (5 coils, 1 scrap, 1 gasoil, 1 lead, 1 bagged ammonium nitrate, 2 containers), 4 to discharge (2 containers, 1 zinc concentrate, 1 salt).
Varna	28-11-2005	Varna East, Varna West, Electrical Power Station, Balchik: Conditions 21-28 November: Thirty-one vessels in port operating of which 17 loading (3 scrap, 2 bulk maize, 3 bulk wheat, 1 empty bags/bulk wheat, 1 bulk kaolin/other, 6 soda, 1 silica sand), 10 discharging (1 steel on pallets, 1 gypsum boards on pallets, 2 bulk copper concentrate, 1 petcoke, 3 containers, 2 bulk coal), 4 discharging/loading (1 small consignments/containers, 2 containers, 1 equipment in packing cases); no vessels waiting in roads.

Port Conditions

Chile

Antofagasta	28-11-2005	Six vessels berthed, 1 berth vacant; 16 vessels due this week to load/discharge concentrates, bulk copper, containers and general cargo.
Arica	28-11-2005	Five vessels berthed, 2 berths vacant; 19 vessels due this week.
Iquique	28-11-2005	Four vessels berthed, 3 berths vacant; 18 vessels due this week.
Lirquen	28-11-2005	Four vessels at terminal, 2 berths vacant; 16 vessels due this week.
Penco	28-11-2005	One vessel at terminal, none due this week.
Puerto Montt	28-11-2005	Two vessels at terminal, 1 berth vacant; 8 vessels due this week.
Punta Arenas	28-11-2005	Four vessels at terminal, 3 berths vacant; 14 vessels due this week.
San Antonio	28-11-2005	Six vessels berthed, 3 berths vacant; 21 vessels due this week.
San Vicente	28-11-2005	Three vessels berthed, 2 berth vacant; 20 vessels due during the week; Steel pier: 1 vessel at terminal, 1 berth vacant; no vessels due this week; Coronel pier: 3 vessels at terminal, 1 berth vacant; 4 vessels due this week; Oil terminal: 1 tanker at terminal, 1 berth vacant; 1 tanker due this week.
Valparaiso	28-11-2005	Three vessels berthed, 5 berths vacant; 3 vessels anchored; 18 vessels due this week.

Cyprus

Larnaca	29-11-2005	Three conventional vessels discharging at berth; 1 conventional vessel due 30/11; no delays expected.
Limassol	29-11-2005	Six container vessels loading/discharging at berth, 2 conventional vessels discharging at berth; 11 vessels due 30/11, of which 8 containers, 2 conventional vessels, 1 Ro/Ro; no delays expected.

Egypt

Adabiya	28-11-2005	Seven vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 2 general cargo, 4 bulk carriers, 1 containers.
Alexandria	28-11-2005	Twenty-six vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 17 general cargo, 5 bulk carriers, 3 tankers, 1 container vessel; 18 vessels dry-docked; 22 vessels at inner anchorage, 7 at outer anchorage.
Damietta	28-11-2005	Twenty-nine vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 18 general cargo, 3 bulk carriers, 1 tanker, 1 reefer, 6 containers; 12 vessels at outer anchorage, 1 at inner anchorage.
Dekheila	28-11-2005	Twenty-nine vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 18 general cargo, 3 bulk carriers, 1 tanker, 1 reefer, 6 containers; 12 vessels at outer anchorage, 1 at inner anchorage.
Port Said	28-11-2005	Four vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 2 general cargo, 2 containers.
Suez	28-11-2005	Eight vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 2 general cargo, 3 reefers, 3 passenger vessels; 4 tugs, 1 vessel dry-docked.
Suez Canal	28-11-2005	Twenty-one vessels transiting Northbound, 25 Southbound.

Estonia

Tallinn	28-11-2005	Paljassaare (formerly Kopli): 2 fertiliser vessels loading at berth, 2 vessels discharging at berth (1 cocoa beans, 1 fish); no vessels waiting at anchorage; 4 vessels due, with 11 days berthing delay expected.
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Georgia

Batumi	25-11-2005	Oil products: 2 vessels berthed, both loading crude oil; 4 vessels in roads, all to load, of which 1 gas, 1 gasoil, 2 crude oil; 8 vessels due by 29/11, all to load, of which 4 crude oil, 2 gasoil, 1 fuel oil, 1 VGO.
Supsa	25-11-2005	Oil products: 4 vessels due by 12/12, all to load crude oil.

Iran

Neka	25-11-2005	Oil products: 2 vessels in roads, both to load crude oil; 3 vessels due by 25/11, all to discharge crude oil.
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Kazakhstan

Aktau	25-11-2005	Oil products: 5 vessels berthed, all completed discharging crude oil; 8 vessels in roads, all to load unknown cargoes; 7 vessels due by 26/11, all to load unknown cargoes.
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Mozambique

Maputo	22-11-2005	Eight vessels in port operating, of which 2 loading bulk coal, 2 discharging (1 bagged rice, 1 bulk maize), 1 discharging/loading containers, 1 under repairs, 1 tug, 1 other vessel; no vessels due to berth 22/11; 18 vessels due by 30/12 of which 7 to load (2 aluminium ingots, 2 bulk coal, 1 gaz condensate, 1 stakes, 1 general cargo), 7 to discharge (1 bagged rice, 2 bulk wheat, 1 frozen fish, 2 bulk alumina, 1 containers), 4 to discharge/load (1 containers/steel plates, 3 containers).
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Nigeria

Qua-Iboe terminal (Eket)	29-11-2005	Production at Oso platform remains low.
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Receive immediate notice as soon as a Casualty occurs. For further information please contact Andrew Luxton on +44 (0) 20 7017 4625.

Russia

Novorossiysk	28-11-2005	Sixteen vessels in port operating, all loading, of which 1 WRIC/steel, 1 bulk cement, 1 bulk urea, 1 steel billets/coils, 4 wheat, 1 steel billets/coils/steel sheets, 2 steel sheets/steel billets, 2 bulk ammonium nitrate, 1 steel billets, 1 aluminium, 1 diesel oil; 10 vessels waiting in roads of which 9 to load (2 wheat, 1 steel billets, 1 bulk urea, 1 wheat, 1 pipes, 3 coils), 1 to discharge bulk sugar; 65 vessels due, of which 64 to load (7 steel billets, 5 bulk ammonium nitrate, 4 bulk NPK, 2 UAN solution, 7 wheat, 3 HBI, 1 cars, 3 slabs, 3 scrap, 3 steel sheets, 3 pipes, 1 flowers, 1 cartons, 1 ammonium sulphate, 1 oil, 1 coils, 1 copper, 1 steel sheets/slabs/steel billets, 1 pipes/coils/steel billets, 2 bulk urea, 2 aluminium, 1 copper, 1 equipment/H-beams, 2 cement, 1 WRIC, 1 tin plate, 1 bulk NPK/bulk ammonium sulphate, 1 DRI, 1 diesel oil, 1 lead, 1 copper/cellulose), 1 to load/discharge containers; Oil terminal: 1 tanker loading crude oil; 5 tankers in roads, all to load, of which 4 crude oil, 1 diesel oil; 6 tankers due, all to load, of which 5 crude oil, 1 fuel oil.
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Slovenia

Koper	28-11-2005	Port working normally. Eight vessels berthed of which 1 discharging/loading containers, 1 bulk carrier discharging minerals, 4 bulk carriers loading grain/coal, 1 vessel discharging general cargo, 1 loading timber products; no vessels waiting at anchorage; 25 vessels due over the next 2 days of which 5 to discharge/load containers, 6 bulk carriers to discharge solid chemicals/minerals/ore/cement/coal, 3 bulk carriers to load coal, 6 vessels to load steel products/sawn timber/timber products/general cargo/general cargo, 1 Ro/Ro to load paper products, 2 car carriers to discharge/load vehicles, 1 reefer to discharge refrigerated goods, 1 vessel to load livestock.
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Spain

Bilbao	28-11-2005	Twenty-one vessels operating (1 tanker, 20 other vessels), of which 4 loading, 11 discharging, 6 loading/discharging.
Cadiz	28-11-2005	Nineteen vessels in port of which 8 operating (3 Ro/Ros, 2 containers, 1 clinker, 1 sunflower seeds, 1 passenger vessel), 11 vessels under repair; no delays.
Sagunto	28-11-2005	Thirteen vessels in port operating, of which 3 loading (1 cement, 1 bulk fertiliser, 1 general cargo), 9 discharging (7 steel products, 2 vehicles), 1 discharging/loading steel products; no vessels outside commercial wharf; no berthing delays at present.

Sri Lanka

Colombo	28-11-2005	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. Four container/feeder vessels loading at berth, 15 vessels discharging at berth (8 containers/feeders, 1 bagged cement, 2 bulk cement, 2 steel cargo, 1 soya bean meal, 1 bagged maize); no vessels waiting at anchorage; 6 vessels dry-docked, 1 at dolphin tanker berth; 6 container/feeder vessels due, with no delays expected.
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Turkmenistan

Aladja	28-11-2005	Oil products: 1 vessel berthed, loading crude oil.
Okarem	28-11-2005	Oil products: 2 vessels in roads, both to load crude oil.
Turkmenbashi	28-11-2005	Oil products: 2 vessels berthed of which completed discharging crude oil, 1 discharging crude oil; 1 vessel due 28/11 to discharge crude oil.

Ukraine

Ilichevsk	28-11-2005	Fourteen vessels in port operating, of which 11 loading (5 steel products, 1 sunflower oil, 2 grain, 1 sulphur, 1 coke, 1 containers), 1 discharging nickel ore, 2 discharging/loading containers; 5 vessels in roads, of which 2 to load (1 steel products, 1 grain), 3 to discharge/load containers; 18 vessels due, of which 8 to load (7 steel products, 1 grain), 1 to discharge palm oil, 9 to discharge/load containers.
Mariupol	28-11-2005	Eight vessels in port operating, of which 7 loading (1 steel, 2 fire-clay, 1 coal, 1 sulphur, 1 wheat, 1 barley), 1 discharging steel; 4 vessels in roads, all to load, of which 1 steel, 1 fire-clay, 1 coal, 1 fire-clay/containers; 49 vessels due, of which 48 to load (24 steel, 11 coal, 6 fire-clay, 2 sulphur, 1 coke, 1 pig-iron, 1 equipment, 1 sunflower beans, 1 bran), 1 to discharge magnetite.
Odessa	28-11-2005	Fifteen vessels in port operating, of which 9 loading (5 metal, 1 corn, 1 wheat, 1 oil, 1 pig-iron), 3 discharging (1 bananas, 1 luggage, 1 citrus), 2 loading/discharging containers, 1 passenger vessel; 7 vessels in roads, of which 4 to load (2 metal, 2 ferro alloy), 1 to discharge meat, 2 to load/discharge containers; 64 vessels due, of which 32 to load (20 metal, 2 pig-iron, 4 corn, 1 ferro alloy, 2 wheat, 1 car equipment, 1 soya beans, 1 general cargo), 7 to discharge (3 wheat, 1 ore, 1 oil, 1 luggage, 1 general cargo), 25 to discharge/load containers.

Port Conditions

United States

Galveston, TX	29-11-2005	No new restriction in draft (normal 39 ft. 6 ins. BW max. channel draft reported – 40 ft. 0 ins. with ideal conditions). Channel open under normal traffic. ADM-Farmland terminal: 2-3 days delay expected.
Houston, TX	29-11-2005	Channel open under normal traffic. Normal 45 ft. 0 ins. FW max channel draft reported (up to Shell Terminal); 38 ft. 10 ins. FW max channel draft reported above Shell Terminal to 610 Ship Channel bride; Normal 36 ft. 0 ins. FW max channel draft reported above 610 Bridge to turning basis area. LDC Dreyfus terminal: no delays expected; Cargill terminal: 2-3 days delay expected.
Kalama, WA	29-11-2005	Kalama export terminal: 6 days delay expected; United Harvest terminal: 3 days delay expected.
New Orleans, LA	29-11-2005	Mississippi River terminal berthing delays: Cenex-Harstates/Myrtle Grove: 6-7 days delay expected. Cargill-Westwego: 2-4 days delay expected. ADM/Ama: 3-4 days delay expected. Bunge/Destrehan: 3 days delay expected. ADM/ Destrehan: 3-4 days delay expected. ADM/Reserve: 3-4 days delay expected. Cargill/Reserve: No delays expected. ADM/Paulina: 3-4 days delay expected. Zen-Noh/Convent: 2-3 days delay expected. Cargill/Baton Rouge: No delays expected. Mississippi River mid-stream buoys - estimated berthing delays based on new vessel presented as load-ready and weather permitting: Mile 121.5 ADM (Gemini) - Destrehan: 3 days delay expected; Mile 158.0 Myrtle Grove Midstream terminal: 1-2 days delay expected; Mile 180.0 Cooper (America) - Darrow: No delays expected.
Portland, OR	29-11-2005	Columbia Grain terminal: 2 days delay expected; CLD Irving terminal: no delays expected; CLD, O Dock terminals: 3 days delay expected.
Seattle, WA	29-11-2005	Louis Dreyfus (Pier 86) terminal: 2 days delay expected.
Tacoma, WA	29-11-2005	Temco terminal: 2 days delay expected.
Vancouver, WA	29-11-2005	United Harvest terminal: 3 days delay expected.

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