

## British IMO team rejects bulker double hull critics

**A** REBUTTAL of plans to block making post-2007 bulkers double skinned emerged yesterday as the British delegation to the International Maritime Organisation questioned criticisms levelled at the formal safety assessments that prompted the decision.

An extended debate over security ensured that the simmering bulker row would have to wait. However, Simon Milne, Maritime and Coastguard Agency head of shipping safety branch, told Lloyd's List that a Greek ministry of mercantile marine-fostered bid to reverse IMO thinking resulted from looking at things entirely from a shipowner's viewpoint.

"We, as regulators, have to take account of all stakeholders involved," he said. "If shipowners are imposing the risk they should pay for risk reduction."

Mr Milne said the two-year international consultative study leading up to the double skin rules,

changed under discussion at this week's Maritime Safety Committee, had been agreed all along the line.

Led by Britain, it had concluded that the move to double skins would reduce risk by 25%.

Mr Milne said the study delivered to IMO by Greece was not scientifically based.

### Structural

The authors had ignored 85% of bulker casualties related to structural failures over a 20-year period, he said, arguing that they would not have occurred if enhanced survey plans and structural changes had been made through amendments to Solas.

Mr Milne said: "Changes to Solas simply put back steelwork taken out in the rush to optimise ships in the 1990s."

He said the Greek study's risk ranking had also made some "arbitrary and pessimistic" assumptions about double side bulkers.

"Damage to external hull due to collision" had been given a score of 13, for example, equivalent to suggesting each ship was involved in a collision more than once a month.

It had idealised single hull construction, where in reality optimised construction meant misaligned frame intervals. It had also used the relatively benign South China Sea for wave environment analysis, which Mr Milne said was bound to undervalue the relative benefits of double hulls.

In comparing costs the Greek study had even taken account of the greater deadweight necessary to build a double skin ship, then added in the port dues of operating a larger ship.

Last night the Greek initiative appeared to be attracting qualified support, with sources suggesting Liberia would propose a formal review of the FSAs used for bulker rule development, effectively tying up debate at IMO for an unspecified period.

**Hugh O'Mahony**  
Lloyd's List Editorial

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

Vessel	Type	Flag	Class	GT	DWT	Bit	Casualty
<i>ABHIMAN</i>	tug	IND	—	457	127	1984	Reported May 3 to have been beached at Darukhana Shipbreakers Yard, Mumbai, to prevent sinking following heavy water ingress.
<i>ALGOISLE</i>	bulker	CAN	LR	18,127	27,199	1963	Towed to Sarnia North Slip Apr 29 by tug after engine trouble in southern Lake Huron. Reported May 1 under way for Thunder Bay.
<i>FUNDY LEADER</i>	fishing	CAN	—	138	—	2001	Sank while hauling catch in lat 43 08.30N, long 66 47.36W, May 1. Crew abandoned.
<i>ORIENT</i>	fishing	GBR	—	—	—	—	Reported in collision with mv <i>Supidana</i> in lat 52 44N, long 01 47E, May 3. Badly damaged above waterline. Escorted into Lowestoft by lifeboat.
<i>VIKINGO</i>	trawler	CHL	NV	1,110	994	1978	Had fire at Talcahuano Apr 29. Towed two miles offshore to prevent spread to other vessels. Extinguished after eight hours.

# CONTENTS

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

<b>Marine, including Overdue &amp; Missing Vessels</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Port State Control</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Seizures &amp; Arrests</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Pipeline Accidents</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Pollution</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Weather &amp; Navigation</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Earthquakes</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Volcanic Activity</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Political &amp; Civil Unrest</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Kidnappings</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Labour Disputes</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Awards &amp; Settlements</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Railway Accidents</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Computer Systems</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Fires &amp; Explosions</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Aviation</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Product Recalls</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Port Conditions</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Port Conditions charts</b>	<b>29</b>



The following reports are reprinted from Lloyd's List



## ABHIMAN (India)

Mumbai, May 3 — Tug *Abhiman* (457 gt, built 1984) has been beached at the Darukhana Shipbreakers' Yard to prevent it from sinking after heavy water ingress. Vessel has not been sold to breakers but it beached at the yard solely to prevent it going under. — Lloyd's Agents.

## AGIOS NIKOLAOS (Greece)

Piraeus, Apr 30 — General cargo *Agios Nikolaos* remains in Eleusis port under repair, ETD unknown. — Lloyd's Agents.

## ALGOISLE (Canada)

Troy, Michigan, Apr 30 — Bulk *Algoisle* (18127 gt, built 1963) was towed to Sarnia's North Slip Thursday afternoon (Apr 29) by the tug *Menasha*, after experiencing engine trouble in southern Lake Huron. It is unknown how long repairs will take. — Great Lakes & Seaway Shipping.

Troy, Michigan, May 3 — Bulk *Algoisle* passed under the Blue Water Bridges, bound for Thunder Bay, on May 1. The trip was twice delayed by mechanical trouble, the vessel was due to arrive at Mission Terminal this afternoon. — Great Lakes & Seaway Shipping.

## ALGOPORT (Canada)

London, May 4 — Following received from Halifax RCC, timed 1426, UTC: Bulk *Algoport* (20222 gt, built 1979) grounded in St. George's Bay, in lat 48 31N, long 59 00W, at 0343, UTC, May 4. The vessel refloated with no damage at 0401, UTC, and proceeded to anchorage at Lower Cove, St. George's Bay.

## ALYSSA M.II (U.K.)

Wellington, May 5 — Understand yacht *Alyssa M.II* has been advertised for sale "as is, where is" and is awaiting offers. It is still lying at Nelson. — Lloyd's Agents.

Wellington, May 6 — A local press report, dated today, states: A partly completed luxury cruise ship in Nelson recently damaged by fire has been put on the market. Yacht *Alyssa M.II*, the former British navy ship *HMS Bulldog* could sell for as little as NZ\$1 million, after costing millions of dollars to refit. The ship's Hong Kong-based owner, Wing-cheung (Tony) Fung, pulled the plug on the refit last month after the fire. Mr Fung's representative, Neil Wilton, said on Tuesday (May 4) he was contacting yacht brokers around the world to see if they had any likely buyers for the 58 metre ship. He said a sale price had not yet been determined, but he believed about \$1million was realistic. It would depend on whether the owner wanted to try and recoup more of his costs, he said. He said a previous estimate of the refit's cost, at about \$15 million, was incorrect but he declined to say what the correct figure was. Mr Wilton said that despite the damage

caused by the fire, the ship's refit was at an ideal stage for a new owner to take over. The guest accommodation had been gutted by the fire, so the new owner could start afresh and develop it how they wanted, he said. The crew accommodation, which was about 70 percent completed, was undamaged and there was only a little bit of structural damage, he said. He said expedition-style ships such as this one were the "latest craze" in the luxury yacht world, but the market for it would be relatively limited because of the cost of finishing it off. He estimated it would cost roughly \$10 million to complete to a seven-star charter boat standard, and \$2 million to \$3 million to complete as a "rough and ready" private boat. "There's not many people in New Zealand who could afford it," he said. About 60 contractors were working on the refit when the fire struck. Work started on it at the beginning of 2002. Mr Wilton said he and two other workers were now tying up the project's loose ends, such as the payment of suppliers and contractors. — Lloyd's Agents.

## AMBER K. (Panama)

New York, May 3 — Bulk *Amber K.* sailed from New York on May 1 bound for Venezuela. — Lloyd's Agents.

## ANGELIA P. (Greece)

Singapore, May 3 — General cargo *Angelia P.* is still in port at Singapore. — Lloyd's Agents.

## AURA (Cambodia)

Bucharest, Apr 30 — General cargo *Aura* sailed by her own means to Tulcea on Apr 29. At present the vessel is afloat at Tulcea where the welding of doublers to the holes in the double bottom centre tank is underway. The vessel is expected to sail for Turkey today. — Lloyd's Agents.

Bucharest, May 3 — General cargo *Aura* is still at Tulcea. Repairs have not yet been completed. — Lloyd's Agents.

## BARGE CAPSIZED ON LAKE TRAVIS, AUSTIN, TEXAS, UNITED STATES

London, May 3 — A press report, dated May 2, states: A party barge carrying dozens of people flipped over on Lake Travis in Texas today, injuring two of the 57 people on board, police said. Officials said all 57 were accounted for. One person injured his back and another was flown by helicopter to a hospital. The Austin American-Statesman reported that the barge overturned just off the shore of Lake Travis, at Hippie Hollow, during the semiannual Splash Day event. No other details were immediately available.

## BB 1138 (Bangladesh)

Chittagong, May 3 — Chittagong port Radio Control advise that due to rough sea and strong current general cargo *BB 1138* reportedly had developed leakage in its engine-room, as a result water gradually entered into the vessel at 1044 on Apr 17, as per VHF log book. As per the radar of general cargo *Banglar Robi*, *BB1138* was located in lat 22 16.2N, long

91 45.7E, bearing 320 deg and distance 3.5 nautical miles from Patenga lighthouse. At the time of sinking the crew were rescued by Navy Coast Guard. Also spoke with the BIWTC, who is the owner of the above vessel who informed that M/s. Shiruba Birds have chartered the vessel from them. Presently the vessel is lying at outer anchorage and they are in a process to salvage the vessel. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### **BBC PERU (Antigua & Barbuda)**

Troy, Michigan, May 3 — The J.W. Wescott Co. in Detroit was called on last week to carry a pilot and surveyor out to general cargo *BBC Peru* anchored in western Lake Erie. *BBC Peru* had sustained a rudder problem when entering the Detroit River and returned to the anchorage for repairs. Crews on board worked for four days to make temporary repairs to the "Becker" type rudder. Repairs were completed and ready for inspection on Apr 27. The repairs were approved and *BBC Peru* departed upbound for the Soo the following morning with a tug escort for the rivers. — Great Lakes & Seaway News.

#### **BELL KOREA (South Korea)**

Busan, May 4 — It was reported that at about 0930, local time, May 4, while general cargo *Bell Korea* (4250 gt, built 1984), laden with about 5,000 tons of steel was lying afloat anchored at Northern harbour anchorage, Busan, a fire broke out in the bosun store. As soon as the fire was discovered three fire station craft and one police craft attended and at about 1030, the same day, the fire was completely under control. It was reported that there was welding repairs being carried out at the bow area at the time which is suspected to be the cause of the fire. *Bell Korea* reportedly sustained minor damage but the exact extent is unknown at this time. — Lloyd's Sub-agents.

#### **CAPE AFRICA (Taiwan)**

London, Apr 30 — A press report, dated Apr 29, states: Bulk *Cape Africa* is being held 150 nautical miles off the Cape coast pending a decision on her future, the SA Maritime Safety Authority (Samsa) said today. Bill Dernier, Samsa's operations manager, said a team from salvors Smit Marine visited the ship by helicopter this afternoon and inspected it. Salvors, Samsa and representatives of the vessel's insurers met in Cape Town when the team returned. "They have now gone away to consider their options," Dernier said. A decision would be taken "hopefully tomorrow", he said. There had been no further damage to the vessel, and the tug was holding it in position.

London, Apr 30 — A press report, dated today, states: Attempts are to be made to save bulk *Cape Africa*, but the stricken vessel has been towed further out to sea where repairs can take place without threatening the Cape coast. Expert salvors assessed the damage yesterday afternoon while salvage tug *Smit Amandla* stood by. The crew of *Cape Africa*, 11 Taiwanese and seven Filipinos, have all arrived safely in Cape

Town. The ship currently holds 1,909 tons of bunker fuel that environmentalists warn is enormously difficult to remove from the sea. Smit Marine was appointed as salvors last night, said James Mackenzie, the owners' lawyer. "They will now take over the salvage operation, the aim is to save the vessel," he said. "Smit Marine is planning to remove the oil from the vessel and is looking at repair alternatives out at sea where there is no threat to the environment." The condition of the vessel has not changed since yesterday although its hull sank deeper earlier this week. Last night it was 160 nautical miles from the shore. The intended rendezvous point was 120 nautical miles away. "There was no need to come closer. The further off from the coast, the better," said Captain Bill Dernier of the South African Maritime Safety Authority. "It's favourable to look to salvage. They're considering the options of salvaging the ship, it remains stable now."

London, Apr 30 — Following received from Cape Town MRCC, timed 0850, UTC: Bulk *Cape Africa*: Lloyd's Standard Form salvage contract has been signed with Smit Marine. Salvage tug *Smit Amandla* remains on scene.

London, May 3 — Following received from Cape Town MRCC, timed 0803, UTC: Bulk *Cape Africa* is presently lying 150 miles off Cape Town. Salvage tug *Smit Amandla* is standing by the vessel and has a towline connected. No decision has yet been taken by the vessel's owners regarding further action.

London, May 3 — Following received from SMIT Salvage Ltd, dated today: The condition of bulk *Cape Africa*, currently under tow by salvage tug *Smit Amandla* approximately 160 miles west of Cape Town, is reported to be stable as preparations for the transfer of 1900 tonnes of the vessel's bunker fuel continue. SMIT Salvage Ltd intends to transfer the fuel to a receiving vessel in the first phase of the salvage operation, which is contingent on *Cape Africa*'s condition remaining stable and the absence of adverse weather and swell conditions — all of which is being closely monitored. A salvage team, including a naval architect, was flown to the casualty yesterday to conduct structural and stability surveys, the outcome of which will be used to determine optimally safe working conditions for salvage personnel during the fuel transfer operation. The Department of Environmental Affairs & Tourism's Antarctic research/supply *S.A. Agulhas* has been chartered by SMIT Salvage Ltd for use as a logistics base at the scene during the operation for both salvage personnel and equipment and is able to support helicopter operations. The bunker fuel pumped from *Cape Africa* will be transferred to *S.A. Agulhas*' fuel tanks for temporary storage. *S.A. Agulhas* is en route to Cape Town from Marion Island and is expected to arrive on Wednesday (May 5), at which time the necessary equipment will be loaded on board. It is anticipated that the vessel will be on the scene by the end of the week. *Smit Amandla* remains connected up to *Cape Africa*. The Department of

Environmental Affairs & Tourism's oil pollution control vessel *Kuswag IV* remains on the scene. The South African Maritime Safety Authority has ordered that *Cape Africa* remain at least 120 miles off of Cape Town until such time as all bunker fuel has been transferred. The Master and crew were airlifted off the vessel on Apr 28 as a precautionary measure after reporting extensive structural damage in hold No 3.

London, May 4 — A press report, dated May 3, states: Bulk *Cape Africa* has a hole in the port side that is more than twice the size it was at first thought. This became clear after surveyors undertook an inspection of the ship at the weekend, which revealed the hole in the port side of the vessel is actually 23m long by 7.2m wide.

London, May 4 — A press report, dated today, states: Salvage experts are hoping that stricken bulk *Cape Africa*, currently lying 200 kms west of Hout Bay, will remain afloat long enough for them to pump out the 1900 tons of heavy fuel oil the ship is carrying. "I'm surprised it's lasted this long," South African Maritime Safety Authority (Samsa) head Bill Dernier told journalists at a media briefing, held at the offices of salvors Smit Salvage Ltd in Cape Town today. The vessel, which is carrying a cargo of just under 150 000 tons of iron ore, has a tear 23 metres long and between five and seven metres high in its hull. The cause of the tear, first noticed by the ship's crew last week, is not known. Smit Salvage head Dave Main said the Antarctic supply vessel *S.A. Agulhas* would be used as a salvage base to pump the oil out of two tanks in the *Cape Africa*'s stern into *S.A. Agulhas*' own fuel tanks. *S.A. Agulhas* is expected to rendezvous with *Cape Africa*, which has been instructed by Samsa to remain at least 120 sea miles off the South African coast, by the end of the week. However, a big fear is some of *Cape Africa*'s bulkheads will collapse. "If the bulkheads collapse, it'll go down quickly; should it go down, it'll break up dramatically, and oil will come up," Main said. The currents would move any oil from such a disaster in a north-westerly direction, and the slick should prove "no risk to the Cape coast". Main said pumping all the fuel oil out of *Cape Africa* would take three days, weather permitting. "Getting fuel off at sea is no easy task," he warned. Cold fronts are forecast for the area. "Cold fronts are marching in, but they are not severe, and the swells will be about three-and-a-half metres. The weather at the moment is quite good," Main said. Speaking to Sapa after the briefing, the department of environmental affairs' acting director for integrated coastal management, Dr Niel Malan, said the chances of pollution to the South African coast were "really remote". "The only concern is if - in the event of a spill - the oil is picked up by the in-shore shelf current, which extends out to the 500-metre depth line." However, the currents around *Cape Africa*'s position, there is 4,000 metres of water under its hull, were most likely to move any such spill in a north-westerly direction at a rate of about 10 km a day. Malan said his department

was happy with the way Samsa was handling the problem. Main said the vessel's owners were paying for the salvage. *Cape Africa's* cargo was valued at US\$2.8-million. Daily press statements would be issued by the salvors from tomorrow.

London, May 4 — A press report, dated today, states: The removal of fuel from damaged bulk *Cape Africa*, under tow from the west coast to Cape Town, could begin this weekend, say marine authorities. Last week, *Cape Africa* issued a distress call following the discovery of a hole in its hull. The environmental affairs and tourism department said that because of the size of the hole, the vessel could either sink or break up. The bulk carrier on its way from Brazil to Japan had a load of iron ore. However, according to the department, the primary environmental concern throughout the rescuing process has been the 1800 tons of bunker fuel oil on board the vessel. The South African Maritime Safety Authority has determined that the bunker fuel be removed from *Cape Africa* before it is allowed to approach the coast for repairs. The authority said the vessel should be towed 222 km west of Cape Town for inspection. It could not be towed any closer because of spillage fears, it said. Department spokeswoman Carol Moses said "ship-to-ship fuel transfer" would begin later this week. The authority's spokesman, Bill Dernier, said removing the fuel from *Cape Africa* was the priority at the moment. Moses said: "If this oil was to be leaked in any major quantity into the surrounding environment, a significant environmental impact could be expected in the event of onshore winds and currents driving the oil slick closer to the South African shoreline." She said the department had deployed anti-pollution patrol vessel *Kuswag IV*, to be on stand-by in the event of an oil spill.

Cape Town, May 5 — Following press release received from the South African Maritime Safety Authority: The condition of holed bulk *Cape Africa*, currently under tow by salvage tug *Smit Amandla* approximately 160 miles west of Cape Town, is reported to be stable as preparations for the transfer of 1,900 tonnes of her bunker fuel continue. SMIT Salvage Ltd intends to transfer the fuel to a receiving vessel in the first phase of the salvage operation, which is contingent on the bulk carrier's condition remaining stable and the absence of adverse weather and swell conditions, all of which is being closely monitored. Of paramount importance in this salvage operation is the safety of salvage personnel and the protection of the marine environment. A salvage team, including a naval architect, was flown to the casualty on Sunday (May 2) to conduct structural and stability surveys, the outcome of which will be used to determine optimally safe working conditions for salvage personnel during the fuel transfer operation. The Department of Environmental Affairs & Tourism's Antarctic supply vessel *S.A. Agulhas* has been chartered by SMIT Salvage Ltd for utilisation as a logistics base at the scene during the

operation for both salvage personnel and equipment and is able to support helicopter operations. The bunker fuel pumped from *Cape Africa* will be transferred to *S.A. Agulhas'* fuel tanks for temporary storage. *S.A. Agulhas* is en route to Cape Town from Marion Island and is expected to arrive today, at which time the necessary equipment will be loaded onto it. It is anticipated that it will be on the scene by the end of the week. *Smit Amandla* remains connected up to *Cape Africa*. The Department of Environmental Affairs & Tourism's oil pollution abatement vessel *Kuswag IV* remains on the scene. The South African Maritime Safety Authority has ordered that the vessel remain at least 120 miles off of Cape Town until such time as all bunker fuel has been transferred. The master and crew were flown off the casualty on Wednesday, Apr 28 as a precautionary measure after reporting extensive structural damage in hold No. 3 earlier. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, May 5 — A press report, timed 2320, May 4, states: Russian salvage tug *Nikolay Chiker* was making ready this evening to head out to stricken bulk *Cape Africa*, which is currently lying 200 kms west of Hout Bay with a huge tear in its hull. A source in Cape Town harbour who declined to be named said *Nikolay Chiker* was discharging 1,000 tons of bunkers - presumably to make space to take fuel off *Cape Africa*. At a media briefing earlier today the salvors Smit Salvage Ltd said they were planning to use the Antarctic supply vessel *S.A. Agulhas* to remove 1,900 tons of heavy fuel oil from the carrier, which is in imminent danger of sinking. However *S.A. Agulhas* will not be able to reach *Cape Africa* before the end of this week and there are a series of cold fronts set to hit the area from Thursday. It is understood that *Nikolay Chiker* will be ready to sail at about 1100 tomorrow and could reach *Cape Africa* within six hours. The currents around *Cape Africa's* position were most likely to move any oil spill in a north-westerly direction at a rate of about 10km a day.

Rotterdam, May 5 — Bulk *Cape Africa*: Salvage tug *Nikolay Chiker* is under contract to SMIT Salvage. — SMIT Salvage BV.

Rotterdam, May 5 — Joint Operations Committee reports: An additional salvage tug has been taken on hire by SMIT Salvage Ltd in order to begin the bulk *Cape Africa* fuel transfer operation as soon as is possible; with *S.A. Agulhas'* estimated time of arrival in Cape Town now tomorrow evening. During the course of the day today, salvage tug *Nikolay Chiker* will be discharging some of its own bunker fuel in preparation for receiving approximately 1,000 tonnes of bunker fuel pumped off *Cape Africa* and will load required fuel transfer equipment during the night. It is expected to depart from Cape Town in the early hours of tomorrow to rendezvous with *Cape Africa* and salvage tug *Smit Amandla*, approximately 160 miles west of Cape Town. Weather permitting, the salvage team hope to begin transferring fuel from *Cape Africa* during the course of the day on Friday. Upon the *S.A. Agulhas*

return to Cape Town, it will be prepared for its role in the fuel removal operation and will proceed to the scene as soon as is possible over the course of the weekend. Salvage personnel flew out to the casualty yesterday in order to conduct additional surveys regarding the vessel's condition and during the course of the night last night, equipment required for an underwater ROV (Remotely Operated Vehicle) survey departed Cape Town on a supply vessel. Members of the salvage team will be flown out to the casualty later today in order to conduct an underwater survey of the vessel as and when the weather and swell condition allows. The condition of *Cape Africa*, currently under tow by salvage tug *Smit Amandla*, is reported to be stable. The transfer of the fuel to a receiving vessel is the first phase of the salvage operation, which is contingent on the bulk carrier's condition remaining stable and the absence of adverse weather and swell conditions - all of which is being closely monitored. The Department of Environmental Affairs & Tourism's oil pollution abatement vessel *Kuswag IV* remains on the scene. — SMIT Salvage BV.

Rotterdam, May 5 — An additional salvage tug has been taken on hire by SMIT Salvage Ltd in order to begin the fuel transfer operation from bulk *Cape Africa* as soon as is possible. Research/supply *S.A. Agulhas* is due to arrive Cape Town tomorrow evening. During the course of today, tug *Nikolay Chiker* will be discharging some of its own bunker fuel in preparation for receiving approximately 1,000 tonnes of bunker fuel pumped off *Cape Africa* and will load the required fuel transfer equipment during the night. The tug is expected to depart from Cape Town in the early hours of tomorrow morning to rendezvous with *Cape Africa* and salvage tug *Smit Amandla*, approximately 160 miles west of Cape Town. Weather permitting, the salvage team hope to begin transferring fuel from *Cape Africa* on Friday (May 7). On *S.A. Agulhas'* return to Cape Town, the vessel will be prepared for its role in the fuel removal operation and will proceed to the scene as soon as is possible over the course of the weekend. Salvage personnel flew out to the casualty yesterday in order to conduct additional surveys of the vessel's condition and during the course of last night, equipment required for an underwater remotely-operated vehicle survey departed Cape Town on a supply vessel. Members of the salvage team will be flown out to the casualty later today in order to conduct an underwater survey of the vessel as and when the weather and swell condition allows. The condition of *Cape Africa*, currently under tow by *Smit Amandla*, is reported to be stable. The transfer of the fuel to a receiving vessel is the first phase of the salvage operation, which is contingent on the vessel's condition remaining stable and the absence of adverse weather and swell conditions, all of which is being closely monitored. The Department of Environmental Affairs & Tourism's oil pollution abatement vessel *Kuswag IV* remains on scene. The South African Maritime Safety Authority has ordered

that *Cape Africa* remain at least 120 miles off of Cape Town until such time as all bunker fuel has been transferred.

London, May 6 — Following received from SMIT Salvage Ltd, dated today: Joint Operations Committee reports: An additional tug taken on hire by SMIT Salvage Ltd earlier this week to assist in the removal of fuel from bulk *Cape Africa* is due to leave Cape Town this afternoon to rendezvous with *Cape Africa* and salvage tug *Smit Amandla* at first light tomorrow, approximately 160 miles west of Cape Town. Salvage personnel worked through last night to ensure the timely mobilisation of transfer equipment, which was sourced both locally and internationally. Tug *Nikolay Chiker* will be able to receive approximately 1,000 tonnes of *Cape Africa's* bunker fuel during the fuel removal operation. Weather permitting, the salvage team hope to begin the fuel transfer operation during the course of tomorrow. Supply *S.A. Agulhas* is expected to return to Cape Town this evening and will be prepared for its role in the fuel removal operation, proceeding to the scene as soon as possible. The vessel will be able to take on the balance of the fuel from *Cape Africa*.

#### **CHRISTINE ANDERSON (U.S.A.)**

London, May 5 — A press report, dated May 4, states: Ferry *Christine Anderson*, out of commission since last month, will resume its normal runs between Steilacoom and Anderson and Ketron islands this week, Pierce County officials announced yesterday. The vessel will make its normal 0545 hrs departure from the Steilacoom dock tomorrow, according to Dick Ferguson, county spokesman. The vessel has been in dry dock for inspections and repairs since an engine failed on Apr 6.

#### **COASTAL SOUND (Republic of Ireland)**

Vigo, May 5 — General cargo *Coastal Sound* sailed from Vigo at 2000, local time, May 4. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### **CORNER BROOK (Bermuda)**

London, May 6 — General cargo *Corner Brook* arrived at Newport News on May 4.

#### **DOUG MCKEIL (Canada)**

Troy, Michigan, Apr 30 — Tug *Doug McKeil* (118 gt, built 1951), towing barge *Ocean Hauler* (4540 gt, built 1997), crashed into the Edison Dock on the US side of the St. Clair River near Marine City after leaving a Canadian dock and turning south early this morning, according to preliminary news media reports from the area. No injuries were sustained, and the vessels were not damaged. They continued on their way to Amherstburg, Ont. There was, however, some damage to the dock. High winds may have been to blame for the crash. Vessel traffic in the area was not affected. — Great Lakes & Seaway Shipping.

#### **EASTWIND (Greece)**

London, May 4 — Bulk *Eastwind*, Mobile for Piraeus, passed Gibraltar on Apr 30.

#### **EIJIN (Panama)**

Singapore, May 6 — Vehicle *Eijin* sailed from Singapore on May 4 bound for Suez. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### **EVERTON (Malta)**

London, May 4 — Smit Salvage managing director Hans van Rooij has praised the Omani authorities for their role in the successful salvage of the crude oil tanker *Everton*, including providing a place of refuge for repairs. Mr van Rooij said that the tanker salvage and pollution prevention operation "shows what can be accomplished through close co-operation between salvor, governments and national response agencies." The pollution prevention operation for *Everton* finished early last month, averting the threat of environmental catastrophe on the ecologically-sensitive Omani coastline. The vessel caught fire following a collision on Mar 22, while on a voyage from Kharg Island to the Egyptian port of Ain Sukhna. While 24 crew were picked up by a passing vessel, one crew member was not found in spite of an intensive search and rescue operation. According to Mr van Rooij, a constructive working relationship was established with the Omani authorities from the outset. "The government of Oman supported us when we requested a place of refuge for *Everton*. The conditions set for a safe haven were fair and reasonable." Smit worked alongside an Omani task force which included naval units and Coast Guard to complete temporary repairs to the vessel and the discharge of over 80,000 tonnes of oil. "Access to sheltered waters was an important factor in the successful outcome," Smit said. Shoreside response was swift, with the establishment of the task force led by superintendent general of pollution control Suleiman Mohammed Al-Busaidy, whose team succeeded in bringing the blaze under control. Mr van Rooij said he was impressed by the high level of response capability shown by the Omani authorities. "It was a good experience all round," he said, with a high level of co-ordination apparent "from the first." Pollution response equipment was in place very quickly. "The attitude towards our request for a safe haven was positive. Thanks to the Omani authorities, no time was wasted when our team arrived on scene."

#### **EXPRESS POSEIDON (Greece)**

London, May 5 — Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: At 1955, May 4, passenger ro/ro *Express Poseidon* (7819 gt, built 1973), which departed Santorini at 1900 hrs for Ios-Naxos-Paros-Piraeus with 155 passengers on board, sustained damage to the starboard main engine while sailing 1.5 nautical miles north of Santorini. At 2050 hrs she arrived at Santorini, where departure was prohibited pending inspection of the repairs and passengers were forwarded to their destinations on other vessels. At 2340 hrs she was permitted to sail for Piraeus without passengers in order to carry out repairs.

#### **FORTLAND (Antigua & Barbuda)**

Shoreham, Apr 30 — General cargo *Fortland* is still at the Fishersgate Terminal in Shoreham, undergoing repairs. — Lloyd's Sub-agents.

#### **FORTUNIA (Antigua & Barbuda)**

See "Drugs Seized on Antigua & Barbuda Flagged Vessel at Miami, Florida, United States" under "Miscellaneous."

#### **FOUR ETOILES (Italy)**

Trieste, May 3 — Bulk/oil *Four Etoiles* sailed Trieste May 1 for Istanbul, in tow of supply *Ievoli White*. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### **FRONTIER MARINER (U.S.A.)**

Seattle, May 4 — Fishing *Frontier Mariner* reportedly completed repairs in Seattle Apr 21. Vessel is currently in Seattle preparing for next fishing season. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### **FUNDY LEADER (Canada)**

London, May 4 — Fishing *Fundy Leader* (138 gt, built 2001) reported to have sunk while hauling its catch in lat 43 08.30N, long 66 47.36W at 0023, UTC, May 1. The three persons on board successfully abandoned into a liferaft, and were picked up a short time later by fishing *Scotia Mariner*.

#### **GEMINI S. (Panama)**

Alexandria, Apr 30 — Bulk *Gemini S.* arrived at El Dekheila on Apr 24 from Gibraltar. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### **GENESIS (U.K.)**

London, May 1 — Following received from Coastguard Aberdeen MRSC, timed 0031, BST: Trawler *Genesis* (362 gt, built 1993) reported taking water in lat 59 14N, long 06 40W, 48 nautical miles north-north-west of Butt of Lewis. Co-ordination passed from MRSC Stornoway to MRSC Aberdeen at 0502, UTC, Apr 29. Coastguard pump placed onboard and vessel made for Fraserburgh, where arrived safely at 2255, UTC, Apr 30.

#### **GREAT MOON (South Korea)**

Port Said, May 3 — Bulk *Great Moon* (75905 gt, built 1984) grounded at HMT 70, Port Said eastern channel, at 1845, May 1, while clearing the Suez Canal with the northbound convoy. The vessel was refloated at 0840, May 3, by Suez Canal Authority tugs *Bassel*, *Baraka I* and *Fahd*, and towed to the outer harbour. — Lloyd's Agents. (Note — *Great Moon* sailed Singapore Apr 13 for Gijon.)

Port Said, May 3 — Bulk *Great Moon* completed repairs and sailed at 1200, May 3. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### **HAMNAVOE (United Kingdom)**

Kirkwall, Apr 30 — Passenger ro/ro *Hamnavoe* has not been taken out of service. Some fissures have been reported by the local press but the vessel continues to operate her normal schedule. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### **HARMONIC PROGRESS (Panama)**

Brisbane, Apr 30 — Bulk *Harmonic Progress* reported to have sustained

flooding whilst in transit, and proceeding to Gladstone for repairs. Vessel was proceeding from Korea to Hay Point, Australia. While in the vicinity of the outer Great Barrier Reef, vessel sustained some failure of ballast main, which caused ingress of water to engine-room. Subsequent events would appear to have resulted in the vessel being towed to Gladstone for repairs. It is confirmed that the vessel has sustained a leak from the ballast main adjacent to the suction side of No.1 main ballast pump, on the forward starboard side of the engine-room. Water is reported to have entered the engine-room bilge via this broken ballast line. Reported to have been found on the morning of Apr 16. Advised that the main engine was stopped and temporary repairs to stop leak attempted. Further advised, but unconfirmed, that the main engine lubricating oil pumps would not start and therefore main engine could not be restarted on the afternoon of Apr 16. It is understood that the master then called for tug assistance and the vessel taken in tow on the afternoon of Apr 17 and proceeded to Gladstone under tow. Towage was undertaken by United Salvage, under LOF 2000. The vessel arrived in Gladstone on Apr 22. Some repairs have been undertaken to the ballast line and to the lubricating oil pump motors and it is reported that the vessel is to proceed, under own power, to drydock in Brisbane as soon as possible. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### **HAVSEL (Norway)**

London, May 4 — A press report, dated today, states: Norwegian seal-hunting vessel *Havsel* (300 gt, built 1980) that sprang a leak in icy Arctic waters Sunday (May 2) was slowly making its way to Iceland yesterday. Crew members managed to patch the leak and save the vessel from sinking. *Havsel* was sailing between Jan Mayen and Greenland early Sunday when it was pierced by an ice floe. The ice cut a hole in the starboard side of the vessel, below the water line. With a storm raging outside, icy water started pouring into the vessel's engine-room. The vessel's 13 crew members started the pumps to bail out water and then worked feverishly to patch the hole to keep the vessel afloat. Bjørne Kvernmo, who was making his first voyage as the vessel's new master and owner, admitted to some tense moments but claimed the crew remained calm. He said no one is hurt. The crew is experienced and repaired our way out of the problem." The bailing and patching process took all day, but Kvernmo eventually decided it was safe to set a course for Iceland for more permanent repairs. Kvernmo declined an offer of assistance from the Danish frigate *Vedderen*, which had offered to sail to the area where the seal hunting vessel was in distress. No other vessels were in the area, and an official at Norway's main search and rescue operation said the problem "couldn't have occurred in a more desolate area." *Havsel* started sailing for Reykjavik Sunday evening and was expected to arrive last night.

London, May 4 — Following received from Bodo RCC, timed 0745, UTC: Seal-

hunting vessel *Havsel* is now proceeding to Akureyri where ETA 0900, UTC, today.

London, May 4 — Following received from Bodo RCC, timed 1258, UTC: Fishing *Havsel* arrived Akureyri at 1000, UTC, today.

#### **HOPE 1 (Panama)**

See "Romania" under "Port State Control."

#### **IONIAN STAR (Greece)**

See *Proteus*.

#### **JOHN J.BOLAND (U.S.A.)**

London, May 5 — Bulk *John J.Boland* arrived Calcite 2343, Apr 29.

#### **KOUTALIANOS (Cyprus)**

Rotterdam, May 5 — SMIT Salvage are contracted to render their services to grounded bulk *Koutalianos* (90707 gt, built 1987) off El Dekheila, Egypt. A team was flown out last night and is currently establishing the condition of the vessel in order to prepare the refloating plan. — SMIT Salvage BV. (Note — *Koutalianos* was last reported to have arrived El Dekheila Apr 28.)

#### **KRITI AMETHYST (Greece)**

London, Apr 30 — Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 0855, UTC: Chemical/oil carrier *Kriti Amethyst* was last reported in lat 11 38N, long 65 40W, at 2100, UTC, Apr 29. It is expected to arrive at Curacao at 1200, Netherlands Antilles local time, today.

London, Apr 30 — Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 1834, UTC: Chemical/oil carrier *Kriti Amethyst* is still under tow to Curacao, ETA 1200, UTC, May 1.

London, May 4 — Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 0917, UTC: Chemical/oil carrier *Kriti Amethyst* is now alongside at Willemstad.

#### **LT PEACE (Panama)**

Manila, May 5 — The Philippine Coast Guard in a report dated May 3 said that c.c. *LT Peace* was still stranded off the coast of Mariveles in Bataan province. The report which gave few details said that efforts to tow the vessel to Manila were unsuccessful because of its heavy load. Salvage tugs *Sikatuna* and *Limay*, both owned by Manila-based Malayan Towage and Salvage Corp. were assisting the vessel. Efforts have shifted to unloading cargo of *LT Peace*, the Coast Guard said in its latest report. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Manila, May 6 — C.c. *LT Peace* arrived safely at Kaoshiung 1900, May 5 according to Evergreen Marine spokesperson Daphne Tsai. The vessel had run aground off the coast of Mariveles town in Bataan province, on Apr 25. The vessel was refloated on May 3 with the assistance of two salvage tugs of Manila-based Malayan Towage and Salvage Corp. Part of its container load was transferred to two Malayan Towage barges and brought to the Manila International Container Terminal, officials of Malayan Towage said. After unloading, Malayan Towage conducted an underwater inspection which revealed a fractured shell plating. The

damage, however, did not penetrate the cargo hold and class surveyors allowed the vessel to sail unescorted. *LT Peace* left Mariveles noon, May 4, for its final destination of Kaoshiung, Malayan Towage officials said. The ship did not call at the Port of Manila contrary to earlier Philippine Coast Guard reports. After discharge of its remaining cargo, *LT Peace* will be dry docked at China Shipbuilding Company's Kaoshiung shipyard. Initial inspection by Evergreen Marine found damage of about four metres in length at the bulbous bow and forepeak bottom which will need to be permanently repaired. "Other underwater parts are apparently okay but to be further examined and repaired if necessary," Ms. Tsai said. The drydocking is expected to take about 10 days. "Actually the repairing of said damage will not cause extra delay since its original drydocking at May 25 had been scheduled before the accident," she noted. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

#### **MAK (Italy)**

Varna, Apr 30 — Pontoon *Mak* is now back in normal service. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### **MANAFOSS (Liberia)**

Reykjavik, May 6 — General cargo *Manafoss* left dry dock at 0500 today for sea trials, which were satisfactorily completed. The vessel is now proceeding to Reykjavik and is expected to resume its normal schedule at 2200, May 7. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### **MILLER FREEMAN (U.S.A.)**

Seattle, May 5 — Oceanographic research *Miller Freeman* is reportedly scheduled to arrive at Alaska Ship & Drydock, Ketchikan, Alaska, for repairs on May 7. According to the shipyard, the vessel will be in drydock from May 8 to 16. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### **MISS SARAH (U.S.A.)**

London, Apr 30 — A press report, dated Apr 28, states: The owner of fishing *Miss Sarah* believes sparks from repair work may be to blame for a fire that caused up to a million dollars in damage to the commercial fishing vessel. Lloyd Whaley said that his crews had been cutting some steel deck to replace flooring earlier in the day, while *Miss Sarah* was tied up at the Hallmark Fisheries dock. The only crewman on board at the time of the fire escaped without injury, Whaley said, and no other boats or the dock were damaged. "We've got the insurance adjuster coming down and everything," Whaley said. *Miss Sarah* had just returned from fishing off Kodiak Island, he said. "We were getting ready to go hake fishing." The fire damage comes just a year after the boat was damaged by a wave in Alaskan waters, causing about \$350,000 in damage. The boat's replacement value, Whaley said, is about \$3 million. He has owned the *Miss Sarah* for 17 years.

London, May 4 — A press report, dated May 1, states: Fishing *Miss Sarah* was gutted by flames Wednesday (Apr 28) after maintenance work sparked a fire deep inside the hull while it was docked at Brookings Harbour. No one was

injured in the fire, which took 18 firefighters almost three hours to put out, said Harbour Fire Department Chief Frank Kelley. On Thursday, Lloyd Whaley, who owns the boat along with his son Todd, said workers had been preparing to haul the boat out of the water and put it in the shipyard for maintenance. Just before the fire started a worker was using grinders underneath portions of the steel flooring in order to remove water that had accumulated inside the boat. Whaley said the \$3 million boat sustained close to \$1 million in damages, which will take about eight months to repair.

#### **MORJAN K. (Syria)**

See "Greece" under "Pollution."

#### **OCEAN HAULER (Canada)**

See *Doug McKeil*.

#### **ORIENT (U.K.)**

See *Supidana*.

#### **PANAGIA TINOU (Greece)**

London, Apr 30 — Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: Passenger ro/ro *Panagia Tinou* was today permitted by Syros Port Authority to continue its normal schedule after repairs to the damage and inspection by the marine inspectorate.

#### **PASSATWIND (Antigua & Barbuda)**

Gothenburg, May 3 — The first attempt to refloat general cargo *Passatwind* using one tug was unsuccessful, as the towline broke. A total of 44 cubic metres of bunker oil was discharged to a Coast Guard unit and brought ashore. A total of 500 tons of the vessel's cargo of steel coils was discharged onto a barge in order to lighten the vessel. The vessel was subsequently able to refloat at about 2230, Apr 29, without assistance and proceeded under its own power to Holmsund, where the remaining cargo was discharged. The bunker oil was reloaded on board during the weekend (May 1-2). Following a diver's inspection, which revealed no holes or serious damage, the vessel's Classification Society cleared it to proceed unassisted to Poland for drydocking. A bank guarantee remains to be cleared today, but the vessel is due to depart later today, once this is resolved. — Westax Marine Services AB.

#### **PETE (U.S.A.)**

See "Portland Harbour, Maine, United States" under "Pollution."

#### **POLARENG (Norway)**

Trondheim, May 4 — General cargo *Polareng* arrived Kvernhusvik Shipyard, Hitra, Apr 18 for permanent repairs. Repairs were completed and vessel sailed 1530, May 3 for northern Norway. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### **POSEIDON (DIS)**

London, May 5 — Following received from Etel MRCC, timed 0941, UTC: General cargo *Poseidon* (1083 gt, built 1970) arrived Bordeaux May 1 for repairs to gearbox problems experienced Apr 30 after departure from Le Verdon.

#### **PRESTIGE (Bahamas)**

London, May 4 — A press report, dated today, states: Robots will start boring holes in sunken crude oil tanker *Prestige* this week in a pioneering effort to recover more than 13,000 tonnes of fuel oil trapped in the vessel's wreckage, nearly 4 km under water, officials said yesterday. The tanker ruptured and sank during a storm off the north-west Galicia region on Nov 19, 2002, spilling most of its 77,000 tonnes of thick fuel oil onto the beaches of northern Spain and south-western France. Lucia Perez, spokeswoman for the government commission handling the tanker disaster, said once the holes are drilled into the hull of the tanker, the extraction will begin next month, weather permitting. Since oil is lighter than water, Perez said, the 13,700 tonnes of oil remaining, mainly in the bow, will ooze out of the wreckage and flow upward into the funnel-like bottoms of huge, specially designed aluminum cylinders above the hull. The cylinders will then seal shut and be hoisted close to the ocean surface so the oil can be pumped onto barges. Then the cylinders will be taken back down to swallow more oil. The oil that remains in the stern will be treated with bacterial agents to help the ocean degrade it. Spanish oil company Repsol-YPF developed the extraction technique. The project is estimated to cost 99.3 million euro (\$165 million) and expected take months. Undersea extraction of oil is not new, but working at these depths is.

#### **PRIDE OF AMERICA (U.S.A.)**

Bremen, Apr 30 — Passenger *Pride of America* remains in port at Bremerhaven. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### **PROTEUS (Greece)**

London, May 5 — Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: Ro/ro *Proteus* (998 gt, built 1973) while making manoeuvres to berth at Killini, was in contact with ro/ro *Ionian Star* (4225 gt, built 1984) which was already moored stern fast at the quay, afternoon, May 4. Due to the collision *Proteus* sustained damage to the starboard side forward hand rails and has been prohibited to depart pending inspection.

#### **RAMITA NAREE (Thailand)**

St. Vincent, CVI, May 4 — Bulk *Ramita Naree* was refloated at around 1630, local time, May 1, with assistance from tug *Pacific Brigand*. *Ramita Navee* is presently anchored safely at Porto Grande and waiting to proceed with some repairs. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### **RESOLUTION (Bahamas)**

London, May 5 — C.c. *Resolution* arrived Hong Kong 0247, May 4, from Haiphong.

#### **ROCKNES (Antigua & Barbuda)**

London, May 6 — A press report, dated May 5, states: Bulk *Rocknes* is to be repaired.

#### **SAMOS FLYING DOLPHIN III (Greece)**

London, May 3 — Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report:

Hydrofoil *Samos Flying Dolphin III* (142 gt, built 1980), with 20 passengers on board, sustained engine damage four nautical miles outside Piraeus during the morning of May 3. It returned to Piraeus, where departure was prohibited pending inspection of the repairs and the passengers were forwarded to their destinations on other vessels.

#### **SAND HARRIER (U.K.)**

Falmouth, May 5 — Sand suction dredger *Sand Harrier* arrived at Falmouth on Apr 10 in tow of tug *Hallgarth*. Understand that the vessel had grounded at Poole, lost its rudder and sustained damage to the propeller blades. The vessel is still in No. 3 Drydock at Falmouth and it is not certain when the repairs will be completed. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### **SMIT-LLOYD 32**

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

London, May 5 — Understood anchor handling tug/supply *Smit-Lloyd 32* (1089 gt, built 1983) is currently at Douala with damage to its engine-room and accommodation, caused by a fire in the engine-room.

#### **SPIRIT OF TASMANIA III (Australia)**

London, May 4 — A press report, dated May 3, states: Passenger ro/ro *Spirit of Tasmania III* (23663 gt, built 1995) has arrived at Devonport, after being delayed on its journey from Sydney by rough weather. The vessel docked soon after 1900, AEST. It encountered the bad weather entering Bass Strait last night, and an upper vehicle door was damaged. Repairs will be carried out at Devonport, the vessel will not return to Sydney until Thursday (May 6). The TT Line has been making alternative arrangements for passengers.

#### **STRANDEBARM (Norway)**

London, Apr 30 — Information received from Sandnes, dated today, states: At 0900, local time, ro/ro *Strandebarm* (743 gt, built 1971), Langevaag for Buavaag, had engine breakdown. Weather was good in the area and another vessel from same company, which was in the area, towed her back to Langevaag for inspections and repairs. No injuries to the 31 passengers or crew of four.

#### **SUPIDANA (DIS)**

London, May 3 — Following received from Coastguard Yarmouth MRCC, timed 0838, UTC: Mayday received from fishing *Orient* at 0516, UTC, May 3, reporting that the vessel had been in collision with general cargo *Supidana* (1109 gt, built 1969) three nautical miles east of Winterton Lighthouse, in lat 52 44N, long 01 47E. *Orient* sustained damage above the waterline. Caister Lifeboat was arrived on scene at 0551, UTC, and escorted the vessel into Lowestoft harbour. *Supidana* sustained no significant damage and was released to proceed on voyage to Newcastle, ETA 0600, UTC, May 4. Search and rescue operations terminated at 0712, UTC.

London, May 3 — A press report, dated today, states: A fisherman was last night said to have been lucky to survive a collision in which 64-metre Danish



general cargo vessel *Supidana*, carrying 17 tonnes of cargo, crashed into the eight-metre fishing vessel *Orient*, damaging its hull. The coastguard said the Marine Accidents Investigation Branch is looking into the incident. It took place early this morning at Happisburgh Gap, three miles east of Winterton lighthouse. The Caister lifeboat *Bernard Matthews* was called at 0600 and spent more than two hours escorting the badly damaged *Orient* back to Lowestoft. Dick Thurlow, coxswain of Caister lifeboat, estimated that repairs to the *Orient* could cost up to £10,000 and take a matter of months. Mr Thurlow said the brunt of the smash was taken by a steel gantry and the mast. A hole was torn through the boat but it was just above the water line. *Supidana* was undamaged. The coastguard in Yarmouth said it was lucky that the weather was relatively calm at the time of the accident or it could have been much worse.

#### THASSOS V (Greece)

London, May 2 — Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: During the evening of May 1, passenger roro *Thassos V* (832 gt, built 1993) sustained engine damage while making departure manoeuvres at the port of Kavala, bound for Keramoti. Departure was prohibited by the port authority until the next day, when repairs had been completed and survey had been performed by the marine inspectorate. The passengers were forwarded to their destinations on board passenger roro *Thassos* instead.

#### TIAN SHENG (China)

London, Apr 30 — Following received from Cape Town MRCC, timed 0840, UTC: C.c. *Tian Sheng* is now under way on its voyage to China and did not have to enter a South African port. The crewmen on board who inhaled smoke were not as badly affected as had been feared and have now fully recovered.

#### TRINACRIA (Italy)

London, May 5 — A press report, dated May 4, states: The outcome of the collision between ro/ro *Trinacria* (24409 gt, built 2002) and a fishing boat, which occurred this morning outside the harbour of Catania, is worse than what it seemed initially. One of the fishing boat crew members was killed, and another 4 were injured, and immediately taken to the Cannizzaro hospital. The Coast Guard and Firemen Squad divers are still on the scene. The collision occurred at 0800 hrs, three miles from the coast. The ferry was heading for Naples. The causes are yet to be ascertained.

London, May 5 — Following received from Rome MRCC, timed 0615, UTC: Ro/ro *Trinacria* was in collision with fishing boat registration No.4CT1073, boat not named. There were five persons on board, of which, four rescued and one deceased. *Trinacria* is in Catania port where investigation is in hand regarding the cause of the collision etc.

Messina, May 5 — Ro/ro *Trinacria* in regular ferry service between Catania and Naples, was in collision with an

unnamed five-ton trawler three miles off Catania, at about 0800, yesterday. The trawler sank, one crew member was killed and four were injured. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### TUCANA (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Apr 30 — Information received from Sandnes states: While general cargo *Tucana* (2732 gt, built 1985) was underway from Bremerhaven to Sandnes with containers, early Apr 29, the vessel experienced engine blackout off the west coast of Denmark. The crew could not restart the engine, and the vessel required tow assistance. According to agent, *Tucana* was towed back to Germany, likely Hamburg, for repairs. ETC is about 5-7 days.

Hamburg, May 3 — General cargo *Tucana* arrived Hamburg May 1. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, May 3 — Following received from the owners of general cargo *Tucana*, dated today: *Tucana* was able to restart its engine and returned to Hamburg under its own power.

#### URVAAG

Trondheim, May 4 — The owner of fishing *Urvaag* reports there is no change, vessel still under water. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### VIARSA I (Panama)

See under "Miscellaneous."

#### VIKINGO (Chile)

Santiago, Apr 29 — Trawler *Vikingo* (1110 gt, built 1978) had fire at Talcahuano this morning. The fire took eight hours to extinguish and the vessel was towed two miles from the coast to prevent the fire from spreading to other vessels. There were no injuries and no oil spillage occurred. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### YIOSONAS (Hong Kong)

London, May 4 — Following received from the managers of bulk *Yiosonas*, dated today: *Yiosonas* is still undergoing repairs at Nantong, with completion of same not expected for a couple of months.

#### YUNG KUO (Taiwan)

Montevideo, May 5 — Local agents of fishing *Yung Kuo* (350 gt, built 1982) owned by China Sea-Products Development Corporation, Kaohsiung, advise a lost fishing net entangled between vessel's rudder and shaft about 1000 miles off Montevideo. Vessel is being towed by fishing *Yung An*. — Lloyd's Agents.

Montevideo, May 5 — Fishing *Yung Kuo* is being towed to Montevideo, with, as reported by its agents, an ETA of May 12. — Lloyd's Agents.

## Port State Control



#### ROMANIA

Bucharest, Apr 28 — General cargo *Hope 1* is still under detention at

Constantza, and the vessel's documents are in the process of being renewed. — Lloyd's Agents.

## Seizures & Arrests



#### ANJUN (Hong Kong)

Karachi, May 4 — Product tanker *Anjun* (395 gt, built 1997) has been under arrest since Apr 30 at Karachi Port, due to some party dispute. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### ARAYA (Malta)

Apapa-Lagos May 5 — Cargo receivers officially detained bulk *Araya* (17697 gt, built 2001) at Berth No.7, Tin Can Island on May 3. — Lloyd's Agents. (Note — *Araya* was last reported arriving Apapa-Lagos Apr 12.)

#### CARMICA V (Panama)

Limassol, Apr 30 — Ro/ro *Carmica V* is still under arrest at Limassol. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### EUROPEAN STARS (Italy)

See "Festival Cruises Inc."

#### EUROPEAN VISION (Italy)

See "Festival Cruises Inc."

#### FESTIVAL CRUISES INC

London, May 5 — The fate of Festival Cruises' French subsidiary was hanging by a thread yesterday evening as the company's 34 employees waited for the group's Italian banks to authorise a promised payment of E250,000 (\$301,600). The Paris Court of Commerce, which has already put off winding up the company at least twice, had set yesterday as the final deadline for the group to demonstrate that the company could be kept in activity. Early yesterday evening, however, the payment had still not arrived, raising fears that the company would be placed in liquidation and that the Festival group would lose its representation on the important French market. French market manager, Bernadette Chevalier, said that the court could still put off a decision for a few more days or put the company under judicial administration but that it would need some proof that it could be made viable. News of the threat to the group's French subsidiary coincided with the announcement that shareholders of the group's main Italian operating company, Festival Crociera Spa, had postponed taking a decision on its future until Monday (May 3). They had been expected to decide at an extraordinary general meeting in Genoa on Monday evening whether to try to continue their efforts to save the stricken cruise company or wind it up. In the event, they took just a quarter of an hour to agree to a request from the company's banks to give them another week to come up with the rescue plan, which has been awaited since Festival's three biggest ships were seized by their owners four and a half months' ago.

Monday's meeting had already been postponed from last week at the banks' request but yesterday there was still no information as to the nature of the project the banks were preparing. They are under pressure from Festival's Italian creditors to agree to convert their loans to the company into shareholdings but have given no indication to date that they are ready to do this, even supposing that such action is enough to save the company. Members of a 260-strong group of Italian suppliers and sub-contractors have already agreed to forego part of the E50m they are owed in return for capital stakes in the company and to accept delayed payment of the remainder. They say they want the banks, principally Banca Carige, Unicredito and Piraeus Bank, to follow their example by accepting the conversion of at least 70% of their outstanding loans into capital. Whatever the banks decide, there is general agreement that they now have only days now to come up with the solution that has so far eluded them. One of the company's three "premium" ships, *European Vision*, has already been sold to Italian rival, MSC Cruises, and the sale of a second, *Mistral*, has been fixed for May 13 in Marseilles. A date for the sale of the third, *European Stars*, in Barcelona, is expected shortly. Staff at the company's Genoa head office, who have stayed at their posts for the last four and a half months in the belief that a solution would be found, continue to cling to the hope, nevertheless, that one will emerge at the eleventh hour. External relations manager Laura Gilli said yesterday that the fact that the banks had asked for more time was being taken as a "positive sign," while Raoul Bollani, head of the Italian creditors' grouping, said: "There are good, positive signs. This is what we want to hope." He said that suppliers and sub-contractors were still hoping that the company could be relaunched in time to catch the impending summer season but added that, even if this were not the case, he was confident that Festival would continue to exist as a company. Festival's employees, suppliers and banks were all determined to ensure that this should be the case, he added.

#### **MISTRAL (Wallis & Futuna)**

See "Festival Cruises Inc."

#### **NAIME S. (Comoros)**

Limassol, Apr 30 — General cargo *Naime S.* is still under arrest at Limassol. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### **NEGROS NAVIGATION CO INC**

London, Apr 30 — A press report, dated today, states: There is no doubt that a squeeze play is being employed against Negros Navigation Co. (Nenaco), the country's oldest shipping firm and a subsidiary of Metro Pacific Corp. Aside from Nenaco, the victims here include some 20,000 passengers who were left stranded last weekend because some government agency seemed to have been influenced in desisting from issuing clearances to allow the shipping firm's vessels from setting sail. Considering that there was no issue about seaworthiness or safety, one wonders

why Marina held back the issuance of clearances on a weekend to the detriment of thousands of travelers. Prior to the incident, text messages had been circulating about Nenaco's alleged manipulation of books to supposedly show profit when there was none. This apparently was what "pressured" the Maritime Industry Authority's to not allow Nenaco's vessels to pull out of harbour. While Nenaco is not exactly spotless, having been weighted down by a debt burden exacerbated by the 1998 Asian crisis plus a host of difficulties caused by a confluence of market and regulatory concerns, the proper forum that decides on its financial (mis)conduct is definitely not the Marina. Obviously, Nenaco is mired in debt. It has about P2.4 billion in unpaid debts by the time it asked and subsequently obtained a stop-payment order from the Manila Trial Court just weeks ago. Nenaco said it was forced to seek relief from the court so it could restructure P2.4 billion in debt payments within 10 years while allowing it to finance P2.9 billion in capital and dry-docking expenditures over the same period. The inter-island shipping firm said its rehabilitation plan should generate sufficient cash flow to finance necessary dry-docking expenses and capital expenditures that would ensure all vessels are in good working condition. At the same time, the rehabilitation would also allow the company to comply with international safety standards as well as settle its financial obligations "in a fair and just manner in a shortest possible time." The same court appointed Sulficio Tagud Jr. as receiver to facilitate an orderly payment of Nenaco's dues. The Manila court order appears to have triggered Cebu-based ship builder and repair firm Tsuneishi Heavy Industries Inc. to ask a Cebu court to issue a warrant of arrest on one of Nenaco's vessels, passenger ro/ro *St. Peter the Apostle*, last Mar 12. Nenaco, it seems, had failed to settle more than P80 million in principal obligations to the Japanese shipbuilder. Including interests, says Tsuneishi, Nenaco owes the shipbuilding and repair company more than P120 million as of April. Interestingly, the Cebu court also placed on similar arrest five other Nenaco vessels, *San Sebastian*, *Princess of Negros*, *Nuestra Senora de Fatima*, *Santa Ana*, and *San Paolo*. Nenaco quickly points out that just one vessel would have been more than enough to account for its outstanding obligation with Tsuneishi. So why should the Japanese firm want to seize six vessels when one was more than enough? With a host of creditors, most of who had far bigger exposures, at risk with the shipping firm's debt problem, why was Tsuneishi also the only one fiercely pressing for collection, and even carrying the whole exercise to the extent of permanently impairing the company from doing business? Tsuneishi admits that the loans it extended to Nenaco are unsecured. But more than the obligations, it appears that 20% of the reason for Tsuneishi's full court press is due to competition, being one-fifth owned by Aboitiz & Co., the very same owners of Aboitiz Transport Systems Inc.

or formerly WG&A, incidentally staunch competitor of Nenaco. The Japanese firm, however, claims that it has been going after Nenaco to pay its debts since 2002. Tsuneishi says that Nenaco defaulted on payments in November 2002 so that in January 2003, it was forced to file a case. Tsuneishi also raised the issue of Nenaco's P103-million net income in 2002, coming at the heels of a whopping P1.8-billion consolidated net loss during the previous year. Tsuneishi claims that the Securities and Exchange Commission is investigating Nenaco's financial reports. Nenaco has denied this.

London, May 4 — The Maritime Industry Authority, known as Marina, has released five vessels of Negros Navigation Company (Nenaco) after mistakes in the financial statements submitted by Nenaco were rectified.

London, May 6 — Troubled Philippines shipping company Negros Navigation has found the majority of its fleet suspended from operation for the second time in as many weeks after creditor Tsuneishi Heavy Industries in Cebu secured a restraining order. Tsuneishi's Philippine shipyard, which is claiming Pesos130m (\$2.4m) owed by Negros Navigation, also known as Nenaco, for drydocking and repairs in 2002, secured a temporary restraining order from Court of Appeals Special 12th Division prohibiting the operation of three passenger ships and two cargo-ships belonging to the company. The suspension leaves Nenaco, the Philippines' second largest domestic shipping company, with just two vessels in operation while two more are in dry dock. "Our lawyers are working full time to have the TRO (temporary restraining order) lifted," Gian Galvez, head of corporate communications for Nenaco, said. Nenaco is seeking to get the order overturned by the country's Supreme Court. Mr Galvez hoped it would be secured "any day now." In the meantime, though, he says that the company is losing Pesos15m per day. Many of the company's 8,000 employees are now worried for their jobs, should the suspension continue. It is the latest in a string of bad news for Nenaco which is already in financial rehabilitation. Just last week it managed to get an earlier six-day ban on the operation of its vessels by the country's Maritime Industry Authority lifted after Philippines President Gloria Arroyo intervened. "We were very happy and thought that this would be the last time this would happen," Mr Galvez said. Tsuneishi has been at the centre of Nenaco's woes that led to it seeking bankruptcy protection at the end of March. On Mar 20, Tsuneishi seized the Nenaco vessel *St. Peter the Apostle* for Pesos130m unpaid repair and drydocking bills from 2002. The ship had a book value of Pesos290m to Pesos300m. "The contention here is the one vessel they have attached is more than enough," Mr Galvez said. However, Tsuneishi has sought to suspend all of Nenaco's operations even though a Manila court has already granted the company protection from creditors. Market intrigue over the actions of the

Tsuneishi yard in Cebu has been fuelled by the fact it is 20% owned by Aboitiz Group which also owns Nenaco's largest competitor Aboitiz Transport Group. The Nenaco spokesman would not say if there was a link. The shipping company has also been forced to explain to the Philippines Security and Exchange Commission why it did not disclose its financial problems before filing for rehabilitation. Nenaco vice-president for group financial reporting Virgencito C Torcal said in a letter to the SEC that it was unaware of any trend or uncertainty that would have an impact on its liquidity and had maintained good relations with its creditors and suppliers, while negotiating for the restructuring of its obligations. This resulted in the restructuring its loans with Equitable-PCI Bank and Prudential Bank. Mr Torcal said that Tsuneishi filed a collection case against Nenaco, even while it was in negotiations to settle Pesos130m in debts for drydocking services and shiprepairs rendered in 2002.

#### **OLVIA (Ukraine)**

London, Apr 30 — Passenger *Olvia*, from Singapore, passed Suez Canal Apr 23 and subsequently passed Istanbul, Singapore for Sevastopol, Apr 26.

#### **PAVEL YABLOCHKOV (Russia)**

Leghorn, May 4 — Cargo/training *Pavel Yablochkov* is still under arrest at Leghorn. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### **PEGY (North Korea)**

Limassol, Apr 30 — Vessel *Pegy* is still under arrest at Limassol. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### **QUEEN CONSTANTINA (Cyprus)**

Limassol, Apr 30 — Passenger *Queen Constantina* remains under arrest at Limassol. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### **SAINT RAPHAEL II (Greece)**

Piraeus, May 4 — After being seized in August 2001, by two separate private creditors, each in pursuit of a Drs1,108,700 (\$2,879) claim, and then later seized by the Piraeus Port Authority in pursuit of a Euro 4,806 claim against the registered owners, tank *Saint Raphael II* remains under arrest in Piraeus port. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### **SALEM SEVEN (Egypt)**

Alexandria, May 4 — General cargo *Salem Seven* is still at quay No.67 at Alexandria port under arrest as funds are owed to the port authorities. It is not known why the vessel owes money. At present the vessel has not been sold. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### **ST.PETER THE APOSTLE (Phillipines)**

See "Negros Navigation Co Inc."

#### **TALAVERA (St. Vincent & Grenadines)**

Venice, Apr 30 — General cargo *Talavera* is still under arrest at Chioggia by the Criminal Magistrate. At present there are no prospects of lifting the arrest/departure. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### **THALASOPOROS (St. Vincent & Grenadines)**

Limassol, Apr 30 — Tug *Thalassoporos* is still under arrest at Limassol. — Lloyd's Agents.



#### **JACOBABAD AREA, PAKISTAN**

London, May 4 — A press report, datelined Jacobabad, May 2, states: A 20 inch diameter gas pipeline blew up, suspending gas supplies to Dadu and Punjab near Fazal Muhammad Hajano town overnight between yesterday and today. The Sui Southern Gas Pipeline Company Ltd (SSGPL) authorities are terming the incident as the outcome of some sabotage activity. However, bomb disposal squad officials said that the explosion was the result of gas pressure in the pipeline. After receiving the news of blast, heavy contingents of rangers and police increased the security of the area to protect the gas line from further damage. A high official of SSGPL Ghazi Anwar Karyu said that explosion caused billion of rupees loss to the company. Gas company employees had started the repairing work today.

#### **SAN FRANCISCO BAY, UNITED STATES**

London, Apr 30 — A press report, dated Apr 29, states: A pipeline that pumps petroleum from refineries in the San Francisco Bay area ruptured, gushing diesel fuel into a marsh that serves as a key nesting ground for migratory birds. The spill, which began Tuesday (Apr 27), prompted an emergency cleanup effort at Suisun Marsh, about 30 miles north-east of San Francisco. Several dead animals, mostly ducks, were found at the scene. State officials estimated that 40,000 gallons of fuel spilled. Initial worst-case estimates had put the spill at one million gallons. Kinder Morgan Energy Partners, the Houston firm that owns the pipeline, estimated that 500 to 1,000 barrels, containing 42 gallons of fuel each, leaked into the marsh, spokesman Jerry Engelhardt said. The spill was mostly contained today and was limited to a diked area of roughly 600 acres, so the fuel could not easily escape to the rest of the marsh, officials said. About 50 workers from state, county and federal agencies were using containment booms and absorbent pads to clean up the spill, which left a sheen on the water. The pipeline, which carries fuel from San Francisco Bay area refineries to Chico, Sacramento and Reno, Nevada, ruptured sometime Tuesday. Kinder Morgan noticed a drop in pipeline pressure around 1800, Apr 27, and shut down a section of the pipeline, Engelhardt said. Environmental officials were told about it yesterday. The broken section of the pipeline would be replaced and back in service by Saturday (May 1), but it could take several weeks or even months to completely clean up the spill, Engelhardt said.

#### **SUISUN MARSH, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES**

London, May 4 — press report, dated May 3, states: A diesel pipeline is up and running again just days after spilling thousands of gallons of fuel into Suisun Marsh. A break in the 14-inch pipe was discovered last week, about five miles east of Fairfield. About 60,000 gallons of diesel leaked into the water, killing 28 animals. Fourteen surviving birds were treated at a local wildlife centre. Workers replaced a 50-foot section of the pipeline, and it was back in operation yesterday afternoon. Meantime, clean-up efforts continued at the 242-acre marsh area.

Houston, May 2 — Kinder Morgan Energy Partners L.P. reopened a gasoline pipeline between San Francisco and northern Nevada today, a spokesman said. The 14.5-inch pipeline, which carries gasoline, diesel and jet fuel from San Francisco Bay area refineries to Sacramento, California, and Reno, Nevada, was shut on Tuesday (Apr 27) after gauges showed problems with flow in the pipeline. The site of the pipeline leak was found Wednesday (Apr 28) morning in the Suisun Marsh on the northern edge of the greater San Francisco Bay. As of Friday (Apr 30), prices were unaffected in West Coast spot markets by the pipeline shutdown and suppliers said shortages would likely not occur if the pipeline was reopened by tomorrow. Flow through the pipeline, which is buried at least three feet underground, was restored this afternoon after a 50-foot section of pipe was replaced, said Kinder Morgan spokesman Jerry Engelhardt. The U.S. Coast Guard, California Fish and Game Department and State Fire Marshal's Office are overseeing the cleanup of the marsh area and investigating the spill which Kinder Morgan estimated at less than 1,500 barrels. "We continue to work with the state and federal agencies supervising the incident," Engelhardt said. As many as 135 people were working on the cleaning up the diesel, which killed eight birds and six mammals. Another nine birds are being cleaned of the fuel according to a statement from the Fish and Game Department. — Reuters.



#### **GREECE**

London, Apr 30 — Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: Following orders from the public prosecutor, personnel from the Piraeus Port Authority arrested the master, chief engineer and oiler of general cargo *Morjan K.* (3271 gt, built 1979) while the vessel was at Piraeus anchorage Apr 29. The arrest was following a pollution incident of light oils between Cape Sidiros and Kassos Island on Apr 28 which the vessel was found to be responsible for.

Piraeus, May 4 — General cargo *Morjan K.* sailed from Piraeus on May 3 bound for Italy. — Lloyd's Agents.

### PORTLAND HARBOUR, MAINE, UNITED STATES

London, May 4 — A press report, dated today, states: Clean up crews hoped this morning to complete the removal of 1,000 gallons of diesel fuel that spilled from tug *Pete* (198 gt, built 1976) into Portland Harbour yesterday. Booms were used to contain the spill to the water directly around the Maine State Pier, where the tug was tied up at the time of the spill. Workers with Clean Harbors Environmental Services used floating skimmers the size of small inner tubes to clean fuel off the surface, and absorbent pads to collect the remnants of the spill. Workers arrived at 0630 hrs, yesterday and found bilge mixed with fuel being pumped from a rear outlet of *Pete*, which was tied up on the Cianbro Corp side of the Maine State Pier. Clean Harbors, which maintains oil spill response boats in the harbour, was able to start setting booms in 15 to 20 minutes, said John Swiger, a field services specialist for the company. The booms were in place and the spill was contained by 1000 hrs, although the smell of petroleum filled the air around the pier all day. Efforts to contain the spill were helped by the tide, which was coming in and kept the fuel pressed up against the shore and the Maine State Pier. By the time the tide shifted, booms were set, so fuel did not escape into the mouth of the Fore River. "The only long-term thing we're going to worry about now is how much is clinging to the undersurfaces of the pier and how long that takes to get cleared out," said Portland's transportation director, Jeff Monroe. Coast Guard Petty Officer Lisa Hennings said no maritime commerce was interrupted, even though the cleanup kept most of the port's tugs tied up. The state Department of Environmental Protection sent specialists to oversee the cleanup, which will be paid for by Portland Tugboat and Ship Docking Co. Jon Woodard of the DEP said it did not appear that the spill affected any sensitive habitat and there should be no major long-term implications. The tugboat company was able to estimate the amount of No. 2 diesel fuel that spilled based on how much remained in the malfunctioning tank, officials said.

### ROCKVILLE, MINNESOTA, UNITED STATES

London, May 4 — A press report, dated Apr 30, states: An estimated 100,000 gallons of manure spilled into a creek from a dairy farm today. The spill happened this morning on a farm about a half-mile south-east of Rockville, said Don Adams, the county's environmental services director. Officials believe the spill happened when some work was being done on a valve on a manure storage tank. The valve broke, causing the manure to spill out, and the owner was unable to turn the valve off. The tank held 500,000 gallons of manure, but was believed to only have 350,000 gallons in it. Another estimated 100,000

gallons was contained before it hit nearby Mill Creek. The 280-animal dairy farm is owned by Dan and Pierre Hansen. Adams said it appeared the farmers followed the proper procedures in responding to the leak, so the quick response by officials lessened the environmental impact. Officials from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Minnesota Department of Health, the City of St. Cloud and Department of Natural Resources went to the scene. Several truckloads of dirt were used to create a berm to keep more manure from reaching the creek, which feeds into the Sauk and then the Mississippi River. Officials were checking to see whether fish were being killed and for any problems where St. Cloud takes its drinking water from the Mississippi. Officials planned to pump the standing manure into an area next to the berm and then apply it to nearby fields.



### CYCLONE IN ARABIAN SEA

London, May 6 — A press report, dated today, states: A cyclone is swirling in the Arabian Sea off southern India, triggering heavy rain along the coast. The cyclone is moving parallel to the coast and is unlikely to make landfall, at least in the next 48 hours, an India Meteorological Department official said today. The storm, with wind speeds of 80-100 km an hour, has led to heavy rains in southern Kerala state.

### HURRICANE "JUAN"

London, May 4 — A press report, dated today, states: Total insured losses from Hurricane "Juan" continue to add up, and to date the insurance industry has paid out \$113.4 million in claims throughout Canada's Atlantic provinces. Losses are up by nearly 40% since initial reports were provided in November 2003.

### IRAN

Tehran, May 2 — Floods have torn through western Iran killing 10 people and devastating farmland, state television reported today. Television showed muddy torrents surging through farmland and cars struggling through streets awash with floodwater. It said the floods that killed eight in Kermanshah province and two in Ilam province were caused by rivers breaking their banks after torrential rain. Some areas were hit by hailstorms that smashed windows and injured some people. Television showed a villager sifting through hailstones almost as big as table-tennis balls. — Reuters.

### KENYA

London, May 4 — A press report, dated today, states: At least six people have drowned and several thousands displaced by floods following torrential rains currently hitting Kenya, officials and press reports said today. "Two people

have been confirmed dead in Nairobi," head of National Disaster Operations Bonventure Wendo said. Reports added that several homes and livestock were swept away across the country, while flights were diverted from Nairobi's Jomo Kenyatta International Airport to Mombasa's Moi International Airport on the Indian Ocean coast. Commuter railway services to Nairobi's suburbs were also suspended, after rail tracks were flooded. Most roads have also been washed away throughout the country, following two days of heavy rains, the Daily Nation newspaper also reported. The Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) said today that up to 3,000 people have been displaced by floods along the banks of River Nyando. "We are preparing for up to 60,000 people," KRCS head of Disaster Response, Farid Abdulkadir, said.

### NEW ZEALAND

London, May 6 — A press report, dated today, states: The repair bill for lower New Zealand's North Island roads damaged in February's floods has topped NZ\$66 million. Transfund regional manager Ian Hunter said yesterday that allocated funding included nearly NZ\$54 million for local roads and NZ\$12.7 million for state highways. The Wanganui District Council has received NZ\$17.51 million, the Manawatu District Council NZ\$15.46 million, and the Manawatu-Wanganui region NZ\$11.22 million.

### ROMANIA

Bucharest, Apr 29 — Sulina channel was re-opened at 1200, Apr 28. — Lloyd's Agents.

### UNITED STATES

London, Apr 30 — A press report, dated Apr 28, states: Thousands of customers had no electricity Wednesday in north-west Washington following severe storms that included a rare tornado. A number of schools closed or were opening late on Wednesday. No injuries or severe damage were reported. Port Townsend on the Olympic Peninsula reported wind blowing at a sustained 45 mph, gusting to 54 mph, when the storm struck Tuesday afternoon, said Jeff Rood, a National Weather Service meteorologist. About 200,000 homes and businesses lost power around Puget Sound, including some parts of the Seattle and Tacoma areas, utilities said. By Wednesday, about 52,000 customers still had no power on the Olympic Peninsula and north of Seattle, officials reported. A tornado was reported near Sumas, on the Canadian border, blowing part of the roof off a barn. Rood said the state averages one per year. Wind also tore away part of the roof on a high school gymnasium in Snohomish County, north of Seattle, officials said. In eastern Washington, wind gusts to more than 40 mph blacked out about 4,000 customers in the Yakima Valley and fanned a series of brush fires. Stiff wind also blew through parts of Idaho during the night, and on Wednesday the storm produced snow in parts of western Montana.

## Earthquakes



### CHILE

London, May 3 — A press report, dated today, states: A strong earthquake rocked a large area in central and southern Chile early today, causing alarm but no damage or casualties, authorities said. The government's Emergency Bureau said the quake had a magnitude of 6.6 in its epicentre off the coast of Temuco, 530 kilometers south of Santiago. It hit at 0039 today and was felt from Rancagua, 80 kilometers south of Santiago to Puerto Montt, 1,000 kilometers south of the capital. The Emergency Bureau said electric power supplies were briefly cut in some areas.

### CHINA

Beijing, May 4 — An earthquake registering 5.5 on the open-ended Richter scale shook part of China's western Qinghai province today, but no casualties or damage were reported. The tremor hit the city of Delingha at around 0500 UTC, with its epicentre some 50 kms away and about 600 kms from the provincial capital, Xining, said an official with a local seismological bureau. "We felt quite strong tremors, but no structures collapsed in the city," he said. — Reuters.

### EL SALVADOR/GUATEMALA

London, May 3 — A press report, dated today, states: A moderate earthquake shook El Salvador and Guatemala but caused no damage or injuries, officials said today. The magnitude-5.0 quake struck just after 2300 yesterday and was centered off the Guatemalan Coast in the Pacific Ocean, El Salvador's National Territorial Studies Institute reported. The quake was felt across western El Salvador and in San Salvador, the country's capital.

### IRAN

London, May 5 — A press report, dated today, states: An earthquake measuring 3.3 degrees on the Richter scale hit the city of Dehdasht, in the southwestern province of Kohgiluyeh-Boyer Ahmad, on Monday night (May 3). The seismological base of Tehran University's Geophysics Institute said the tremor occurred at 2032, local time. There were no immediate reports of any casualties or damage to property caused by the quake.

London, May 5 — A press report, dated today, states: An earthquake, measuring 3.3 degrees on the Richter scale hit the city of Firouzabad this morning. The seismological base of Tehran University's Geophysics institute registered the epicenter of the tremor at Meymand District 100 km south of the capital city of Shiraz. It occurred at 0843, local time. There were no immediate reports of any casualties or damage to property caused by the quake.

London, May 6 — A press report, dated today, states: According to the Geophysics Institute affiliated to Tehran University an earthquake measuring 3.6 on the Richter scale hit Bandar Jask in the Southern province of Hormuzgan at 0316, local time, today. There were no immediate reports of any casualties or damage to property caused by the quake.

London, May 6 — A press report, dated today, states: According to the Geophysics Institute affiliated to Tehran University an earthquake measuring 3.8 on the Richter scale hit the city of Dinvar in the western province of Kermanshah at 0513, local time today. There were no immediate reports of any casualties or damage to property caused by the quake.

London, May 6 — A press report, dated today, states: According to the Geophysics Institute affiliated to Tehran University an earthquake measuring 3.8 on the Richter scale hit Sanandaj the capital city of western province of Kurdistan at 0513, local time today. There were no immediate reports of any casualties or damage to property caused by the quake.

London, May 6 — A press report, dated today, states: According to the Geophysics Institute affiliated to Tehran University an earthquake measuring 4.3 on the Richter scale hit the city of Tabas in Northeastern province of Khorassan at 0528, local time today. There were no immediate reports of any casualties or damage to property caused by the quake.

### SOUTH CHINA SEA

London, May 3 — A press report, dated May 2, states: Tremors from an earthquake which occurred in the South China Sea at 0729 today were felt in Miri, Bintulu and other places in Sarawak, east Malaysia. The Meteorological Services Department in Kuala Lumpur said the earthquake measured 4.8 on the Richter Scale. The epicentre was between latitude 4.2 degrees north and longitude 113.2 degrees east, in the South China Sea, about 90 km off Miri, 430 km off Kuching and 1,290 km from Kuala Lumpur. No tidal waves were reported and neither were there any reports about houses collapsing or cracks developing.

### TAIWAN

London, May 2 — A press report, dated today, states: A moderate earthquake measuring 5.8 on the Richter scale jolted eastern Taiwan yesterday, triggering landslides that killed two people, reports said. The quake, measuring 5.8 on the Richter scale, was centred on the island's east coast, seven kilometres west of the town of Hsincheng in Hualien county, the Central Weather Bureau said.

### UNITED STATES

London, May 5 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: A light earthquake shook the Central California coast today, but apparently caused no injuries or damage. The estimated magnitude-4 quake hit at 1025 hrs, seven miles north-east of seaside Cayucos.

## Volcanic Activity



### MOUNT BAGANA, PAPUA NEW GUINEA

London, May 5 — A press report, dated May 4, states: Communities close to the base of Bougainville's Mount Bagana volcano could be exposed to long-term dangers from lava flow, a Rabaul-based volcanologist warned yesterday. Rabaul observatory assistant director Ima Itikari in his report to the Government confirmed there was new lava flow moving slowly down the south-west flanks of the volcano but there was no immediate and intermediate risks from it. "Long-term dangers and risks from the lava flow would be on some hamlets that developed near the base of the volcano, most likely during the crisis period," Mr Itikari said. Mount Bagana started spewing lava early last week creating concerns for nearby villages and the people of Bougainville.

### MOUNT VENIAMINOF, ALASKA, UNITED STATES

London, May 4 — A press report, dated May 3, states: Aleutian arc volcano Mount Veniaminof has been lightly shaking the ground and sending up ash over the past week, according to the Alaska Volcano Observatory. While a major eruption is not expected, scientists warned of additional low-level unrest at the 7,073-foot caldera, about 480 miles south-west of Anchorage near the village of Perryville. "We expect that steam and ash emissions similar to those observed this week may continue intermittently and could pose a hazard to people and low-flying aircraft in the vicinity of the active cone," the observatory reported in its Friday (Apr 30) update. Ash and steam spotted during clear weather on Wednesday and Thursday rose to 8,000 to 10,000 feet above sea level. The clouds then drifted 10 miles on strong winds, while seismic tremors continued above background levels. Veniaminof is one of the largest and most active volcanoes in Alaska, with a 6-mile-wide caldera and 12 eruptions over the past 200 years. Veniaminof, which has been restless for weeks, was listed as "yellow," meaning that an eruption could occur.

## Political & Civil Unrest



### AFGHANISTAN

London, May 4 — A press report, dated today, states: The bullet-riddled bodies of 10 government soldiers were found in southern Afghanistan today, hours after they were abducted in two raids by suspected Taliban, Afghan officials said. A senior Afghan military commander

said five militia soldiers were found dead on a mountainside in Niamashien district of Kandahar province, some 240 kilometres south-west of the capital, Kabul. Khan Mohammed said Taliban assailants took the men during an attack on the district chief's office just after midnight today. "They were alive when they were captured, but they'd been shot with AK-47s when they were found," Mr Mohammed said. He said more troops had been despatched from Kandahar to investigate and search for the culprits. Earlier, troops sent to search for five Afghan National Army soldiers abducted in Zabul province found their bodies in the Sur Ghogan area, about 380 kilometres south-west of Kabul, Zabul Governor Khial Mohammed said. A purported spokesman for the Taliban, Abdul Hakim Latifi, said yesterday that it had taken the men, but also said they were safe and that conditions for their release would be discussed later. Taliban-led militants have ramped up attacks in recent weeks, killing dozens of Afghan soldiers and civilians, and bringing the death toll in violence across the country to more than 300 this year. Authorities appear to have little control in Zabul, where officials said four Afghan soldiers and two civilians were killed by mines and dozens of Taliban fighters attacked a government office in a remote district on Sunday (May 2).

London, May 5 — A press report, dated today, states: Two foreigners and an Afghan helping the United Nations prepare for landmark elections were killed in an attack in a remote eastern province, a senior Afghan official said today. "I confirm that there was an attack by a number of people and two foreigners and one Afghan were killed," Deputy Interior Minister Hilalludin Hilal said. The attack occurred yesterday, Hilal said. It was not immediately clear where the foreigners were from or if they were U.N. employees. Hilal said the three were surveying Nuristan province as part of U.N. plans to register voters for the September election. The United Nations is pressing ahead with plans to register 10 million Afghan voters across the country, despite a surge in violence by Taliban-led militants.

#### **BANGLADESH**

Karachi, Apr 30 — The dawn-to-dusk countrywide strike called by the Bangladesh's main opposition political party-Awami League (AL) disrupted life for the second consecutive day yesterday and sporadic violence marked the shutdown in the Dhaka city. The second round of strike ended almost peacefully elsewhere in the country. The general strike shut most businesses, educational institutions and offices, hampered cargo handling at Chittagong port of Bangladesh and largely emptied streets of vehicles. Train and air services were however normal. About 8,000 law enforcers deployed on the capital's streets foiled the AL's bid to hold rallies and bring out processions during the shutdown. Police barricaded the roads around the AL central office at Bangabandhu Avenue throughout the day putting up barbed wire fences to

prevent party activists and hartal supporters from gathering there. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

#### **BOLIVIA**

London, May 4 — A press report, dated today, states: A national strike called for this week began with a whimper yesterday, providing a short-term boost for Bolivia's beleaguered President Carlos Mesa. The Bolivian Workers Union and a contingent of Aymara Indians managed to march through central La Paz at noon, forcing the diversion of traffic, but that was a far cry from the strike's original goal of shutting down the capital and the two-lane highways leading into it. "The public's response has been a clear rejection," Foreign Minister Juan Ignacio Siles said. "A strike only creates uncertainty and a lack of confidence in the country's future. People want to work in peace and tranquillity. The extremists don't have much support." Mesa declared yesterday a holiday to diminish the strike's potential impact. Nonetheless, it seems clear that the leftist workers and Aymarans, who were at the vanguard of the street protests in October that toppled Mesa's predecessor, Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada, have far less political strength today. "There's not a single, concrete objective that allows the different opposition sectors to rally behind," said Alvaro Garcia, a leftist sociologist. "This government still has public support. It still has legitimacy." Jaime Solares, the Communist leader of the workers union, vowed to continue the strike and predicted that it would gain strength the coming days.

#### **BURUNDI**

London, May 4 — A press report, dated May 3, states: Burundi's largest former rebel group has withdrawn from President Domitien Ndayizeye's unity government. The group - Forces for the Defence of Democracy (FDD) - has accused the government of not abiding by a peace accord to end a decade of civil war. FDD leader Hussein Rajabu said that six months after agreeing to a ceasefire, the FDD was not adequately represented in the administration. But he said the decision did not mean a return to war. Correspondents say the group's decision to join the government last November raised hopes that peace would return to Burundi. "This is obviously a dramatic development which is symptomatic of very serious divisions within the Burundian government about the way forward," Jan Van Eck, a Burundi expert in South Africa, told Reuters news agency. Troops from an African peacekeeping mission are currently in Burundi to protect senior officials from the Hutu-based FDD, while their fighters are integrated into a new army and police force. Mr Rajabu suggested the planned integration of the FDD into the existing Tutsi-led army would be unaffected for now. "We have no problem with the people we used to fight, with the army," he told Reuters. "The problem is with the politicians, with the political parties."

#### **COLOMBIA**

London, May 3 — A press report, dated today, states: Two small bombs exploded outside the Ministry of Social Affairs in the Colombian capital late yesterday, injuring nine people and shattering windows, police said. After a first bomb went off at 1930 just yards from the ministry in the center of Bogota, a police patrol cordoned off the area. But six minutes later, a second explosion slightly injured three officers and six onlookers, Bogota Police Chief Gen. Hector Garcia told reporters. Most of the ministry's windows were shattered, while neighboring buildings were also lightly damaged. There was no immediate indication of who was behind the attack.

London, May 5 — A press report, dated today, states: A car bomb exploded in front of a supermarket in north-east Colombia, killing a boy and wounding 17 people, the town's mayor has said. The blast occurred yesterday evening in Tame, a town in Arauca state which has been the scene of numerous clashes between government troops, right-wing paramilitary groups and Colombia's two leftist rebel armies. It was not immediately clear who was behind the attack.

#### **DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO**

London, May 6 — A press report, dated today, states: Fighting in the South Kivu region of the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo has driven about 25,000 people from their homes since Apr 19, the United Nations said yesterday. The clashes, at Lemara and Lubarika on the Ruzizi plain, pitted forces of the DRC army against Rwandan Hutu rebels of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), it said. The UN's office for the co-ordination of humanitarian affairs (OCHA) said almost 5,000 households had been displaced. To these should be added 867 households of former refugees who had returned from Burundi. "The humanitarian situation is worrying in these places," OCHA said. It added the displaced families were receiving preliminary help from the UN refugee agency (UNHCR), the World Food Programme and UNICEF. The UN mission "will deploy military observers in these places to ensure the security of the (local) populations", its local spokesperson, Major Abou Thiam, said.

#### **GEORGIA**

London, May 3 — A press report, dated May 2, states: Ajaria rebels have blown up two bridges linking their breakaway region to the rest of Georgia. Today's blasts destroyed the main bridge over the Choloki River and a smaller one near the village of Kakuti. Rebels hope to slow down any government attempt at reintegrating the region back into the ex-Soviet Black Sea state. Ajarian leader Aslan Abashidze said the demolitions were intended to rule out any government troop deployment south. "According to our data, some units of the Georgian armed forces taking part in the manoeuvres set up tents only a kilometre from the border," Abashidze was quoted as saying in the region's

main town Batumi. Georgian officials denounced the explosions and said the army had no intention of moving against Adzhara. "Ajaria has totally isolated itself," Ivan Merabishvili, head of Georgia's Security Council, told Rustavi-2 television. "This shows that Aslan Abashidze and his regime is in their final agony. They are very frightened." Ajaria is one of three Georgian regions operating beyond the control of central government but, unlike the other two, has never declared itself independent. Abashidze runs the region, presiding over his own armed forces and declining to pay taxes to the state budget. Georgia and Ajaria came close to military confrontation in March when Saakashvili was prevented from entering the region during an election campaign. Both sides put forces on alert. Backed by Washington, Saakashvili was elected in January after leading a bloodless revolution that ousted veteran leader Eduard Shevardnadze. He has called for the Ajaria leader's removal, but vows to use only peaceful means.

London, May 6 — A press report, dated May 5, states: Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili has announced on Georgian state television that Aslan Abashidze, the controversial leader of the country's Adzharia province, has resigned and left the country. Abashidze is alleged to be flying to Moscow. He left the country in the company of Igor Ivanov, head of the Russian Security Council who once served as Russia's foreign minister. Abashidze earlier this week ordered all bridges connecting the province with the rest of Georgia to be destroyed to prevent Georgian forces from coming to remove him. Abashidze's departure is seen as a major victory for Saakashvili. Yesterday, Saakashvili announced that Abashidze had "hours to leave" or face charges of human rights abuses in Adzharia. In addition to demolishing the bridges into the province, forces loyal to Abashidze had armed themselves with rocket propelled grenades, assault rifles and had set up anti-aircraft guns. However, in the wake of Abashidze's departure, confrontation with these forces has not materialized and in Batumi, the provincial capital of Adzharia, crowds were flooding the streets in celebration.

### GREECE

London, May 5 — A press report, dated today, states: Three bombs have exploded near a police station in an Athens suburb without causing any injuries, Greek police say. The three blasts occurred within 45 minutes in a parking lot near the police station in the southern Athens suburb of Kallithea. According to state television channel NET, the adjacent police station has suffered some damage. An anonymous warning was issued ahead of the first explosion via a phone call to an Athens newspaper. Police believe the blasts were staggered in the hope that the second and third bombs would injure policemen arriving on the scene after the first explosion. They gave no details of the nature of the bombs or the possible identity of the bombers. According to NET, at least one of the bombs seems to

consist of dynamite attached to a timer. Senior police officials are inspecting the site of the blasts.

### INDIA

London, May 4 — A press report, dated today, states: Indian soldiers killed three suspected guerrillas today in separate gun battles in India's troubled Jammu-Kashmir state, while five paramilitary soldiers were wounded in a pre-dawn attack on a base there, officials said. The skirmishes erupted when soldiers were trying to clear out separatist militants before tomorrow's Indian Parliamentary elections. The guerrillas have threatened to kill anyone taking part in the voting. Two suspected guerrillas were killed in a battle with paramilitary soldiers in a Kulgam village, about 70 kilometres south of Srinagar, the state's summer capital, said senior police officer Ravindra Kumar. In a separate skirmish with soldiers, an unidentified guerrilla was killed in Shopiyan, about 60 kilometres south of Srinagar, Kumar said. Also in Shopiyan, five paramilitary soldiers were injured in an early-morning attack by suspected guerrillas armed with automatic weapons, an officer said on condition of anonymity. Shopiyan and Kulgam were set to hold polls tomorrow, when nearly 1 million eligible voters were to cast ballots to fill a Parliament seat.

### INDONESIA

London, May 3 — A press report, dated today, states: Another 100 paramilitary police have been sent to the troubled Indonesian city of Ambon as the death toll from a week of violence between Christian separatists and Muslims rose to 38. The Brimob paramilitary unit adds to the about 400 police and 450 soldiers already sent to Ambon, the capital of Maluku province.

London, May 6 — A press report, dated today, states: Indonesian troops and police have killed almost 2,000 separatist rebels in Aceh province almost a year after they launched an all-out offensive to crush the guerrilla movement, the military said yesterday. Some 1,963 Free Aceh Movement (GAM) rebels have been killed since May 19 last year, the military said in a statement. Another 2,100 rebels have been arrested and 1,276 surrendered. The military said in the statement that GAM's estimated strength was 5,251 before the offensive began, about 100 fewer than the number said to have been killed, captured or surrendered. The military statement said 130 soldiers have been killed and 289 wounded since the offensive began, but gave no figure for police deaths. It said 1,045 weapons of various types have been seized from rebels.

### IRAQ

Baghdad, May 3 — Nine US soldiers have been killed in a bloody 24 hours for US-led forces in Iraq, and Washington said it was still deciding which former general from Saddam Hussein's army to appoint to restore order in Falluja. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said he expected the Security Council to authorise a multinational force for Iraq to take over after the planned US

handover of power to Iraqis on Jun 30. In the worst attack on US forces yesterday, six soldiers were killed in a mortar bombardment on a base in western Iraq. Top US general Richard Myers accused media of "very bad" reporting on Falluja, saying US forces had not withdrawn and that General Jasim Mohamed Saleh, a commander in Saddam's feared Republican Guard, was unlikely to take charge in the Sunni city. On Friday (Apr 30), US officers signalled Saleh would lead former Iraqi troops to try to end a stand-off with guerrillas in the hotbed of anti-US resistance. "There's another general they're looking at to take charge," Myers, chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, told ABC TV. "My guess is it will not be General Saleh... He may have a role to play, but that vetting has yet to take place." Myers's appearance on three different television shows seemed calculated to counter media reports suggesting US Marines had suffered a virtual defeat in Falluja and had turned to Saddam's former generals to salvage the situation. "The Marines have not withdrawn from Falluja," Myers told CBS television. "They are not withdrawing from Falluja." The US failed in a month-long siege to eliminate an estimated 2,000 guerrillas in Falluja, prompting US President George W. Bush's critics to accuse him of leading Washington into a Vietnam-style quagmire. US Marines pulled back from some positions around Falluja on Friday as part of a sketchy deal, but said they were ready to resume an offensive if Saddam's former soldiers did not restore order in the city, some 50 km west of Baghdad. For a second day, former Iraqi soldiers on patrol in Falluja turned a blind eye to gunmen celebrating "victory". Saleh appeared to be at odds with US officials yesterday when he said there were no foreign fighters among the guerrillas in Falluja. US officials said there were 200 or more foreign fighters, some of whom may have ties to Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda, and have tasked Saleh to arrest them. The US crackdown on Falluja was triggered by the killing and public mutilation of the bodies of four American contractors in the city, in the heart of the so-called "Sunni Triangle" where US-led forces have faced regular guerrilla attacks. After April became the bloodiest month for US troops in Iraq with 129 combat deaths, Annan appeared to offer help. Annan said a resolution being considered by the United States was designed to authorise a multinational force for security in Iraq after Jun 30. "Quite frankly, it's in everybody's interest to do whatever we can to stabilise Iraq," Annan said. Annan, who Bush has been lobbying for support on Iraq, said Washington was stepping up diplomacy with France, Germany and Russia over the proposed Security Council resolution. However, he saw little chance the three nations, which opposed the US-led war to oust Saddam, would send troops to Iraq soon. In April's upsurge in violence, soldiers from other countries in US-led forces and foreign civilians were also killed and more than two dozen foreigners were kidnapped, jeopardising transport, construction and

oil projects key to US efforts to win hearts and minds in Iraq. The US military said Thomas Hamill, a trucker who had been held hostage for three weeks by gunmen, escaped into the arms of a US patrol close to Saddam's home town of Tikrit, but gave few details. Hamill, who worked for US company Halliburton's subsidiary Kellogg, Brown and Root, was seized when his convoy was attacked on a main highway out of Baghdad on Apr 9. The Mississippi farmer, in Iraq to earn more money, was filmed by a TV crew as he was driven away by masked gunmen. They released a video later threatening to kill or maim him. US-led forces are also struggling to deal with another flashpoint area, the southern city of Najaf — holy to Iraq's Shi'ite majority, where radical Shi'ite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr is holed up with thousands of his Mehdi Army militia. Sadr is wanted by US troops and Iraqi judges in connection with the murder of a rival Shi'ite cleric a year ago. Sadr's followers rose up in several towns and cities last month after one of his aides was arrested in connection with the murder, but the uprising has largely died down. However, his militia still controls Najaf, nearby Kufa and Kerbala. The latest US combat deaths took to 552 the number of American troops killed since US-led forces invaded Iraq in March last year to topple Saddam. — Reuters.

London, May 4 — A press report, dated today, states: Shi'ite militiamen fired several mortar shells at a US base in Najaf early today and at a city hall guarded by Bulgarian troops in another Shi'ite city. Elsewhere, four US soldiers died after their Humvee overturned during a combat patrol, the US Army said. The sporadic overnight shelling of the US base in Najaf followed intense attacks yesterday by militiamen loyal to radical cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, who pounded the base with mortars and fired rifles and machine guns. No US soldiers were killed in either attack. US officers estimated about 20 Iraqis were killed by US retaliatory fire. In Karbala, 50 miles north of Najaf, the city hall and the police headquarters, which are guarded by Bulgarian soldiers, came under mortar fire before dawn today, Bulgarian Defence Ministry spokeswoman Rumyana Strugareva said. No casualties or damage were reported after that attack which lasted about ten minutes. Al-Sadr's forces have battled coalition troops since the occupation authorities sought his arrest last month for the killing of a rival cleric last year. North of Baghdad, four US soldiers of the 1st Infantry Division died from injuries sustained when their vehicle rolled over last night during a patrol near Khalis, some 40 miles north-east of Baghdad, the military said in a statement. At least 759 US troops have died in Iraq since the war began in March, 2003. In Najaf, US commanders said they were holding back fire to avoid serious clashes in the city, which is home to one of the most holy Shi'ite Muslim shrines. "I think every soldier here understands the sensitivities of the situation," said Lt Col Pat White. He added that US troops would "maintain our defence posture"

until someone "much, much higher than me makes a different decision." The shelling today was light compared to yesterday's sharp clashes. White estimated that 20 militiamen were killed in yesterday's battle. He said there were few civilian casualties because troops were using precision fire. In Fallujah, Maj Gen Mohammed Abdul-Latif, who opposed Saddam Hussein, took over as head of a new force that will replace US Marines in the city, subject to a final background check by US officials. Abdul-Latif would replace another general who may have been involved in Saddam-era repression. During a brief news conference in Fallujah, Abdul-Latif condemned the brutal killing and mutilation of four American contractors there last month, which triggered the three-week siege of the city. However, Abdul-Latif said the people of Fallujah collectively were not to blame. Abdul-Latif met with former officers of Saddam's army at the headquarters of Iraqi security forces in Fallujah today. Fallujah residents have been celebrating what many see as a victory over the US Marines, who are lifting a month-long siege and pulling back from positions. The Marines are being replaced by an Iraqi force that is largely made up of former soldiers. US officials have acknowledged they did not vet the force's commanders for the extent of their ties to Saddam before letting the new brigade take over. The new brigade has taken up positions in the south of Fallujah and is expected to replace Marines in the north and start patrols in the city soon. US officials said the Fallujah Brigade would crack down on hardcore guerrillas in the city even though the force itself will likely include some of the gunmen involved in fighting against the Marines. Since Friday (Apr 30), masked and armed insurgents have moved freely in the city's streets. In Najaf, US troops yesterday fought for hours with Shi'ite militiamen who barraged the US base with mortars overnight, then in the afternoon opened fire from several directions. US soldiers responded with heavy machine gun and tank fire. The fighting subsided late yesterday, but overnight, insurgents fired several more mortar rounds at the base. The US military moved soldiers to the base inside of the city after Spanish peacekeepers withdrew following a decision by the new Madrid government to terminate its involvement in Iraq. US troops took over the Spanish base as the coalition was cracking down on al-Sadr, who has taken refuge in Najaf, the holiest city in Shi'ite Islam. Al-Sadr's forces have stepped up attacks in recent days, apparently either to pressure US officials to negotiate an end to the stand-off or to goad troops into retaliating and raising Shi'ite anger. The US military has vowed to capture or kill the cleric, whose militia launched an uprising across the south in early April.

London, May 5 — A press report, dated today, states: The US-led coalition and militiamen of the radical Shi'ite cleric Moqtada Sadr clashed in the southern Iraqi city of Diwaniya today, the cleric's spokesman said. "Violent clashes are currently taking place in the middle of

the city," Ali Kharsane said, without specifying if there were casualties. There was no immediate confirmation from the coalition of fighting in Diwaniya, 180km from Baghdad. Overnight, three insurgents were killed in fighting near the Shi'ite holy city of Najaf. Five Iraqis were also killed and 20 wounded yesterday during several hours of fighting between the two sides in Najaf. Sadr, who is wanted in connection with the murder of a rival cleric last year, has dug in with his militia around the Imam Ali mausoleum, Najaf's holiest site.

Falluja, May 5 — US Marines say they plan to lift a security cordon around the volatile north-west of the city of Falluja today and allow traffic in for the first time in a month. The cordon had previously been tightly enforced in the hope of trapping guerrillas inside the Golan district, a hotbed of resistance to the US-led occupation of Iraq. "We expect to open the roads at checkpoints jointly manned by marines and Iraqi forces on Wednesday," Lieutenant-Colonel Gregg Olsen, commander of the 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines Regiment, said. "Other marines will realign their positions and move back but remain within support distance." Troops of the US-backed Iraqi Civil Defence Corps yesterday began manning checkpoints previously guarded by US troops alone. US forces are hoping the new Falluja Brigade, predominantly made up of former members of Saddam Hussein's military, will crush 2,000 rebels and root out perhaps 200 foreign militants. The commander of the brigade, General Mohammed Latif, said yesterday the month of violence between fighters in the city and US forces had been a misunderstanding stirred up by foreign guerrillas. — Reuters.

Baghdad, May 6 — A suicide bomber killed five Iraqis and an American soldier at an entrance to the U.S. Baghdad headquarters today, hours after President Bush tried to mend the damage from a prisoner abuse scandal. The car bomb also wounded 23 Iraqi civilians and at least three U.S. soldiers at an entry checkpoint to the so-called Green Zone, a U.S. military spokesman said. The bomber struck as Iraqis employed by the U.S.-led administration were going to work in the heavily guarded zone which used to be Saddam Hussein's Republican Palace. Hours earlier, Bush appeared on two Arabic satellite television stations to tell an outraged Middle East that soldiers guilty of abusing Iraqi prisoners would be punished. He did not explicitly apologise for the scandal which erupted after pictures of prisoners being sexually humiliated appeared last week, leaving the public apologies to top aides. A week after pictures were published, the U.S. army revealed that 25 prisoners had died in Iraq and Afghanistan in U.S. custody. They included two Iraqis murdered by Americans, one death described as justifiable homicide, and 12 deaths by natural or undetermined causes. Ten were still being investigated. The CIA said it was investigating the deaths of three prisoners interrogated by its personnel in Iraq and Afghanistan but did not say if these were among the



25 reported by the Army. Meanwhile, President Bush asked Congress for another \$25 billion for military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, breaking a pledge not to seek more money before the November election. A level of about 138,000 U.S. troops will be maintained in Iraq through 2005, U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has said, warning there will be increased attacks in the run-up to a planned hand over of sovereignty to Iraqis in June. — Reuters.

## ISRAEL

Gaza, May 2 — Israeli helicopters fired three missiles into Gaza City today, wounding at least two people, hours after Palestinian militants killed five Jewish settlers in the territory, witnesses said. The missiles hit a 12-story building known as the Palestine Tower and housing a radio station of the main militant faction Hamas. Today's air attack occurred as members of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's party were voting in an internal referendum on his plan to withdraw settlers from the Gaza Strip in a strategy of "disengagement" from conflict with Palestinians. Pre-referendum polls indicated Sharon's plan would be defeated by rank-and-file in the right-wing party. — Reuters.

London, May 4 — A press report, dated today, states: Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon is scrambling to come up with alternatives, including a possible pullout from just five Jewish settlements, after his Likud Party overwhelmingly rejected a withdrawal from all of the Gaza Strip, a senior government official said today. In Gaza, an Israeli missile strike killed two Palestinians, including a 16-year-old boy, and wounded 22 others, in fighting in a refugee camp. Sharon had promoted a "unilateral disengagement" from the Palestinians for several months, and Likud's rejection of the plan in a referendum on Sunday (May 2) dealt a tough blow to the prime minister. Sharon has pledged to find an alternative that would be more acceptable to his hard-line party. However, he is also under pressure from a key coalition partner, the moderate Shinui Party, to push forward with his peace efforts. The main opposition Labour Party, meanwhile, is pushing for early elections. In Gaza, an Israeli attack helicopter fired a missile early today at a group of armed Palestinians in the Khan Younis refugee camp in Gaza, killing two and wounding 22, residents and doctors said. Witnesses said gunmen fired two missiles at Israeli tanks in the camp before the helicopter struck. Palestinian hospital officials said one of those killed was a 25-year-old member of the militant Hamas group. The other victim, a 16-year-old boy, was a civilian. Doctors at Khan Younis hospital said five of the wounded were in critical condition. Some civilians were among the wounded, they said. Israeli forces withdrew from the area early today, the army said. The Israeli operation followed an attack on Sunday by Palestinian gunmen who ambushed an Israeli vehicle, killing a pregnant Jewish settler and her four young

daughters. Also early today, Israeli troops took up positions around Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's office building in the West Bank city of Ramallah, witnesses said. Israeli military officials said soldiers were arresting suspects, but the operation was not linked to Arafat's office. There were no reports of gunfire. The soldiers were withdrawn early today, the army said.

Bureij Refugee Camp, Gaza, May 5 — Israel released a co-founder of Hamas to the Gaza Strip but shot and killed another leader of the militant group in the West Bank today, witnesses and a military source said. Mohammed Taha, 68, had been the highest ranking Hamas figure from Gaza in Israeli custody. He was arrested during a military raid in Bureij refugee camp in central Gaza in March 2003. Witnesses said Taha was freed at the Erez crossing in northern Gaza this afternoon, and then driven by supporters to Bureij, in central Gaza. It was not immediately clear exactly why Taha was released at a time when Israel has stepped up operations against Hamas. Shortly after Taha's release, Israeli soldiers shot dead a senior Hamas militant leader, Imad Mohammed Janajra, 31, in an olive grove in the northern West Bank, witnesses said. An Israeli military source said Janajra was shot when soldiers spotted him armed and approaching them near his village of Talousa. The source said troops also detonated a bomb planted nearby. — Reuters.

## NEPAL

Kathmandu, May 4 — Nepal's king, facing mounting protests over his suspension of democracy, yesterday lifted a ban on public rallies that had sparked thousands of arrests but failed to quell massive demonstrations. Police released two top opposition leaders detained to stop them leading the latest in a series of rallies against King Gyanendra to demand he replace an appointed royalist government with a multi-party team and hold elections. Ending the ban was a key condition the five opposition parties had set before they would agree to talks with King Gyanendra to end the political crisis. More than 5,000 people have been arrested and 300 injured since protests against the king were stepped up on Apr 1, the move that prompted the ban. — Reuters.

London, May 4 — A press report, dated May 2, states: Maoist rebels attacked development and infrastructure projects in rural Nepal, causing more than one million dollars of damage ahead of a general strike, police said. More than 150 Maoists launched a nighttime raid on a building providing agricultural training in the southeastern Dhanusha district, setting off a bomb and torching 14 government-owned vehicles, police said today. They also bombed an irrigation project, a bridge and a government transportation office in the district, police said. No one was injured, but a police officer estimated damage at nearly 90 million rupees (\$US 1.28 million). The attacks came before a day-long strike begun in the troubled district called by the Maoists to protest alleged

killings of their activists by security forces. The rebels plan a nationwide strike from May 18 to 20.

## NIGERIA

London, May 4 — A press report, dated today, states: Heavily armed Christian militants attacked a Muslim village in Nigeria's central highlands and triggered a clash that left at least 67 people dead, a police commander said today. Assistant commissioner Sotonye Wakama told reporters he had led a team to the ethnic Hausa village of Yelwa Shendam after witnesses fleeing the area reported an attack late yesterday by a large group of gunmen. Reports said up to a hundred people could have been killed and all the Muslims in Yelwa-Shendam had moved to Kurgwi in Quaana Pan local government council for fear of further attacks. Witnesses said fighting was still continuing in the area today. Police commissioner Innocent Ilozuke said the fighting was thought to be a revenge attack, after three Tarok people were killed last month.

London, May 6 — A press report, dated today, states: Nigeria's top Muslim leader said yesterday that 300 people, mostly Muslims, were killed in Sunday's (May 2) attacks by Christian militia in the town of Yelwa in the central Plateau state. Justice Abdulkadir Orire, secretary general of the Jama'atu Nasril Islam, described the killings in the remote farming town as "genocide" and said they took the death toll from three months of ethnic violence to at least 700-800 people.

## PAKISTAN

Karachi, May 3 — Pakistan's two state owned gas distribution companies-Sui Northern Gas Pipeline Company Ltd (SNGPL) and Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) said that a 20-inch gas pipeline from Sui gas filed in Balochistan Province to Punjab was blown up in village Hajano, some 80 kms from Jacobabad in Sindh Province, suspending gas supply to parts of Sindh and the Punjab provinces on Sunday morning (May 2). Company officials reported that the explosion occurred in the jurisdiction of Tangwani police station of Taluka Kandhkot, destroying an eight-foot piece of the pipeline, owned by the SNGPL. It also created a 20-foot deep crater in the ground. A team of SSGC arrived at the scene from Shikarpur and started the repair work. Gas supply to Kashmore, Kandhkot, Shikarpur, Rahim Yar Khan, Sadiqabad, and Rajanpur was restored from alternative pipeline after seven hours. According to Deputy General Manager (Technical) of SSGC Ghazi Anwar Kerio, the repair work would be completed in 24 hours. Kerio said that it was an act of terrorism as a bomb blew up the pipeline. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

London, May 4 — A press report, dated May 3, states: An apparent car bomb in south-west Pakistan has killed three Chinese engineers helping to build a multi-million dollar seaport and injured 11 others, today, police and hospital officials said. The victims travelled by passenger van to the port in Gwadar, on the Arabian Sea coast near the Iranian

border some 480 kilometres west of Karachi. Police, calling the blast a "terrorist attack," said a car blew up as the van passed. "It is a terrorist act." A bomb may have been detonated by remote control, a police officer said. The Pakistani driver and a Pakistani security guard were among the injured, the head of the Gwadar Civil Hospital, Masood Ahmed, said. Six of the nine injured Chinese were in a serious condition. China, Pakistan's oldest and closest ally, is financing some 80 per cent of the \$US248 million port project. The China Engineering Harbour company, overseeing the port's development, has some 450 engineers and technicians working in Gwadar.

**PERU**

London, May 6 — A press report, dated May 5, states: Peru's interior minister is being forced to resign after the country's Congress voted to censure him. Politicians said Fernando Rospigliosi failed to calm three weeks of protests in the south of the country which culminated in a mob lynching of a town mayor last week. It is the first time a minister has been censured by Congress since President Alejandro Toledo took office almost three years ago and Mr Rospigliosi's departure is bad news for Mr Toledo's already weak government. Mr Rospigliosi was given 72 hours to resign after the legislature voted 62 to 39 with six abstentions to censure him. The lawmakers needed 61 votes to force him out. Last week, thousands of mostly indigenous Aymara people beat to death the mayor of Ilave in southern Peru after accusing him of corruption. Opponents of Mr Rospigliosi said he did nothing to handle the events which led to the death of the mayor. The minister told Congress last week that he did all he could to calm the residents of Ilave. His departure is likely to harm the president, who has lost a handful of ministers and a vice president in the past six months after a raft of corruption scandals. According to a poll published this week, Mr Toledo currently has the approval of less than eight percent of the population.

**SAUDI ARABIA**

Jeddah, May 4 — Saudi Arabia said today that four men who killed five Westerners in a suspected al Qaeda attack on a Saudi energy site were two brothers and their uncles, and one had links to a Saudi dissident group in London. Interior Minister Prince Nayef bin Abdul-Aziz has said he believes Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda was behind Saturday's (May 1) attack in the oil and petrochemical hub of Yanbu. There has been no claim of responsibility for the shootings, which killed two Americans, two Britons and an Australian. The gunmen dragged the corpse of one American through the streets of the Red Sea town before being shot dead by police. Two Saudi security personnel were also killed. Violence in the Middle East and concerns over potential disruptions to petroleum supplies have helped to push oil prices to their highest levels for 13 years. US light crude rose more than 80 cents a barrel yesterday after the killings at Yanbu, which

heightened fears that militants might target oil infrastructure in the world's top crude exporter. The Interior Ministry named the attackers as brothers Sami and Samir al-Ansari and their uncles Ayman and Mustafa, all Saudis. It identified Mustafa as a suspected militant wanted by Saudi authorities who had entered the country illegally after working with well-known Saudi dissident figures abroad. "He last left the country in 1994 to join Saad al-Fagih and Mohamed al-Mas'ari to work with them in their suspicious committee," it said. "He recently entered the country illegally, crossing the borders in order to carry out vile plans." Fagih and Mas'ari, two British-based Saudi opposition figures promoting democratic reform in the conservative kingdom, set up the Committee for the Defence of Legitimate Rights (CDLR) in 1993. "This is a desperate and hopeless attempt by the Saudi government to find some link between us and terrorists, after trying many times and failing," Fagih said. "The Saudi government has to decide if it is accusing us, Israel or al Qaeda, and then those accusations can be taken seriously," he said in reference to initial comments by Crown Prince Abdullah blaming "Zionist hands" for the attack. He said someone called Mustafa al-Ansari had frequented the CDLR in 1996, but he did not know if it was the attacker. The US ambassador to Riyadh yesterday praised the kingdom's crackdown on al Qaeda militants but re-issued a warning to the 35,000 Americans in the Gulf state to leave after the shooting. Fifty people were killed in Riyadh last year in a string of suicide bombings blamed on al Qaeda. Security forces have killed or arrested eight on a list of 26 top militants since December. Swiss-based ABB Lummus, targeted in Saturday's attack, said it was evacuating all 90 foreign staff from Yanbu and that a project it was carrying out for a Saudi petrochemical firm would be delayed. — Reuters.

**SUDAN**

Khartoum, May 5 — Fighting has erupted between Sudanese government forces and rebels in the west of the country despite a ceasefire signed last month, military and security sources said today. Neighbouring Chad said the fighting had spilled over the border and that its army clashed with Sudanese pro-government militia 25 kms inside Chadian territory, with seven people killed in the violence. The fighting breaks a truce aimed to enable urgent food and medical supplies to reach hundreds of thousands of people forced from their homes. Aid groups have issued warnings of a humanitarian crisis. The sources in the impoverished region of Darfur, who asked not to be identified, told Reuters that clashes on the Sudanese side of the border around Abu Gamra, 45 kms north of the town of Kebkabiya, had involved forces led by Sudan's army. "We are still fighting factions of the rebels... We have to destroy them. These are our orders," a senior Sudanese military source told Reuters, speaking by telephone from Darfur. "This is the third day of fighting.

Some of the rebels refuse to accept that they have to lay down their arms." Another Sudanese security source in Darfur confirmed that clashes with the rebels were continuing in the area around Abu Gamra. He said they involved Sudanese regular forces and an irregular group of local fighters commanded by the army. Emmanuel Nadingar, acting defence minister in Chad, said the Janjaweed had attacked civilians inside Chad early today, killing six of them before being chased back over the border. "Our forces clashed with the Janjaweed. We lost a commandant... The Chadian government strongly condemns this clash," Nadingar said. — Reuters.



**COLOMBIA**

Bogota, May 3 — Kidnappings in Colombia, number one kidnap country of the world, dropped by almost a half in the first three months of the year, the government said today. There were 317 reported kidnappings from January to March, down from 586 in the same period of 2003, the National Planning Department said in a news release. It was the lowest rate of kidnapping for eight years. President Alvaro Uribe has boosted military spending and pushed the armed forces to pursue Marxist rebels, who carried out almost half of the kidnappings in which the perpetrators were identified so far this year, according to the government figures. — Reuters.



**BANGLADESH**

See under "Political & Civil Unrest."

**BOLIVIA**

See under "Political & Civil Unrest."

**CANADA**

London, May 6 — A press report, dated May 5, states: A strike by 4,300 employees of Aliant, Atlantic Canada's largest telecommunications company, is poised to enter its second week with no talks planned and frustration mounting on both sides of the labour dispute. Operators, technicians and clerical workers went on strike on Apr 23 following a week of conciliation talks. The main issues in the dispute are job security, pension plans and wages. "We remain committed to reaching a settlement, but ... there are no new talks scheduled," Aliant spokeswoman Brenda Reid said today. There has been no contact between the company and its two unions since negotiations broke off nearly two weeks ago, said Ervan Cronk,

spokesman for the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers union. Earlier in the week, the union's national president, Brian Payne, said Aliant's "pigheaded" behaviour is blocking a settlement. Meanwhile, about 1,800 Aliant managers have had to respond to scattered service outages since the strike began, some of which the company has described as "suspicious." The RCMP were called in to investigate in Cape Breton and parts of mainland Nova Scotia after damage to cables and equipment theft left hundreds of customers without service last week. Cronk said while it appears the two sides are at an impasse, the strike can't drag on for much longer. Aliant's services will eventually get bogged down as managers struggle to keep up with the workload. But Reid insisted the managers have the expertise to keep the system running. Aliant provides telephone, Internet and other services to an estimated two million residential customers and 80,000 businesses in Atlantic Canada.

### ITALY

London, Apr 30 — A press report, dated Apr 29, states: Alitalia employees have ended a strike which led the airline to cancel hundreds of flights, Alitalia officials have confirmed. Demanding the state assists the ailing airline, the workers walked out leaving passengers stranded at airports throughout Italy. Ministers are still meeting with union officials, Alitalia said, in talks on the airline's financial woes. The loss-making airline plans to cut 16% of its 20,000-strong workforce. "The government is still in negotiation with unions. We want the situation resolved as soon as possible," an Alitalia spokesman said. Air services are due to restart at 2000 local time, but the airline warned that "the resumption of flights will be slow and progressive." Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's cabinet discussed a package of measures for the airline today but put off making a final decision on whether to approve it. European competition rules may also mean any state aid will have to be open to the entire Italian air transport sector, officials say, which would bring little benefit to Alitalia.

London, May 4 — A press report, dated May 3, states: Fiat SpA said today that a strike now entering its third week at a southern Italian factory had cut auto production by 35,000 vehicles, or two percent of total annual production. Pickets and roadblocks around the factory in Melfi, southern Italy, have been dismantled. But Fiat said some strikers were impeding other employees from reaching their jobs. National union overseers have begun sporadic talks with the company, but some union groups in Melfi voted to continue their walkout today. Production at Melfi has resumed at a reduced level but other Fiat Auto factories have also had to cut back due to the unavailability of key components. Fiat said the strike has reduced production by 35,000 units. Two of the company's key new models, the Lancia Y and the Fiat Punto, are assembled in Melfi. The strike is also affecting the network of smaller companies that supply Fiat Auto. Fiat

called for Melfi's assembly lines to return to full productivity and said it was willing to meet with union representatives to discuss their complaints.

### NEW ZEALAND

Wellington, Apr 30 — Lyttelton Port Company (LPC) ground to a halt late last night as workers went on strike after eleventh-hour talks failed. The four-day strike began at 2300 hrs and will end when workers return to work at the same time on Monday (May 3) after a stop-work meeting earlier that day. Three days of talks this week have not brought about a settlement despite both parties voicing a commitment to reaching a resolution. However, parties will return to the negotiating table next week in a bid to resolve the long-running dispute. Six days of strike were initially planned but union advocate Paul Corliss said two notices were retracted as a sign of good faith after some limited progress was made during yesterday's session. The combined unions also agreed to make an exemption to allow the import of critical LPG supplies to Christchurch. The exemption was made because immediate supplies were needed to ensure constant supply to some city hospitals and homes. LPC chief executive Peter Davie said the strike would force the firm to close most of its operations but the gatehouse and signal tower would remain active and the monitoring of refrigerated containers would continue. "Though the strike affects shipping in and out of the port, companies like Toll Logistics and Lyttelton Stevedores will still be able to operate their receipt and delivery services, and coastal shipper Pacifica will not be affected," he said. "Once the strike commences some of our customers and exporters will be losing millions of dollars per day. This action also affects the direct employment of thousands of people in the Canterbury region." The cost to the port is likely to reach \$1 million but Davie has said of more concern is the roll-on effect on importers and exporters who are in their busiest period. The four-day strike will cost state-owned coal producer Solid Energy alone about \$2 million. LPC and unions have been wrangling over the collective agreement — which covers 240 staff — for more than two months. The list of issues being negotiated are confidential but a known sore point is the port's use of permanent part-timers which LPC claims are vital in making it a competitive business but which unions are opposed to. The port company said the use of permanent part-time staff enabled it to run the round-the-clock container terminal operation its customers required and sped up the turnaround time for vessels in the port. Permanent part-time staff are employed to work 48 hours a fortnight, eliminating the need for the company to pay workers for down time. A one-year agreement ratified in February last year agreed on the port using 17 permanent part-timers but union advocate Les Wells said last night the port was currently using about 30. "Idle time has always been an accepted part of the industry and they're

trying to take it out of the industry," Wells said. Unions argue the permanent part-time positions undermine job security and workers' ability to obtain permanent full-time work at the port. The Maritime Union of New Zealand, one of three unions involved in bargaining at the port, earlier this week launched a campaign against the "casualisation" of jobs. However, Wells said the unions' debate with the LPC over permanent part timers dated back three years, well before the campaign started. — Lloyd's Agents.

### PAKISTAN

Karachi, May 6 — Pakistan Flour Mills Association (PFMA) said flour mills in the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan went on a four-day strike from yesterday against the Punjab government ban on the inter-provincial movement of wheat. Both flour millers and the provincial government are protesting the decision of Punjab in this connection. According to PFMA (NWFP chapter) President Naeem Butt, the Association has also written a letter to President General Pervez Musharraf to seek a meeting with him and brief him on the situation arising out of the ban imposed by Punjab on the flour mill industry of the Frontier province. He informed that flour mills in Balochistan also went on the strike to condemn the ban as well as express solidarity with the millers of NWFP. Tearing the decision of the Punjab government as unconstitutional and unjustified, he vowed that their struggle would continue until the withdrawal of the ban on wheat movement in the country. In NWFP, 167 flour mills are running, but the inter-provincial ban on the movement of wheat has rendered the majority of them closed. On Tuesday (May 4), the flour millers staged a protest demonstration in front of the Governor's House and presented a memorandum regarding their protest, he added. According to NWFP Food Minister Fazal Rabbani, the province has a stock of only 70,000 tonnes of wheat, sufficient for only one week. The situation will get worst if Punjab continues the ban on wheat movement and the flour mills would have no option but close down their business. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

### PERU

London, Apr 30 — A press report, dated Apr 29, states: Peruvian miners from companies including Southern Peru Copper Corp. and Shougang Hierro Peru SA went on a two-day strike to demand an end to outsourcing and wage raises reflecting higher metal prices, union officials said. Miners are demanding higher salaries and better working conditions and are pressing their companies to stop contracting jobs to outside companies that pay lower wages, said Pedro Escate, general secretary of the Mining Workers' National Federation. All 1,300 workers at Southern Peru, the nation's biggest copper miner, and 1,500 employees at Shougang Hierro Peru, the nation's only iron miner, went on strike, said Guillermo Panca from Southern Peru's

Toquepala mine and Julio Ortiz from Shougang. Workers at both mines are demanding wage raises to reflect the increase of metal prices. "Shougang's earnings more than doubled last year from 2002," said Ortiz. "This should be transferred into better jobs for workers." Miners also are demanding changes in the pension laws to allow them to retire before the age of 65. Miners at Volcan Cia. Minera SA, Cia. Minera San Ignacio de Morococha SA, Pan American Silver Corp.'s mines and Cia. Minera Milpo SA also went on strike.

#### UNITED STATES

London, Apr 30 — A press report, dated Apr 29, states: High diesel fuel prices rattled California's transportation industry yesterday, as independent truckers in Stockton walked out for a third straight day and state officials discussed an allocation system to ensure adequate supplies for emergency vehicles. The standoff between trucking firms and several hundred independent drivers caused a partial shutdown of Union Pacific Corp.'s railyard in French Camp, south of Stockton. To prevent goods from stacking up there, UP placed an embargo on the yard yesterday, limiting the volume of freight that could be brought in by rail. Irate over diesel costs that have risen 18% this month - topping \$2.30 a gallon - several hundred independent truckers have refused to haul goods from the UP and Burlington Northern Santa Fe yards around Stockton until they get a big increase in shipping rates. In addition to soaring fuel costs, the truckers are worried about other expenses, such as medical costs. Their action has bottled up freight bound for warehouses and other sites from Sacramento to Fresno, but it was hard to say if the informal strike would translate into shortages in the region. Trucking executives said the dispute would have to continue several more days to create short-ages. And spokeswoman Stephanie Williams at the California Trucking Association said drivers from Arizona and Oregon, with access to cheaper fuel, are coming into California to make deliveries and pick up the slack. At the same time, though, there was speculation that the dispute could spread to other sites, ports as well as railyards, where truckers pick up goods and haul them to customers. UP spokesman John Bromley said his company heard reports that drivers might stage similar actions at UP yards in Oakland, Long Beach, Los Angeles and Commerce. Protests or walkouts also were anticipated at the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, although nothing had materialised as of yesterday. "They can't pass on costs," she told a joint hearing yesterday of the Assembly Transportation Committee and the Select Committee on Gasoline Competition, Marketing and Pricing. Not only are prices high, but state officials are fretting that some areas might run short on fuel. At the hearing, Commissioner James Boyd of the California Energy Commission said his agency has briefly looked at implementing an allocation system that would divert diesel supplies to make

sure emergency and public safety vehicles have enough. But Boyd, in an interview, denied claims by the trucking association that such a plan was on the verge of being implemented. The trucking group opposes allocation, which could tighten supplies considerably for commercial users. The Energy Commission has been tracking supplies of gasoline and diesel closely for several weeks and became particularly alarmed when diesel supplies fell dramatically in early April, said commission spokeswoman Claudia Chandler. The governor would have to declare a state of emergency before an allocation system could kick in. She said it's never happened before.

London, May 4 — A press report, dated today, states: A second day of demonstrations by independent truckers kept traffic at the Port of Oakland at a snail's pace and threatened to disrupt the Bay Area's flow of goods. "Until we get an answer, we will be on strike," said Irv Dhanda, a trucker from Hayward. He said the drivers have been gathering to discuss a formal list of demands, such as a surcharge to compensate for record-high diesel prices, and are looking into forming a union. Hundreds of truckers rallied Friday in Oakland, Los Angeles/Long Beach and Lathrop in San Joaquin County. Yesterday, the work stoppage appeared to be mainly in Oakland. "They seem to be very committed and energetic," said Chuck Mack, port division director with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, which has been supporting the drivers and will propose recommendations to resolve the dispute today. The Port of Oakland's terminals operated at about the same capacity as Friday, at about 15 to 20% of normal, according to the port. APL, with operations in Oakland, said it saw about 10% of the normal number of trucks that pass through its gates daily. "It's not a concern yet, but it could be later on in the week," said Scott Dailey, a spokesman for APL. APL has already been paying its truckers a surcharge to offset the increasing fuel prices. The impact on the Bay Area's economy has been limited so far, because the demonstration had been well publicised and companies had shifted their plans in anticipation. But that could change if the protests extend through the week. New United Motor Manufacturing Inc., a Fremont-based joint venture between General Motors and Toyota, said it has been monitoring the situation "hour by hour" and that the protests could potentially halt its manufacturing line. The plant receives 92 containers a day from the Port of Oakland in a process called "just in time," in which the car parts move straight from the container to the assembly floor. But Union Pacific, the nation's largest railroad, indicated yesterday that the work stoppage was not as serious as it first thought. It had initially planned to reject all shipments headed to Oakland and Los Angeles/Long Beach beginning yesterday because it feared its operations could become backlogged. John Bromley, a Union Pacific spokesman, said that it changed its mind Sunday. "It's not enough to significantly interfere with our business," he said.

London, May 6 — A press report, dated May 5, states: No arrests were reported today at a four-day-old trucker protest at the port of Oakland over rising diesel gas prices, but most truckers stayed away from work despite a tentative agreement brokered by the port. Truckers continued to protest, but there was no repeat of yesterday's activity, when dozens of Oakland riot police were called in and three truckers were arrested for vandalism for throwing rocks at trucks that did not honour the strike. Yesterday, the Port of Oakland convinced truckers, shippers and brokers to sit down together to work out an agreement over diesel gas prices and other issues that are cutting into truckers' profits. In return, truckers were supposed to get back on the job. But Oakland-based owner-operator Irvinder Dhanda said that while the tentative agreement is a step in the right direction, most protesting truckers decided not to go back to work pending a meeting at the port tomorrow night. Port spokeswoman Marilyn Sandifur said, "There's a substantial difference between the number of demonstrators today compared to yesterday," with many fewer truckers participating today. But she admitted that truck activity is still about 75% below normal levels. Spokesman Scott Dailey of the shipping company APL estimated that trucking activity was 85 to 90% below normal today. Union Pacific Railroad spokesman John Bromley said the railroad's operations at the port remain closed for the second day. "There's no traffic in or out," he said. Bromley said Union Pacific would assess the situation on a day-by-day basis.

### Awards & Settlements



#### MISDIAGNOSIS, AUSTRALIA

London, May 5 — A press report, dated today, states: A South Australian woman crippled after a specialist's misdiagnosis 30 years ago has won a damages payout of \$3.2 million. Vivien Kaye Waller, 49, of Kangaroo Island, became wheelchair bound in the late 1980s when a cyst in her spine went untreated. She had been misdiagnosed as suffering from multiple sclerosis in 1975. In the District Court she sued the Flinders Medical Centre and specialist neurologist Richard Burns. Today Judge Robert Lunn said if the cyst had been properly identified and removed, Mrs Waller would not have become a paraplegic.

#### NON-PAYMENT OF REVENUE, UNITED STATES

London, May 3 — A press report, dated May 2, states: A US court has ordered Modi Entertainment Network to pay \$2.4 million to ESPN Software India Pvt Ltd for non-payment of distribution revenues during the last four months of the distribution agreement between

June and September, 2000. MEN had claimed, among others, that its term as a distributor of ESPN Service in India, which expired on Sep 30, 2000, and was not extended by ESPN, should have been extended. MEN claimed damages on this account from ESPN Inc and ESPN Software India Pvt Ltd. The New York Supreme Court jury rejected the claim. ESPN, on the other hand, succeeded on the counter-claim it had filed against MEN in this proceeding and was awarded \$2.4 million.

#### **SPORTING INJURY AWARD, AUSTRALIA**

London, Apr 30 — A press report, dated today, states: The Court of Appeal in Brisbane has dismissed an appeal against a \$2.6 million payout to a man who was seriously injured after being hit with a golf ball during a charity tournament. Glen Ollier was hit in the head as he was about to play a shot at an event on Magnetic Island in far north Queensland in 1994. In a subsequent trial in Townsville, the Supreme Court found the man who hit the ball, who was playing in the group behind Mr Ollier, had breached his duty of care by failing to ensuring it was safe to play a shot. The Appeal Court agreed and today dismissed his appeal against the payout.

#### **UNFAIR DISMISSAL, UNITED STATES**

London, May 6 — A press report, dated May 5, states: A former worker at McKesson Corp's West Sacramento distribution centre has been awarded \$19 million by a jury that found she was unfairly fired because her panic disorder caused her to miss too much work. Charlene Roby, formerly of Orangevale, was fired after missing 10 days of work over 14 months, said her attorney, Christopher H. Whelan of Gold River. He said that amounted to discrimination and harassment against Roby because of her disability. The Yolo County civil jury awarded Roby \$15 million in punitive damages and \$4 million in compensatory damages in decisions reached on Friday and Monday (Apr 30 and May 3). McKesson spokesman James Larkin said the San Francisco company was "extremely disappointed with the outcome of the case." "We do not believe that the verdicts are supported by the facts or the law," he added. "And the company intends to vigorously pursue all available legal remedies, including an appeal, if that is necessary." The bulk of the compensatory award — or some \$2.7 million — was given on the basis of emotional distress. Of that amount, \$2.2 million was assessed against the Fortune 500 company, while another \$500,000 was awarded against Roby's immediate supervisor, who Whelan said was found to have harassed Roby. "She was a 25-year employee whose performance was exemplary for 24 years," said Whelan. "She was affected by this mental condition, and they couldn't even cut her any slack for these absences." Whelan said the company penalised Roby, a liaison with customers, because of her disability,

violating her protections under the Family Medical Leave Act, the California Family Medical Rights Act and the Fair Employment and Housing Act. The company's absenteeism policies, he said, were not consistently followed and not fully understood by workers at the site. Roby, who moved to Grants Pass, Oregon, after her April, 2000, firing, said yesterday that she suffered deep embarrassment on the job over her panic attacks, which brought offensive body odour. When she arrived for work, she said, she sometimes found "shampoos, deodorants, bath soaps, things like that on my desk." Her supervisor, Roby added, would bring pies or trinkets into the office for co-workers and exclude her. "I wanted to let it go," she said. "It was petty to me." However, after Roby exhausted her six sick days and used four vacation days for illness, she was asked to resign or be fired, she said. Roby refused to resign and was fired effective Apr 14, 2000, she said.

#### **UNPAID ROYALTIES, UNITED STATES**

London, May 6 — A press release, dated May 4, states: Major recording companies have agreed to return nearly \$50 million in unclaimed royalties to Sean "P. Diddy" Combs, Gloria Estefan, Dolly Parton and thousands of more obscure musicians under a settlement announced Tuesday. A two-year investigation by New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer's office found that many artists were not being paid royalties because record companies lost contact with the performers and had stopped making required payments. As a result of the agreement, Spitzer said, new procedures will be adopted to ensure that artists and their descendants receive the compensation they are entitled to. "Once the recording companies have received royalties, those royalties have to be disbursed to the artists who are owed those funds," Spitzer said at a news conference announcing the settlement. "There are many artists who struggle. . . They depend on the stream of royalties," he added. Spitzer said about \$25 million in royalties has already been paid, with the other \$25 million still outstanding. Representatives for Combs and Parton did not immediately return calls for comment. A spokesman for Estefan, reached before the announcement, was unaware of the settlement and had no immediate comment. Spitzer had no explanation when asked how companies could lose contact with such big-name artists. The participating companies include SONY Music Entertainment, Sony ATV Music Publishing, Warner Music Group, UMG Recordings, Universal Music, EMI Music Publishing and BMG Music. Under the settlement, the music companies agreed to make good-faith efforts to track down artists to whom royalties are due. If the artists still cannot be located, the money will revert to the state. The settlement could expand to include other recording companies, Spitzer said.

## Railway Accidents



#### **NARABRI AREA, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA**

London, May 4 — A press report, dated today, states: A New South Wales CountryLink train has derailed near Narabri in the north-west of NSW, a radio report said. ABC radio reported fire, police and ambulance services were on the scene. It is believed a train crashed into a car on a level crossing causing the train to leave the tracks. One person has been killed, with a number of others trapped on the train, ABC radio said.

#### **PARIT BUNTAR AREA, MALAYSIA**

London, May 6 — A press report, dated today, states: Three wagons of a Keretapi Tanah Melayu Bhd goods train jumped tracks at KM 38.5, Nibong Tebal-Bagan Serai railroad near Parit Buntar early today. A KTMB spokesman said the train was heading for Kuala Lumpur from Haadyai when the derailment happened at 0650 hrs. No casualties were reported. The spokesman said KTMB temporarily closed the affected stretch and its workers worked round-the-clock to repair the tracks. He said the affected railroad was expected to be reopened soon.

#### **PLANO, TEXAS, UNITED STATES**

London, May 4 — A press report, dated May 3, states: Clean-up continues in Plano after 18 cars of a Kansas City Southern freight train derailed. No injuries were reported in yesterday's accident. A Kansas City Southern statement says five of the 18 derailed cars overturned. The statement says the cars contained ash. Plano police Division Chief Bob Acker said none of the derailed cars carried hazardous materials, and there were no evacuations. A KCS spokeswoman says there's no word on when that crossing will be re-opened. But she says the main rail line will re-open late tonight.

London, May 4 — A press report, dated May 3, states: A train derailment is causing travel problems for Plano residents. Sixteen cars of an 80-car train derailed around 1600 hrs, yesterday at Jupiter and 14th Street. The cars that jumped the tracks were full of vinyl pellets. There were no injuries or evacuations. Crews worked throughout the night but were not able to clear the cars, which are still blocking both directions of Jupiter. Even after the cars are cleared, crews will need to close the lanes for the next few days to fix the tracks.

#### **QUEBEC CITY AREA, CANADA**

London, May 2 — A report from LaSalle, Quebec, dated May 1, states: A freight train carrying petroleum products derailed yesterday with about five cars leaving the tracks. There's no danger to residents or to the

environment, said Renald Labrie of the local fire prevention service. The 68-car train was travelling on a secondary track south of Quebec City when the accident happened. Local traffic was stalled because several of the derailed cars blocked a highway. The train had left an oil refinery and was heading to Montreal.

**ROBY AREA, TEXAS, UNITED STATES**

London, May 5 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: Six railroad cars of the Burlington Northern Sante Fe Railway (BNSR) derailed Sunday (May 2). While an investigation into the accident continues, company workers spent the day repairing the aftermath. Steve Forsburg, BNSR General Director of Public Affairs, said the derailment occurred at approximately 1945 hrs, Sunday. "There were six cars that sustained minor damage out of 105 cars," said Forsburg. The train was travelling from Carslbad to Beaumont when it derailed just west of Highway 70 North, which leads to Roby. "The main track line was not affected and both the cars and the tracks sustained minor damage," said Forsburg. BNSR workers were at the scene yesterday repairing damaged rails and using construction equipment to move the rail cars.

**RYONGCHON STATION, NORTH KOREA**

London, May 3 — A press report, dated Apr 30, states: In the first inter-Korean cargo flight, South Korea's Red Cross will transport blankets, medicine and other aid to North Korea today to help the communist nation cope with a devastating train explosion. The relief flight will be in addition to \$25 million in building materials, food and other goods Seoul plans to start shipping next week to Ryongchon, the town where the blast killed 161 people and destroyed thousands of homes. A South Korean vessel loaded with instant noodles, blankets and bottled water worth \$1 million arrived in a Northern port yesterday after a day-long voyage. South Korea has been quick to respond to the North's request for help after the Apr 22 tragedy, although Pyongyang has rejected Seoul's offer to truck supplies across their heavily fortified border, seriously slowing the transport of emergency supplies. The North also refused to let South Korean doctors go to the area.

Seoul, May 6 — The death toll from last month's train explosion in North Korea has risen from 161 to 170 but is now unlikely to increase much more, an international aid official who toured the site said. With relief efforts being carried out by hand while machinery sent in as aid stands idle, it was unclear if relief goods and emergency supplies from South Korea were reaching residents of the shattered town of Ryongchon, Tony Banbury, regional director of the World Food Programme, said in Seoul. North Korean officials had given the fresh death toll in the April 22 explosion but had no more details, Banbury said. More than 1,300 people were reported injured in the blast in Ryongchon, near the

Chinese border, which was apparently caused by sparks from an electric cable setting off two trainloads of explosives and petroleum and razing much of the town. After an initial refusal to accept any relief by land, North Korea agreed to a shipment of heavy equipment to be delivered over the fortified border. Banbury said there was some heavy machinery at the site but most was unused while the clean-up was being done by hand. — Reuters.

**SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS, UNITED STATES**

London, May 4 — A press report, dated May 3, states: A Union Pacific Railroad train derailed early today in San Antonio, sending box cars and thousands of gallons of diesel fuel into a shallow portion of a River. The derailment occurred at 0400 south of downtown after a Union Pacific Railroad train headed to Mexico from Houston struck the last car of a Union Pacific Railroad train headed to Illinois from Mexico, said Union Pacific Railroad Spokesman Mark Davis. The trains were on separate tracks when the accident happened. The engineer and conductor of the train that derailed jumped off their locomotives before the derailment and suffered minor injuries. A homeless man was also slightly injured. Two locomotives and 12 cars from one of the trains derailed, Davis said. The locomotives and five cars ended up in the San Antonio River, spilling 5,600 diesel gallons of diesel into the river. No cars from the other train jumped the tracks. Crews set up a dam in an effort to stop diesel fuel from flowing down river and an absorbent was also being utilized. Davis said 500 feet of track will be replaced. He added it will take several hours to clean up the wreckage. The cause of the derailment is under investigation.

London, May 5 — A press report, dated May 4, states: Crews removed crumpled box cars and locomotives from the San Antonio River today where a freight train derailed south of downtown. A crew from Eagle Construction and Environmental Services removed most of the 5,600 gallons of diesel fuel and oil that spilled into the river after a Union Pacific Railroad freight train collided with another Union Pacific Railroad freight train early yesterday at Roosevelt Avenue and South St. Mary's Street. Two locomotives and 12 cars from one of the trains derailed. The locomotives and five cars crashed into the river. The trains were on separate tracks when the crash happened. Union Pacific is still working on clearing a number of box cars that derailed on the tracks and workers are also testing the track where the tail ends of the two trains collided. Once the fuel is removed, San Antonio Water Systems will conduct water quality tests along the river to make sure the water is safe.

**TEJGAON AREA, DHAKA, BANGLADESH**

Karachi, May 5 — Bangladesh Railway said its goods train derailed near Dakkhin Begun Bari, in Tejgaon Industrial area in Dhaka last night. As a result, traffic on its tracks on both sides

of the crossing near the Film Development Corporation in Tejgaon remained suspended for around two and half an hours. It was reported that the train carrying containers derailed at 2130, local time, after leaving Tejgaon Railway Station 10 minutes before. However, it was put back on track at 1205. Traffic on the Panthapath Extension Road was diverted through Bangla Motor and Moghbazar. No one was injured. The cause of derailment is under investigation. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.



**MALFUNCTION, AVIATION CONTROL CENTRE, HOUSTON, TEXAS, UNITED STATES**

London, May 5 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: Air travel in Houston and South Texas struggled to return to normal late today after being disrupted by a computer glitch. The problem was the second major computer incident involving air travel in the past few days, and it caused many flights to be delayed for hours. The latest problem occurred at the Federal Aviation Administration's regional control centre in Houston when new software was installed early today. After being installed, the software affected the FAA's ability to handle automated flight plan data, the agency said. The previous version of the software then was reinstalled, but not before flights were delayed by as much as two hours. Houston-based Continental Airlines said about 40 of its flights were affected. Over the weekend, Atlanta-based Delta Air Lines saw its flights grounded for more than six hours after computer problems arose. The Houston problem was not caused by any type of virus like Sasser, FAA spokesman John Clabes said. Traffic at Houston's Bush Intercontinental Airport was nearly back to normal by mid afternoon, but Hobby Airport continued to experience some delays, Houston Airport System spokesman Ernie DeSoto said. That was probably because Hobby handles more regional traffic, he said. The problem began about 0750 hrs, according to the FAA. Primary radar coverage was maintained, but without any of the identifying data and the automatic processing of the data to display on computer screens for air traffic controllers. As a result, controllers at the Houston-based centre ordered a halt in takeoffs, or "ground stop," at all airports they cover, which includes airports in South Texas and small portions of New Mexico and Louisiana. In addition to Intercontinental and Hobby, 11 other regional commercial airports were affected. Among them were New Orleans and Baton Rouge in Louisiana.

**NETSKY-AC WORM**  
See "Sasser Worm".

**SASSER WORM**

London, May 4 — The rapidly evolving “Sasser” computer worm is spreading rapidly across the Internet, disrupting corporate and home computer systems and fuelling fears of more potent outbreaks to come. First detected over the weekend (May 1-2), the worm has already infected, by some estimates, over one million PCs and knocked out computer systems at banks, transport reservation systems and at European Commission offices. Unlike previous Internet worms, Sasser infects vulnerable PCs without any action by the user like opening attachments, allowing it to spread very quickly. Home users would likely first notice an infection if their computer mysteriously rebooted or their Internet connection slowed dramatically. Because of its nature, security experts were warning users to update their PCs with the latest Microsoft patches and install a firewall to keep out future infections. With businesses throughout parts of Europe returning from the long holiday weekend today, anti-virus technicians were expecting a new wave of infections. “It’s still going steady. It will be a big problem for a day or two, then it will linger on the Internet for weeks, and likely years,” said Mikko Hypponen, Anti-Virus Research Director at Finnish data security firm F-Secure. Because Sasser seeks out infectable computers automatically and does not use e-mail to spread, experts said personal machines may be most vulnerable. Security experts are analysing the worm to determine where Sasser might hit next. “We don’t know yet, for example, if it attacks machines running on Windows XP Embedded, which runs ATM machines and cash registers. That would be disastrous for banks and retailers,” said Raimund Genes, European president of security software firm Trend Micro. In the space of three days, four variants have emerged, each capable of causing machines that run on Microsoft’s Windows operating systems XP, NT and 2000 to reboot without warning and knocking out some computer reservation systems. Victims include Goldman Sachs, Australia’s Westpac Bank and Finnish financial company Sampo. US carrier Delta Air Lines also experienced a computer glitch on Saturday, causing delays and cancellations, but the company was unsure whether Sasser was the culprit. Sasser attacks an exploit in Windows known as the Local Security Authority Subsystem Service, or LSASS, which had been targeted in a Microsoft security update released on Apr 13. F-Secure’s Hypponen said the emergence of a related e-mail virus yesterday called Netsky.AC may hold clues to the authorship of Sasser. Netsky.AC carries an attachment purporting to fix Sasser infections. Since spotting Netsky.AC, Hypponen and other security officials suspect Sasser was programmed by a group believed to be based in Russia calling itself the “Skynet anti-virus group”. A link on Microsoft’s home page instructs users to make sure that they have installed a protective firewall, updated Windows to close the security loophole the worm exploits and

then remove the worm from their hard drives. — Reuters.

London, May 3 — A press report, dated May 2, states: Computers using Microsoft’s Windows XP or 2000 operating systems are the target of a new Internet worm that spreads from machine to machine without user intervention. The worm, dubbed Sasser.B, takes advantage of a flaw in Windows that was patched by a fix issued in mid-April. However, because not all users take advantage of an auto-update feature included in Windows XP and 2000, there are still many systems connected to the Internet that are vulnerable. Sasser.B attacks a component of Windows called LSASS.EXE, and installs a file called AVSERVE.EXE, which then begins scanning the Internet and local networks for more machines to infect. Unlike the majority of viruses and worms that attack Windows-based systems, Sasser does not require e-mail to spread. The worm also creates a server program on the infected computer that uses FTP, a common way to transfer files between computers, potentially leaving it vulnerable to hackers. An analysis by security software firm Symantec indicated Sasser has the potential to slow an infected PC dramatically, rendering it nearly unusable. According to McAfee.com, a PC security site operated by Network Associates, the worm may also crash the LSASS.EXE module in Windows. Sasser is similar to another worm that wreaked havoc among Windows users in 2003. MS-Blast or Blaster worked the same way, taking advantage of unpatched systems and exploiting a flaw for which Microsoft had already offered a patch. However, Sasser appeared to be moving at a slower pace than Blaster, which reproduced so quickly that it bogged down some Internet servers. Most antivirus software companies today had Sasser rated as a medium-risk worm.

London, May 4 — A press report, dated today, states: Coastguard stations around the UK have been severely disrupted after the Sasser worm brought down IT systems. The worm has hit all 19 coastguard stations and the service’s headquarters, leaving officers reliant on pens and paper. But there is no danger to the public, a UK Maritime and Coastguard Agency spokeswoman said. Its computer mapping facilities are not working but staff are still able to use paper maps, she added.

London, May 5 — A press report, dated today, states: The search has begun for the creators of the Sasser Windows worm that has wrought havoc this week. Sasser’s core computer code is being analysed for clues as to who might have put the malicious program together. The worm is said to have infected more than one million PCs and caused trouble for net users around the world. Worst hit seem to be home users and small businesses though some large organisations suffered serious disruption as well. A Microsoft spokeswoman said the FBI was taking the code apart to see if it bears any information that points to the authors of other viruses. Finnish anti-virus firm F-Secure published an

analysis of Sasser.D and the Netsky.V viruses and claimed there were parallels between the two. This analysis may not help law enforcement agencies track down Sasser’s creators as the authors of the 29 variants of Netsky remain at large. The Sasser worm first appeared on May 1 and estimates vary widely on how many Windows PCs have been infected by it. Simon Perry, head of security strategy at Computer Associates, said most large corporates avoided the worst attentions of Sasser or quickly moved to limit damage if they were infected. “Large companies tell us they have it under control and that it either did not hit them or if it did it was isolated,” he said. About 1.5 million people visited Microsoft’s Sasser clean-up web page in the first 48 hours of its availability, the software giant said. Website monitoring firm Netcraft said Microsoft’s update site was overwhelmed by the sheer number of people visiting to download a patch. Whatever the final numbers the worm’s four variants have racked up an impressive list of victims between them. The virus was reported to have hit up to 300,000 machines at Deutsche Post making it impossible for staff to hand over cash. Machines at investment bank Goldman Sachs, the European Commission and British Airways and 19 regional offices of the UK Maritime and Coastguard Agency all fell victim to Sasser. Up to 500 hospitals in New Orleans were shut down for several hours and social and health services in Washington state were also hit by the worm. Half of British Airways’ computers at the check-in desks in Terminal Four were put out of action leading to delays for customers yesterday evening. The reports of infections fell off sharply today suggesting that the worst of the Sasser outbreak is now over. But some anti-virus firms cautioned against complacency. “There is a fear that background radiation of the Sasser worm could be felt for months to come,” said Graham Cluley, senior technologist at Sophos. “The big danger is a raft of new computers that are not protected,” he added. According to Mr Cluley new computers often do not have protection for up to nine months worth of virus outbreaks. The virus can infect PCs running Windows 2000 and XP that are not patched against the loophole it exploits or do not have a firewall to protect themselves. According to anti-virus firms machines running Windows 95, 98 and Millennium Edition can help spread Sasser even though they cannot be infected by it.

London, May 6 — A press report, dated May 5, states: Worries over the Sasser worm took a turn for the worse when it emerged that a free-ware fix meant to cure it is also a worm. Security experts warned users not to download Netsky.AC, which masquerades as a “cure” for Sasser and its variants. Khazi Mohamed Akram of RAS Infotech Ltd, a Dubai-based computer security company, said: “With the spread of the Sasser worm hitting the headlines, we’re concerned that some users may fall for Netsky-AC’s trick and it may launch its damaging payload.” Netsky-AC worm, also known

as W32/Netsky-AC pretends to be a warning from an anti-virus company and spreads through email. It alerts a user to an invasion by the Sasser (A,B,C,D), NetSky.AB, Bagle.AB, Mydoom.F and MSBlast.B worms. Akram of RAS Infotech, which distributes Sophos anti-virus in the Middle East, said: "I've seen the signature of Netsky-AC. Its author is playing on users' fear of computer attack. The worst thing you can do is fall for this trick by clicking on the attached file. The best thing users can do is to update their Microsoft operating system with a patch." Sasser has infected millions of computers around the world, including attacks on systems at airports, banks and train stations. Fixing Sasser-infected computers is a tedious task because unlike some types of security updates that can be applied across an entire network, most of the worm-affected computers must be corrected unit by unit. Some IT administrators are also nervous about installing system-wide patches fearing they might cause other problems on the network. A technical support desk employee from Microsoft said that they had no immediate information about Netsky-AC or details of its exact nature. Virus researchers at Sophos, a computer security company, have warned users not to fall for the Netsky worm. Hidden inside the code of Netsky-AC is a message directed towards anti-virus companies which suggests that the author of Netsky also wrote the Sasser worm. The FBI is reportedly hunting for Sasser's author. It is believed that many virus writers come from universities, some of which offer subjects on how to write viruses.

## Miscellaneous



### CLEAN UP OF HAZARDOUS WASTE, MONTANA, UNITED STATES

London, May 4 — A press report, dated Apr 29, states: The French owners of a defunct Montana phosphorous plant were fined more than \$16 million today by a federal judge who warned the clean up must be completed properly. Judge Donald Molloy of Missoula ordered Rhodia Inc. to pay \$16.2 million to the federal treasury for illegally storing hazardous waste at the shuttered plant, plus restitution of \$1.8 million to the state Department of Environmental Quality. He also sentenced the company to five years probation and ordered it to perform 1,000 hours of community service. As a condition of probation, Rhodia must clean up the Silver Bow site near Butte, and those costs will likely far exceed the fine, with estimates ranging from \$50 million to \$100 million, prosecutor Kris McLean said. McLean said the fine was the second-largest criminal penalty lodged nationwide under the federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. The highest was the \$16.5 million fine levied at Colorado's

Rocky Flats nuclear waste site, he said. Rhodia, a multinational corporation based in Paris, pleaded guilty in January to two felony criminal counts of illegal hazardous waste storage and agreed to pay the fine and restitution. Rhodia must work with state and federal agencies to devise a clean up plan and make quarterly reports on its progress. The illegally stored waste contains elemental phosphorus, which can burst into flames when it contacts air. The main issue is whether about 500,000 gallons of sludge-like crude phosphorus stored in a tank can be capped on site or whether the waste must be hauled to a treatment facility. Molloy asked whether clean up negotiations will turn into a "dogfight," and Rhodia lawyer Kevin Evans said that could happen if the Environmental Protection Agency insists the waste be removed. Molloy said he didn't want the disagreement back in court. "You have an obligation to continue with the clean up, and it must be done in the correct way and in good faith," he said.

### COAL MINE, XIXIAN COUNTY, SHANXI PROVINCE, CHINA

London, Apr 30 — A press report, dated today, states: An accident at a coal mine occurred this morning in Xixian County of Linfen City, north China's Shanxi Province, leaving 14 miners trapped. There were 49 miners working underground at the Liangjiahe Coal Mine in Xixian County, when the accident happened at 0740 hrs. Thirty-five out of the 49 people have been rescued so far, and the remaining 14 are still trapped. No detailed information has been revealed about the accident because of poor telecommunications. Whether it was a gas blast, a shaft collapse or well flooding remains unknown till now.

### DRUGS SEIZED ON ANTIGUA & BARBUDA FLAGGED VESSEL AT MIAMI, FLORIDA, UNITED STATES

London, May 4 — General cargo *Fortunia* arrived Barbados 0930, Apr 23, from Miami and sailed 1708 same day for Kingston, Jamaica.

### FLOODED COAL MINE, WUHAI, CHINA

London, May 2 — A press report, dated today, states: Fifteen miners trapped in a flooded coal mine in northern China are feared dead. Officials say rescuers are trying to reach the workers trapped since Friday morning (Apr 30) in the flooded mine in the Inner Mongolian city of Wuhai. The flood occurred after miners had either dug into an abandoned mine shaft filled with water or hit an underground spring. Police had detained both the chairman and head of the mine. The mine had been closed by authorities last week because of concern over its ventilation but it had been secretly reopened by management.

### OUTBREAK OF SEVERE ACUTE RESPIRATORY SYNDROME

Beijing, May 4 — Three suspected cases of severe acute respiratory syndrome in Beijing have now been confirmed, taking the number of victims

of the latest outbreak to nine, the Health Ministry said today. All three newly confirmed cases of the highly contagious deadly flu-like SARS were linked to one viral disease laboratory in Beijing, it said. Only one of the nine has died. Hundreds of people have been isolated for observation in the past few weeks, but hundreds of millions of travellers have been taking flights and trains undeterred for the week-long May Day holiday that ends on May 7. Nearly 800 people died of the potentially fatal illness worldwide after SARS emerged in southern China in late 2002. Six of the confirmed SARS patients were in stable condition in Beijing's Ditan hospital while a seventh confirmed patient in the capital was expected to be released from hospital after recording a normal temperature for 18 consecutive days, it said. Another victim from eastern Anhui province was expected to be discharged from a local hospital soon, the ministry said. No new suspected SARS cases had been reported, it said. The World Health Organisation has said it believes all the current SARS cases are linked to the Chinese National Institute of Virology that has engaged in research involving the SARS coronavirus. That appears to be part of the reason the Chinese public appears unconcerned. Mention of SARS has been noticeably lacking in Chinese media in recent days despite temperature checks at airports and railway stations for travellers with a fever, a symptom of SARS. Unlike last year's outbreak, China is believed to have a system in place to cut the chain of transmission. However, fears of a SARS comeback have rippled through Hong Kong. A tourism official there warned this week that the recent return of SARS to mainland China could slow a recent recovery in visitor levels to the city. — Reuters.

### SINKHOLE, TEXAS, UNITED STATES

London, Apr 30 — A press report, dated Apr 29, states: A sinkhole that is destroying West Texas oil lines is already almost as far across as three football fields, and it's growing. Experts say the sinkhole, which has grown to 900 feet from about 125 feet when it formed in 2002, may be caused by salt removal. The collapse has destroyed crude oil flow lines in the Hendrick oil and gas field, which has produced 250 million barrels of oil since 1926. Geologists, petroleum company officials and government representatives met Wednesday to discuss the problem. Some in the area, including independent producer John Bell, worry that the sinkhole could ruin the freshwater supply for the Winkler County towns of Kermit and Wink, west of Odessa. The sinkhole is the county's second, about a mile south of a smaller, older collapse. It is surrounded by oil and gas wells, about six per acre, as well as several abnormal dips in the ground, said Steven Seni, who led the session at the Centre for Energy and Economic Diversification.

### VIARSA I (Panama)

Fremantle, May 4 — Fishing *Viarsa I* is still at Jervoise Bay. — Lloyd's Agents.



## Fires & Explosions



### BOATYARD, OULTON BROAD, NORFOLK, UNITED KINGDOM

London, May 4 — A press report, dated today, states: A boatyard owner spoke of his devastation last night after fire ripped through his yard and destroyed a rare second world war Suffolk gunboat. Fire broke out in the main workshop at Keith Wood's Newson boat building and restoration yard at Sea Lake Road, off Harbour Road in Oulton Broad, shortly after 0300, local time, yesterday morning. More than 25 firefighters from Lowestoft, Yarmouth and Haverhill raced to the incident but found their job was even more hazardous than usual, with the building structurally unstable and containing cylinders holding highly flammable gases. In their two hour and 40 minute battle with the flames, crews managed to save three boats, including one used in the evacuation of Dunkirk during the Second World War, but could not rescue an almost unique gunboat housed in the main building. Mr Wood was alerted to the incident by the coastguard shortly after 0500 hrs. Paul Collins, fire officer in charge of the incident, said: "The first pumps from Lowestoft realised it was quite a serious fire and requested further assistance. We had six pumps in operation with four jets and we sent in crews using breathing apparatus. It was hazardous because the fire started in an engineering workshop where there were compressed gasses. We had to deal with flammable gases such as acetylene and propane. We did not know what cylinders we were going to find or where. In addition, the building was unstable." The firefighters managed to bring the blaze under control by 0553, but were still putting out hot spots yesterday afternoon while officers carried out an investigation into the cause. Mr Collins added: "It was a strange time of the day for a fire to start in an unoccupied building and we cannot rule out arson." Suffolk police are treating the blaze as suspicious and are continuing to make inquiries. A police spokeswoman said: "The scene has been examined by police scenes of crime officers and fire investigators and work is ongoing to determine the cause of the blaze."

### COAL MINE, XIXIAN COUNTY, SHANXI PROVINCE, CHINA

London, May 1 — A press report, dated today, states: An explosion has tore through a coal mine in remote northern China yesterday, killing at least 34 miners and leaving another two trapped underground. The official Xinhua news agency said the men were killed when a blast ripped through the state-owned Liangjiahe coal mine in a mountainous area outside Shanxi province's Linfen city, shortly after 0740, local time. It said 13 miners had been rescued from the mine, which lies in a remote

mountainous region, while efforts were underway to save two more still underground. Xinhua said Shanxi governor Zhang Baoshun was on his way to the mine while local officials were directing rescue efforts at the site. It said efforts to investigate the cause of the blast were being hampered by the mine's location in remote, difficult terrain.

### COMMERCIAL PREMISES, MITCHELL, SOUTH DAKOTA, UNITED STATES

London, May 4 — A press report, dated May 3, states: Firefighters will focus on determining what caused a huge blaze that gutted Mitchell's historic State Theatre, now that what is left of the building has been stabilised. Saturday's (May 1) early morning fire destroyed the downtown theatre, seven upstairs apartments and the Scoreboard sports bar. Two other businesses in the Main Street building, The Little Red Hen and Einstein's, suffered extensive water and smoke damage. There were no reported injuries. Captain Mike Eliason yesterday said firefighters knocked down some walls that were in danger of falling and the building is now stabilised. Investigators today will be looking into what caused the fire, but they do not suspect arson, he said.

### FACTORY, KARACHI, PAKISTAN

Karachi, Apr 30 — A huge fire erupted in the privately owned Sunlight Chipboard factory at 0300, local time, today, on Darululoom Road, Korangi Industrial Area, Karachi Sindh Province, Pakistan, according to Central Fire Brigade sources. The fire spread rapidly and as many as 14 fire tenders and dozens of fighters took part in the operation which ended at 0800. The authorities were investigating the cause of the fire that caused a big loss to the owner. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

### FURNITURE FACTORY, TAMBON KRISANA, THAILAND

London, May 4 — A press report, dated today, states: A fire believed caused by a short circuit swept through a furniture factory in Sikhiu district early yesterday, seriously injuring one worker and causing 100 million baht damage. The fire broke out at a warehouse of Padolchai Khehaphan Co in Tambon Krisana at about 0200. The blaze was first spotted at a power control board installed in a room where thinner and paint were kept. It took firemen about an hour to get the fire under control.

### GAS STATION, SHINDAND, AFGHANISTAN

London, May 3 — A press report, dated May 2, states: An accidental explosion at a gas station killed at least 25 people in western Afghanistan, the government said today. At least another 40 people were injured in the blast near Shindand, in Herat province, 360 miles west of Kabul, President Hamid Karzai's office said in a written statement. Karzai was "deeply saddened by the news of the terrible accident caused by a fuel explosion" and extended his condolences to the families of the victims, the

statement said. It was not immediately clear what caused the blast or when it occurred.

### PREMISES, BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA

London, May 6 — A press report, dated today, states: More than 100 office workers were evacuated today after an explosion and fire in the lift well of a building in Brisbane. Emergency services were called in after workers in the Quay Central building on North Quay reported hearing a bang at 1445 hrs and then smelled burning electrical wiring. "The fire was quite large," said Queensland Fire and Rescue Service spokesman Grey Reynolds. "It took a little bit to extinguish and we used our dry powder CO2 extinguishers." A spokesman for Queensland Ambulance Service said one woman was taken to Royal Brisbane Hospital to be treated for smoke inhalation. Workers were allowed to go home early as firefighters attended to the blaze in the lift motor room on the 14th floor and then ventilated the building.

### REFINERY, FLUSHING, NETHERLANDS

Flushing, May 4 — Total and Dow's jointly-owned 149,000 barrels per day Dutch refinery in Flushing was hit by a fire early today, oil product traders said. Three people were injured in the fire, they said. The fire affected output from the plant, traders said. Dutch news agency ANP reported that the fire broke out at 0345, local time, in a high-pressure heat exchange unit during repair work. ANP said that one of three repair workers was seriously wounded, while another two received minor injuries. Officials at Total and at the plant were unavailable for comment. — Reuters.

### SCHOOL, DUNSTABLE, BEDFORDSHIRE, UNITED KINGDOM

London, May 5 — A press report, dated today, states: An investigation is under way after 50 firefighters tackled a serious blaze at a school. Bedfordshire Fire Service was called just after 2100 BST, yesterday to Northfields Technology School in Houghton Road, Dunstable. A senior fire officer said about 30% of the site had been destroyed and 60% of it was damaged by smoke and heat. An investigation into the cause of the fire has begun.

### TREATMENT PLANT, AURORA, MINNESOTA, UNITED STATES

London, May 6 — A press report, dated May 5, states: A wastewater treatment plant at Aurora, Minnesota, was shut down temporarily today after an explosion. Plant workers had left for the day just 10 minutes before the blast and nobody was reported injured. The cause of the blast wasn't immediately determined. The explosion, which happened around 0130 hrs destroyed the plant's main control building and could be heard throughout the city. A half-dozen homes were evacuated as a precaution, Mayor Dave Worshek said. Firefighters extinguished a small fire and stopped a natural gas leak from a 2-

inch line and a chlorine gas leak from a 150-pound cylinder, Public Works Director Chris Vreeland said. A chemical assessment team from Duluth closed the plant to public works employees and investigators until it could make sure there were no gas leaks. Worshek said he hoped electricity would be rerouted and a temporary pump put in place by last night. The city's water supply was unaffected.

#### **WAREHOUSES, AL QUOZ AREA, DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES**

Karachi, May 5 — Dubai Civil Defence said a huge fire gutted two privately owned warehouses in Al Quoz Industrial Area, Dubai, United Arab Emirates causing more than Dh10 million in damage. The blaze broke out in a warehouse storing construction materials and spread to an adjoining unit containing kitchen utensils. Two Civil Defence teams from Al Quoz and Jumeirah fire stations spend 55 minutes tackling the blaze. They spent another two hours making the area safe. According to Dinesh Kumar, the administration director of Shine Shiny Utensils, his company lost between Dh10-Dh15 million of stainless steel kitchen utensils destroyed in the blaze. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

#### **WILDFIRES, RUSSIA**

London, May 5 — A press report, dated today, states: A total of 737 fires have been registered in Russia starting from yesterday morning, a source at the information department of the Russian Emergencies Ministry said today. The fires have claimed the lives of 46 people and the same number of people have received injuries, the source said. Fire fighters have managed to rescue 59 people. According to the ministry official, a major fire was registered at a farmstead in the village of Kroshilovo in the Nizhny Novgorod Region yesterday. The fire destroyed 1,600 square metres. The damage amounted to over 400,000 roubles. According to early reports, the fire was caused by negligence.

London, May 5 — A press report, dated today, states: Forest fires, which began in Russia's republic of Tyva late in April, have already destroyed over 110 hectares of woodland, an officer on duty at the regional department for natural resources told Itar-Tass today. Five fire centres are presently registered in the Siberian republic. Four fires have been put out, and now specialists are combating the blaze in the Tandy district, where the fire has engulfed the area of over 20 hectares, the officer on duty said.

#### **WILDFIRES, UNITED STATES**

London, May 3 — A press report, dated May 2, states: A wildfire ignited on the Camp Pendleton Marine base in San Diego, California, today, prompting voluntary evacuations of more than a dozen homes along a nearby canyon and charring more than 1,000 acres of dry brush by late afternoon. No structures were immediately threatened. Two fires in Riverside County burned more than 500 acres and also prompted voluntary evacuations of several dozen homes. The

fire season has been called three weeks early amid concerns about lower rainfall and bark beetles infestation, which have left huge sections of forest ripe for another massive blaze after last autumn's wildfires. "We're expecting it to be a busy fire season," said Capt John Harvey of the Riverside County Fire Department. "We're not taking this season lightly in any way, shape or form."

London, May 4 — A press report, dated today, states: Southern California's 2004 fire season opened yesterday with firefighters battling blazes that covered nearly 5,000 acres and forced hundreds of people to evacuate. The largest was a 2,500-acre fire in Riverside County. But five other blazes were scattered across Santa Barbara, Los Angeles and San Diego counties, as temperatures climbed to 100 degrees in some places. Several firefighters among the thousands on the job were treated for injuries, including heat stroke, dehydration and smoke inhalation. Authorities ordered a mandatory evacuation of several homes in the path of the Riverside County fire in the hills south of Temecula. They previously advised residents of about 100 homes to evacuate. The blaze destroyed a home and a research facility used by researchers at the University of California, Riverside. Another Riverside County fire that broke out yesterday afternoon in El Cerrito spread across 400 acres in less than three hours, said Department of Forestry spokeswoman Becky Luther. She said it threatened up to 30 homes. A fire in the Los Padres National Forest, in Santa Barbara County, grew to about 100 acres within two hours. Firefighters had about 75 percent containment on a 50-acre blaze that broke near a Los Angeles County jail in Castaic, said fire Capt. Mark Savage. Firefighters said they managed to slow a blaze that burned 1,500 acres near the Camp Pendleton Marine base in San Diego County. It was about 45 percent contained, with no structures damaged. A fire that started Sunday (May 2) just east of Lake Elsinore in Riverside County had scorched 350 acres. One structure was burned.

London, May 4 — A press report, dated May 3, states: Southern California's 2004 fire season opened today with firefighters battling blazes that covered nearly 5,000 acres and forced hundreds of people to evacuate. The largest was a 2,500-acre fire in Riverside County, but five other blazes were scattered across Santa Barbara, Los Angeles and San Diego counties, as temperatures climbed to 100 deg Fahrenheit in some places. Several firefighters among the thousands on the job were treated for injuries, including heatstroke, dehydration and smoke inhalation. Authorities ordered a mandatory evacuation of several homes in the path of the Riverside County fire in the hills south of Temecula. They previously advised residents of about 100 homes to evacuate. The blaze destroyed a home and a research facility used by researchers at the University of California, Riverside. "They are just totally burned to the ground. All that's left is a couple of pieces of steel," said

Rick Cook, emergency services coordinator for Riverside County. Another Riverside County fire that broke out this afternoon in El Cerrito spread across 400 acres in less than three hours, said Department of Forestry spokeswoman Becky Luther. She said it threatened up to 30 homes. A fire in the Los Padres National Forest, in Santa Barbara County, grew to about 100 acres within two hours. Firefighters had about 75% containment on a 50-acre blaze that broke out near a Los Angeles County jail in Castaic, said fire Capt Mark Savage. Firefighters said they managed to slow a blaze that burned 1,500 acres near the Camp Pendleton Marine base in San Diego County. It was about 45% contained, with no structures damaged. A fire that started yesterday just east of Lake Elsinore in Riverside County had scorched 350 acres. One structure was burned. The start of the fire season was declared three weeks earlier than last year because of dry weather and a tree-killing bark beetle infestation.

London, May 5 — A press report, dated today, states: Southern California's first wildfires of the season burned homes and brushlands and forced thousands of people to evacuate yesterday, portending what could be an especially dangerous and costly summer. A man was charged with negligently setting the largest blaze. The fires burned through a total of more than 15,000 acres of grass and low-lying scrub parched by blistering spring heat. At least nine cottages and two mobile homes were reported destroyed. Nearly a dozen firefighters among the thousands on the job in Southern California were treated for injuries, including heat stroke and dehydration. At least two people fleeing a fire in the Los Padres National Forest were treated for injuries, including smoke inhalation and cuts and bruises. The two biggest fires burned in Riverside County, an inland region east of Los Angeles. Fires also burned in San Diego County and up the coast in Santa Barbara County. Sen. Dianne Feinstein said she was disturbed \$120 million allocated for tree removal in San Bernardino, Riverside and San Diego counties had not yet been spent. As many as 600 people were evacuated as a 9,000-acre fire in Riverside County between Corona and Lake Elsinore approached their homes. Firefighters were trying to save about 250 homes as winds picked up. An additional 2,000 to 3,000 people may have left voluntarily, Forestry Department engineer Rick Griggs said. A smaller, 4,000-acre fire in Riverside County, 10 miles south of an area that burned last fall, destroyed 13 structures, including two mobile homes, officials said. The Federal Emergency Management Agency made federal money available to firefighting agencies for the two Riverside County blazes. Last month, a governor's review panel outlined a series of changes that could be made to better prevent and respond to wildfires such as the ones last fall. Among the commission's recommendations were more training and improved equipment; quicker use of military aircraft; and reconsideration of the sunset deadline for launching firefighting aircraft.

London, May 6 — A press report, dated today, states: Firefighters got help from cooler weather and diminishing winds yesterday as they tried to contain a trio of wildfires that have burned more than 22,000 acres and destroyed at least 14 homes in Southern California. Thousands of people remained evacuated from their homes as the two largest fires ate up acres of grass and low-lying scrub in Riverside County, an inland region east of Los Angeles. But triple-digit temperatures and strong wind gusts that fanned the flames early in the week had abated. The 11,000-acre Cerrito Fire still threatened about 1,000 homes and 12 commercial buildings in the north-eastern Lake Elsinore area, about 70 miles south-east of Los Angeles. The blaze was 30 percent contained early yesterday, with full containment expected Friday morning (May 7), the forestry department said. The 8,800-acre Eagle Fire, south of Temecula in Riverside County, destroyed 25 structures, including 14 homes, officials said. Containment was estimated at 60 percent, with full containment expected by this evening. The fire was moving away from homes and a mandatory evacuation order could be lifted soon, said forestry department information officer Mitch Villalpando. In Santa Barbara County, the 1,042-acre Cachuma Fire in the Los Padres National Forest was 10 percent contained. In San Diego County, the 2,050-acre India Fire on the Camp Pendleton Marine base was fully contained early yesterday. No structures were damaged.

London, May 6 — A press report, dated May 5, states: A prescribed burn designed to reduce fire danger at the Grand Canyon jumped a containment line today, blanketing some of the park's busiest visitor spots with heavy smoke. The fire spread to within half a mile of park employee housing, national park spokeswoman Leah McGinnis said. Access to the canyon's South Rim, the most frequently visited section of the park, was cut off for several hours to everyone except park employees, although visitors already in the park were allowed to stay. The entrance was reopened by late afternoon. The popular Mather Point lookout and a canyon visitor information centre were closed in the afternoon but were expected to reopen tomorrow, said park spokeswoman Maureen Oltrogge. The fire was several miles from Mather Point. No park lodges, restaurants or housing had been evacuated, but "people can smell the smoke, and the smoke is highly visible," Grand Canyon spokeswoman Donna Nemeth said. The fire was estimated at about 1,700 acres; no official containment estimates had been made. Canyon officials had intended to burn 1,620 acres about a mile south of the rim's Grand Canyon Village, which includes campgrounds, lodges, restaurants and other facilities. About 80 people were fighting the fire this evening; most had been part of the prescribed burn crew, Oltrogge said.

London, May 6 — A press report, dated May 5, states: A federal appeals court yesterday ordered an imprisoned former

Forest Service employee responsible for the largest wildfire in Colorado history to pay \$14.7 million in restitution. A three-judge panel of the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals sided with federal prosecutors who argued Terry Lynn Barton should pay the cost of emergency restoration of national forest southwest of Denver. The 2002 Hayman fire charred 138,000 acres and destroyed more than 100 homes. Barton, who was patrolling the forest during a season of high fire danger, pleaded guilty to federal arson charges. She said the fire began after she tried to burn letters from her estranged husband.

London, May 6 — A press report, dated today, states: Firefighters got help from cooler weather and diminishing winds yesterday as they tried to contain a trio of wildfires that have burned more than 22,000 acres and destroyed at least 14 homes in Southern California. Evacuation orders were lifted as hundreds of people began returning to homes near two large fires in Riverside County, an inland region east of Los Angeles, that consumed acres of grass and low-lying scrub. The 11,000-acre Cerrito Fire still threatened about 1,000 homes and 12 commercial buildings in the northeastern Lake Elsinore area, about 70 miles south-east of Los Angeles. The blaze was 65% contained yesterday evening, with full containment expected tomorrow morning, the forestry department said. The 8,800-acre Eagle Fire, south of Temecula in Riverside County, destroyed 41 structures, including 14 homes, officials said. Containment was estimated at 70%, with full containment expected by tomorrow. The fire was moving away from homes and a mandatory evacuation order was lifted late yesterday, said forestry department information officer Mitch Villalpando. One casualty of the Eagle Fire is the Dorland Mountain Arts Colony, a cluster of about ten buildings which for decades has been a place for musicians and artists to create their work. Among the items lost in the fire are a Steinway piano believed to have been played by Russian composer Sergei Rachmaninoff, and hundreds of antique music manuscripts that belonged to 1920s concert pianist Ellen Dorland. In Santa Barbara County, the 1,110-acre Cachuma Fire in the Los Padres National Forest was 20% contained. In San Diego County, the 2,050-acre India Fire on the Camp Pendleton Marine base was fully contained early yesterday. No structures were damaged. In Washington, D.C., meanwhile, the Agriculture Department agreed to give \$120 million for dead tree removal in the three Southern California counties hit hardest by devastating wildfires in the region last fall. Congress had designated that the money go to San Diego, San Bernardino and Riverside counties, but a requirement that the counties match 25% of the money with local funds had kept them from receiving it. Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., announced yesterday that the requirement had been lifted, and that a matching-fund requirement on another \$48 million for fuel-reduction projects had been reduced from 50% to 25%.



### 9V-SPK

London, May 6 — A press report, dated May 5, states: The first wrongful death case to go on trial in the United States against Singapore Airlines (SIA) for a couple killed in the Oct 31, 2000, crash of Flight SQ006 (Boeing 747-412 9V-SPK) in Taiwan began yesterday. Siblings Sidney Wu and Christina Wu are suing SIA for the wrongful deaths of their parents Richard Tzuen Ren Wu and Ching Ying Wu in the crash which occurred on take-off from Chiang Kai Shek airport in Taipei amid heavy rain and windy conditions. Mr Kevin Boyle, one of the two lawyers representing the Wus, said that SIA did not contest liability for the crash. This means that the trial would determine how the Wu children should be fairly compensated for the deaths of their parents caused by Singapore Airlines, he said. SIA has made an offer of compensation, said Mr Boyle, who works for Greene, Broillet, Panish & Wheeler. However, he said that four years after the crash, SIA "still hasn't offered a fair sum of money". He declined to say how much SIA has offered. 'We think it's far below what the jury will give,' he said of SIA's offer. Lawyer Frank Silane of Los Angeles-based law firm Condon & Forsyth is representing SIA and Los Angeles Federal Court Judge William Keller is presiding over the trial. The trial opened with jury selection and both sides made their opening statements yesterday. It is expected to close by the end of this week. Mr Boyle said there were more than 30 cases outstanding against SIA for the crash. So far, SIA has settled some cases, the compensation amounts of which were not disclosed. Last September, for example, the carrier settled a negligence suit by Dr Harald Linke for a confidential sum described by his lawyers as "probably a record for post-traumatic stress". SIA has previously offered US\$400,000 to the families of those who died in the crash and US\$20,000 to those who were injured. A total of 179 people were on board the aircraft which crashed while attempting to take off from a closed runway at the airport. Eighty-three people were killed and 57 were injured in the crash. Mr and Mrs Wu, both executives with Ameripeac, a company that packages beverages, were returning home to the United States after a business trip.

### AIRCRAFT PUT BACK TO LEHIGH VALLEY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, PENNSYLVANIA, UNITED STATES

London, May 4 — A press report, dated today, states: A US Airways commuter aircraft turned around shortly after departing from Lehigh Valley International Airport yesterday when a door malfunctioned, officials said. No injuries were reported among the 27 passengers and three crew members on

the Dornier 328 twin-engine turboprop aircraft bound for Philadelphia. But one passenger was treated at the Allentown airport for an asthma attack, said Susan Kittle, a spokeswoman for Lehigh Valley International Airport. US Airways Flight 2447 returned to the airport several minutes after taking off from Lehigh Valley at around noon, Kittle said. She said details of the door malfunction were not immediately available. The Federal Aviation Administration is investigating the incident.

#### **CRASH RALEIGH-DURHAM INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AREA, NORTH CAROLINA, UNITED STATES**

London, May 4 — A press report, dated May 3, states: At least one person was reported killed this afternoon when a single-engine aircraft developed engine trouble and crashed south of its intended runway at Raleigh-Durham International Airport. RDU spokeswoman Mindy Hamlin said the pilot of the four-seat Mooney aircraft reported the malfunction at about 1510 hrs on approach to the airport. Control tower personnel lost contact with the pilot when the aircraft went down about five miles south of the airport, she said. Hamlin said officials believe the aircraft did not strike anyone on the ground, although one person on board was reported killed. There may have been two people on board, Hamlin said, but she had no details about the status of a second person.

#### **CRASH, BARROW COUNTY, GEORGIA, UNITED STATES**

London, May 4 — A press report, dated May 3, states: Investigators are looking into what downed a twin-engine Beechcraft Excalibur in Barrow County, leaving its pilot pinned in the wreckage. The pilot — described only as a man in his late 50s or early 60s — survived the incident after his aircraft crashed at about 2130 yesterday, just south of Winder-Barrow County Airport. Search teams discovered the wreckage in a cow pasture behind a farm. Neighbours said they heard sputtering engines and called the authorities to report something may be wrong. Search crews, including a helicopter, combed the nearby area, and eventually found the downed aircraft. Despite the aircraft's damage, it did not catch fire. Rescue workers, however, did have to extricate the pilot left trapped in the debris. He was flown to Gwinnett Medical Centre and listed in stable condition. The Federal Aviation Administration and the National Transportation Safety Bureau were expected at the crash site this morning to investigate what led to the crash.

#### **CRASH, CHIHUAHUA STATE, MEXICO**

London, May 4 — A press report, dated May 3, states: Investigators examined the site today where a small aircraft carrying federal anti-narcotics agents crashed, killing all seven people on board. The Turbo Commander 840 went down two hours after taking off at

around noon Sunday (May 2) from Ciudad Juarez, said Hector Garcia, head of the federal Justice Department in northern Chihuahua state. There was no immediate indication of the cause. The victims, five federal agents and two pilots, were all part of a team carrying out drug trafficking surveillance flights in the Chihuahua mountains. Garcia said the agents were returning to the capital after a two-week assignment, while the pilots were permanently based in Ciudad Juarez.

#### **CRASH, RALEIGH-DURHAM INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AREA, NORTH CAROLINA, UNITED STATES**

See N91514.

#### **CRASH, STOLAC AREA, BOSNIA**

London, May 6 — A press report, dated today, states: Pilot error caused the aircraft crash that killed Macedonian president Boris Trajkovski and eight other people in southern Bosnia last February, an official said yesterday. "The direct cause of the aircraft accident was procedural mistakes by the crew, committed during the approach to land at Mostar airport," Bosnia's Communication and Transport Minister Branko Dokic told journalists, presenting the results of an official probe into the accident. Boris Trajkovski, 47, and several of his closest advisors died when his aircraft crashed in heavy fog around dawn on Feb 26.

#### **CRASH, TALISAY CITY, CEBU, PHILIPPINES**

London, May 5 — A press report, dated today, states: Police said two people were killed while one was critically injured when a Cessna aircraft dropping political campaign leaflets crashed late this afternoon in Talisay City in Cebu. Talisay City police Chief Supt. Pablo Lamosao identified the fatalities as Capt. Gabriel Cimafranca III, pilot of the aircraft, and a Baby Terano, reports reaching ABS-CBN News said. Injured was Arden Suarez, an airplane mechanic, who was reported in critical condition in a hospital. Reports said the four-seater aircraft left the Mactan International Airport at 1443 hrs for Talisay City to drop campaign leaflets of gubernatorial candidate Gwen Garcia of Kusug Party. Around 1530 hrs, the single-engine aircraft reportedly hit a tree in Barangay Lagtang.

#### **EMERGENCY LANDING, CLEVELAND HOPKINS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, UNITED STATES**

London, May 5 — A press report, dated today, states: A Continental aircraft landed safely at Cleveland Hopkins International Airport this morning after an emergency. Cleveland fire responded to an aircraft coming in with one engine just before 0800 hrs. The aircraft landed without incident. No one was injured on the flight.

#### **G-ARFL**

London, May 3 — Cessna 175B (Skylark), G-ARFL, operated by A.F.Hobbs, crashed at a private airstrip

near Acle, Norfolk, yesterday afternoon. The pilot, Adrian Hobbs, sustained minor injuries.

#### **HELICOPTER CRASH, WYNDHAM AREA, NEW ZEALAND**

See ZK-HSF.

#### **MID-AIR COLLISION, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA**

London, May 5 — A press report, dated May 4, states: A report into a fatal midair collision over Sydney which killed four members of one family has found neither pilot was to blame for the crash. An investigation by the Australian Transport Safety Bureau into the 2002 accident at Bankstown Airport found there were "insufficient visual cues" for the pilots of the two light aircraft. Colin van Montfoort, his wife Jose and their children Kristy and Tristan died when their Piper PA-28-161 (Cherokee Warrior II) crashed into an industrial area near the airport on May 5, 2002. Mr van Montfoort was coming into land when his plane and a Socata Tobago TB10 collided. Two pilots — a student and an instructor — in the Socata were conducting landing training, also known as a touch and go exercise, at the time. They were able to land safely, with no injuries. Bankstown airport has three parallel runways - left, centre, and right. Under air traffic control, both aircraft had begun their landing approach circuits to the centre and left parallel runways, which are 107 metres apart, when they collided. "The pilot of the Piper had requested, and been issued with, a clearance to land on runway 29 centre from a right circuit and the pilots of the Socata had been issued with a clearance to conduct a touch and go landing on runway 29 left from a left circuit," the ATSB said in a statement. The report concluded neither pilot could have foreseen a collision. "The investigation concluded that there were insufficient visual cues for a pilot in one circuit to reliably assess the collision potential of an aircraft in the opposing circuit, when both aircraft were conducting contra-circuits to parallel runways 107 metres apart," the ATSB said. Airservices Australia, which manages air traffic control, modified its procedures for Bankstown in December, 2003, to cut the incidence of aircraft landing on parallel runways at the same time, it said. "Airservices Australia modified its procedures for Bankstown so that, where aircraft involved in contra-circuits are likely to be at base or final legs at approximately the same time, the use of the centre runway would be denied." The ATSB said it had issued recommendations to Airservices Australia and the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) on midair collision risks at major airports, and provided advice to pilots about collision risk management strategies.

#### **N130AL**

London, May 3 — A press report, dated May 2, states: A University of Alaska Fairbanks researcher was killed and three other people were injured when their helicopter crashed Friday night (Apr 30) on the North Slope while doing

climate-change research, officials said. A pilot and three researchers from UAF's Water and Environmental Research Center, or WERC, were on board the Bell 206 when it went down in a remote region about 58 miles south-west of Deadhorse, officials said. The pilot and two of the passengers survived. Laboratory manager Quinton Costello, 33, was killed, according to Larry Hinzman, a WERC research professor in Fairbanks. The three survivors, who were not seriously injured, were picked up at the crash site Saturday by a rescue team on snowmachines from the village of Nuiqsut and were flown to Deadhorse. It was not immediately known what caused the crash. Representatives of the National Transportation Safety Board are investigating the accident. Air Logistics of Alaska Inc. operated the downed helicopter and was working for the National Science Foundation at the time of the crash, according to Air Logistics general manager Jeff Reed. Reed said his company found out the helicopter was down from the pilot, who reported it via satellite phone from the site of the crash around 1910. Air Logistics launched all four helicopters it had stationed between Fairbanks and the North Slope to hunt for the wreckage. The North Slope Borough Search and Rescue Team also searched by air and land. Pat Patterson, of the North Slope's Emergency Operations Center, said thick fog severely hampered rescue efforts. After several failed attempts to find the crash site by air, a team of searchers from Nuiqsut, a village of about 400, radioed in on Saturday morning that they had reached the site by snowmachine, Patterson said. The team started back toward Nuiqsut with the survivors. A borough rescue helicopter spotted the group around 1130 about halfway between the crash site and Nuiqsut, Patterson said. The helicopter flew the crash survivors on to Deadhorse.

London, May 4 — Bell 206L-3, N130AL, operated by Air Logistics of Alaska Inc, crashed under unknown circumstances near Deadhorse, Alaska, at 1955, local time, Apr 30. Four persons on board, one was fatally injured.

#### **N2277M**

London, Apr 29 — Cessna 182P (Skylane), N2277M, operated by J.F.C. Aircraft Inc, with one person on board, crashed in a field at Soddy Daisy, Tennessee, at 0030, UTC, Apr 29. The aircraft was substantially damaged and the pilot seriously injured.

#### **N3243P**

London, Apr 29 — Beechcraft Bonanza A36 N3243P crashed near Bedford, Massachusetts, at 1903, Apr 28, while on a flight from Bedford to Worcester, MA. The aircraft was destroyed. One of the two persons on board was seriously injured.

#### **N355UJ**

London, May 5 — LearJet 55, N355UJ, owned and operated by Bombardier Capital Corporation, of Colchester, Vermont, was substantially damaged during a hard landing following an

aborted take-off from La Romana Airport, Dominican Republic, at 1531, EDT, Apr 18. The pilot, first officer, and six passengers were not injured.

#### **N4NY**

London, May 5 — A press report, dated today, states: A television news station helicopter crashed on the roof of an apartment building in New York City yesterday, seriously injuring the three people on board, emergency services personnel said. A police spokesman said the WNBC-TV helicopter crash-landed shortly before 1830, local time, in the Flatbush area of Brooklyn where the crew had been covering a shooting. A fire department official said the three passengers, including a reporter, the pilot and a third occupant had all been taken to hospital with serious injuries. Television reports quoted witnesses as saying the helicopter had gone into a spin, apparently after losing tail rotor control. There were no reports of any injuries on the ground.

London, May 5 — Eurocopter AS 350BA (Ecureuil) N4NY, operated by Horsham Valley Airways Inc, crashed onto a rooftop in Brooklyn, New York, at 2230, May 4. The aircraft was destroyed. The three persons on board were seriously injured.

#### **N5099D**

London, May 4 — Cessna 182A, (Skylane), N5099D, operated by Emerald Coast Skydiving Center Inc, had a power loss and engine failed short of runway 18 at Horak, Alabama, and crashed at 2230, local time, May 1. The aircraft was destroyed.

#### **N5483H**

London, May 4 — Piper PA-18-105 Special, N5483H, operated by Professional Pilots Inc, made a low pass and crash landed in a pool of water along the Yellowstone River, 12 miles south-west of Billings, Laurel, Montana, at 1845, local time, May 1. The aircraft was destroyed.

#### **N7448G**

London, May 4 — Cessna 172K, N7448G, operated by T&C Aviation Enterprises Inc, while landing at Harrison, Missouri, at 1445, local time, May 1, veered to the left of runway 35, hit a ditch and flipped over. Two persons on board, one sustained minor injuries. The aircraft was destroyed.

#### **N91514**

London, May 4 — Mooney 257 TLS (M-20M), N91514, crashed near Raleigh-Durham International Airport, North Carolina, at 1917, May 3, while on a flight from Columbia, South Carolina, to Raleigh-Durham. The aircraft was destroyed. The two persons on board were killed. (See "Crash, Raleigh-Durham International Airport Area, North Carolina, United States" in issue of May 5.)

#### **N9919L**

London, Apr 29 — American General AA-1B (Advanced Trainer) N9919L crashed near Dodge Center, Minnesota, at 2112, Apr 28. The aircraft was

destroyed. The one person on board was killed.

#### **ZK-HSF**

London, May 5 — Bell UH-1B, ZK-HSF, operated by Fine Particle Application (NZ) Ltd, broke up in flight near Mokoreta Apr 23, while in transit from a spraying operation, and crashed over a wide area. The one person on board was killed.

## Product Recalls



#### **MURRAY RIDE-ON-MOWERS, AUSTRALIA**

London, May 5 — A press release from Product Recalls Australia, dated May 3, states: Murray Ride-On Mowers, Models 312001x50, 31200x50, 38501x50, 38510x50, 405001x78, 405600x50, 40560x50, manufactured prior to November 2002, supplied by Parklands Trading Company Pty Limited, imported by Parklands Trading Company. The mowers have been fitted with a potentially faulty fuel tank. Should the fuel tank develop cracks, fuel could leak creating a fire hazard. Consumer action: Contact your authorised Murray dealer. Market coverage/recall national.

#### **PIANO BENCHES, UNITED STATES**

Washington, DC, May 5 — The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in co-operation with Casio Inc., Dover, N.J., today announced voluntary recall of about 18,000 piano benches. Consumers should stop using recalled product immediately unless otherwise instructed. The screws and bracket assemblies attaching the legs to the bench can weaken and detach, causing the bench seat to collapse during normal use. Casio has received four reports of bracket assemblies failing, including one report of a consumer sustaining a fractured wrist when their bench collapsed. This recall involves two model benches, the Bench DK, made of dark wood and the Bench LT, made of light wood. The bench has a plush leather covering and measures about 22-inches by 13 Ω-inches with 17 Ω-inch tall legs. Each bench comes with a small sticker that reads, "Made in China" and some units have a gold emblem that reads, "GAO JI CHUANG." Benches were sold separately and with Casio's electronic pianos. Sold at music instrument retailers, Sam's Club, Costco Wholesale and on Casio's Web site nation-wide between September 2003 and March 2004 for about \$99. The benches sold by Sam's Club and Costco were unassembled and included a Casio Electronic Piano and piano stand. The benches distributed by music instrument retailers were assembled and sold as stand-alone products. Manufactured in China. Consumers should stop using the benches immediately and contact Casio for instructions on how to return the product for a full refund plus an incentive payment. Consumers who

purchased a Casio Eighty Eight key digital piano, model AP31 from Costco Wholesale Corporation should return only the bench to their local Costco retailer. Consumers who purchased a Casio Eighty Eight key digital piano, model AP31 or PX100 from Sam's Club will receive a box, instructions, and a return label to return the bench back to Casio. Do not return benches to Sam's Clubs. Consumers who purchased the keyboard and bench together will receive \$125 toward the purchase of a replacement bench and consumers who purchased a bench separately will receive a full refund of the purchase price plus a \$25 incentive payment.

**TEST LEADS, UNITED STATES**

London, May 4 — A press report, dated today, states: A Washington state company is recalling 110,000 test wires used to measure voltage because they pose a risk of shock or electrocution to users. The Fluke Corporation, of Everett, Wash., said yesterday that it has received 29 reports of the modular test leads malfunctioning. No injuries have been reported. The leads connect probes

to hand-held digital meters that measure the amount of current in electrical circuitry. Users may get shocked or electrocuted if they touch live wires that the meter reads as having no electrical current, the Consumer Product Safety Commission warned. The recalled components are red and black with no permanent probes attached and have the Fluke logo on the connector ends. The recall includes only Fluke Model TL221, TL222 and TL224 test leads. The model numbers are written on the packaging or on product documents. Fluke test leads with a SureGrip™ symbol are not included in the recall. The leads sold for about \$18 at hardware stores and electrical distributors nationwide from December 2002 through March 2004.

**VIKING RIDE-ON-MOWERS, AUSTRALIA**

London, May 5 — A press release from Product Recalls Australia, dated Apr 30, states: Ride-on-Mower, Viking Models MT433T and MT433H, manufactured from 1998 and prior to November 2002,

supplier Stihl Pty Ltd, may have been fitted with a potentially faulty fuel tank. Should the fuel tank develop cracks, fuel could leak creating a fire hazard. Consumer action: Contact your authorised Viking (Stihl) Dealer. Market coverage/recall national.



**SYRIA**

London, May 5 — Congestion at the Syrian ports of Lattakia and Tartous has become so bad that conference lines have introduced an emergency surcharge. The 15 members of the Europe/Mediterranean Trade Agreement have advised customers that a levy of E50 per teu for freight in and out of Lattakia, and E100 for Tartous cargo, would be introduced on May 18.

**Port Delays**

<b>Country/Port</b>	<b>Date of report</b>	<b>No.of vessels waiting and/or days delay</b>
<b>Australia</b>		
Dalrymple Bay	05-May-04	Coal: 2 vessels berthed, 5 anchored; 42 vessels due by 20/6; vessels berthing in order of cargo availability; depending on type of cargo required, delays of up to 7 days can be expected.
Hay Point	05-May-04	Coal: 2 vessels loading, 1 anchored; 16 vessels due by 12/5; up to 7 days berthing delay expected subject to cargo availability and berth congestion. Berth No. 1 will be closed from 07.00 hrs. 11/5 to 17.00 hrs. 12/5.
Gladstone	05-May-04	Coal: R.G. Tanna coal terminal: 2 vessel berthed, 12 anchored; 28 vessels due by 28/5; up to 11 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability. Barney Point: 1 vessel berthed, 6 vessels due by 24/5; up to 4 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Brisbane	05-May-04	Coal: Fisherman Island coal berth: 1 vessel anchored; 7 vessels due by 9/6; up to 4 days delay expected due to berth congestion.
Newcastle	05-May-04	Coal: Kooragang 4, 5 and 6: 3 vessels loading, 21 waiting; 11 vessels due by 8/5; Dykes 4+5: 1 vessel loading, 13 waiting; 5 vessels due by 14/5; no unallocated vessels due; 10-14 days delay expected prior to berthing due to planned maintenance at Kooragang terminal and heavy shipping schedule. Grain: 5 vessels due by 22/5, all to load wheat; up to 2 days delay at present due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Port Kembla	05-May-04	Coal: 1 vessel loading; 8 vessels due by 20/6; CB1: 2 vessels due by 26/6; up to 1 day's delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability. Grain: 5 vessels due by 1/6, all to load wheat; up to 4 days delay at present due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Port Hedland	05-May-04	Iron ore: BHP Iron Ore Pty. Ltd., Mt. Newman (Nelson Point), "A" berth: 1 vessel berth and loading, 3 anchored; 3 vessels due by 11/5; up to 1 day's delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; "B" berth: 1 vessel berth and loading, 2 at town berth, 2 anchored; 3 vessels due by 13/5; 1-3 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; BHP Iron Ore Pty. Ltd., Goldsworthy (Finucane Island): 1 vessel berthed and loading; 2 vessels due by 4/5; a 48 hour maintenance shutdown is scheduled to start ca. 5/5; 2-3 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; Westyard "D" berth: 1 vessel berthed; 4 vessels due by 10/5; delays subject to berth congestion and cargo availability. Due to heavy demand for product, acute cargo shortages are being experienced at wharf stockpiles. Vessels will continue to berth as product becomes available.
Dampier	05-May-04	Iron ore: Parker Point: force majeure is still in effect; 1 vessel berthed and loading, 4 anchored of which 2 awaiting product; 3 vessels due by 15/5; up to 11 days delay due to berth congestion and cargo availability; cargo shortages are evident and vessels may berth out of turn; East Intercourse Island: force majeure still in effect; 1 vessel berthed and loading, 9 vessels anchored of which 2 awaiting product; 6 vessels due by 15/5; up to 12 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; cargo shortages are evident, delays are anticipated and vessels may berth out of turn.
Port Walcott	05-May-04	Iron ore: force majeure is still in effect.
Melbourne	05-May-04	1 vessel loading wheat; 3 vessels due by 24/5, all to load wheat; up to 3 days delay at present due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Geelong	05-May-04	Grain: 5 vessels due by 20/5, 3 to load wheat, 2 barley; up to 6 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Portland	05-May-04	Grain: 2 vessels waiting, 1 to load wood-chips, 1 wheat; 3 vessels due by 22/5, 1 to load canola, 1 wheat, 1 wood-chips; up to 5 days delay expected due to cargo availability and berth congestion.
Port Adelaide	05-May-04	Grain: No. 27 berth: 10 vessels due by 30/6, 1 to load faba beans, 9 wheat; up to 1 day's delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Port Pirie	05-May-04	Port will be closed to shipping from 1/7 to 9/8 for electrical upgrade in silo control room.
Port Lincoln	05-May-04	Grain: 3 vessels due by 19/5, 1 to load wheat, 1 barley, 1 wheat/canola; up to 1 day's delay expected due to berth congestion.
Geraldton	05-May-04	Grain: 3 vessels due by 14/5, all to load wheat; up to 9 days delay expected due to cargo availability and berth congestion.
Kwinana	05-May-04	Grain: 11 vessels due by 3/6, all to load wheat; up to 11 days delay expected due to cargo availability and berth congestion.
Albany	05-May-04	Grain: 7 vessels due by 25/5, 4 to load wheat, 1 barley, 2 other grain; up to 3 days delay expected due to cargo availability and berth congestion.
Esperance	05-May-04	Iron ore: 3 vessels due by 15/5; up to 1 day's delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability. Grain: 3 vessels due by 18/5, 2 to load wheat, 1 barley; 1-3 days delay expected due to cargo availability and berth congestion.
Port Latta	05-May-04	Iron ore: 3 vessels due by 20/5; up to 1 day's delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
<b>Bulgaria</b>		
Bourgas	03-May-04	Twelve vessels in port operating, of which 9 loading (1 baryte concentrate, 2 metals, 1 bagged ammonium nitrate, 1 scrap, 2 coils, 1 steel sheets, 1 containers), 3 discharging (1 billets, 1 containers, 1 Rebco); 6 vessels waiting in roads, all to load, of which 4 empty, 1 chemicals, 1 bunkers; 17 vessels due of which 11 to load (7 coils, 1 equipment, 1 metals, 1 containers, 1 steel sheets), 3 to discharge (1 equipment, 1 salt, 1 containers), 3 passenger vessels.

**Port Conditions**

**Egypt**

Alexandria	03-May-04	Nineteen vessels berthed (loading/discharging) of which 13 general cargo, 2 bulkers, 1 containers, 2 tankers, 1 passenger vessel; 7 vessels at inner anchorage, 7 at outer anchorage.
Damietta	03-May-04	Seventeen vessels berthed (loading/discharging) of which 12 general cargo, 3 bulk carriers, 2 containers; 5 vessels at outer anchorage, 1 at inner anchorage.
Suez Canal	03-May-04	Twenty-two vessels transiting Northbound, 23 Southbound.

**India**

Mumbai	04-May-04	No labour problems. Five vessels loading at berth, 4 discharging at berth; no vessels waiting at anchorage; expected delays: container vessels: 12 hours; bulkers: 1-2 days on completion of cargo documents; general cargo vessels: berthing within 24 hours of arrival.
Visakhapatnam	03-May-04	Six vessels loading at berth, 7 discharging at berth; 4 vessels waiting at anchorage to load, 1 waiting at anchorage to discharge; 30 vessels due, with 1-3 days delay expected.

**Israel**

Haifa	04-May-04	No labour problems. Five vessels discharging at berth (2 general cargo, 3 bulkers), 8 vessels loading/discharging at berth (6 containers, 2 tankers); 3 vessels waiting at anchor to load/discharge (1 containers, 2 tankers); 3 vessels under repairs/dry-docked, 2 awaiting orders; 21 vessels due, with 2-3 days delay expected.
Ashdod	04-May-04	No labour problems. Two general cargo vessels loading at berth, 11 vessels discharging at berth (9 general cargo, 2 bulkers), 3 vessels loading/discharging at berth (2 containers, 1 car carrier); 3 vessels waiting at anchor to discharge (2 general cargo, 1 bulker); 1 vessel under repairs/dry-docked, 1 awaiting orders; 17 vessels due, with 2-3 days delay expected.

**Kazakhstan**

Aktau	03-May-04	Oil products: 4 vessels in roads, waiting to load crude oil.
-------	-----------	--

**Panama**

Panama Canal	03-May-04	All vessel traffic proceeding on schedule without incident and with little or no delays. Tentative dates for lock/lane outages are scheduled as follows: Miraflores lock: lane outages 31/5-10/6; Pedro Miguel: lane outages 5-15/7.
--------------	-----------	--

**Russia**

Novorossiysk	03-May-04	Fourteen vessels in port operating, of which 12 loading (2 scrap, 1 bulk cement, 3 bulk NPK, 1 pipes/steel sheet/technical cargo, 1 steel, 1 steel billets, 1 copper, 1 aluminium, 1 diesel oil), 2 discharging bulk sugar; 12 vessels waiting in roads, of which 4 to discharge bulk sugar, 8 to load (1 pipes/steel/paper/bricks, 4 pipes, 1 pipes/steel sheet, 1 flowers, 1 bulk urea); 53 vessels due of which 51 to load (5 scrap, 1 bulk cement, 2 steel sheet, 3 HBI, 4 pig-iron, 2 bulk urea, 1 pipes, 5 copper, 4 steel billets, 1 bulk urea/bulk NPK, 1 equipment, 6 coils, 1 aluminium, 1 UAN solution, 1 vehicles, 2 slabs, 2 bulk NPK, 1 containers, 1 WRIC, 1 DRI, 1 pipes/coils, 1 zinc, 1 diesel oil, 1 equipment/vehicles, 1 onions, 1 general cargo), 2 to discharge containers. Oil terminal: 1 tanker loading crude oil; 3 tankers in roads, all to load crude oil; 9 tankers due, all to load, of which 8 crude oil, 1 fuel oil.
--------------	-----------	---

**Turkmenistan**

Aladja	03-May-04	Oil products: 1 vessel in roads waiting to load crude oil.
Okarem	03-May-04	Oil products: 1 vessel berthed loading crude oil; 1 vessel in roads, waiting to load crude oil.

**Ukraine**

Odessa	03-May-04	Fifteen vessels in port operating, of which 11 loading (9 metal, 1 scrap, 1 metal/wood), 3 discharging (2 sugar, 1 building materials), 1 discharging/loading containers; 7 vessels in roads, of which 1 to load metal, 5 to discharge (2 sugar, 3 metal), 1 to discharge/load containers; 64 vessels due, of which 24 to load (18 metal, 1 pipes, 3 ferro alloy, 1 equipment, 1 scrap), 7 to discharge (5 metal, 1 meat, 1 citrus), 33 to discharge/load containers.
Mariupol	03-May-04	Twelve vessels in port operating, of which 11 loading (4 steel, 2 sulphur, 2 fire-clay, 3 coal), 1 discharging bagged magnesium; 3 vessels undergoing survey (1 coal, 2 steel); 8 vessels in roads, all to load, of which 4 steel, 4 clay; 45 vessels due, of which 40 to load (24 steel, 1 ferrous metals, 10 coal, 4 fire-clay, 1 sunflower beans), 4 to discharge (1 magnetite, 3 heavy lift cargo), 1 to discharge/load containers.
Ilichevsk	03-May-04	Six vessels in port operating, of which 5 loading (4 steel products, 1 wood-pulp), 1 discharging/loading containers; 2 vessels in roads, of which 1 to load equipment, 1 to discharge cement; 15 vessels due, of which 11 to load (9 steel products, 2 oil), 2 to discharge ore, 2 to load/discharge containers.

**United States**

Miami	03-May-04	The traffic in Miami and Fort Lauderdale is congested at times on Friday, Saturday and Sunday due to the movement of cruise vessels.
Houston	03-May-04	Cargill terminal: 2-3 days delay expected; LDC Dreyfus terminal: no delays.
Galveston	03-May-04	No new restriction in draft (normal 39 ft. 6 ins. b.w. max. deep draft enforced). Channel open under normal traffic; ADM-Farmland terminal: 2-3 days delay expected.



**Port Conditions**

New Orleans	03-May-04	Mississippi River terminal berthing delays: Cenex-Harstates/Myrtle Grove: no delays; Cargill-Westwego: 1 day's delay expected; ADM/Ama: 5 days delay expected; Bunge/Destrehan: no delays; ADM/Destrehan: 5 days delay expected; ADM/Reserve: 5 days delay expected; Cargill/Reserve: 2 days delay expected; Peavey/Paulina: 4 days delay expected; Zen-Noh/Convent: 1 day's delay expected; Cargill/Baton Rouge: no delays; 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: maintenance being performed until 7/5; no delays; Mile 158.0 Cargill (K2) - Convent: 5 days delay expected; Mile 180.0 Cooper (America) - Darrow: 1 day's delay expected.
Tacoma, WA	03-May-04	Temco terminal: 2 days delay expected.
Kalama, WA	03-May-04	Kalama export terminal: 5 days delay expected.
Vancouver, WA	03-May-04	United Harvest terminal: 1 day's delay expected.
Portland, OR	03-May-04	Columbia Grain terminal: 2 days delay expected.
<b>Yemen</b>		
Hodeidah	02-May-04	Berths 5 and 7 are occupied; 2 vessels berthed (1 containers, 1 timber), none anchored; expected waiting times: general cargo: no delays; bagged cargoes: no delays; bulk cargoes: up to 2 days; no delays for containers.

**Published by Lloyd's Marine Intelligence Unit, Informa UK Ltd , Sheepen Place, Colchester, Essex CO3 3LP.**

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

**Copyright © Lloyd's Marine Intelligence Unit, Informa UK Ltd 2004. This casualty information is copyright. Unauthorised copying prohibited by law.**

**ISSN 0047 4908**

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