

ROC may be facing end of the line as liquidators prepare to auction fleet

THREE remaining Royal Olympia Cruises overnight cruiseships are to be auctioned in Piraeus, seemingly bringing to an end the Greek cruise line's troubled nine-year history.

Under a Greek court decision issued this week, three shipowning companies controlling the 1971-built Triton, the 1966-built World Renaissance and the 1962-built Odysseus have been put in the hands of liquidators on application from mortgagee Fortis Bank.

Negotiations

The Dutch bank, reportedly owed almost € 59m (\$75.5m), is by far ROC's major creditor and looks set to reap the lion's share of auction proceeds although some observers feel the most likely outcome at auction is that the bank will buy the vessels back and then hold private negotiations with interested parties.

Priority claims are likely to include those of hundreds of unpaid crew ranging up to the €45,000 each said to be owed to the company's masters.

While in most ship auction scenarios ROC's office staff would miss out on unpaid wages, legal experts in Piraeus left open the possibility that the unprecedented

procedure might also take into consideration shoreside employees.

The liquidation brings to an end more than 12 months in which the cruise firm has been on the rack after losing its three premier vessels to other creditors — a period that included nine months of legal protection against creditors, the first time the specific Greek bankruptcy protection laws have been invoked for shipping companies of this type.

Bankruptcy

In a last-ditch attempt to salvage something from the collapse, ROC management had sought a bankruptcy in operation order and had been trying to convince Fortis Bank it could struggle on if it sold just two of the vessels.

ROC itself as the cruise firm's managing company, though, appears to have escaped efforts to judicially wind it up.

Managers at the cruise line and its legal spokesman were unavailable for comment yesterday.

One Piraeus legal expert described the company's status as "uncertain" after the court threw out a variety of petitions to have ROC liquidated, mainly on technical grounds.

Despite this, most observers see it as the end for ROC, although not necessarily for one of the longest family company stories in world shipping.

ROC was established as Royal Olympic Cruises by the merger of the Potamianos family's Epirotiki Lines and the Keusseoglou family-controlled Sun Line at the end of 1995.

It embarked on a perilous career as a publicly listed company with a small initial offering on Nasdaq in early 1998.

Extended

But Epirotiki's history goes back more than 150 years and arguably this could be extended if the Andreas Potamianos-led clan is able to keep a toe-hold in the business.

Mr Potamianos could not be reached yesterday, but, according to one Greek passengership source, he has been examining possible cruises from Venice employing the elderly Jason, a 136-cabin vessel that was left outside ROC.

Nigel Lowry
Lloyd's List Correspondent



EDITOR
Stephen Legall
Tel +44 020 7017 5228

ADVERTISEMENTS
Mike Smith
Tel +44 (0) 20 7017 4488
Fax +44 (0) 20 7017 5007
email mike.smith@lloydsniu.com

SUBSCRIPTIONS:
Peter Barker
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7017 4779
Fax: +44 (0) 20 7017 5007
Email: peter.barker@lloydsniu.com

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

Vessel	Type	Flag	Class	GT	DWT	Bit	Casualty
<i>AURELIA</i>	bulker	MLT	RS	22,046	34,170	1981	Sent distress signal and sank in heavy weather, in lat 27 45.32N, long 139 44.24E, near Chichijima Island Feb 2. Twelve crew rescued, 10 missing.
<i>CAPE FLATTERY</i>	bulker	HKG	NK	16,978	28,433	2004	Reported aground, by the bow, with the stern still afloat, about half a mile east of Barbers Point Feb 2. Three tugs attempting refloat. Listing to port.
<i>HARDWAR</i>	bulker	IND	IR	28,739	47,311	1987	Reported anchor lashing problems and water in forepeak, in heavy weather, 35 miles north-west of Bermuda Jan 29. Anchored in lat 32 41N 64 42W, awaiting orders. Reported Feb 3 in lat 32 10.7N, long 64 50.9W, proceeding west for shelter.
<i>JOY RUBY</i>	—	—	—	487	—	—	Sank about 150 metres from Coron pier, Philippines, Jan 29, after disembarking passengers at Coron. Vessel was taking water on its way into Coron and after passengers were off vessel was floated away from the port for sinking.
<i>KEMERI</i>		LBR		10,944			Experienced sea suction problems in lat 46 49.31N, long 71 12.17W, Jan 31, while downbound in the St. Charles River, resulting in a total black-out. Technical advisor on board.
<i>MIN HAI 102</i>	general	CHN	CS	977	1,150	1987	In collision with Minghui 8 in lat 23 27N, long 117 16E, Jan 26. Vessel was damaged but not seriously. Oil spillage reported.
<i>POMERANIA</i>	passenger	BHS	GL	12,087	1,856	1997	In collision with asphalt tanker Rio Grande about 14km west of Falsterbo, Sweden. Sustained a small hole well above the waterline. Escorted to Copenhagen. Investigation to commence.
<i>RADWAN</i>	product	CYP	NK	23,904	35,584	1980	Salvage services being rendered by Tsavlis International under LOF, dated Jan 29, due engine failure in lat 34 08S, long 08 52E. Reported Feb 2 under tow of tug <i>Nikolay Chiker</i> bound Cape Town.
<i>RED POINT</i>	chem/oil carrier	ITA	AB	27,001	46,825	1984	Reported Feb 3 to have been aground at the entrance to the River Amazon for 2/3 days. Smit Salvage contracted under LOF.
<i>SAATLY</i>	general	AZE	RS	3,363	4,286	1962	Reported Jan 30 aground offshore Makhachkala, Caspian Sea. High winds and rough seas. Tug Oktay Veliyev arrived on scene and also grounded.
<i>STOLT FULMAR</i>	chem tanker	CYM	LR	3,818	4,300	2000	Contacted with the dock at Blankenese and tug Schleppko, Jan 29, due rudder problems and fog. Sustained 15cm tear. Proceeded for Antwerp 30 Jan escorted by two tugs. Damage to dock extensive. Arrived Antwerp Jan 31.
<i>VOLCAN DE TACANDE</i>	ro-ro	CNI	BV	18,316	2,325	1974	Engines stopped as a result of water entry about four miles from Los Cristianos Jan 30. Passengers evacuated to vessel Salvamar. Towed to Las Palmas. Inquiry underway.

CONTENTS

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

Marine, including Overdue & Missing Vessels	1
Seizures & Arrests	13
Pipeline Accidents	15
Pollution	16
Weather & Navigation	16
Earthquakes	18
Volcanic Activity	19
Political & Civil Unrest	19
Labour Disputes	28
Awards & Settlements	29
Railway Accidents	32
Computer Systems	34
Miscellaneous	35
Fires & Explosions	36
Aviation	38
Product Recalls	41
Port Conditions	42
Port Conditions charts	43

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The following reports are reprinted from Lloyd's List



ACACIA (Bermuda)

Falmouth, Jan 31 — Ro/ro Acacia (13436 gt, built 1974) arrived Falmouth at 1800, Jan 29 with contaminated fuel. Vessel secured to cross roads buoy in Falmouth Harbour to rectify problem. — Lloyd's Agents. (Note — Acacia, which sailed Zeebrugge Jan 27 for Philadelphia, subsequently passed Dover Strait same day.)

Falmouth, Feb 3 — Ro/ro Acacia expects to leave Falmouth later today. — Lloyd's Agents.

AKKOC 1 (Turkey)

London, Feb 3 — Following received from Ankara MSRCC, timed 1230, UTC: General cargo Akkoc 1 (498 gt, built 1976) reported taking water and listing in Black Sea, in lat 41 20 12N, long 28 40 00E.

London, Feb 3 — Following received from Ankara MSRCC, timed 1345, UTC: General cargo Akkoc 1 remains in the same position, listing towards starboard.

AL KHALED (Georgia)

Tunis, Feb 1 — Bulk Al Khaled (6954 gt, built 1975) while manoeuvring out from Sousse port reportedly struck bulk Apollonia Spirit (10912 gt, built 1977), laying at quay No.5, causing it damage to hull as well as damage to the quay and fender at 1345, Jan 31. — Lloyd's Agents. (Note — Al Khaled arrived Sousse Jan 29 and Apollonia Spirit arrived Sousse Jan 12.)

ALEXANDROS (Panama)

London, Feb 1 — Following received from Malta Radio, timed 1700, UTC: No further information has been received regarding general cargo Alexandros.

ALGA (St. Vincent & Grenadines)

London, Jan 28 — Following received from Aarhus MRCC, timed 1030, UTC: General cargo Alga is still aground.

London, Jan 30 — Following received from Aarhus MRCC, timed 1030, UTC: General cargo Alga is still aground. Understood owners are negotiating with salvors for the removal items of value from off of the vessel.

London, Jan 31 — Following received from Aarhus MRCC, timed 1055, UTC: General cargo Alga is still aground. It is hoped that the vessel will be refloated in around three days, after which it will be taken in tow, destination unknown at present.

London, Feb 3 — Following received from Aarhus MRCC, timed 0930, UTC: General cargo Alga was refloated prior to 0140, UTC, today and was towed to Aarhus, where arrived at 0824, UTC. The small amount of oil that was on board the vessel has been removed. Alga has already entered dry dock in Aarhus.

ALMAZ (Russia)

Seoul, Feb 1 — Fish factory Almaz is still staying at shipyard in Yosu and repair schedule has not yet been fixed. — Lloyd's Agents.

ANGLIAN EARL (Barbados)

Falmouth, Jan 31 — Anchor handling tug/supply Anglian Earl is still undergoing repairs at Falmouth with ETS week nine. — Lloyd's Agents.

ANKE ANGELA (Gibraltar)

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated today, states: General cargo Anke Angela (1547 gt, built 1984), Hamina for New Holland, contacted lock gate in the Kiel Canal at Brunsbützel during the night of Jan 30. Extent of damage unknown at present.

Cuxhaven, Feb 1 — General cargo Anke Angela, Hamina for New Holland, while passing the entrance of the lock touched the lockgate following an engine breakdown at about 2400, Jan 30. Only a small amount of damage. After they had found the problem and repaired it by themselves, the class surveyor was on board and the vessel sailed after a delay of about five hours. — Lloyd's Agents.

ANNERDIEP (Cyprus)

See Assiduus.

APACHE MAIDEN (Philippines)

Yokohama, Feb 1 — Bulk Apache Maiden (14499 gt, built 1987) had a fire in the cargo hold while mooring at the T-9 Daikoku Pier, Yokohama at 1045, Jan 6. The fire was extinguished by Japan Coast Guard at 1750, same day. No injuries. — Lloyd's Agents. (Note — Apache Maiden arrived Yokohama Jan 4 and sailed Jan 8 for Manzanillo.)

APOLLONIA SPIRIT (Malta)

See Al Khaled.

AQUARIUS (U.K.)

Hull, Jan 27 — The home port of fishing Aquarius is Amble and it is therefore based there while not engaged in fishing operations. When the vessel was towed there after the incident it remained alongside for two days (Jan 21/22) and thereafter returned to normal fishing operations. — Lloyd's Agents.

ASSIDUUS (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Jan 27 — Understood general cargo Assiduus (2292 gt, built 1990), Le Havre for Szczecin, reportedly struck bank of Kiel Canal near Landwehr ferry about 0315, Jan 24, and subsequently ran amidships into general cargo Annerdiep (2999 gt, built 2003), which ran aground. The ferry quay was damaged. Assiduus continued its voyage after an investigation in Kiel, arriving Szczecin Jan 25. It had sustained no serious damage. Annerdiep was freed and subsequently arrived Hamburg 2315 same day for repairs. It sailed 1520, Jan 26, for Ornskoldsvik.

Cuxhaven, Jan 28 — Understand from the canal authorities that at 0315, local time, Jan 24, general cargo Annerdiep

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

passed the ferry quay at Landwehr and grounded ashore. The vessel came free under own power, but collided at low speed with general cargo Assiduus. Annerdiep turned ashore again and badly damaged the ferry bridge causing canal traffic to be stopped. Both vessels continued their voyages, Annerdiep to Hamburg shipyard and Assiduus to Kiel. — Lloyd's Agents.

Hamburg, Jan 28 — There was a collision in the Kiel Canal between general cargo Assiduus and general cargo Annerdiep Jan "25". Annerdiep subsequently crashed into a terminal of a canal ferry, after the collision. The newspaper estimated the damage at approximately EUR 200,000.00. Annerdiep is now in dock at Husumer Dock u. Reparatur GmbH & Co. KG at Husum for repair work. The vessel will remain in dock until the end of next week. Repair estimate not available. — Lloyd's Agents.

ATHOS I (Cyprus)

London, Feb 3 — A Delaware River Oil Spill Joint Information Centre report, dated Feb 2, states: Crude oil tanker Athos I: Latest Updates: Two hundred and eighty-seven responders are working in the command centre and along the Delaware River. Some 106,350 gallons of oil and oily liquid has been recovered. Some 11,108 tons of oily solids (cleanup materials and oil) have been collected. Seventy-eight percent of the heavily oiled areas, 54% of the medium oiled areas, and 34% of the lightly oiled areas have been grossly decontaminated. Thirty-eight facilities have been grossly decontaminated with seven currently being decontaminated. Experts report 366 birds have been released and 178 birds are reported deceased.

AURELIA (Malta)

Vladivostok, Feb 2 — Following received from the Vladivostok Salvage Co-ordinating Centre: Bulk Aurelia (22046 gt, built 1981) sent distress signal and sank not far from Japan's Chichijima Island at 0630, local time, today. Of 22 crew members, nine have been found on four boats and a raft, 13 persons reported missing. The cause of sinking is unknown. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Feb 2 — Following received from Coast Guard Japan, timed 0710, UTC: Bulk Aurelia, 9HMZ6, sank in approximately lat 27 45 32.4N, long 139 44 24E. Sixteen crew rescued, so far, six missing.

Tokyo, Feb 2 — Six Ukrainian crew members were missing today after bulk Aurelia apparently sank off the coast of Japan, the coast guard said. Fourteen of the 22-strong crew were rescued by military helicopters, a coast guard spokesman said, while two more had been spotted in the water and would be airlifted to safety shortly. The coast guard received an emergency signal at 0620 hrs (2120, UTC) from Aurelia, which was close to Chichijima. A coast guard plane was searching the area but had been unable to locate the ship, which is thought to have sunk, the coast guard said. The ship was heading

for Shimonoseki with a cargo of zinc ore, Kyodo news agency reported. — Reuters.

London, Feb 2 — Following press release, dated today, received from Alloceans of Athens, managers of bulk Aurelia: At approximately 0730, UTC, today, Alloceans of Athens were informed by the Maltese Authorities (the Flag State) that the Japanese Coastguard had responded to an emergency distress call from bulk Aurelia, some 420 miles south-east of the Japanese mainland. In response to that call, 16 members of the 22 strong Ukrainian crew were safely recovered. Six remain missing, and a search and rescue operation, co-ordinated by the Japanese Coastguard is continuing. Every effort is being made to ensure the safe return of these men. The recovered crew members have been flown to the Japanese mainland where they are receiving a full medical examination. Speaking for Seven Seas Maritime, London agents for the vessel, Christine Kershaw, head of Insurance and Claims stated, "At this stage we have no idea as to the cause of this incident. All our efforts are going into assisting the search and rescue operation and ensuring the recovered crew members are as comfortable as possible. We understand that the authorities will be conducting an investigation with which we will fully co-operate". The vessel was on passage from Peru destined for Japan with a cargo of zinc and copper concentrate. Aurelia had, as has been reported, a number of non operational deficiencies when it called into New Orleans in May last year. These were swiftly corrected and the vessel has since traded into the United States, passing US Coast Guard inspections with no recommendations or deficiencies. We, the managers, would like to thank the Japanese Coast Guard for their swift and professional response and for their continued efforts to locate the missing crew. This is our immediate priority.

AURORA (U.K.)

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated today, states: Passenger Aurora has left Southampton for a German shipyard where it will be repaired for 10 weeks. The vessel will undergo repairs at Bremerhaven before returning to Southampton in April. The company said it selected repairers Lloyd Werft as they have a proven track record with complex cases and are close to the motor manufacturers in Germany. (Note — Aurora sailed Southampton 1738, Jan 26 for Bremerhaven.)

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated Jan 27, states: Passenger Aurora is heading for Lloydwerft shipyard in Bremerhaven. after its 103-day world cruise was finally abandoned last week after 10 days of trying to make the boat sail. P&O initially said that the necessary repairs to the propulsion problems would take four to five weeks to mend. But the company has now said it will take 10 weeks, meaning the vessel will not be back at its

Southampton home until early April. A spokeswoman said: "Aurora had been due back from its world cruise on Apr 27 and we are still hoping to arrange a cruise before reverting to the planned post-Apr 27 itinerary."

London, Jan 31 — Passenger Aurora arrived Bremerhaven 1230, Jan 28, from Southampton.

AVONHURST (Singapore)

Bangkok, Jan 28 — Understand that as the damage sustained by supply Avonhurst was minor repairs were not carried out. The vessel is used to transport goods and workers to and from the gas platforms in the Gulf of Thailand and to Songkhla port in the south of Thailand. — Lloyd's Agents.

BALTIC TRADER (St. Vincent & Grenadines)

See "Languedoc, France" under "Pollution."

BARGE BREAKAWAY, MISSISSIPPI RIVER, UNITED STATES

London, Feb 3 — A press report, dated Feb 2, states: For a third time in eight days, barges hit both Mississippi River bridges at Vicksburg today. Ronnie Bounds, whose home overlooks the twin spans, said 10 or 12 barges cabled together in the tow scattered all over the river. Warren County Sheriff Martin Pace said one grain barge sank about 100-200 yards down river from the Interstate 20 and Old U.S. 80 bridges. Bridge Superintendent Herman Smith said the boat pushing the barges was owned by Ingram Barge Co, of Paducah, Ky. "It was one of the big ones, 10,000-horsepower," Smith said. Smith said boats were dispatched and the scattered barges were rounded up. Meanwhile, the U.S. Coast Guard said rain and high water are stalling the work to remove barges that hit the bridges last week. A boat from American River Transportation Co., or ARTCO, of Decatur, Ill., was headed downstream on the river last Thursday (Jan 27) when the pilot apparently lost control of the 22-barge tow. One barge sank about 1 1/2 miles south of the bridges and two others were beached. Last Tuesday (Jan 25), another ARTCO tow had hit the U.S. 80 bridge, but none of those barges sank. The Coast Guard imposed a safety zone for southbound tows from just upstream of Vicksburg to just downstream of the bridges. The action banned all southbound tows of 30 barges, limited tows from 16 to 30 barges to daylight and imposed a minimum horsepower-to-barge ratio. That safety zone remains in effect, said Lt. Todd Peterson, chief of port operations for the Marine Safety Unit in Baton Rouge, La. Peterson said it probably won't be lifted until the Mississippi falls below 43 feet, flood stage, which is forecast for tomorrow. A salvage outfit is handling the salvage, Peterson said. The company's first task, he said, is removing the grain from the beached barges. Peterson said the sunken barge is out of the channel and poses no immediate threat to navigation.

BARGE BREAKAWAYS, OHIO RIVER, UNITED STATES

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated Jan 26, states: Residents and businesses along an Ohio River tributary are being asked to conserve water because of dropping levels resulting from a barge accident that has blocked a dam controlling the river's depth. The Wood County Emergency Services issued the advisory yesterday to customers of the Claywood Park and Mineral Wells public service districts and the town of Elizabeth. The Claywood Park PSD obtains its water from the Little Kanawha River, which empties into the Ohio River at Parkersburg, and supplies the other two systems. Water in the 42-mile stretch of the Ohio River between the Belleville and Willow Island locks and dams has been dropping since three barges slammed into the dam on Jan 6 and twisted around its gate piers. Another barge sank. Water has also dropped in the Little Kanawha, where the level today was five feet below the Claywood Park PSD's intake. That forced the PSD to use pumps to draw water into its plant, which provides about 1.2 million gallons a day, said General Manager Jack Beck. "We are in good shape for water right now. Our only concerns are if the river keeps dropping, the pumps wouldn't be able to pull water up into the existing structure," Beck said Wednesday. He said a hydraulic submersible pump that can pull water into the plant is to be placed in the river tomorrow. The water conservation advisory was issued as a precaution and no shortages have occurred, Beck said. If there is shortage, water will be brought in by truck, said Robert Bibbee, emergency planner for the Wood County OES. US Army Corps of Engineers spokeswoman Peggy Noel said the agency does not know how long it will take to free the barges, which are obstructing two of eight gates at the Belleville dam. A section of one barge was removed today, clearing a third gate. The gates control the depth of the navigational pool between Belleville and Willow Island. All eight gates must be operational to restore the pool to its normal depth. "It's a very tedious operation because of how the barges are wrapped and they have to be careful not to do structural damage at the dam. They're working as long and as hard as they can," Noel said. The corps has suspended barge traffic through the Belleville lock because the water is too low to navigate. The level of the Hocking River in Ohio, another tributary, also has been dropping. (See issue of Jan 25.)

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated Jan 31, states: The last of three wrecked barges that have closed a 42-mile stretch of the Ohio River for nearly two weeks was removed today, and barge traffic was expected to resume by midweek. The closing has stranded more than 290 barges and caused losses estimated at \$4.5 million a day. The 175-foot steel barges broke loose on Jan 6 during flooding along the river and twisted themselves around a

dam, preventing its gates from closing. The US Army Corps of Engineers halted river traffic through the Belleville lock on Jan 19 because of the falling water levels. Salvage crews removed the final barge this afternoon, and the dam's gates were closed later in the day, corps spokesman Chuck Minsker said. The channel between the Belleville and Willow Island locks and dams was expected to fill to its normal water level, about 12 feet, by Wednesday evening (Feb 2).

London, Feb 2 — A press report, dated Feb 1, states: Traffic resumed early today along a 42-mile stretch of the Ohio River that was closed for nearly two weeks while salvage crews removed three runaway barges that had twisted themselves around a dam. The 175-foot coal barges broke loose on Jan 6 during flooding along the river and jammed the dam's gates, preventing them from closing. Because of the falling water levels, the US Army Corps of Engineers halted river traffic through the Belleville lock on Jan 19. The closing trapped 46 towboats and more than 550 barges. "They are moving them pretty briskly right now," corps spokesman Chuck Minsker said today of barges moving through the lock. "I would think in two or three days we should be back to normal." Salvage crews removed the last of the wrecked barges yesterday, allowing the dam's gates to close. They worked today to move a fourth barge that sank but was not blocking the gates. Senator Jay Rockefeller, D-W.Va., said the river's closing cost the region \$4.5 million a day. He asked President Bush last week to declare several counties in the Ohio Valley federal disaster areas. The accident also reduced water levels in two tributaries of the Ohio. Erosion of the rivers' banks since the accident prompted a lawsuit by residents who blame the accident for damage to their properties.

BBC PACIFIC (Antigua & Barbuda)

Honolulu, Feb 1 — General cargo BBC Pacific (6170 gt, built 2000) is currently in Honolulu reportedly with damage to its main engine, due to bad bunkers. — Lloyd's Agents. (Note - BBC Pacific sailed Busan Jan 12 and arrived Honolulu Jan 29.)

BELMONTE (Netherlands Antilles)

Seattle, Jan 27 — Bulk Belmonte sailed Seattle Jan 26. — Lloyd's Agents.

BIG VALLEY (U.S.A.)

London, Feb 2 — A press report, dated today, states: The US Coast Guard says it believes fishing Big Valley had too much equipment on board, and that is why it went down on the opening day of the snow crab season. The Coast Guard limited Big Valley to carrying no more than 31 600-pound crab pots. Compare that to 55 700-pound pots on board. That's the amount investigators say they believe Big Valley was carrying, more than twice the weight limit when it likely capsized. The Kodiak-based vessel sank 70 miles west of St. Paul Island on Jan 15. Of the six men on

board at the time, only one survived. Investigators say the sole survivor, along with people on the docks when the ship left port, told them how many pots were on board. Investigators also found Big Valley was likely carrying up to 13,000 pounds of bait, 8,000 pounds more than Coast Guard limitations. "The owner of the boat, Gary Edwards, we had had at least two other interactions with him over the last couple years when we've done these at the dock stability checks," said Chief Chris Woodley of Coast Guard port operations office. "And in January 2004, we required Mr. Edwards to pull 13 pots off of Big Valley, because he had packed it past what his stability letter allowed him to do." The Coast Guard says this year it did not check Big Valley before it left port.

BIOSFERA (Ukraine)

London, Feb 2 — Following received from Madrid MRCC, timed 0915, UTC: Fish factory Biosfera (3983 gt, built 1977) in tow of tug Sea Nostromo (? tug Sea Nostromo Segunda, 180 gt, built 1962) sank in lat 38 53N, long 03 11E, at 1115 yesterday. (Note — Sea Nostromo Segunda towing Biosfera, Las Palmas for Aliaga, passed Tarifa 0348, Jan 27. Biosfera was last reported to have arrived Las Palmas Oct 19, 1999.)

BLUE SEVEN 2

See Shoyo Maru

BUM YANG NO.7 (South Korea)

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated today, states: A Japan Coast Guard patrol vessel rescued 13 crew members on board crippled South Korean fishing Bum Yang No.7, 69 tons, near Shimane Prefecture yesterday at the request of South Korean maritime safety authorities, coast guard officials said. Bum Yang No.7 was found by the patrol vessel at around 0930 hrs, about six hours after the Japan Coast Guard received the request, the officials said. It began towing the fishing vessel into Sakai port.

CAPE FLATTERY (Hong Kong)

Honolulu, Feb 2 — Bulk Cape Flattery (16978 gt, built 2004), laden with bulk cement, grounded this morning approximately half a mile east of the pilot station at Barbers Point Deep Draught Harbour. The vessel is hard aground on the Diamond Head side of the channel, with tugs Mamo, Pono and Mikiala II attempting to refloat it. The vessel is listing to port with its starboard side broadside to the beach. The US Coast Guard is on scene. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Feb 2 — Following received from Coast Guard Honolulu, timed 2219, UTC: Bulk Cape Flattery is still aground. Three tugs are attempting to refloat the vessel. If unsuccessful, a further attempt will be made on the next high tide, at approximately midnight, local time. The vessel's hull has reportedly not been breached.

London, Feb 3 — The Hong Kong managers of bulk Cape Flattery reported, on Feb 2, that the vessel has

run partially aground near Barbers Point, Hawaii, at approximately 0649, local time, this morning. The vessel is partially aground by the bow, with the stern still afloat. Tugs are in attendance and the US Coast Guard and local authorities have been notified. The vessel is carrying a cargo of cement, no fuel has been spilled and there were no injuries.

London, Feb 3 — Following received from CoastGuard Honolulu, timed 0650, UTC: Attempts to refloat bulk Cape Flattery have so far failed. Further attempts should begin in about four hours.

London, Feb 3 — Following received from Coast Guard Honolulu, timed 1430, UTC: Bulk Cape Flattery is still aground. The Coast Guard are currently awaiting a lightering plan from vessel.

CAPE SYROS (Cyprus)

Cadiz, Jan 31 — General cargo Cape Syros is still under repairs at the IZAR shipyards at Cadiz. Last information received from the consignee was that the vessel would be sailing by the end of last week. — Lloyd's Agents.

CEMSTAR (Sweden)

Trondheim, Jan 31 — Cement Cemstar is now at Aalesund transferring the remaining cargo to cement Conberria. Estimate completion of this operation as Feb 1. Cemstar will then, weather permitting, sail for Stavanger to repair at Maritime GMC AS. Repairs estimated to take about 19 days. — Lloyd's Agents.

CLIPPER GLORY (Liberia)

See Helm Trader.

CRISTOFORO COLOMBO (Belgium)

London, Jan 27 — A press release issued by the Sakhalin Energy Investment Company Ltd on hopper dredger Cristoforo Colombo, dated Yuzhno Sakhalinsk, Jan 25, states: The salvage of the dredger has suffered considerable delays due to recent bad weather and obstacles on the seabed. The storms in December and January have caused considerable damage to the hull and tanks such that the floating capacity of the vessel has diminished and the vessel cannot be pulled off the shore without severe damage to its structural integrity. Additionally, wave action during the storms has caused ice to form on board increasing the weight of the vessel considerably. All parties involved, including the vessel operators European Dredging Company and the appointed salvage contractor Smit International and SakhBASU, are working hard to find a solution that ensures that the environment will be safeguarded, that minimises disturbance to the community of Kholmsk, minimises the destruction of the vessel and maximises the chances of success. All the necessary precautions are being taken to prevent pollution, disturbance and damage to the environment. To reduce the risk of possible environmental impacts, all oil

and oily water has been removed from the vessel and pumped into special containers and stored onshore for treatment. The option to pull the dredger off the shore is being reassessed. The impact of the storms and identification of rock ridges between the vessel and the dredged channel, which is required to allow the vessel to be towed off the shoreline and out to sea, will prevent a successful pulling operation without some dismantling of the vessel. Other options, such as floating the vessel in a man-made basin continue to be considered, but are dependent upon weather conditions. Sakhalin Energy remains fully committed to assisting vessel operator, salvage contractor and Kholmsk Administration in the safe and responsible removal of the grounded vessel. Meanwhile, all of the good will projects agreed between the Kholmsk Administration and Sakhalin Energy are in the process of being implemented in Kholmsk. They include deployment of oil spill response equipment, Primorski Boulevard beautification, replacement of a kindergarten roof, purchase of equipment and furniture for the children's health clinic and provision of an emergency medical centre at the hospital.

CT SUN (Malta)

London, Jan 29 — Following received from Coastguard Humber MRSC, timed 1032, UTC: At 0845, UTC, today, chem.tank CT Sun (4382 gt, built 1980), experienced a main engine failure, two cables off Immingham Oil Terminal, River Humber. As a result the vessel was unable to manoeuvre and dropped anchor to stabilise. Vessel then received tug assistance to berth alongside at East Jetty, Immingham, berthing at 0950, UTC. The vessel has no external damage and it is understood that its crew will be endeavouring to undertake engine repairs. (Note — CT Sun sailed Skelleftea Jan 24 for Immingham.)

London, Feb 1 — Chem.tank CT Sun sailed Immingham Jan 30 for Helsingborg.

DAE BO SAN (North Korea)

Yokohama, Feb 1 — The fishing nets were removed from general cargo Dae Bo San and the vessel was towed to Nanao port on Jan 18. — Lloyd's Agents.

DANICA GREEN (DIS)

London, Jan 31 — Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: General cargo Danica Green (902 gt, built 1981) is currently repairing in Perama shipyard. (Note — Danica Green was towed by tug Akhtiar from Port Said to Piraeus for repairs following engine trouble.)

DETTIFOSS (Antigua & Barbuda)

Reykjavik, Jan 31 — C.c. Dettifoss (14664 gt, built 1995), Reykjavik for Eskifjordur, lost a rudder blade approximately eight miles south-east of Iceland at 2000, Jan 28. The vessel was towed by Icelandic Coast Guard vessels

Tyr and Aegir to Eskifjordur harbour arriving there 0030 this morning. The Coast Guard vessels had some trouble with the towing due to strong wind and heavy seas. No damage to vessel or cargo reported, except the rudder blade. It is understood a tug is on its way to Eskifjordur to tow Dettifoss to Rotterdam. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Feb 3 — C.c. Dettifoss, which lost steering control when its steering blade broke off, is on its way to Rotterdam for repairs. It is estimated that towing the vessel from Iceland to Rotterdam will take six days. The Icelandic owners said that strong winds prevailed at the time of the incident on Jan 28, but they were not bad enough to provoke an emergency situation. Coast Guard vessel Tyr arrived at the scene two hours later, followed by Aegir about 12 hours later. The vessel was towed towards Eskifjordur and berthed. Divers assessed the damage to the steering mechanism but it was impossible to determine what caused the vessel to lose its ability to steer until it was drydocked, Eimskip stated. It had then been decided to tow the vessel to Rotterdam for repairs. Tug Primus has been contracted for the job. A search is now on for a suitable charter vessel to replace Dettifoss.

Reykjavik, Feb 3 — C.c. Dettifoss departed from Eskifjordur harbour at 0940 hrs, this morning, under tow of tug Primus, bound for Rotterdam. — Lloyd's Agents.

DOLLART (Gibraltar)

London, Jan 28 — General cargo Dollart arrived Rostock 0320, Jan 27.

DONG YIH NO.668

See "Mutiny on Taiwan Flagged Vessel in Indian Ocean" under "Miscellaneous."

ELEFThERIA (Greece)

London, Jan 28 — Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 0959, UTC: Bulk Eleftheria (40832 gt, built 2001), loaded with grain, grounded on sand at Bahia Blanca at 0235, UTC, Jan 28. The vessel refloated by its own means approximately two hours later. An inspection revealed no damage, and the vessel sailed Bahia Blanca at 0700, UTC, bound Jebel Ali.

ELIZABETH M. (U.S.A.)

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated Jan 31, states: The captain of tug Elizabeth M., that sank on the Ohio River, killing three of seven crew members and leaving one presumed dead, defied orders and departed a fueling station without waiting for a second boat, a company official said today. Don Grimm, president of Campbell Transportation Co., said the captain ordered the tug to depart without the help of a second towboat that was still one and-a-half hours downriver. "I believe there was some errors in judgment, obviously," Grimm said during a Coast Guard inquiry into the Jan 9 accident. The first tug was pushing six coal barges up the Ohio when strong currents wrenched the lead barges back toward the

Montgomery Lock and Dam, through which it had just passed. The tug was pushed or pulled backward over the dam and sank quickly. Three of the seven crew members were rescued by nearby towboats. One crew member, Rick Conklin, 40, has not been found. Today was the first day of what is expected to be a week of testimony to determine what led to the sinking. Capt. Toby Zappone was scheduled to testify tomorrow. Deckhand Jacob Wilds is scheduled to testify Wednesday (Feb 2). Grimm said written orders had been left on the vessel's log indicating the second towboat would assist with the barge transport. He said he had not spoken with Zappone about his decision to navigate the lock without the other boat's aid. Under questioning from Zappone's attorney, Grimm testified there were no warnings from the Coast Guard suggesting the river was not navigable on Jan 9. Grimm also said Zappone was a captain with 20 years experience and no record of poor decisions.

EMC 423 (U.S.A.)

London, Jan 27 — A Coast Guard Chicago press release, dated today, states: Testing and planning continue in recovery of sunken tank barge EMC 423 and its petroleum cargo in preparations to fully reopen the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal. Coast Guard personnel conducted sampling of the barge cargo from accessible tank compartments onboard the barge today to help in further defining the composition of the petroleum product that was being transported to ensure it can be safely moved. The removal of known debris continued today with the lifting of a diesel tank that floated loose from the barge and sank down river from the Cicero Ave. Bridge. The use of a high resolution side scan sonar unit is being prepared to further map the debris field and to gain a better picture of the condition of the barge. Striving to mitigate any environmental impact to the local ecology, the Coast Guard continues to work closely with local, state and national agencies, and with the responsible parties to remove and reclaim the barge and the petroleum cargo from the canal.

Chicago, Feb 1 — Tank barge EMC 423 is still lying sunk. Egan Marine are to carry out salvage operations before Feb 15. — Lloyd's Agents.

ENTERPRISE (U.S.A.)

London, Feb 2 — A Coast Guard Boston press release, dated Feb 1, states: A helicopter from Coast Guard Air Station Cape Cod rescued four fishermen two miles east of Nantucket at 1845 tonight. Crew members from fishing Enterprise (134 gt, built 1969) contacted the Coast Guard via channel 16 after their engine-room caught fire. A Coast Guard helicopter air lifted the crew from a liferaft and transferred the crew members to Hyannis airport where Emergency Medical Services then transferred them to Cape Cod Hospital. The crew members identity and conditions are unknown.

London, Feb 2 — Following received from Coast Guard Boston, timed 1145, UTC: Abandoned fishing Enterprise, official No.518840, was last reported still afloat and on fire in lat 41 18.2N, long 69 56.1W. One of the rescued crewmembers died in hospital, believed due to a medical condition.

London, Feb 3 — Following received from Coast Guard Boston, timed 1430, UTC: Fishing Enterprise drifted aground in Nantucket in lat 41 14.4N, long 69 59.9W. The fire is now out but vessel remains aground.

EWL CURACAO (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Feb 3 — C.c. EWL Curacao sailed Rotterdam Feb 1 for Felixstowe.

EXPLORER (Bahamas)

London, Jan 27 — A Coast Guard Alameda, press release, dated today, states: The Coast Guard is continuing to monitor the voyage of passenger Explorer which is about 690 miles north of Midway Island and heading to Hawaii. The transit to Hawaii is expected to take several days. The plan of action changed to better facilitate any repairs that may be required when Explorer reaches port. Explorer is no longer heading to Midway Island as previously reported. The ship, using two engines, is approximately 1,450 miles from Honolulu, its next port of call. The trip could take several days, depending on the number of main engines that are available for use. The current on scene weather reported by Explorer has calmed since last night. Explorer is reporting 15-foot seas and 20 mile an hour winds out of the west. The wind and seas are on Explorer's stern as the ship continues southeast, which should allow for a smoother transit for the crew and passengers. Explorer is maintaining a regular communications schedule with the vessel's shipping agent: V-Ship's, which is also working with the Coast Guard. Coast Guard cutter Jarvis is continuing to sail towards Explorer and a Coast Guard HC-130 is standing by at Midway Island ready to support as needed.

London, Jan 27 — Passenger Explorer, update at 1700, EST, today: It is currently morning onboard the ship. The vessel's current position is lat 40 51N, long 178 48E, speed 14 knots. The master has confirmed the ship will make for Hawaii. The current on scene weather reported by Explorer has calmed since last night. Explorer is reporting 15-foot seas and 20 mile an hour winds out of the west. The wind and seas are on Explorer's stern as the ship continues southeast, which should allow for a smoother transit for the crew and passengers. Hot meals were served last night and passengers are able to return to their cabins and to move freely about the ship. Regular meal service has resumed. The master has reported that the students spirits remain high and they are extremely cooperative. He had very high praise for their collective resilience and courage. The Deans met with faculty and staff last night and they agreed to

begin classes again today. Explorer is maintaining a regular communications schedule with both the vessel's technical manager: V-Ship's, who are also working with the US Coast Guard.

Honolulu, Jan 28 — A press report, dated today, states: Passenger Explorer sustained damage when it was hit by a 50 ft wave approximately 800 miles north of Midway, Northwest Hawaiian Islands. Reported damage is to bridge windows and bridge controls. It was further reported the vessel also sustained engine damage, but the crew was able to regain power in two of its four engines. It was on a voyage from Vancouver to Japan. U.S. Coast Guard assisted and the vessel is continuing onto Japan. The vessel was operated by the Institute for Shipboard Education in partnership with the University of Pittsburgh, with 681 students, 113 faculty and staff, and 196 crew onboard. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated today, states: When a 50-foot wave hit passenger Explorer late Wednesday night, about 650 miles south of the Aleutian Islands, it shattered a window on the bridge and temporarily shorted out the electrical system that controls the engines, leaving the vessel running on one engine. Two crew members suffered injuries that were not critical. "We want to emphasize that the ship is not in an emergency situation and is not in need of rescue," said the Semester at Sea Web site www.semesteratsea.com yesterday. "The vessel remains seaworthy and navigable." "The crisis has passed," Coast Guard spokesman Bruce Pimental said yesterday in Alameda, Calif. "This ship is three years old," he said. "It's super-technologically advanced, so when the water got into the bridge it shorted the electrical system and then the engine. But they always have a back-up system, and that's what they went with." The vessel is now heading to port in Hawaii instead of Busan, Korea, as originally planned, said Jim Lawrence of V.Ships, technical manager for Explorer. He said the route change will take the vessel into calmer waters and allow it to make repairs. As of yesterday, Explorer's phone, fax and e-mail systems were still down, and officials were communicating with the captain via marine band radio. The vessel left Vancouver, British Columbia, on Jan 18 carrying 681 students, 113 faculty and staff, and 196 crew members. After Busan, their itinerary includes Kobe, Japan; Shanghai and Hong Kong, China; Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam; Chennai, India; Mombasa, Kenya; Cape Town, South Africa; Salvador, Brazil; La Guaira, Venezuela; and Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

London, Jan 28 — Passenger Explorer: Situation at 0900, EST, today: The ship's position as last reported is lat 38 10N, long 175 34W, speed 12 to 14 knots.

London, Jan 28 — Passenger Explorer: Situation at 1715, EST: Explorer is proceeding on a south easterly course toward Honolulu,

Hawaii. The master is estimating that they will arrive in Honolulu on Feb 1. The weather continues to slowly improve with seas presently at 5 metres. The communications system on board the vessel remains unavailable and indications are that it will not be repaired until the ship reaches Honolulu.

Honolulu, Jan 28 — Passenger Explorer has three engines on-line. It is approximately 600 miles north of Midway and the U.S. Coast Guard cutter Jarvis is currently escorting the vessel. Pusher tug Jimmy Smith is to depart, this evening, to relieve Jarvis. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Jan 31 — Passenger Explorer: Situation at 1530, EST, Jan 30: Explorer is in lat 27 19N, long 160 02W, speed of 18 knots. It is reported that the weather is fine with sunny skies and a light breeze. Sea swells are 2 to 3 metres. Based on the conditions and the speed they have been able to maintain, the revised estimated time of arrival in Honolulu is approximately 1500 tomorrow, Jan 31. At this time ship management personnel, including marine technical engineers, from V-Ships (Monaco and Miami) are en route to Hawaii to oversee the assessment of Explorer. Additionally, senior staff from ISE in Pittsburgh are also en route to assist the on-board administration with planning for the continuation of the voyage. Coordinated efforts between the administrative team on board and staff at ISE in Pittsburgh are underway to map out alternative scenarios for the voyage schedule. The future schedule will depend on the outcome of the assessment of the vessel, and the time that it will take to make reparations.

London, Jan 31 — Passenger Explorer: Situation at 0915, EST, today: Explorer remains on schedule for an ETA of 1500, local time, in Hawaii, 2000, EST. (See issue of Feb 1.)

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated Jan 31, states: Passenger Explorer, that was damaged in heavy weather last week, arrived in Honolulu Harbour at 1500 this afternoon. Explorer docked at the harbour's Pier 2. The 600 students who were on the cruise had to go through processing at US Customs and because the arrival was unscheduled it is taking awhile to process everyone.

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated Jan 31, states: Passenger Explorer arrived in Honolulu Harbour today. The vessel is scheduled to remain in Hawaii for several days before heading to China. The vessel will be inspected by the Coast Guard, naval architects and Marine engineers. The Coast Guard will ultimately decide whether the vessel is seaworthy, said Jim Lawrence, spokesman for Explorer.

Honolulu, Feb 1 — Passenger Explorer arrived in Honolulu Harbour, yesterday. It is reported damage will be assessed and repairs completed. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Feb 3 — Passenger Explorer is scheduled to remain in Hawaii for five days before heading to China. It will be inspected by the Coast Guard,

naval architects and marine engineers. The Coast Guard will ultimately decide whether the vessel is seaworthy, said Jim Lawrence, spokesman for Explorer.

EXXON VALDEZ (U.S.A.)

Anchorage, Jan 27 — Crude oil from the 1989 spill from non specific tanker Exxon Valdez still lingers in Alaska's Prince William Sound and nearby areas, with parts of the environment still far from recovery, several scientists have said at a three-day conference. Crude oil that percolated into beach soil remains largely locked in place until otters digging for food loosen it, while eight types of sea birds affected by spilled oil show no signs of recovery, scientists from the US Geological Survey said in a report issued late on Tuesday (Jan 25). "I guess we didn't anticipate that the oil would stay in the inter-tidal zone as long as it did," said Jim Bodkin of the US Geological Survey's Alaska Science Centre, who has studied the oil spill's chronic effects on sea otters. "It certainly is unanticipated. Is there anything we can do about it? No, I don't think there is," Bodkin said. The conference was hosted by the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council, the federal-state group that administers the 1991 natural resource settlement, as well as by several other organisations. Exxon Mobil, the successor to Exxon Corp, has argued that Prince William Sound and the affected parts of the Gulf of Alaska recovered long ago from the 11-million-gallon oil spill. However, effects from the spill are still seen in some of Prince William Sound's killer whales, where certain populations have shrunk dramatically since the incident, said Craig Matkin, a marine biologist who also is a whale specialist. "We projected earlier that they'd recover in 10 years," Matkin said. "We didn't think the effects would drag on." Scientists say the surprising persistence of spill effects could also have financial implications. Under a \$900 million civil settlement struck in 1991 with Exxon, the federal and state governments have until September, 2006, to seek up to \$100 million more in payments from the oil company for natural resource damages that could not have been reasonably predicted shortly after the spill. However, in order to use that re-opener provision, the state and federal governments must also have specific plans to address the unexpected damages. — Reuters.

FAIRWEATHER (U.S.A.)

Anchorage, Jan 28 — Passenger ro/ro Fairweather is currently in Ketchikan where temporary repairs have now been completed. The vessel is due to go into the dry dock in February for permanent repairs which should take a number of weeks. The damage was sustained from large waves to the bow section in between the hulls and involves buckling and cracking. They are now calling for the repairs to include strengthening of this section of the vessel to prevent future damage of

this nature. At this stage the repairs look to be in excess of US\$200,000. Repairs have also apparently been delayed due to some contractual problems with the union. — Lloyd's Agents.

FENG SHUN 16 (Belize)

London, Jan 27 — Following navigation warning issued by Coast Guard Tamano, timed 1650, JST, today: Seto Naikai, Katakami Ko: Stranded general cargo Feng Shun 16 (497 gt, built 1984) removed.

FIANDARA (Comoros)

Varna, Jan 31 — General cargo Fiandara: The Bulgarian Directorate Search and Rescue reported the vessel sunk at the previously reported position. As the wreck is not in Bulgarian territorial waters and does not present danger to safe navigation, the Bulgarian Maritime Administration is not concerned with any further actions (investigation, removal of wreck, etc). — Lloyd's Agents.

FOSS 180-C6 (U.S.A.)

London, Jan 28 — Following received from Coast Guard Seattle, timed 2030, UTC: Barge Foss 180-C6 was refloated yesterday and is now at Everett where it is being discharged. Once discharged the barge will be taken to a shipyard in Tacoma for repairs to bow rake damage.

Seattle, Feb 2 — Barge Foss 180-C6 arrived at a shipyard in Tacoma on Jan 31. Repairs are reportedly in progress. — Lloyd's Agents.

FRANCONIA (Panama)

Honolulu, Feb 2 — It was reported that vehicle Franconia (36201 gt, built 1985) sustained main engine damage, due to bad bunkers taken on in Busan. Its ETA in Honolulu is Feb 12. — Lloyd's Agents. (Note — Franconia sailed Yokohama Jan 28 for Lazaro Cardenas.)

FRANK (Gibraltar)

London, Jan 29 — Following received from Jobourg MRCC, timed 0600, UTC: At 0540, Jan 28, chemical/oil carrier Frank (9266 gt, built 2000) had main engine oil pump failure and later developed propeller pitch problem. Vessel has anchored in lat 49 39N, long 02 49.8W. Salvage tug Abeille Languedoc and another tug are presently standing by.

London, Jan 29 — Anchor handling tug Alphonse Letzer left Falmouth, yesterday, under contract, to aid chemical/oil carrier Frank and is presently standing by the vessel.

London, Jan 29 — Understood that technicians will go onboard chemical/oil carrier Frank this afternoon to attempt to effect repairs.

London, Jan 30 — Following received from Jobourg MRCC, timed 1043 UTC: Chemical/oil carrier Frank is still at anchor, effecting repairs.

London, Jan 30 — Chemical/oil carrier Frank remains in the same position, with anchor handling tug Alphonse Letzer standing by on scene.

London, Jan 31 — Following received from Jobourg MRCC, timed 1250, UTC: Chemical/oil carrier Frank: Situation remains unchanged.

Antwerp, Jan 31 — The problem on board chemical/oil carrier Frank cannot be fixed and vessel will have to be towed to a port for repairs. At present, negotiations are under way regarding the destination of the tow. — Union de Remorquage et de Sauvetage.

London, Feb 1 — Following received from Jobourg MRCC, timed 0930, UTC: Chemical/oil carrier Frank is being towed to Le Havre, by tug Alphonse Letzer, where ETA approximately 1100, local time, today. (Note — Frank had sailed Donges Jan 27 for Tees.)

Antwerp, Feb 1 — Chemical/oil carrier Frank, in tow of tug Alphonse Letzer, is currently between the breakwaters at Le Havre, shortly to berth in the port. — Union de Remorquage et de Sauvetage.

London, Feb 2 — Understood salvage services were rendered to chemical/oil carrier Frank under Lloyd's Open Form by Union de Remorquage et de Sauvetage SA.

Le Havre, Feb 2 — Chemical/oil carrier Frank was towed to Le Havre for repairs due to damage to gearbox and propeller. Repairs are being carried out. Expected time for repairs around 10 days. — Lloyd's Agents.

HARDWAR (India)

London, Jan 31 — Following received from Bermuda RCC, timed 1500, UTC: Bulk Hardwar (28739 gt, built 1987), Houston for Thessaloniki, cargo 43,270 tons petroleum coke, reported anchor lashing problems with anchor slipping five to six metres into the sea, 35 miles north-west of Bermuda at 2324, UTC, Jan 29 in heavy weather. The anchor was resecured in heavy rolling seas. Later 1,600 tons of water was discovered in vessel's forepeak with vessel's draught 12.8 metres forward and 10.9 metres aft. Vessel requested shelter around Bermuda. Vessel could not enter port due its draught. The weather, which is very bad, is forecast to remain bad until this coming weekend. At the moment the vessel is hove-to approximately 20 miles north of Bermuda, and at 1245, UTC, was in lat 32 41N, long 64 42W, awaiting owners instructions.

London, Feb 2 — Following received from Bermuda RCC, timed 1220, UTC: Bulk Hardwar is 17 miles south-south-east of Bermuda. Weather on scene is still very bad with 60 knot winds. The intention is to arrange for divers to inspect the vessel's forepeak once the weather improves, thereafter, owners will then decide on next actions.

London, Feb 3 — Following received from Bermuda RCC, timed 1420, UTC: Bulk Hardwar is currently in lat 32 10.7N, long 64 50.9W, proceeding westwards for shelter. Waves on scene are 15 to 20 ft so conditions are still difficult.

HAVTANK (Cambodia)

London, Jan 31 — Product tanker Havtank sailed Hamburg 2025, Jan 29, subsequently arriving Rotterdam 0350, today.

HE DA 98 (China)

Yokohama, Feb 1 — General cargo He Da 98 (4061 gt, built 1996) Busan for Kobe, had a fire 9800 metres and 235 degrees from Ube at 1100, Jan 14. The fire was extinguished and vessel was towed to Ube. — Lloyd's Agents. (Note — Ha Da 98 sailed Busan Jan 13 for Kobe.)

HELM TRADER (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Jan 29 — Following received from German River Police, timed 1125, UTC: At 0520, Jan 28, there was a small collision involving outgoing general cargo Helm Trader (1939 gt, built 1982) and incoming bulk Clipper Glory (36433 gt, built 1990), near buoy 48, River Elbe. Helm Trader experienced stern damage. Vessel has proceeded to Butzfleth, near Brunsbittel and has been detained by the authorities. Clipper Glory, which was not damaged, proceeded to its berth. (Note — Helm Trader departed Hamburg 0230, Jan 28, destination Muuga. Clipper Glory arrived Hamburg 0645, Jan 28.)

HYUNDAI ADVANCE (Panama)

Singapore, Jan 27 — C.c. Hyundai Advance remains in port at Singapore. — Lloyd's Agents. (See issue of Jan 26.)

Singapore, Feb 3 — C.c. Hyundai Advance sailed Singapore Jan 31 for Hong Kong. — Lloyd's Agents.

IANUK (Malta)

Dakar, Feb 2 — Chem.tank Ianuk (11194 gt, built 1993) experienced main engine breakdown and is now anchored at Dakar port roads. Repairs are now in hand and when completed the vessel will berth at Dakar port for discharge of its jet and gas oil cargo. — Lloyd's Agents. (Note — Ianuk was reported to have "broken down" after departing from Abidjan Jan 16, bound for Conakry, and was subsequently taken in tow and towed to Dakar Roads, arriving Jan 28.)

ICE PRINCE (Greece)

Gothenburg, Jan 31 — General cargo Ice Prince: The situation has improved considerably. Late Saturday evening (Jan 29), after having worked around the clock, the last few bundles of the deck cargo was discharged and the list improved all the time. The port has taken over the vessel from the salvage company and the engine-room has now been emptied as well. There is no risk of vessel sinking but some oil spillage, which the Coast Guard is tasked to clean. During yesterday hatches to holds were uncovered and it was decided to discharge part of the entire load of timber — starting from the No 4 aft hold and moving forwards — to check holds and repair whatever is required. Insurance and surveyors/port inspectors attended during today. Master required to send 24-hour alert to port inspectors before he intends to depart from the port, unless something else turns up when the holds are discharged. So far the only visible damage to the vessel are the port side stanchions bent and broken. — Westax Marine Services AB.

IOLCOS CELEBRITY (Panama)

London, Feb 2 — The engine room of bulk Iolcos Celebrity (35629 gt, built 1982), berthed in Hamburg port, caught fire early yesterday morning. Carrying 75,000 tonnes of soymeal, the vessel was about to unload its cargo when the fire broke out. A sailor on board noticed the thick smoke and informed the rest of the 29-member crew, which was able to extinguish the blaze before the fire department arrived. According to police, a generator fuel line came loose between engine cylinders one and two, spraying fuel onto the hot vent cover. No one was injured.

IRMGARD (Malta)

Bilbao, Feb 2 — Ref Irmgard is scheduled to complete loading at Santander on Feb 3 and sail the same day for Benghazi. — Lloyd's Agents.

ISOLA AZZURRA (Italy)

London, Jan 28 — Tekne Sam, Monaco, managers of chem.tank Isola Azzurra report that the vessel departed Cagliari at 2030, local time, Jan 27 on passage to Leghorn, with an ETA of 1600, Jan 28.

JOY RUBY

Manila, Jan 29 — The Philippine Coast Guard reported that passenger/cargo vessel Joy Ruby (487 gt) sank off Coron Pier in Palawan island, in the western Philippines at 1120 hrs, today (29 Jan). The vessel with a crew of 25 and 58 passengers had left the North Harbour Terminal at the Port of Manila yesterday bound for Coron Pier. The Coast Guard said that the vessel began taking water even before it reached Coron Pier because of a still undetermined problem at its aft section. The vessel arrived at Coron Pier at 0930 hrs, today and was able to disembark all its passengers. With the flooding getting worse, the master release all its mooring lines and left the pier. The vessel sank 150 metres from the pier after hitting a sandbar. The Coast Guard said that all crewmen were rescued but the ship's entire cargo was lost. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

London, Jan 29 — A press report, dated today, states: A small ferry sank today shortly after arriving at a port south of Manila, but there were no casualties, officials said. The 487-ton ro/ro Joy Ruby was taking in a lot of water from a leak as it approached the port of Coron but the captain managed to dock the boat and unload the more than 50 passengers and some cargo, said terminal manager Froilan Factor. "The boat had a big hole, I do not know if it is due to dilapidation or an accident. We are going to investigate," Factor said. Port authorities later disengaged ropes tied to the boat and it drifted about 50 metres from the pier and sank about an hour later, he said. The ferry left Manila yesterday for the 17-hour trip to Coron, about 310 kilometres southwest of the Philippine capital, Factor said. He said they were trying to contain an oil leak.

KAFOR (Russia)

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated today, states: Fishing Kafor (735 gt, built 1970) is in distress in the Sea of Japan. The latest developments are not known as contact with the vessel has been broken, reports the Vladivostok maritime rescue and coordination centre. The Primorye frontier rescue patrol vessel Lauzurit and a Pacific Fleet rescue vessel are heading for the scene, according to the centre. The Vladivostok rescue centre and the Nakhodka-based coast guard unit of the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) Frontier Department for the Maritime Territory received SOS signals from the vessel at 1200, local time. The trawler was 30 miles off the Maritime Territory's southern coast. A storm is raging in the sea, waves are sometimes 3 meters high, wind is blowing at a speed of 17 metres a second. The crew of an An-26 plane has just discovered two rescue rubber rafts in the disaster area. The rescue vessel is expected to be on scene very shortly.

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated today, states: Four liferafts with people onboard were found in the Sea of Japan in the area where a Russian trawler (fishing Kafor) issued a mayday call. An An-26 of the Russian Pacific Fleet discovered the rafts 40 miles from Cape Povorotny. However, the plane did not spot the vessel itself. The border-guard vessel Primorye, the life-saving vessel Lazurit, and the Pacific Fleet salvage tug Okeansky are sailing to the area. A Ka-27 helicopter carrying doctors is about to leave for the area where the trawler went missing.

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated today, states: Fourteen Russian fishermen, crewmen of Russian fishing Kafor have been rescued in the Sea of Japan today, a spokesman for the Vladivostok Rescue Coordination Centre said. Currently 10 of the fishermen are onboard Russia's border guard ship Primorye, another four have been taken to Nakhodka by helicopter. Five fishermen are still missing. At noon local time, 0500, Moscow time, the Vladivostok Rescue Coordination Centre received an SOS radio message from the trawler whose home port is Kholmsk. The trawler with 19 crewmen onboard was about 30 nautical miles off the shore. A strong storm is sweeping the Sea of Japan, the wind blowing at 17 metres per second. The waves are up to four metres high, and the weather is still deteriorating.

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated today, states: Criminal proceedings on the fact of violation of safety rules at sea and rules of exploitation of waterborne transport resulting in the loss of life were instituted today by the transport Prosecutor's Office of Nakhodka in connection with the sinking of Sakhalin trawler Kafor. The press office of the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) for the Primorye (Maritime) territory told Itar-Tass that ahead of the Kafor sinking its crew violated fishing rules. The trawler left

Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky on Jan 5 and after that disappeared from the border guards' radars. The crew switched off special equipment transmitting its position. The border guard department did not rule out that the fishermen had engaged in poaching, because the crew had no permit for fish, crabs and shellfish catches. Kafor sank near the Primorye coast on Jan 31. Thirteen people out of its 20-strong crew have been rescued and three dead sailors have been lifted from the sea. According to preliminary information, the vessel's sinking was caused by a crack in the hull near the engine-room. The crew of the Primorye border patrol boat that was the first to arrive in the distress area rescued 10 crew members. The sailors have been taken to Nakhodka port. The condition of all the 13 rescued is assessed by the medics as satisfactory, despite the fact that they had spent many hours on liferafts in the conditions of a stormy sea. The owner of the trawler, the Morspetstrans-Sakhalin Company, maintains that the crew of the wrecked vessel comprised 18 members. The trawler was on its way from the Japanese port of Wakkanai to South Korea when it was caught in a storm. An intensive search for the crew members of the trawler resumed in the Sea of Japan this morning. The fate of those missing is still unknown. The search-and-rescue operation is involving five vessels, and An-26 and Il-38 aircraft of the Pacific Fleet.

London, Feb 3 — A press report, dated today, states: The search operation for five missing crew members of fishing Kafor that sank in the Sea of Japan on Jan 31 has been stopped, as there is no longer any hope for their rescue, the Vladivostok-based rescue-co-ordinating centre told Itar-Tass.

KEMERI (Liberia)

London, Feb 1 — Product tanker Kemer (10944 gt, built 1985) while downbound in the St. Charles River, experienced sea suction problems resulting in a total black-out in lat 46 49 31N, long 71 12 17W, at 0940, EST, Jan 31. A technical advisor boarded the vessel shortly afterwards, in order to assist.

KISSHO MARU (Japan)

Yokohama, Feb 1 — Chemical/oil carrier Kissho Maru (460 gt, built 1993) Iwakuni to Kashima, was in collision with ro/ro Rokuryu Maru (5199 gt, built 1997) bound Fukuyama, 600 metres and 101 degrees from Magosaki Lighthouse at 0252, Jan 9. The master of the Rokuryu Maru was injured. — Lloyd's Agents.

LADY HASSAN (North Korea)

See Seebrise.

LEESWIG (Cyprus)

Pasajes, Jan 28 — General cargo Leeswig is still at Pasajes under repairs, and for the moment there are no prospects for completion. — Lloyd's Sub-agents.

M560L (U.S.A.)

Miami, Jan 28 — Understand from Vance Construction in West Palm Beach that they are about 60% completed on the cutting up of barge M560L. Estimated time of completion not known due to the weather. — Lloyd's Agents.

MAERSK GABARUS (Canada)

Halifax, Jan 31 — Tug/supply Maersk Gabarus completed repairs at Halifax, Jan 18 and returned to service on charter with Exxon Mobil, deployed at the Sable Island gas field. — Lloyd's Agents.

MAJOR DHAN SINGH THAPA PVC (India)

See "South-East Asia" under "Earthquakes".

MARY NOUR (Panama)

See "Cement Dispute, Mexico" under "Miscellaneous."

MIN HAI 102 (China)

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated today, states: Two sailors are dead, two are missing and nine were saved after tanker Minghui 8 sank after a collision with general cargo Min Hai 102 (977 gt, built 1987), in ballast, off the coast of Shantou. Efforts to find the missing sailors are continuing and work on cleaning up the leaking oil has started, but the size of the oil-affected area is still unknown, a spokesman for the Shantou Maritime Safety Administration said today. Minghui 8 collided with Min Hai 102 about 0200 yesterday when it was about 7.5 nautical miles east of Nan'ao Island, off Shantou, as it was heading from Fujian Province to Shantou. The ships belong to a company in Wuhan, Central China's Hubei Province, and a company in Fujian Province. The 53-metre Minghui 8, which contained 975 tonnes of diesel, sank about 10 minutes after the collision, with all of its 13 crew members still on board. The 63-metre, unloaded Min Hai 102 was damaged, but not seriously. Crew on board managed to save one sailor from the sunken vessel. A helicopter based in Xiamen in Fujian Province flew to the area, found the two bodies and airlifted an injured sailor to hospital. At least six ships have been involved in the search, rescue and oil cleaning-up job. Ships near the site were also called for help. A modified ship is expected to arrive from Shanghai today, to help pump oil out of the sunken vessel. The oil spill is expected to have an impact on fishing in the area.

Beijing, Jan 28 — General cargo Min Hai 102 and non specific tanker Minghui 8 were in collision near Nan'ao Island, in lat 23 27N, long 117 16E, Jan 26. Minghui 8 sank as a result of the collision. The small amount of leaked light fuel was reportedly not have a major impact on the local environment. — Lloyd's Agents.

MINERVA ELEONORA (Greece)

Maassluis, Jan 27 — Crude oil tanker Minerva Eleonora sailed Antwerp Jan 26. — Lloyd's Sub-agents.

MINGHUI 8 (China)

See Min Hai 102.

MIRABELLA V (Isle of Man)

London, Feb 1 — Yacht Mirabella V sailed Portsmouth at 1302, Jan 29.

MIYUKI MARU

Dover, Feb 1 — Ferry Miyuki Maru: According to Medway Ports, vessel is still in Collier Dock, Chatham. The owners have been in touch with them quite recently and vessel is expected to sail in the next few days, most likely for Great Yarmouth. However, further understand that, before it is allowed to depart, relevant paperwork and certain documents have to be provided for Medway Ports and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency. — Lloyd's Agents.

MUIRNEAG (U.K.)

Liverpool, Jan 27 — Ro/ro Muirneag sailed Liverpool Jan 22 for Stornoway. — Lloyd's Agents.

NONA MARY (Greece)

London, Feb 1 — Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: During the early hours of Jan 31, passenger ro/ro Nona Mary (2206 gt, built 1972), after departing from Lavrion for Ag. Efstratios and Limnos, returned to the port following damage to the port main engine. On board were three passengers for Ag. Efstratios and one for Limnos. Following repair of the damage and survey by the Marine Inspectorate, the vessel was permitted to depart at 2130, local time, same day, for Ag. Efstratios, Limnos, Samothraki and Kavala.

NORRVIK (Isle of Man)

London, Jan 29 — Following received from Coastguard Humber MRSC, timed 0912, UTC: On Jan 24, general cargo Norrvik (2041 gt, built 1979) reported losing six containers overboard in lat 53 51.84N, long 02 44.08E. One of the containers, loaded with wood wrapped in plastic coverings, remained afloat and presented a potential danger to nearby offshore platforms. The container was initially secured by supply Sartor and then passed over to supply Atrak (which departed Rotterdam 2015, Jan 25) which towed it into Great Yarmouth, arriving at 1238, UTC, Jan 28. The container was craned onto a quay at 1554, UTC. There have been no sightings of the other five containers. (Note — Norrvik arrived Hull 2334, Jan 24, reportedly from Norrkoping and sailed 1856, Jan 26, for Rotterdam, where it arrived 1340, Jan 27.)

NORTHERN LINN (U.S.A.)

London, Jan 31 — Following received from Coast Guard Boston, timed 1520, UTC: Fishing Northern Linn (134 gt, built 1985), official No.693587, is currently in tow of a Coast Guard cutter bound Rhode Island where ETA 0300, UTC, Feb 2, following engine problems in lat 40 41N, long 67 18W.

London, Feb 3 — Following received from Coast Guard Boston, timed 1435, UTC: Fishing Northern Linn was safely towed into Rhode Island, where it is currently moored.

OCEAN (Slovakia)

London, Feb 2 — Following received from Larnaca RCC, timed 1130, UTC: Asphalt tanker Ocean, OMND, (2569 gt, built 1969) reported mechanical problems and problems with ballast, in lat 34 59N, long 34 05E, on Monday (Jan 31). Vessel believed still anchored in same position. (Note — Ocean sailed Alexandria Jan 29 for "Gibraltar".)

London, Feb 3 — Following received from Larnaca RCC, timed 0945, UTC: Asphalt tanker Ocean resumed voyage about 1200, UTC, yesterday, proceeding in a northwards direction.

OCEANIC ICE (Netherlands Antilles)

London, Feb 1 — Gibraltar Port Authority reported Dec 29: Ref Oceanic Ice (2244 gt, built 1977) arrived Gibraltar 1008, Dec 17 in tow of tug Mumbles from Ceuta for repairs. Vessel left 0831, Dec 28 for Algeciras. (Note — Ocean Ice arrived Algeciras Dec 28 and was reported stationary in lat 36 08.583N, long 05 25.817W, at 1230, today, with restricted manoeuvrability.)

London, Feb 3 — Following received from Gibraltar Port Authority: Ref Oceanic Ice arrived at Gibraltar under tow by a local tug on Dec 17 and was berthed alongside the Detached Mole for minor repairs. However, on finding out that the repairs were to be major repairs to the main engine including changing the crankshaft the owners decided to tow the vessel to Algeciras for repairs. The vessel is still at Algeciras.

Cadiz, Feb 3 — According to consignee information, ref Oceanic Ice is under repair at Algeciras Port, at the North Quay. It is supposed to be sailing by the end of the week or next week. — Lloyd's Agents.

OKTAY VELIYEV (Azerbaijan)

See Saaty.

P&O NEDLLOYD OBOCK (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Feb 2 — General cargo P&O Nedlloyd Obock arrived Massawa Jan 15. Vessel subsequently arrived Aden Jan 27 and sailed Jan 28.

PAULA (Republic of Ireland)

Trondheim, Jan 31 — Temporary repairs to trawler Paula, at Baatbygg Yard, Maaloy, are estimated to take at least 14 days. Tenders for rebuilding of the vessel will be invited later. — Lloyd's Agents.

PHYLLIS DUNLAP (U.S.A.)

London, Feb 3 — A press report, dated Feb 2, states: Tug Lauren Foss was sent into action this afternoon after tug Phyllis Dunlap (198 gt, built 2001) lost its tow and set a barge drifting near Cape Flattery. The barge never hit shore and its tug was able to re-establish a connection within about an hour, but the short drama made for a "tense situation," said Sandy Howard, spokeswoman for the state Department of Ecology. The barge was being towed from Hawaii to Washington by the La Connor-based tug Phyllis Dunlap. It carried some cars and containers onboard, but was mostly empty, said

Howard. At about 1300 hrs, the Neah Bay-based Lauren Foss was dispatched to assist with the barge after the tug reported losing the connection to its load. It was adrift about one mile off the rocks of Cape Flattery, but the wind was pushing it away from land, Howard said. "Fortunately, the weather conditions were very good."

POMERANIA (Bahamas)

See Rio Grande.

PONTODROMON (Cyprus)

Falmouth, Jan 28 — Bulk Pontodromon (35609 gt, built 1986), in ballast, arrived Falmouth at 0600, Jan 28, in tow of tug Alphonse Letzer due to propeller trouble. The vessel was handed over to local harbour tugs and entered No 2 dry dock at 0800 today to effect repairs. The vessel is expected to sail during Week 6. — Lloyd's Agents.

POOLGRACHT (Netherlands)

Boston, Ma, Feb 1 — After gaining approval from the US Coast Guard and other regulatory bodies, including US Customs, the RI Department of Environmental Management, the local Fire Department, etc, cargo operations involving the discharge of product from general cargo Poolgracht are under way. In order to mitigate the effects of the shifted cargo of ammonium nitrate, the vessel will discharge all cargo from the 'tween decks and most cargo from the lower hold, and will then re-stow the cargo, in one tier only, on each deck. Additional cargo is to be stowed into 20-foot containers for carriage on deck. It remains to be determined exactly how much cargo is to be re-stowed, however best estimates are that 3,300-3,600 tonnes will be re-stowed. The balance of the cargo is to be stored in a local warehouse, and then shipped back to the manufacturer's facility by rail or by truck. — Lloyd's Agents.

PORVENIR I (Chile)

London, Feb 1 — Ro/ro Porvenir I arrived Punta Arenas Jan 29.

Santiago, Feb 2 — Ro/ro Porvenir I arrived Punta Arenas at 1500, Jan 29, in tow of tug Lena Dura, with a slight list to port. The vessel docked alongside Asmar Bahla Catalina mole and repairs will apparently be effected afloat at the dock. — Lloyd's Agents.

PRIDE OF BILBAO (U.K.)

London, Jan 28 — Passenger ro/ro Pride of Bilbao (37583 gt, built 1986) had a minor fire at Falmouth, Jan 22. The fire broke out in a restaurant while the vessel was undergoing a refit at the A&P dock yard. It was quickly brought under control with A&P Falmouth evacuating of the vessel. (Note — Pride of Bilbao arrived Falmouth Jan 7.)

London, Feb 1 — Passenger ro/ro Pride of Bilbao arrived and sailed Portsmouth Jan 29, subsequently arriving and sailing Bilbao Jan 31.

PRUVA (Turkey)

Honolulu, Jan 27 — Bulk Pruva anchored off Honolulu Jan 26. — Lloyd's Agents.

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

Honolulu, Feb 1 — Bulk Pruva is still undergoing repairs to its turbo-charger. — Lloyd's Agents.

RADWAN (Cyprus)

London, Feb 1 — Understood salvage services are being rendered to product tanker Radwan (23904 gt, built 1980) by Tsavlis International under Lloyd's Open Form, dated Jan 29, following engine failure in approximately lat 34 08S, long 08 52E. Also understood tug Nikolay Chiker left Cape Town to assist. (Note — Radwan sailed Rio Grande Jan 14 for Iran.)

London, Feb 2 — Understood product tanker Radwan has a cargo of vegetable oil.

Cape Town, Feb 2 — Understood that product tanker Radwan, carrying vegetable oil, is being towed to Cape Town, due to engine failure. Reported that the tug involved is Nikolay Chiker. — Lloyd's Agents.

RAVAN RIVER (Liberia)

London, Jan 28 — Product tanker Ravan River was reported passing Istanbul, westbound, 0630, Jan 22, on passage Midia for Tuzla.

RED BARON (U.S.A.)

London, Feb 3 — A Coast Guard Kodiak press release, dated Feb 1, states: Coast Guard cutter Hickory towed fishing Red Baron (148 gt, built 1980) to Homer yesterday. The vessel had engine difficulties and began drifting in Cook Inlet. Red Baron's operator contacted Coast Guard Air Station Kodiak command centre on VHF-FM channel 16 Sunday (Jan 30) to report an engine casualty. The vessel's reduction gear ceased to function and the vessel began drifting with with three persons on board near the Barren Islands, 56 miles southwest of Homer in Cook Inlet. The master of the vessel declined a Marine Assistance Radio Broadcast (MARB) and kept a communications schedule with the Coast Guard. The crew repaired the reduction gear twice, but the reduction gear failed again and again. The port engine manifold also experienced a problem and again the crew made repairs. After the repairs, the crew transited to Homer, but 36-knot winds from the north-northeast and 16-foot seas combined with the compromised propulsion system slowed the vessel to three knots. Red Baron's master requested the Coast Guard issue the MARB. The MARB went out, but no other mariners answered the call. The weather forecast continued to call for inclement weather, so rescue coordinators at the Coast Guard Command Centre in Juneau directed Hickory to get underway and head to Red Baron's position. Red Baron's crew contacted the Coast Guard at about 0500 yesterday and told of propulsion loss. The reduction gear and shaft on the starboard engine broke and the port engine refused to start. Hickory and its crew arrived on scene with Red Baron and took the vessel into tow just after noon yesterday. They set a course for Homer and arrived outside the harbour at about 1900 yesterday.

Hickory released the tow to tug Augustine which towed the vessel into the harbour and assisted it in mooring at the pier. Following the tow a boarding team from Hickory conducted a safety boarding on the vessel. This is standard procedure following a search and rescue case. The team found several discrepancies on board the vessel including the use of coffee cans welded in various places on the engine to keep it running. Additionally, the boarding team found an inch of soot throughout the engine-room. The boarding team advised Red Baron's master to contact Coast Guard Marine Safety Detachment Kenai after completing repairs to ensure the vessel passes a safety inspection before getting underway again. Red Baron is a crab vessel reportedly based out of Anchorage.

RED POINT (Italy)

London, Feb 3 — Understood from local sources that chemical/oil carrier Red Point (27001 gt, built 1984), loaded with gasoline, has been aground at the entrance to the River Amazon for about two to three days. Smit Salvage BV have been contracted under Lloyd's Standard Form salvage contract and are mobilising tugs and a salvage team.

REINE (Panama)

Santo Domingo, Jan 28 — Ro/ro Reine: According to Cirammar, repairs to vessel have not yet been completed. — Lloyd's Agents.

RIALTO (Panama)

Barcelona, Feb 2 — C.c. Rialto sailed from Barcelona yesterday for Italy or Greece. The agents in Barcelona state that they do not now charter the vessel and are not sure of the next port. — Lloyd's Agents.

Barcelona, Feb 3 — C.c. Rialto sailed Barcelona Feb 1 for Gioia Tauro. — Lloyd's Agents.

RIO GRANDE (Sweden)

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated today, states: Asphalt tanker Rio Grande (4248 gt, built 1969) was in collision with passenger ro/ro Pomerania (12087 gt, built 1997) carrying 140 passengers and 79 crew off Sweden's west coast today. Both vessels were only slightly damaged, maritime officials said. No one was injured in the collision, which happened about 14 kilometres west of the city of Falsterbo, said Birger Knutsson, of the Swedish Maritime Administration. "The ferry had a small hole far above the water level and the tanker a crack in the hull, also above the water level," he said, adding that there were no oil leaks. Pomerania, which sails between the Danish capital Copenhagen and the northern Poland port town of Swinoujscie, was escorted to Copenhagen. Rio Grande, which had a crew of 13, continued to its final destination Halmstad on Sweden's southwest coast. The reason for the collision was not known.

Gothenburg, Jan 31 — Asphalt tanker Rio Grande, Stockholm for Halmstad with sludge oil, and passenger ro/ro

Pomerania were in collision 10 km south of Falsterbo Rev, south-west Sweden, shortly after 0600, Jan 31. Pomerania sustained hull damage above the waterline but was able to proceed to Copenhagen. No oil leakage was noted from Rio Grande. Swedish Inspectors will commence an investigation into the collision. — Westax Marine Services AB.

Malmo, Feb 1 — At 0600, local time, Jan 31, passenger ro/ro Pomerania bound for Copenhagen, with 142 passengers and 79 crew, was in collision with asphalt tanker Rio Grande, bound for Halmstad, with fuel oil, outside Falsterbo Rev. There was bad weather at the time of collision with winds at 20 metres per second. Pomerania sustained damage to the starboard side. No injuries to the passengers. No oil leakage. Vessel proceeded to Copenhagen. Rio Grande proceeded to Halmstad for discharging and then for repair. No oil leakage. The whole port side is indented. — Lloyd's Agents.

RIO LANDRO (Spain)

Fayal, Feb 2 — Trawler Rio Landro arrived Horta at 0730, local time, today with a generator problem. The vessel will effect repairs today and leave Horta harbour tonight. — Lloyd's Agents.

ROBERO (Spain)

Fayal, Jan 31 — Trawler Robero arrived Horta at 1600, Jan 27, in tow of tug Ilha S. Luis due to main engine trouble. An engineer was called in from Spain, and repairs are expected to be completed today. — Lloyd's Agents.

ROKURYU MARU (Japan)

See Kissho Maru.

RYU GYONG (North Korea)

See "Cargo Dispute, Chittagong, Bangladesh" under "Miscellaneous."

SAATLY (Azerbaijan)

London, Jan 30 — A press report, dated today, states: The crew of general cargo Saatly (3363 gt, built 1962), which ran aground offshore Makhachkala, is not in danger, a representative of the Dagestani Emergency Situations Ministry told Itar-Tass today. The 20 crew members were all right and had everything they needed, the source said. The weather has been bad in the Dagestani area of the Caspian Sea with gale-force winds and waves four to five metres high for two days. A tug from Baku is on its way to the scene.

London, Feb 3 — General cargo Saatly and tug/supply Oktay Veliyev (2723 gt, built 1988) lie ashore in the Caspian Sea, three miles north of Makhachkala, in the southern Russia region of Dagestan. Oktay Veliyev had hurried from Baku to render assistance to Saatly, which had been thrown aground on a beach by a week-long storm, when it also ran aground.

SCHLEPPKO 7

See Stolt Fulmar.

SEA FOX (Latvia)

Glasgow, Jan 28 — General cargo Sea Fox departed from Castlebay, Isle of Barra, on the morning of Jan 26, and arrived at Liverpool at around noon, Jan 27. — Lloyd's Agents.

SEA NOSTROMO SEGUNDA (Spain)

See Biosfera.

SEA VENTURE II (Cyprus)

London, Jan 28 — Following received from Aarhus MRCC, timed 1039, UTC: General cargo Sea Venture II is still anchored in Kalundborg Fjord. About 350 cubic metres of oil have been transferred from the vessel, which is awaiting class approval to proceed to a shipyard.

London, Jan 30 — Following received from Aarhus MRCC, timed 1030, UTC: Understood general cargo Sea Venture II was escorted into Fredericia yesterday afternoon. Understood vessel will offload its cargo and then effect repairs. On completion the cargo will be re-loaded and the vessel will resume passage. Understood repairs will take approximately 10 days.

SEEBRISE (Belize)

London, Jan 30 — A press report, dated Jan 29, states: North Korean general cargo Lady Hassan (ex Seebriase) has returned to the deep-water quay in Cork Harbour after it took in water several miles off the Cork coast early this morning. The vessel left Cork for the Mediterranean last night but began to take water when it was about 20 nautical miles off the coast. An Irish Coast Guard helicopter and Ballycotton Lifeboat attended the scene. The eight crew members on board the vessel were not in danger. The vessel, which was travelling empty, had run aground off Kinsale last October and had since been under repair in the Cork docks. The Department of Marine has now issued a detention order against the vessel, which prevents it leaving Cork Harbour until there is a full inspection.

SELENDANG AYU (Malaysia)

London, Jan 26 — A Coast Guard Juneau press report, dated Jan 25, states: As of this report, the total volume of fuel initially on board bulk Selendang Ayu has been revised to 424,423 gallons of intermediate fuel oil (IFO 380) and 21,058 gallons of marine diesel oil. The midsection fuel tank ruptured when the vessel broke apart and released an estimated 40,131 gallons of IFO 380. The status of the centreline IFO fuel tanks No.1 and No.3, originally estimated to contain 176,473 gallons and 104,000 gallons, respectively, remains unknown at this time. The actual amount of spilled fuel is also unknown. Dependent on weather, today's response activities will include shoreline cleanup, water quality sampling and wildlife recovery operations. The protection group will continue to assess sites with protective booming and reconfigure the boom to increase effectiveness and remove boom that is ineffective or no longer needed.

Oil sampling using net tows is scheduled for Unalaska, Iliuliuk Bay, and vessel anchoring areas in Broad and Captains Bay. On Sunday the Unified Command signed a new Incident Action Plan for the period Jan 24 to Jan 31. Yesterday, shoreline cleanup crews worked in Skan Bay, Portage Bay, Humpback Bay, and collected 1,255 bags of oily waste (21 cubic yards). Today, cleanup crews have collected 28,675 bags (478 cubic yards) of oily solid waste. Today, the protection group has removed 5,000 ft of boom that is ineffective or no longer needed. They have also decontaminated 4,000 feet of boom. There is no change in the lightering status due to bad weather yesterday. On Saturday the lightering team removed 17,216 gals of IFO from No.4 port tank. The total volume lightered from the vessel to date is 76,490 gallons of IFO/water and 3,094 gallons of diesel for a total of 79,584 gallons of IFO/water/diesel. There was one dead oiled bird recovered on Sunday and another two on yesterday. Today, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reported that a total of 970 dead birds have been recovered. Yesterday, water quality sampling crew pulled 32 passive sampling crab pots and encountered one oiled snare near the surface adjacent to Little South America which is on the south end of Amaknak Island and one smear on a snare tow at 9-12 ft depth outside of Hog Island. The crew will continue tows in the Unalaska areas. A new Oil Spill Fisheries Water Quality Sampling Plan is being developed for the next phase of the program. Today, seafood inspections at the Dutch Harbour and Akutan processing plants have found all products free of oil contamination. Inspections are conducted throughout the day and night to check crab and pollock as they arrive at the docks. Predicted weather in Dutch Harbour today calls for cloudy skies, rain, breezy, temperatures low to upper 30s, southeast winds building to 10-15 knots, and seas at three feet. Tomorrow's weather will consist of rain and snow, temperatures low to high 30s, southeast winds at 25 knots and seas at four feet.

London, Jan 31 — A Unified Command press release, dated Juneau, Jan 30, states: Bulk Selendang Ayu: Due to inclement weather some of the response vessels have been recalled to Dutch Harbour and the ones, which are unable to make it, are pulling in to other bays for shelter. The vessels are working on maintenance and repair during this time. Today's response activities may be restricted to over flights, vessel lightering, water-quality sampling and wildlife recovery operations. Due to inclement weather shoreline cleanup operations may not be done today. Oil sampling using net tows is scheduled for today in Unalaska Bay. Snare-packs will be issued to the Pacific cod catcher boats in the area to detect oil contamination. Due to inclement weather no shoreline cleanup was done yesterday. Today, cleanup crews have collected 33,166 bags (552 cubic yards) of oily solid

waste. Lightering operations were also suspended yesterday due to the weather. The lightering team removed 1,680 gallons of intermediate fuel oil (IFO) from the No.4 port tank and sealed the tank Friday. The total volume lightered from the vessel to date is 102,196 gallons of IFO/water and 3,094 gallons of diesel/water for a total of 105,290 gallons of IFO/water/diesel. A Remote Operated Vehicle (ROV) is being obtained to investigate the sub-surface of the wreck and oiling. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reported crews removed 341 oiled and/or scavenged birds from Makushin Bay, 337, Pumicestone Bay, two, and Skan Bay, two, yesterday. Today a total of 1,473 dead birds have been recovered. Today's weather in Dutch Harbor consists of mostly cloudy skies, rain with the possibility of snow, northeast winds at 25 knots, five-foot seas and a high near 42 degrees.

London, Feb 1 — A Coast Guard Kodiak press release, dated Jan 31, states: Bulk Selendang Ayu: Following a weekend of inclement weather, some of the response vessels and crews that were recalled to Dutch Harbour and others that sought shelter in nearby bays are returning to work today. The vessels and crews that took shelter from the weekend weather in Anderson Bay remain there, but today's response activities include over flights, vessel lightering, water-quality sampling and wildlife recovery operations. Shoreline cleanup operations were able to take place yesterday and crews are continuing their work today. Oil sampling using net tows is scheduled for today in Unalaska Bay. Snare-packs will be issued to the Pacific cod catcher boats in the area to detect oil contamination. Shoreline cleanup on yesterday yielded 325 bags (five cubic yards) of oily solid waste. Today, cleanup crews have collected 33,491 bags (558 cubic yards) of oily solid waste. Lightering operations were suspended Saturday due to the weather but resumed yesterday and continue today. The lightering team removed 5,872 gallons of intermediate fuel oil (IFO) that had been transferred from the No.4 port tank that was sealed Friday. The total volume lightered from the vessel to date is 108,068 gallons of IFO/water and 3,094 gallons of diesel/water for a total of 111,162 gallons of IFO/water/diesel. A Remote Operated Vehicle (ROV) to investigate the sub-surface of the wreck and oiling is expected to arrive in Dutch Harbor today. Today's weather in Dutch Harbour consists of mostly cloudy skies, rain, northeast winds at 25 knots, five to seven-foot seas and a high near 41 degrees.

SEVEN SEAS NAVIGATOR (Bahamas)

Miami, Jan 27 — Passenger Seven Seas Navigator had a small electrical fire break out in the generator room Jan 17. The air conditioning went down. Vessel returned to port Jan 19. The air conditioning unit was repaired and the vessel sailed Port Everglades

1705, Jan 25. The vessel had to cancel its Jan 18 cruise. — Lloyd's Agents.

SHOYO MARU (Japan)

Yokohama, Feb 1 — Ferry Shoyo Maru (696 gt, built 1990) Matsuyama to Kure, was in collision with vessel Blue Seven 2 eight degrees from Utazaki Lighthouse at 1025, Jan 18. Blue Seven 2 sank, one crew member died, others rescued by passing fishing vessel. Shoyo Maru sustained scratching to its hull, no injuries. — Lloyd's Agents.

SILVA (Cambodia)

Esbjerg, Feb 2 — General cargo Silva is still in port at Esbjerg. — Lloyd's Agents.

SNOW CRYSTAL (Cayman Islands)

Durban, Jan 27 — Ref Snow Crystal remains at Durban undergoing repairs. — Lloyd's Agents.

SO GYONG 2 (North Korea)

Yokohama, Feb 1 — General cargo So Gyong 2 was towed out from anti-pollution nets and arrived at Maizuru port by own power on Jan 17. — Lloyd's Agents.

SOULA (North Korea)

Limassol, Jan 28 — General cargo Soula is still repairing and under arrest. — Lloyd's Agents.

SOUTHERN CROSS (U.S.A.)

Boston, Ma, Feb 1 — Understand from the owners of tug Southern Cross that the vessel is currently at Promet Marine Services Corp, Providence, Rhode Island, and is scheduled to be hauled at 1000, Feb 2. The surveyor reportedly considered the vessel a total loss, however a second opinion was required, and the purpose of the haul-out is to determine a repair estimate and whether or not the vessel is a constructive total loss. — Lloyd's Agents.

SPIRIT OF ONTARIO I (U.S.A.)

London, Jan 29 — A report from LaSalle, PQ, states: A press report, dated today, states: The owners of passenger ro/ro Spirit of Ontario I may sue the City of Rochester, alleging municipal officials damaged their reputation and business prospects. Canadian American Transportation Systems (CATS) operated the ferry between Rochester and Toronto beginning last June. Service stopped on Sep 8 when the company declared it had run out of money. The ferry operator initially blamed the shutdown on the cost of operating a border crossing and stalling by federal governments on both sides of the border. However, in a notice of claim delivered to the City of Rochester last week, the company suggests the municipality hampered its attempts to stay in business after the ferry stopped running. The letter accuses the municipality of a range of improper conduct, including interference with contracts, acts of unfair competition, misappropriation of property and

“conduct defamatory and injurious to claimants' reputation.” According to the letter, the actions of city officials have caused “harm to reputation, loss of property, contractual rights and profits, and damage to and loss of current and prospective business interests and relationships.” The letter is likely related to the city's plans to buy the ferry at a Feb 28 foreclosure auction. Rochester wants to operate the ferry through a not-for-profit corporation and has secured a \$40-million loan from the Export Finance and Insurance Corporation, a branch of the Australian government, to purchase the vessel. The same organisation also provided \$22.5-million to finance the CATS project. Cornel Martin, the president of CATS, has accused the city of colluding with the Australian finance corporation because the two brokered the loan. There are also allegations city officials poached portions of the CATS' business plan and blocked its attempts to restart the ferry service. The letter from CATS is a legal formality required by New York state before a lawsuit can be formally launched against a municipality.

SPIRIT OF TASMANIA II (Australia)

See “Australia” under “Weather & Navigation.”

STOLT FULMAR (Cayman Islands)

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated today, states: Chem.tank Stolt Fulmar (3818 gt, built 2000), bound Antwerp, was in contact with the dock at Blankenese at about 0415, Jan 29 due to rudder problems. Vessel sustained a small tear and was allowed to proceed yesterday escorted by two tugs. (Note — Stolt Fulmar sailed Hamburg 0400, Jan 29 for Antwerp.)

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated Jan 29, states: At 0415, today, chem.tank Stolt Fulmar, bound Antwerp, cargo 4,900 tons sulphuric acid, struck the Faehranleger Blankenese, Hamburg port, in fog. Stolt Fulmar also struck port tug Schleppeko 7 (built 1944) which was alongside the dock. At the time there were no crew on the tug. The tug was kept afloat by fire brigade pumps. Stolt Fulmar sustained an approximately 15 cm tear on starboard side, however, no cargo or fuel was lost.

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated today, states: Two days after chem.tank Stolt Fulmar struck the Faehranleger “Blankenese” the cause of the accident is unsettled. Yesterday consultants of the opposing insurers visited the damaged pontoons and the completely destroyed bridge. Two of the stakes, at which the pontoons hung, are destroyed, likewise a column of the bridge. Whether further stakes are damaged, must be clarified by divers. Duration of the repair is estimated at three to five months. The total damage, unofficially, lies in the million-range. Also a fish restaurant on one of the two pontoons is heavily damaged.

London, Feb 2 — Chem.tank Stolt Fulmar is on its way to Antwerp after colliding with a tug and striking the

ferry terminal Blankenese, on the River Elbe, last Saturday (Jan 29). The vessel, in thick fog under pilot service, struck the east pontoon of the terminal and then with tug Schleppeko 7. Although still buoyant, the pontoon was badly damaged and is now no longer open to the public. As a result, the Hamburg dock and harbour engineering authorities have ordered the entire facility, including landing pier, towed to the harbour Hansahafen on the L. Becker Ufer.

London, Feb 2 — Chem.tank Stolt Fulmar arrived Antwerp 1832, Jan 31.

SUN WARM VI (Philippines)

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated today, states: At 0600 yesterday Philippine fishing Sun Warm VI ran aground on the coast of the Gran Canaria municipality of Telde. Sun Warm VI lost navigation control when it returned, from the African coast where it had been working, to Las Palmas, where it has its base. A tug, a rescue boat and helicopter went to the aid request and evacuated the 30 crew of the vessel. The vessel was refloated at high water at 1700 yesterday afternoon.

London, Feb 1 — Following received from Madrid MCC, timed 0850, UTC: Fishing Sun Warm VI, length approximately 50 metres, is in lat 27 52.8N, long 15 17.1W. A tug has a towline on the vessel, which is in a “semi-sunk” condition.

London, Feb 2 — Following received from Madrid MRCC, timed 0915, UTC: Fishing Sun Warm VI sank in lat 28 00N, long 15 22W, at 1108 yesterday.

SVEN OLTSMANN (Antigua & Barbuda)

Hamburg, Jan 31 — C.c. Sven Oltsmann is still in port at Hamburg under repair. — Lloyd's Agents.

TASMAN ENDEAVOUR (Hong Kong)

London, Jan 28 — General cargo Tasman Endeavour sailed Singapore 1645, Jan 25, destination Suva.

TIAN SHENG HAI (Panama)

See “Castletown, Esperance, Australia” under “Pollution.”

TITUS

Nassau, Jan 27 — Tank barge Titus came out of service during November while awaiting parts to repair engine problems. The vessel has four Harbour-master-type units installed for propulsive power, the two inboard units are propulsive power only and the two outboard units can azimuth to provide steering power. The latter steerable units appear to be the source of the problems. While awaiting parts the vessel has made about five trips as a towed barge to provide Nassau with much needed water supplies. The port azimuthing unit was repaired and the vessel returned to normal but restricted, fair weather, service as of Jan 21 until such time as the starboard azimuthing unit can be repaired. — Lloyd's Agents.

TOR DANIA (NIS)

London, Jan 28 — Ro/ro Tor Dania arrived Rotterdam 0830, Jan 27, from Immingham.

TOR DANIA (U.K.)

Hull, Jan 27 — Ro/ro Tor Dania sailed Immingham Jan 26. — Lloyd's Agents.

TOR SCANDIA (Sweden)

London, Feb 2 — Information received from Sandnes, dated today, states: Ro/ro/c.c. Tor Scandia (33652 gt, built 1981) came into hard contact with the quay at Brevik at 0900, local time, Feb 2, while arriving at the port. The vessel sustained damage to the starboard side, above the waterline. After effecting temporary repairs, the vessel will sail for Horten, Gothenburg or Frederikshavn for permanent repairs, ETS 1900, local time, Feb 2.

TRANSFER (Antigua & Barbuda)

Belize City, Jan 27 — All the bunker have now been taken off part c.c. Transfer. The smaller portions of lubricants and hydraulic oils will be stored in drums on the vessel which is still grounded on the reef. No contract for salvage has yet been awarded. — Lloyd's Agents.

TUG NESTOR (NIS)

London, Feb 2 — Following received from Gothenburg MRCC, timed 1300, UTC: Tug Tug Nestor was raised around Dec 18/19 and taken to Slite. (Note — Understood Tug Nestor is now in dock at Beckholmen.)

VEENDAM (Bahamas)

See "Outbreak of Virus on Bahamas-Flagged Passenger Vessel."

VESTKAPP (Norway)

Trondheim, Jan 31 — Fosen Gjenvinning recommend we contact them again in about three months regarding the scrapping of fishing Vestkapp. — Lloyd's Agents.

VICUNA (Chile)

Santos, Feb 2 — Following received from sub-agents Paranagua: The dismantling of chemical/oil carrier Vicuna and removal of its parts continues steadily under Environmental Authority supervision. The company in charge of the operation is now working through the wrecks main body which is nearly all under water. — Lloyd's Agents.

VIETFRACHT 02 (Vietnam)

Yokohama, Feb 1 — General cargo Vietfracht 02 (4929 gt, built 1993) manoeuvring for berthing at Sakisenboku port, touched bottom at 1400, Jan 4. Vessel refloated with tug assistance. No damage to the hull or injuries. — Lloyd's Agents. (Note — Vietfracht 02 arrived Sakai Jan 1 and sailed Jan 8, subsequently arriving Kuantan Jan 18.)

VIGLA (Honduras)

London, Feb 3 — Following received from Malta RCC, timed 1050, UTC: A report was received at 2200, local time, yesterday, that general cargo Vigla,

HQBK7, (1153 gt, built 1968), MMSI No.334148000, with seven persons on board had sunk in lat 35 55N, long 17 31E. Three dead bodies have been recovered and another person has just been sighted. (Note — Vigla was understood to be on voyage from Tunisia to Slovenia with a cargo of salt.)

VOLCAN DE TACANDE (Canary Islands)

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated today, states: A total of sixty passengers and twenty-nine crew had to be evacuated last night from ro/ro Volcan de Tacande (18316 gt, built 1974) that operates on the regular service between Tenerife, Gomera and Hierro. Four miles out of the port the vessel's engines stopped as a result of a water entry. The passengers were evacuated by vessel Salvamar of Salvamento Marítimo and taken to the port of Los Cristianos. Volcan de Tacande, of Naviera Armas SA, was towed, with its cargo, to Las Palmas, Gran Canaria.

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated today, states: Ro/ro Volcan de Tacande was adrift last night after its engines stopped due to entry of water four miles off Los Cristianos. The 60 passengers and the 29 crew of the vessel, that is being towed to Las Palmas, were evacuated during the night, according to Marine Rescue. Marine Rescue received a call at 2100 hrs that Volcan de Tacande was adrift. Immediately Marine Rescue co-ordinated a rescue operation, that included tug/supply Punta Salinas, patrol vessels of the Civil Guard and several tourist boats, that helped to evacuate the passengers to Los Cristianos. The vessel's owners contracted a tug, that is taking the ferry to Las Palmas, where it is hoped that it will arrive at 2000 hrs.

London, Feb 2 — A press report, dated today, states: The Government of the Canary Islands has opened an inquiry on the water entrance in the engine-room of ro/ro Volcan de Tacande that forced the evacuation of 60 passengers and 29 crew Sunday night (Jan 30). The Council of Infrastructures, Transports and House of the Canary Government informed yesterday that the chief of the main Directorate of Transports, Davila Rose, has requested urgent information from the Marine Captain of the Canary Islands, Naviera Armas and the marine rescue service with the purpose of clarifying the circumstances that caused that event. Meanwhile, Naviera Armas explained yesterday that contact with a rock is the most probable cause of the failure on Volcan de Tacande when leaving the port of Los Cristianos. The company considers that "it is possible that the rock has fallen off the jetty or the wharf or that it has been dragged out to sea by the recent bad weather." The owners surveyed the ship Monday after its arrival at the port of Santa Cruz de Tenerife and located a crack of about eight metres in length.

WELFARE DIANA (St. Vincent & Grenadines)

London, Jan 28 — Following received from Cape Town MRCC, timed 0932, UTC: General cargo Welfare Diana (4535 gt, built 1973) was reported disabled due to loss of propeller in lat 20 12S, long 35 55E, at 0100, UTC, Jan 27. The vessel is still in the same position and the owners are making arrangements for towage.

London, Jan 28 — Following received from Cape Town MRCC, timed 1800, UTC: General cargo Welfare Diana is "anchored in the port of Beira." Understood a tug, name not known, is underway to tow the vessel, destination not known.

London, Jan 29 — Understood tug Toto has departed from Durban to render assistance to general cargo Welfare Diana, which has propeller problems. Further understood the intention is to tow the vessel to Durban.

London, Jan 30 — Following received from Cape Town MRCC, timed 1048, UTC: The last contact with general cargo Welfare Diana was made yesterday at which time the vessel advised that it was awaiting the arrival of tug Toto and would contact the MRCC once the tug had arrived and the tow was secure.

London, Feb 1 — Following received from Cape Town MRCC, timed 1250, UTC: General cargo Welfare Diana is still anchored in the same position awaiting a tug. Now understood it is probably to be towed to Maputo.

YAIZA (Panama)

Tema, Feb 3 — Ref Yaiza (2477 gt, built 1978), which arrived at Tema on Jan 30, reported that the vessel's gas oil tank touched bottom at Tema Fishing Harbour. Need to appoint a surveyor to attend. — Lloyd's Agents.

**AFRICAN PRIDE (Panama)**

London, Feb 2 — Information received from La Salle, PQ, dated Feb 1, states: The trial of the 13 Russians who allegedly used missing product tanker African Pride for illegal oil bunkering has been suspended following an application by the Federal Government, the complainant in the case. Ruling on an oral application for adjournment by government yesterday, trial judge Gloria Okeke stated that the prosecution had brought before the court a notice of appeal filed at the Court of Appeal by government against the rulings delivered by the court. She noted that the Supreme Court in its decision held that if a judge was aware of an application before a higher court and ignores it, but goes ahead to deliver a ruling or judgment in the matter, it amounted to judicial impertinence and an affront on the appellate court. Justice Okeke reasoned

that the court would adjourn the matter pending the hearing on application before the Court of Appeal and the ruling in the matter, explaining that the suspension of the trial becomes pertinent in view of the allegation of lack of fair hearing levelled against the trial court by the government which has also taken the same complaint to the Appeal Court. The prosecuting counsel had sequel to the refusal of the judge to grant the government's request to amend the two-count charge preferred against the Russians and to stay proceedings in the matter, approached the Court of Appeal, Lagos, to review the decisions of the court below as well as compel it to stay further proceedings in the matter pending determination of government's appeal. At the proceedings last week, the prosecuting counsel made an oral application that the matter be adjourned pending the determination of the appeal, with hearing fixed for Mar 7. However, Emefo Etudo, representing the accused Russians, objected to the request for adjournment, stating that it contravened Section 36 of the 1999 Constitution, which grants the accused person's right to a fair hearing. The defence counsel argued that it is a gross abuse of court process to stay proceedings in a criminal matter of this nature at its advanced stage, contending that the proper thing for the trial court to do is to proceed to judgment since the trial is nearing conclusion. He said, it is the law that if a case has reached an advanced stage, a counsel who is dissatisfied with an interlocutory ruling of the court should not ask for stay, but should wait for the final judgment and if the counsel is dissatisfied with the judgment, he can then appeal both the interlocutory ruling and the trial judgment together.

AL QAMAR (Honduras)

Port Said, Jan 27 — Passenger ro/ro Al Qamar is still under arrest at Suez by S.C.A and the National Maritime Co. — Lloyd's Agents. (Note — Al Qamar was reported Apr 4, 2000 under arrest at Suez, and subsequently sank Apr 19.)

ARDEAL (Romania)

Khulna, Feb 1 — General cargo Ardeal is still under attachment at Mongla Outer anchorage for subsequent break-up. — Lloyd's Sub-agents.

BALTIC TRADER (St. Vincent & Grenadines)

See "Languedoc, France" under "Pollution."

BITUMEN ONSAN (South Korea)

Busan, Feb 2 — Asphalt tanker Bitumen Onsan sailed Busan under its own power Feb 1 for China for scrapping. — Lloyd's Sub-agents.

CONDOR (Philippines)

Manila, Jan 26 — The Philippine Navy reported that it had detained and confiscated the cargo of Philippine registered cargo vessel Condor (360 gt,

built 1988). Philippine Navy spokesperson Captain Geronimo Malabanan said that Condor was carrying 200,000 board feet of illegally cut lumber. "The operation came after Navy intelligence operatives received reports that a Cebu-bound vessel from Davao was transporting illegal logs," Malabanan said. He said that Condor was intercepted by the Navy small patrol boat Salvador Abcede Monday (Jan 24). The vessel and its cargo was brought to Cebu port where it is currently detained. The Condor is owned and operated by Cebu-based Goodwill Lighterage Corp. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Manila, Jan 31 — The Philippine Navy reported today that vessel Condor and its crew was still under detention. Philippine Navy spokesperson Captain Geronimo Malabanan said that the vessel and its 10-man crew was under the custody of Naval Task Force 51, based in Cebu port. He said that the vessel and its crew were being held until charges of smuggling lumber are filed against the crew, the vessel's owner and the cargo owner. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

ENDEAVOR II (Greece)

Karachi, Jan 31 — A local press report, dated Jan 29, states: The owner of crude oil tanker Endeavor II has decided to auction the arrested vessel that arrived in Karachi in July, 2003. Presently, the tanker being property suit No.1167 of 2003 filed by the Karachi Port Trust in the Sindh High Court. Pakistani correspondent of the owners, Indeminis Marine Private Limited, has demanded a reserve price of \$6.85 million on "as is, where is" basis. Offers with pay order of 10 percent of the offered amount (reserve price) in favour of the "Official Assignee of Karachi" SHC should reach the official assignee by Feb 15 before 1330. — Lloyd's Agents.

FORTUNE 1 (Indonesia)

London, Feb 3 — A press report, dated today, states: Indonesian fishing Fortune 1 and its skipper were arrested in Cape Town harbour yesterday on suspicion of fishing illegally for shark in South African waters. The authorities became aware of the vessel after its fishing gear became entangled in the equipment of an offshore oil exploration ship. The skipper, who may not be named, is in custody in the holding cells at the Table Bay police station where he will stay until his bail hearing. Fortune 1, a long-liner vessel, is not allowed to leave port while the authorities investigate the case. Marcel Kroese of the Department of Environment's Marine and Coastal Management (MCM), said yesterday an offshore oil exploration ship had alerted them to the presence of Fortune 1 in South African waters about a week ago. "We give the oil exploration ship a printout of all the vessels that are fishing within a 50km radius of where the ship is working, so they can keep a lookout for them," Kroese said. "The exploration ship uses sonar equipment. They found that this survey equipment

had become fouled with fishing gear. They saw Fortune 1 nearby, but saw that it was not on the list of vessels fishing legally which we had given them. So they contacted us," he said. The vessel was spotted off Mossel Bay. Kroese alerted the new fisheries patrol vessel Lillian Ngoyi, which he dispatched to find Fortune 1. "There was extremely bad weather for two days, and Lillian Ngoyi could not find it," he said. Later they established that Fortune 1 had left South Africa's exclusive economic zone, which stretches 200 nautical miles offshore. When the vessel berthed in Cape Town harbour yesterday, MCM staff arrested it. "There was no catch on board, only some bycatch. We have reason to suspect that it may have done a ship-to-ship transfer at sea. We're investigating that now," Kroese said. Fortune 1 did not have a permit to fish in South African waters this year. Last year, it had been given a permit to fish for shark in a joint venture with a local company. It had fished mainly for mako and blue shark, which are considered good eating.

INDIAN FISHING VESSELS ARRESTED BY PAKISTAN

Karachi, Jan 29 — Pakistan's Maritime Security Agency (MSA) said this afternoon that its vessel Nusrat apprehended seven Indian fishing vessels along with 43 crew members today for fishing illegally in Pakistani waters, according to an MSA press release. The vessel was on routine patrol in the Eastern Maritime Region when it found the boats illegally fishing about 35 kilometers inside Pakistan's EEZ. The apprehended fishermen have been handed over to Docks Police for further legal action. The MSA has so far apprehended 94 Indian fishing vessels, along with 546 fishermen, during this season, which started in September 2004. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Karachi, Feb 3 - Pakistan government in principle has decided to release all arrested Indian fishermen on humanitarian grounds. They were apprehended by Maritime Security Agency (MSA) along with a large number of fishing boats while fishing illegally in Pakistani waters. Pakistan government officials said as a first step, Indian officials would be allowed to meet these arrested fishermen for identification, and vice versa, Pakistani diplomats should be allowed to see arrested fishermen in Indian custody. It was pointed out that all vessels would be confiscated. The Maritime Safety Agency has so far apprehended 94 Indian fishing vessels, along with 546 fishermen, during this season, which started in September. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

INVINCIBLE (Mongolia)

London, Jan 31 — Consequent upon the order of the High Court of the Republic of Sri Lanka, holden in Colombo, in the exercise of its Admiralty Jurisdiction, in action in Rem No.16/2003, general cargo Invincible will be sold in its existing

state/condition, by public auction, free of all encumbrances, at 1400, Feb 28, at the High Court of Colombo, by the Marshal of the High Court.

JUL (St. Vincent & Grenadines)

London, Feb 1 — Following received from the Admiralty Marshal, dated today: General cargo Jul (2478 gt, built 1971) arrested at Immingham Jan 28, due to damage to cargo of timber and timber products carried between Dec 2 and Jan 3. Vessel arrested on behalf of Continental Wood Products Ltd. Vessel released Jan 31. (Note — Jul arrived Immingham Jan 27.)

KING DIAMOND II (U.S.A.)

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated Jan 26, states: A judge has ruled that a Hawaiian ship caught with 32 tons of shark fins aboard was a fishing vessel and was taking part in shark finning, the illegal practice of cutting fins off live sharks and dumping the bodies into the ocean. The San Diego judge didn't decide whether that means the company that contracted for the purchase of the fins should forfeit a \$775,000 bond. After a court battle, the Hong Kong company posted the bond for the shark fins and sold them in Asia. The U.S. Attorney's Office said the decision "paves the way" for such forfeiture in the first case to go to court after finning was banned in 2000 in U.S. waters and by American vessels. The 64,695 pounds of shark fins seized in 2002 were the biggest ever under the law, which was designed to get the United States out of the fin trade. The fins are used in soup that can sell for more than \$100 a bowl, and is popular at Chinese wedding banquets and restaurants in Southeast Asia. In June 2002, a Hong Kong seafood company chartered the Honolulu-based fishing King Diamond II to sail to the South Pacific with \$300,000 cash to buy fins from 26 swordfish and tuna fishing ships, most of them from Korea. Two months later, the Navy intercepted King Diamond II 250 miles off Guatemala and directed it to San Diego. The judge's decision may also determine whether seafood company Tai Loong Hong Marine Products Ltd., boat owner Tran and Yu Inc. and Captain Chien Tan Nguyen are liable for \$620,000 in civil penalties. They were charged in Hawaii with 26 counts of possessing shark fins on a U.S. fishing vessel without the corresponding shark carcasses. It is legal to catch sharks, but not to dump their bodies after the fins are cut off. The seafood company argued that 20 to 30 tons of shark meat had to be tossed overboard when the cooling system aboard King Diamond II broke down. Government lawyers say there's no independent proof of that, and said the fins on the ship represented 11,000 to 20,000 sharks. A lawyer for the seafood company said those figures were never substantiated. Bryan Ho argued in San Diego federal court that because the ship was simply buying the fins on the high seas, it wasn't technically a "fishing vessel" and was allowed to ferry fins. U.S.-flagged cargo ships, for

instance, are allowed to transport the fins without shark carcasses, he said. But U.S. District Judge Barry Ted Moskowitz wasn't persuaded. "Common sense indicates that picking up fish or its parts at sea aids fishing," he wrote in the opinion dated Jan 19 but announced by the U.S. Attorney's Office on Monday (Jan 24). As a result, Moskowitz said, King Diamond II "became a 'fishing vessel.'" Lawyers for the seafood company and the government are due back in court on Feb 15 to discuss how to proceed. The company still trades in shark fins, but doesn't use U.S. ships.

OCEAN BOOMER (Panama)

Gibraltar, Feb 3 — Oceanographic research Ocean Boomer, laid up at Gibraltar since Dec 11, has again been arrested by Supreme Court Feb 2. Vessel is still alongside. The agent informed this morning that the vessel will be sold to new owners in a few days. — Lloyd's Agents.

SOULA (North Korea)

See under "Marine."

TVILLINGER

Trieste, Feb 2 — Situation of general cargo Tvillinger remains unchanged. Vessel is still under arrest at Trieste, and there are presently no prospects of the vessel's release. — Lloyd's Agents.



AGUA DULCE AREA, VERACRUZ, MEXICO

Mexico City, Jan 26 — Mexico's Pemex yesterday reported its fourth pipeline leak in as many months, saying naphtha, a light hydrocarbon fuel used in the petrochemical industry, had leaked from a pipeline in Veracruz state. State-owned company Pemex said the spill occurred the previous evening near the town of Agua Dulce and about one kilometre from the busy Villahermosa-Coatzacoalcos highway. Pemex, or Petroleos Mexicanos, could not say how much fuel had leaked and said there were no casualties. Pemex said it had evacuated some local residents to temporary shelters as a precaution against inhaling toxic fumes. "The situation is under control," the company said, adding that it had cut off the pipeline flow in order to start repairs and that employees were working to clean up the spilled fuel. It said the cause of the leak was unknown. — Reuters.

ALLENTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA, UNITED STATES

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated today, states: A gasoline pipeline exploded in Pennsylvania this morning, shooting flames and a huge plume of dark, oily smoke into the sky and forcing about 30 people to evacuate. No injuries or property damage were

reported from the 0630 hrs explosion in South Whitehall Township, and there was no immediate word on the cause, officials said. Officials were trying to shut off the feed to the pipeline operated by Exxon/Mobil and let the fire burn itself out, said Valerie Hildebeitel, a spokeswoman for the Lehigh County Emergency Management Agency. A county dispatcher said a pumping station that monitors gasoline along the pipeline had exploded, but Hildebeitel could not immediately confirm that report. Firefighters, environmental response teams and Exxon/Mobil officials were on the scene.

London, Feb 3 — A press report, dated Feb 2, states: The fire caused by the underground gasoline pipeline explosion yesterday morning in South Whitehall Township continues to burn more than a day later. The explosion and fire at dawn yesterday caused dozens of residents to leave their homes, some in little more than their nightclothes, and sent a towering pall of sun-dimming smoke drifting over the Lehigh Valley. It was difficult to determine how long the gasoline from the pipeline at Huckleberry and Wehr Mill roads will continue to burn. At least one family of evacuated residents returned to their home today, but authorities said their return was a mistake and that only some residents would be permitted to return to the area no earlier than tonight. Authorities said they would have to wait for the fire to burn out before conducting a full investigation, but speculated that a leak in the pipeline might have been ignited by a passing car. No one was injured in the 0630 hrs, blast, not even two motorists whose vehicles were engulfed by flames as they drove past. Heat from the fire melted the siding on the nearest home. The FBI and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives were at the scene, but authorities downplayed the possibility of terrorism. The line is one of three major pipelines that cross the Lehigh Valley. The explosion happened at an above-ground junction station where gasoline is diverted from the eight-inch main pipeline into a six-inch spur line that leads to Allentown. Authorities said it is possible one of the cars passing the fenced station at the time of the explosion somehow ignited leaking gasoline.

CARROLLTON AREA, KENTUCKY, UNITED STATES

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated Jan 26, states: A pipeline broke and spilled 238,000 litres of crude oil into the Kentucky River near Carrollton early today, creating a 15-km slick that crews were racing to contain to keep it from contaminating drinking water. It was not immediately clear what caused the rupture of the pipeline. The break, about 15 metres from the north side of the riverbank, sent oil gushing into the waterway, said Dan Harden, area supervisor for Mid-Valley Pipeline Co. of Hebron, a division of Sunoco Inc. and owner of the

pipeline. Workers battled the slick by deploying a boom across the north-flowing Kentucky River to divert the oil to a confined area where the goo could be skimmed from the water. Harden estimated that the cleanup could take a week, and said Mid-Valley would pay for the work.

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated Jan 27, states: Workers today made progress removing some of an estimated 63,000 gallons of crude oil that seeped into the Kentucky River from a ruptured pipeline, forming a huge slick approaching the Ohio River. Workers put up a series of booms to confine the massive slick, which at one point stretched up to 12 miles long. By this evening, workers had recovered 26,000 gallons, officials said. Environmental officials had feared if the slick had reached the Ohio, it could foul drinking water supplies downriver. "So far, it is contained entirely on the Kentucky," said Chuck Wolfe, a spokesman for the state Environmental and Public Protection Cabinet. The bulk of the oil was contained just south of Carrollton, about seven miles from the confluence with the Ohio. It was not immediately clear what caused the rupture yesterday. The pipeline carries about 180,000 barrels of crude daily from the Gulf Coast to refineries in north-west Ohio. The break, about 50 feet from the north side of the river bank, sent oil gushing into the waterway, said Dan Harden, area supervisor for Mid-Valley Pipeline Co of Hebron, a division of Sunoco Inc and owner of the pipeline. The pipeline and the river are usually farther apart, but recent rain and snow swelled the waterway. Harden estimated the clean-up could take a week, and said Mid-Valley would pay for the work. He did not have an estimated cost. The spill posed no public health risk, despite a strong diesel fuel odour, said EPA on-site co-ordinator Art Smith. There were no reports of fires or injuries. He has predicted the clean-up would recover a large amount of oil, but said it was unlikely all of it could be retrieved. The effect on wildlife may be minimised by the time of year and by the thickness of the oil, which means it will probably float, said Mark Marraccini, a spokesman with the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife. The pipeline is checked periodically by sending electronic devices through the line, Harden said. The section of line that ruptured was last checked in the past few years, he said.

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated Jan 30, states: Crews are making progress in cleaning a fouled section of the Kentucky River near Madison, Indiana. Crews today cleared much of the 63,000 gallons of crude oil that spilled from a ruptured pipeline about four miles from the confluence of the Kentucky and Ohio rivers. As of late yesterday, about 45,000 gallons, or two-thirds of the spill, had been removed. Environmental and Public Protection Cabinet spokesman Chuck Wolfe says along with mopping up the oil from the river, workers were beginning to clear the shoreline. It was not clear what

caused the early Wednesday (Jan 26) rupture of the underground pipeline, which carries up to 195,000 barrels of crude daily from the Gulf Coast to refineries in Ohio.

LAHORE AREA, PAKISTAN

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



CASTLETOWN, ESPERANCE, AUSTRALIA

London, Jan 27 — Bulk Tian Sheng Hai sailed Esperance Jan 21.

DELAWARE RIVER, UNITED STATES

See Athos I under "Marine."

KENTUCKY RIVER, UNITED STATES

See "Carrollton Area, Kentucky, United States" under "Pipeline Accidents."

LANGUEDOC, FRANCE

London, Jan 28 — General cargo Baltic Trader (6263 gt, built 1981), on voyage from Marina di Carrara, was ordered into Brest Jan 27 after being spotted by French Customs aircraft with a 36-km-long oil slick in its wake when it was 180 km off Port Vendres, on the Mediterranean coast of France's Languedoc region, on Jan 18. The vessel refused to stop and continued its voyage; however, it was tracked by the authorities who intercepted it off Brittany and escorted it into Brest yesterday. (Note — Baltic Trader sailed Marina di Carrara Jan 16.)

Brest, Feb 2 — General cargo Baltic Trader is still under detention at Brest. The matter is in the hands of the P&I Club lawyers, who are defending their client at the Court of Marseilles. No information so far as regards the Court decision. — Lloyd's Agents.

PUGET SOUND, TACOMA, WASHINGTON, UNITED STATES

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated Jan 29, states: Emergency crews responded to an oil spill in Puget Sound's Dalco Passage yesterday. Reported about 1120 hrs by the Washington state ferry Rhododendron, yesterday's spill was thought to be a few hundred gallons of oil said Coast Guard Petty Officer Mike Zolzer.

TIMOR SEA

London, Feb 3 — A press report, dated today, states: Oil and gas producer Woodside Petroleum Ltd was investigating the cause of an oil leak at its Laminaria field in the Timor Sea, the company said today. The leak was noticed Jan 18 and investigations had determined a problem with the flowline from the Laminaria 2 well, Woodside said. The Laminaria 2 well, and other

wells connected in the production system, were shut in shortly after the leak was noticed. Woodside said it immediately notified government authorities and began investigating the cause and size of the leak. The initial estimate put the size of the leak at about 300 barrels (50 cubic metres) of oil, although that might vary depending on the outcome of modelling, it said. Laminaria oil is very light and rapidly evaporates from the sea surface. A surface inspection two days later concluded the oil had already evaporated from the area. Repairs to the Laminaria 5 well, which produces about 3000 barrels a day, are expected to be made in the second quarter of 2005. Resumption of production at Laminaria 2, which produces about 2000 barrels a day, depended on a full assessment of the flowline fault, the company said. Production from the adjacent Corallina field, which is averaging 18,000 barrels a day, was unaffected.

UNALASKA ISLAND, ALASKA, UNITED STATES

See Selendang Ayu under "Marine."



ALGERIA

London, Jan 29 — A press report, dated Jan 27, states: The worst snowfalls in more than 50 years have paralysed Algeria's capital, Algiers, and more than a third of the country, the authorities say. The bad weather is reported to have caused at least 10 deaths and hundreds of motorists have had to be rescued from their stranded vehicles. Towns and villages have been cut off, while many sporting events have been postponed until next week. Weather forecasters say the conditions will persist for several days. The Algerian authorities said people should not venture out unless necessary. Several areas in the north-east, including the port oil city of Skikda, were cut off after 36 hours of snow and strong winds. Most of the 10 fatalities have been caused by traffic accidents.

ARGENTINA / URUGUAY

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated today, states: A storm caused at least 11 deaths, 52 injuries and left 200 homeless in Argentina, the authorities said yesterday. Eight people were killed and 49 wounded when a bus carrying tourists collided with a truck on the Buenos Aires Route 41, near the city of San Andres de Giles. A woman and two minors died in the area of Buenos Aires Luis Guillon after strong winds forced a tree to fall on their house. The other three were injured on Route 3 where a bus collided with an official vehicle. Nearly 2,000 Uruguay-bound passengers were stranded after heavy rains and strong winds forced the

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Uruguayan navy to close the ports of Montevideo and Colonia. In Buenos Aires, the Buquebus company's two vessels suspended their planned voyage to the Uruguayan harbours. The Atlantic, the only one departing for Montevideo, had to return due to the poor weather.

AUSTRALIA

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated Jan 26, states: Severe thunderstorms over parts of Victoria are causing severe flooding in the south-west of the state. Parts of the Princes Highway in Geelong and Torquay have been flooded, causing traffic lights to stop working and vehicles to bank up. The Great Ocean Road has been affected by traffic delays.

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated today, states: The weather in North Queensland is now improving and vessel berthing and loading at coal ports has resumed, as follows: Abbot Point: There were minor loading delays yesterday due to heavy rain. However, the weather has cleared and operations are now back to normal. Bulk Dynasty, currently loading, will sail at 2100 hrs, today, and one of the two vessels currently at anchor will berth immediately after. Dalrymple Bay: Strong winds are easing and Dalrymple Bay Coal terminal reopened at 1400 hrs, yesterday. Hay Point: Strong winds are easing and Hay Point Coal Terminal Berth No.2 reopened at 1200 hrs, yesterday. Hay Point Coal Terminal Berth No.1 reopened at 1640 hrs, yesterday.

London, Feb 2 — A press report, dated today, states: Around 100,000 homes throughout Sydney, the Central Coast and surrounding areas are without electricity after big storms which swept the region this afternoon. Strong winds brought down trees, and heavy rain caused flash flooding which caught some people in their cars. The big storms brought rainfall of up to 20 millimetres in an hour. The flash flooding that followed saw three people trapped in their cars in the water at Bexley Road in Sydney's south. Emergency services were called to get them to safety. Fallen branches on powerlines and thousands of lightning strikes have affected electricity supplies. The power is out for thousands across Sydney, in the Blue Mountains, the Illawarra and on the Central Coast. The State Emergency Service has received more than 1,500 calls.

London, Feb 3 — A press report, dated today, states: Freak summer storms lashed eastern Australia overnight, dumping record rains on Melbourne, hitting Brisbane with a towering dust storm and leaving at least two people dead, officials said. Melbourne received more rain in the 24 hours to this morning than during any day since records began in 1856, leaving the city's rivers and waterways swollen to bursting point. Victoria state police were searching for a teenage boy reported to have been swept away in a suburban Melbourne creek while two

people were killed by falling trees in neighboring New South Wales state. The storms, caused by an intense low-pressure system, hit a vast area from Queensland state in the north, through New South Wales and Victoria and on to the island state of Tasmania off mainland Australia's south-eastern corner. The front swept in yesterday when eastern Australia was experiencing blue skies and sweltering heat normal for the height of the southern summer. At the height of the storm yesterday evening, Melbourne registered its coldest February day on record with the mercury dropping to 12.8 degrees Celsius. Fallen trees blocked roads and toppled power lines across the region, cutting off electricity supplies to tens of thousands of people, authorities said. In Queensland, high winds whipped up a massive dust storm that sent a wall of rust-red particles across the large state, cutting visibility to 100 metres in some areas and forcing the closure of 20 regional airports.

London, Feb 3 — A press report, dated today, states: Passenger ro/ro Spirit of Tasmania II (29067 gt, built 1998) has docked safely in Melbourne after turning back mid-way through a stormy voyage to Devonport, Tasmania. Waves of up to 20m lashed the ferry, smashing a number of windows on its upper decks, causing it to turn back about 0400, AEDT, today. The ferry had left Melbourne at 2100, yesterday. Ray Bean, from Longford, Tasmania, said after leaving the ferry, "All the public address system was blown out and it made it very hard for the crew." He said there was "quite a lot of damage, but no one was hurt". Mr Bean said passengers had been told they would be compensated.

London, Feb 3 — A press report, dated today, states: State Emergency Service crews in Victoria and New South Wales will be working into the night cleaning up after yesterday's huge storms. Emergency crews are stretched to the limit as they continue to deal with the aftermath of the torrential rain and gale force winds. About 120 mm or five inches of rain was dumped on Melbourne in 24 hours. Peter Cocks, from the Victorian SES, says crews still have a lot of work to do with more than 4,000 calls for help received. The damage bill from the storm is expected to run into the millions of dollars. Thousands of Victorians are still without electricity and power companies say some customers will not have services restored until later in the evening. Alan Grossbard, from Alinta, says steady rain is causing more problems.

HURRICANE "IVAN"

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated Jan 31, states: More than four months since the remnants of Hurricane "Ivan" swept through the Allentown, Pa, region, the flood damage is still clear on the 60-mile Delaware Canal State Park. Much of the historic canal, which runs from Easton to Bristol in Bucks County, remains dry, and miles of formerly hiker-friendly paths are still rubble.

Park manager Rick Dalton says officials are waiting for approval of repair projects from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. FEMA will foot as much as 80 percent of the \$9.2 million bill for the canal repairs. Once FEMA approves, Dalton says, final design specifications will be prepared and the projects — 13 in all — will be sent out for bid. The repairs are expected to take at least two to three years.

IRAQ

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated today, states: Due to rough weather since yesterday evening, no sailing or berthing operations are being carried out at Basrah Oil Terminal. According to the forecast, rough weather is also expected tomorrow.

London, Feb 3 — A press report, dated today, states: Weather conditions at Basrah Oil Terminal have improved, with berthing/sailing operations due to resume at approximately noon today. Operations at the terminal had been halted due to rough weather since the evening of Jan 31.

JAPAN

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated today, states: A powerful winter storm snarled commuter traffic across Japan today, delaying flights and trains and causing scores of highway accidents that injured at least 18 people, officials said. Heavy snow blanketed areas from southwestern Kyushu region to the northernmost island of Hokkaido. In the western port city of Kobe, nearly 30 cars crashed in 10 separate accidents on a frozen highway, prefectural police spokesman Masahiko Furuta said. In another crash, a college student lost control of her car on a frozen roadway in a nearby town, striking a group of children and injuring eight of them, Furuta said. Services on the Shinkansen bullet train in the western and northern regions were delayed or suspended, and more than a dozen domestic flights connecting Kyushu and northern Japanese cities were cancelled, NHK said.

London, Feb 2 — Heavy snow blanketed much of Japan today, disrupting train and airplane operations. The Japan Meteorological Agency warned of continued snow in the Hokuriku region, and Nagano, Gifu and Tottori prefectures. Snow delayed as many as 44 Sanyo Shinkansen trains, which connect Osaka with northern Kyushu. All Nippon Airways cancelled 18 flights and Japan Airlines canceled 10 as of noon, today, affecting about 3,500 passengers. The cancelled flights were mainly to and from Hokuriku-area airports such as those in Toyama, Toyama Prefecture, and Komatsu, Ishikawa Prefecture.

ROMANIA

Bucharest, Jan 26 — The Sulina Channel, which was closed at 1030 hrs, yesterday, was re-opened at 1000 hrs, today. Mangalia Port, which was closed at 0830 hrs, yesterday, was re-opened at 0400 hrs, today. — Lloyd's Agents.

Bucharest, Jan 27 — Sulina Channel was closed at 0600, Jan 27, due to bad weather, with south-south-easterly winds force 6-7 (strong breeze to near gale) and five-to-six-foot seas. — Lloyd's Agents.

Bucharest, Jan 28 — Sulina Channel was re-opened at 1600, Jan 27. — Lloyd's Agents.

TROPICAL CYCLONE "LOLA"

London, Feb 1 — Following received from the Meteorological Office: The centre of tropical cyclone "Lola" was located near lat 24 5S, long 175 2W at 0600, UTC, today. Cyclone moving south-east at about eight knots and expected to gradually curve south-west within the next 24 hours. Expect sustained winds of 35 knots close to centre. Expect winds over 33 knots within 80 miles of centre in sectors from north through east to south and within 60 miles of centre elsewhere. Forecast position near lat 25.5S, long 176.5W at 0600, UTC, Feb 2.

UNITED STATES

London, Jan 30 — A press report, dated today, states: More than 230,000 customers had no electricity, today, in Georgia, while crews worked to repair power lines snapped by an ice storm and the city's airport reopened all its runways as temperatures rose above freezing. Two traffic deaths in Georgia and one in South Carolina were blamed on the storm that spread sleet and freezing rain across parts of the south-east, yesterday. By today, all four runways at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport were operational again. Only two, and at one point only one, of its four runways were available yesterday, as crews laboured to scrape off ice. There is not enough demand to have all four operating, an airport spokeswoman said, adding that about 300 stranded airline passengers spent the night at the airport, because their flights were canceled. Thick blankets of ice began melting today, as temperatures climbed above the freezing. Highs reached the 40s for northern Georgia and the 60s in the southern part of the state. Even with the improved weather conditions, fewer than 100 departures were scheduled out of Atlanta passenger airport this morning. AirTran canceled 33 of its estimated 500 flights scheduled for today, but the airline expected operations to return to normal by early afternoon. Delta, which only operated 8 percent of its flights the previous day, planned to offer 70 percent of its normal schedule today. The icy weather also forced airlines to cancel scores of flights yesterday, at airports in Greenville-Spartanburg and Columbia, S.C., and at Charlotte and Raleigh, N.C. Amtrak canceled rail service for this morning from Raleigh to Charlotte. Georgia Power said 165,000 homes and businesses it serves were without power today and the Electric Membership Corp. reported 68,000 customers blacked out. Many of the outages were in the Atlanta metropolitan area. Thousands of utility workers toiled through the night to

restore power only to have new pockets of customers go out as the ice collected on the power lines. Both companies said they hoped to return power by tomorrow at the latest. In North Carolina, power was restored to 9,000 customers who had been blacked out. Utility officials in South Carolina estimated about 5,000 customers were still in the dark today, down from 11,000 yesterday.

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated Jan 25, states: A winter storm that slammed Ohio two days before Christmas will cost insurance agencies across the state millions of dollars. According to the Ohio Insurance Institute, Ohio insurers expect to pay at least \$85 million to home, automobile and business owners who had property damage from snow and ice. The storm caused major power failures and travel hazards across the state. Homeowners account for more than 70 percent of the 27,000 claims received by 23 insurers. Their claims total \$62.5 million. About 10 percent of the claims, totaling \$5.9 million, were from drivers. The state industry association said businesses have made 1,322 claims, totaling \$11.8 million.

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated Jan 31, states: The storms that hit California starting a month ago cost more than \$85 million in damage to state highways, Caltrans says. The state Department of Transportation says in a press release that it is using "existing budget resources" to pay the cost, which will probably rise when the state finishes its final analysis. Fierce storms starting in late December dumped more than 13 feet of snow on the Tahoe Basin in two weeks, closing Interstate 80 for 39 hours. State highways in Ventura, San Bernardino and Los Angeles counties suffered the most, accounting for roughly two-thirds of the \$46 million in emergency repair contracts that Caltrans has written so far. Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has declared a state of emergency in eight Southern California counties, asking the White House to designate them as disaster areas so that the state and local governments can tap the federal budget to help pay for repairs.



GREECE

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated today, states: A strong earthquake measuring 5.6 on the Richter scale struck off western Greece in the Ionian Sea early today, but no casualties were reported, officials said. The officials said the quake took place 50km from the island of Zante in the Ionian Sea. There were no reports of damage or injuries. The epicentre of the quake, which took place at 0305 hrs was 340km west of Athens in the sea, the officials said. A smaller quake,

measuring four on the Richter scale was recorded shortly afterwards, from the same epicentre.

GUAM

London, Feb 3 — A press report, dated today, states: A magnitude 6.3 earthquake jolted the Northern Marianas and Guam yesterday, but seismologists assured terrified residents that the quake wouldn't generate a tsunami. There were no immediate reports of injuries or major damage on the islands. The Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre, which is located in Hawaii, did not issue a tsunami warning. Despite assurances from local and federal agencies, many terrified residents ran out of buildings and looked out to sea for any sign of a tidal wave. The epicentre of the quake was located about 35 miles west of Rota and 45 miles north of Hagatna, Guam.

INDIA

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated Jan 26, states: A moderate earthquake occurred at 1730, UTC, today. The magnitude 5.6 event has been located in the Nicobar Islands, India, in lat 08.29N, long 93.98E, depth 26 km.

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated today, states: A moderate earthquake struck near India's Nicobar Islands - an area that has been rattled by aftershocks since last month's earthquake-tsunami disaster, the Hong Kong Observatory said today. It was not immediately clear if there were any casualties. The 5.6-magnitude tremor struck at 1539, GMT, yesterday in the Nicobar island chain.

INDONESIA

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated today, states: An earthquake measuring 5.6 on the Richter scale jolted the area of Lumajang regency in East Java this morning. The quake was also felt in the neighbouring regencies of Blitar and Malang. The earthquake occurred at about 0321 hrs with the epicentre 119 kilometres south of Lumajang, about 33 kilometres under the Indian Ocean. "We haven't had any reports of fatalities or damage caused by the quake," Arief of the Meteorology and Geophysics Agency's Tretes station told Antara news agency.

London, Feb 2 — A press report, dated today, states: A moderate earthquake rocked parts of Indonesia's main island Java today, causing panic among residents and cracks to some buildings, officials and a media report said. There were no immediate reports of casualties. The epicentre of the 5.2-magnitude quake was about 40 miles south of Bandung, West Java's capital, said Yusuf, an official at the meteorological agency. It struck at about 1300. Meanwhile, Muhammad Imron, an official in Bandung, said that the quake jolted some towns in the province and caused large cracks at a factory in Banjaran, an industrial neighbourhood in southern Bandung. The quake has reportedly damaged two houses and one school building in Garut and Pengalengan, two other towns in West Java.

London, Feb 3 — A press report, dated today, states: Two earthquakes, the strongest measuring 5.5 on the Richter scale, shook Indonesia, injuring several people and damaging houses, officials said. The resort island of Bali and Lombok were shaken by the more powerful of the two quakes at 2200 hrs, 1400, GMT, some 15 km south-west of Lombok's capital Mataram, seismology officials said. The quake was felt strongly in Denpasar, the capital of Bali, but there were no reports of injury or casualty on the resort island. Earlier, at 0555, GMT, a 5.2-magnitude quake struck 43 km south of Bandung, the capital of West Java, the Meteorology and Geophysics Agency said. District spokesman Suherman said several people were injured in the melee and many houses were damaged but the number was not immediately known.

JAPAN

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated today, states: An earthquake registering a preliminary magnitude of 5.8, jolted eastern Hokkaido yesterday evening, the Japan Meteorological Agency said. There were no immediate reports of injuries or damage from the 1839 hrs quake. The quake measured 3 on the Japanese seismic intensity scale of 7 in Churui and Hiroo, the agency said.

RUSSIA

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated Jan 26, states: Russia's Far East suffered a 5.9-magnitude earthquake last night, less than two days after several tremors measuring up to 4 on the Richter scale, hit the area, the Itar-Tass news agency reported today. The tremor struck the Northern Kurile Islands in the Russian Far East at 2154 hrs, yesterday, according to Russian seismology service. But there were no reports of casualties or damage. The epicentre was located 220 km off the Paramushir Island and 158 km under the Pacific Ocean floor.

SOUTH-EAST ASIA

London, Feb 1 — Crude oil tanker Major Dhan Singh Thapa PVC sailed Kochi Jan 29.



ANATAHAN, NORTH MARIANA ISLANDS

London, Jan 25 — A press report, dated Jan 24, states: The ongoing volcanic activity on Anatahan intensified on Saturday (Jan 22). The eruptions resumed at peak levels with the volcano displaying strong explosions according to the Emergency Management Office and the US Geological Survey. In a joint report, the EMO and the USGS said strombolian explosions resumed late Saturday and have been continuing. The volcano has

spewed ashes and smog several thousand feet in the air. With southerly winds blowing several days ago, ash plumes and haze being blown from Anatahan to Saipan prompted the EMO and the Department of Public Health to issue a health advisory that advised residents to stay indoors. Inhalation of sulphur dioxide may have adverse health effects, especially to those who have respiratory problems. An overflight conducted by the EMO after the new eruptions began saw ash plumes rising to about 10,000 feet and observed pyroclastic rocks over one meter in diameter. The volcano's activity intensified after months of extremely low seismic activities, which followed the second batch of eruptions from April to June last year. Anatahan remains off-limits to the public, except for government and approved scientific missions.

KLYUCHEVSKAYA SOPKA, RUSSIA

London, Feb 2 — A press report, dated Feb 1, states: The Klyuchevskaya Sopka volcano today was sending out hot gas and steam from its crater. The spout column raised to a height of one kilometre and the plume of the volcanic discharge stretched for over 100 km north-west of the volcano. Volcanic ash fallout was registered in the Klyuchi city located 30 km from the gigantic volcano. It presents no danger to the population, the Kamchatka-based seismic research crew told Itar-Tass. According to specialists, Klyuchevskaya Sopka's volcanic tremor intensified in the period from 0730 to 1000, local time. Simultaneously snow containing dark ash was falling in Klyuchi. Klyuchevskaya Sopka, the highest active volcano in Eurasia, is becoming more active. Local earthquakes and incessant volcanic tremor have been registered in the volcano area.

MOUNT OYAMA, JAPAN

London, Feb 2 — A press report, dated today, states: About 60 former residents of the Japanese island of Miyakejima have returned to the homes they evacuated after a volcanic eruption in 2000. Japan's government lifted an evacuation order on the island yesterday. The returnees have been issued with gas masks to guard against the risk of volcanic gas emissions, which are being closely monitored by officials. More than half of the island's 4,000 inhabitants are to return over the coming months. The island's mayor, Norishige Hozumi, told a Japanese broadcaster he hopes to revive the economy, placing tourism at its centre. However, it is unclear if Miyakejima can once again attract the 80,000 tourists who visited its beaches and coral reefs every year. Visitors once able to fly from Tokyo in 30 minutes now face a seven-hour boat journey to the island. The island of Miyakejima, formed by the Mount Oyama volcano, lies about 180km south of Tokyo. The volcano began spewing rocks and gas in 2000, and by September, all its residents had been rescued. The island-dwellers have spent the last four years in temporary shelters in Tokyo, unsure

of whether they could return. Shops, restaurants and local officials have now resumed work on the island - but some of its original residents are unlikely to ever return to homes deemed too unsafe.

MOUNT TAVURVUR, PAPUA NEW GUINEA

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated Jan 26, states: the Mount Tavurvur volcano in East New Britain began emitting plumes of ash again on Monday (Jan 24) after being quiet for 11 months, causing grave concern among Rabaul residents. Rabaul Volcanic Observatory Assistant Director Ima Itikarai said the volcano began spewing out dust as high as three kilometres just after 1800 on Monday. He said the dust eruptions were caused by magma movement beneath in the volcano and based on past cases, he expected the fluctuating eruptive activity to continue for up to a year or more, but not to a level that would pose a threat to the residents in the area. Because of the north-westerly winds, areas like Tokua Airport, the Duke of York Islands and parts of Namatanai in New Ireland province are experiencing ash falls. An officer with Air Nuigini said flights into Tokua would not be affected, but ground staff would assess the situation every day.

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated Jan 27, states: Scientists in Papua New Guinea say a volcano near Rabaul is continuing to throw up ash although, at this stage, it is not posing a direct threat to life. The Rabaul Volcanic Observatory said data received from its 15 seismic stations around Mount Tavurvur suggested the activity would not increase, as it did before a devastating 1994 eruption. Assistant director Ima Itikarai said the wind was blowing the ash offshore. He said the observatory had stopped sending ground teams to inspect the volcano for the time being.



AFGHANISTAN

Kandahar, Afghanistan, Jan 29 — A land mine blast killed nine Afghan soldiers near the border with Pakistan today in the bloodiest attack yet on Afghanistan's army. A local army commander said an Afghan border commander was also wounded when the army vehicle hit the mine near the southern town of Spin Boldak while traveling toward the Pakistan border. A Taliban spokesman claimed responsibility for the attack, which he said had killed four soldiers. In a separate incident, two soldiers were killed and two wounded by unidentified gunmen near the eastern town of Khost, the local police chief said. — Reuters.

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

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated today, states: Two separate landmine blasts in the south and east of Afghanistan killed at least two people and injured 15 others, police officials said. Pakistan-based Afghan Islamic Press reported that two men were killed by a landmine in the eastern Kunar province on the highway that leads to the city of Jalalabad. It quoted Kunar police chief Matiullah Khan as saying it was possible the two were killed by the explosion while trying to plant the mine. Separately, a small bus carrying civilians hit a landmine in Arghandab district of Kandahar province, General Salim Khan, a senior police official for Kandahar city, said. He said at least 15 people were in the bus when it hit the landmine and the injured were rushed to a hospital in Kandahar city. He said he did not know how many were killed. The bus was travelling from Uruzgan province where suspected members from the ousted Taliban government usually target Afghan and US-led forces with roadside bombs. The incident comes a day after nine Afghan soldiers were killed in the Spin Boldak area of Kandahar by a mine planted by Taliban members.

BANGLADESH

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated today, states: The main opposition party of Bangladesh today announced a non-stop 72-hour hartal (destructive strike) from tomorrow across the country to protest against an attack on its rally that killed four. A source from the Awami League (AL) headquarter in Dhaka today confirmed to Xinhua that the decision of holding three-day hartal was taken earlier at a presidium meeting. Some unidentified terrorists yesterday night hurled two grenades at an AL rally in northeastern district Habiganj. Three people including former Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria's nephew were killed on the spot, while the critically wounded Kibria was sent to a hospital in Dhaka and succumbed to his injuries later. Bangladeshi President Iajuddin Ahmed today expressed profound shock at the brutal killing of Kibria, the AL leader and member of parliament, terming the killing as "barbaric" and "cowardly." The president said the miscreants involved in such heinous attack are the enemies of the country and people.

Dhaka, Jan 29 — More than 70 people were injured and about 100 detained in Bangladesh today as police battled opposition protesters during a nationwide general strike. Witnesses said the strikers halted at least five trains on their way to and from the capital, Dhaka, damaged scores of rickshaws and mini-cabs, and scuffled with security forces. Authorities deployed hundreds of police, paramilitary troops and auxiliary forces in Dhaka and other main cities trying to keep order. The main opposition party, the Awami League, called a three-day national strike starting at dawn today after an explosion at a rally in the country's

north-east Thursday (Jan 27) killed a senior party leader and four other people. Police said the explosion, which also wounded around 70, was caused by a grenade thrown by an unknown assailant. In Dhaka, steel-helmeted police and other security forces with automatic weapons and batons patrolled streets and guarded key buildings. The strike drove most transport off Dhaka's usually crowded streets and closed shops and schools. "At least 50 people including a former Awami minister, Obaidul Kader, were injured in police action in Dhaka on Saturday," one witness said. Police said 20 or more activists were injured in sporadic violence in the southern district of Noakhali. The stoppage widely disrupted business as well as activities at the country's main port, Chittagong. The Dhaka and Chittagong stock exchanges were closed, traders said. Thursday's blast — the latest in a series to rock the country over the last year — killed former UN official, diplomat and finance minister Shah Abu Mohammad Shamsul Kibria, 73, a key Awami leader, as well as his nephew and three others. — Reuters.

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated today, states: Anti-government protesters clashed with police yesterday and set fire to buses and taxis in several cities during a strike protesting a grenade attack that killed five opposition members. The violence left one person dead and 38 injured, officials said. Police used tear gas and batons to disperse strike supporters during the second day of a three-day strike called by the opposition Awami League. The strike shut down many shops, schools and businesses around the country.

London, Feb 3 — A press report, dated today, states: At least 15 people were injured, one seriously, when petrol bombs were thrown at two buses on the eve of a nationwide shutdown called by Bangladesh's opposition party today, police said. Strike supporters attacked the buses overnight in Dhaka, city police chief Mizanur Rahman told AFP. More than 10,000 police and paramilitary forces had been deployed in the capital to prevent further violence, he added. Bangladesh's main cities were brought to a near-standstill today as the main opposition Awami League party enforced the fourth shutdown day in a week. In Dhaka, private cars were off the road and schools, colleges and shops were closed. The situation was similar in the southern city of Khulna, the southeastern port city of Chittagong and northern Rajshahi, police said. The Awami League has called the shutdowns to protest at a grenade attack on a rally last week that killed five people including a former minister. A three-day strike ended Monday (Jan 31) and two more shutdowns are planned for Saturday (Feb 5) and Sunday (Feb 6). The opposition enforced 22 protest shutdowns last year, despite pleas from aid donors and business groups who say such actions hit the nation's impoverished economy. Most of last year's strikes were called

as part of the Awami League's stepped-up campaign to oust the government, a four-party Islamist-allied coalition led by Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party. The opposition accuses the government of failing to crack down on crime and corruption. The government says it is working hard to tackle a grim situation inherited from the Awami League's administration.

COLOMBIA

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated today, states: Rebels firing homemade rockets attacked a military post in southwestern Colombia today, killing at least nine soldiers and wounding about 20, the navy said. Government forces in river gunboats, a "Phantom" fixed-wing gunship and helicopters were pursuing the rebels of the leftist Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, who attacked the Colombian marine post in Iscuande county, the navy said in a statement. FARC rebels used large gas cylinders converted into rockets to attack the Marine outpost, the statement said. The attack came amid a government offensive, called Plan Patriot, deep into the rebel's jungle hideouts in southern Colombia, more than 150 miles from the site of today's attack.

Bogota, Feb 2 — Colombian Farc rebels killed 14 marines and wounded 25 others in an attack on a jungle river base at Iscuande, Nariño province. — Reuters.

London, Feb 3 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: Marxist rebels in southern Colombia ambushed an army convoy with explosives and gunfire today, killing eight soldiers and wounding four others in the second deadly guerrilla attack in as many days, the military said. President Alvaro Uribe late today blamed both attacks on errors by members of the military, and urged soldiers to exercise more caution. In today's attack, soldiers were travelling along a highway near Santa Ana, 350 miles south-west of the capital, Bogota, when their vehicles came under attack from fighters of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, according to the military. One civilian was also killed.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated Jan 27, states: Aid workers fear many people died when dozens of well armed militia stormed Che village in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo setting it ablaze. One person has been confirmed dead, but an ethnic militia group that defends the community says 80 were killed. The United Nations, which has more than 3,000 peacekeepers in the area, is checking the massacre allegations. According to the aid workers, the attack on Che, 60km north east of Bunia, took place in the early hours of Wednesday morning (Jan 26). A team trying to reach Che with food supplies for more than 7,000 displaced Hema people living there saw the village

burning and were forced to turn back before reaching its centre. Thomas Lubanga, leader of the Hema militia the Congolese Union of Patriots, said he believed Lendu militiamen were behind the attack.

Kinshasa, Jan 31 — Villagers in the remote hills of northeastern Congo said armed groups had killed at least 15 people and kidnapped 34 in recent attacks, the United Nations said yesterday, adding that hundreds of homes had been razed. The reports underlined the chaos reigning in the lawless east of Africa's third largest country. The attacks were reported around Tche, a string of hamlets some 60 km northeast of Bunia in the Ituri province. U.N. troops flew over the region on Saturday (Jan 29) and saw 220 burnt homes and smoke rising from nearby hills, U.N. spokesman Christophe Boulierac said. In another sign of instability, rival factions from the Congolese army clashed on Saturday just west of Bukavu, over 450 km to the south, looting the village of Kabare, U.N. spokesman Leocadio Salmeron said, speaking from Bukavu. The world body had received unconfirmed reports that two or three civilians and several soldiers had been killed, he added. "We were able to confirm that the village was completely looted, even the medical centre," he said, adding that an unknown number of civilians had fled the violence. In one settlement in Tche, peacekeepers found 120 people, mainly women and children, and left around 30 Pakistani soldiers there to protect them overnight, Boulierac said. Villagers told the U.N. troops that armed groups had increased their harassment of locals over the past 10 days. The violence in the east and political squabbling in Kinshasa have cast a shadow on the transitional government which is meant to organise democratic elections by the end of June. However, the elections deadline is in doubt because of logistical problems and legislative delays. — Reuters.

GEORGIA

Tbilisi, Feb 1 — A car exploded outside a police station in ex-Soviet Georgia today, killing at least three people, an interior ministry spokesman said. He said the blast had almost totally destroyed the police headquarters in the town of Gori, some 80 km to the west of the capital Tbilisi. — Reuters.

INDIA

London, Jan 25 — A press report, dated today, states: Normal life has come to a standstill in the southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh due to a strike by the main opposition Telugu Desam Party (TDP). The strike has been called to protest against the killing of a senior TDP leader, Paritala Ravi, who died in a bomb blast at his office yesterday. Incidents of violence and arson have been reported from different parts of the state following the killing. The state capital Hyderabad and several other major cities were all affected. Shops, business

establishments and educational institutions were all closed in Hyderabad and in the cities of Vijaywada, Vishakhapatnam and Tirupati. Thousands of passengers were stranded at different places due to lack of train services and other forms of transport. The state-run road transport corporation decided not to run its buses anywhere during the strike since protesters were targeting government property. Nearly 400 buses were damaged or burnt yesterday by the demonstrators. Police say that Mr Ravi was killed with one of his acquaintances, Eshwaraiyah, at a district office of the TDP. Incidents of stone pelting and attacks on government vehicles and offices have been reported today. The state government has ordered schools to remain closed fearing trouble during the shut down. The TDP-led strike has been supported by its ally, the right wing Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party. TDP leader Chandrababu Naidu has blamed the state's governing Congress party and police for the attack which took place in the district of Anantapur, where a curfew has been imposed. Police yesterday dismissed Mr Naidu's allegations, insisting that there was no lapse in his security arrangements and no question of them not making every effort to catch the perpetrators. The TDP has also demanded the dismissal of the state's government. Mr Ravi, a controversial figure and a former Maoist rebel, was facing several criminal cases and was also in the middle of an ongoing feud with a Congress leader in the faction ridden Anantapur district. Ever since the TDP-run state government was voted out of office in May last year, Mr Ravi had complained to the authorities that he feared for his life.

London, Jan 30 — A press report, dated today, states: Five bogies of the Shramik Train were derailed today in Bihar's Munghyr district due to the damaging of tracks by suspected Naxalites, railway sources said. No casualty was reported. The CPI (Maoist) Naxalites, who have given a call for a poll boycott in Bihar and Jharkhand, were suspected to have damaged the tracks leading to the derailment, the sources said. Railway authorities said efforts continued to remove the affected bogies to restore normal traffic.

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated today, states: Four members of a family in an Indian-administered Kashmir village were killed late yesterday in a grenade attack on their home. Three of those killed were children below 10 years, the Indo-Asian News Service (IANS) reported today. Three others were critically wounded in the attack in Nashla village in Doda district, IANS quoted local police as saying. The massacre occurred when militants launched a grenade attack on the home of Nazir Ahmad in the village around midnight. His wife and three children were killed instantly. Nazir Ahmed, his father and sister were left injured in a pool of blood. They have been shifted to a hospital in Doda for

treatment. No militant group has claimed responsibility for the attack.

Guwahati, Feb 3 — A powerful rebel group in India's troubled north-east today offered to hold peace talks with New Delhi to end a four-decade revolt but set conditions unlikely to be accepted by the federal government. The outlawed United National Liberation Front (UNLF), battling for freedom for nearly two million people in the mountainous state of Manipur, said it was willing to "end the conflict once and for all" if New Delhi allowed U.N. mediation. A statement from UNLF chief Sana Yaima said authorities should organise a U.N.-monitored plebiscite in Manipur, replace federal forces with U.N. peacekeepers and transfer political power as mandated by the referendum. "Now it is up to the government of India to decide and reciprocate our gesture. We will wait for Delhi's response," Yaima said. Formed in 1964, the UNLF says it is waging an armed struggle against New Delhi's "colonial occupation" of the former princely state of Manipur. The group has about 1,200 combatants, including 100 highly trained women guerrillas. The UNLF, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and PREPAK, are three major rebel groups active in Manipur. The call by the UNLF comes after that rebel group and the PLA suffered heavy losses in the past three months during campaigns by the Indian military. Arms sourced from gun-runners in Southeast Asian countries had also been seized, an intelligence source said. The UNLF talks offer could be a ploy to buy time and recoup, the source said, adding that the conditions set by the outfit would not be acceptable to New Delhi. — Reuters.

INDONESIA

Helsinki, Jan 27 — Indonesian ministers and exiled rebel leaders seeking the independence of Aceh province agreed with Finnish mediators today to hold face-to-face talks about ending nearly 30 years of fighting. Finnish ex-President Martti Ahtisaari, a veteran mediator, met the Indonesian officials and Free Aceh Movement (GAM) rebels separately and persuaded them to talk directly — a breakthrough in itself compared to previous mediated negotiations. "They are willing to meet each other," Matti Kalliokoski, vice-chairman of Ahtisaari's Crisis Management Initiative group, told Reuters. "The talks continue tomorrow, on Friday." Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono said he hoped to win peace by offering "special autonomy status." — Reuters.

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated today, states: Indonesia's government has rejected an offer by Aceh's rebels to put demands for independence on hold in exchange for a referendum on Aceh's future. Despite the government's rejection, the offer shows an encouraging willingness on the rebels' side to be flexible. The new offer from the rebels came two days after its exiled leadership and

government ministers held their first face-to-face talks in almost two years. Although the talks achieved no formal agreement, the two sides agreed in principle that they would meet again in the next few weeks to discuss longer-term solutions to the 28-year-old insurgency. The rejection of the offer by the rebels to put their demands for independence on hold for five to ten years until a referendum is little surprise. Indonesia's President, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, has said he is willing to consider any solution that does not involve independence.

IRAQ

Baghdad, Jan 26 — Insurgents attacked the offices of three political parties northeast of Baghdad today and released a video apparently showing three kidnapped election workers in the latest violence ahead of Sunday's (Jan 30) landmark polls. In the deserts of western Iraq, a U.S. Marine transport helicopter ferrying troops crashed in the early hours, the military said in a statement. It said search and rescue teams were at the site and the casualty toll would be announced later. Police in Baquba, a mixed Shi'ite and Sunni town 40 miles north of Baghdad, said one policeman was killed and at least eight people wounded when gunmen opened fire on the local offices of three parties contesting the polls. In the northern city of Mosul, a rebel stronghold that has seen persistent violence, a video filmed by insurgents showed three Iraqi men who had apparently been taken hostage and who said they worked for Iraq's electoral commission in the city. On the video, a hooded insurgent carrying a pistol read out a statement as another masked guerrilla crouched with a rocket-propelled grenade launcher on his shoulder. "We are mujahideen in the province of Nineveh. What they call elections have no basis in the Islamic religion and that's why we will hit all election centres," the statement said. Several guerrilla groups in Iraq — including militants loyal to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, al-Qaeda's leader in the country — have declared war on Sunday's elections, vowing to attack polling stations and to kill those who dare to vote. The government has announced a set of extraordinary security measures to try to protect the polls, including closing Baghdad airport and land borders over the election period, extending night curfews in cities and banning cars from roads on election day. — Reuters.

Baghdad, Jan 26 — A U.S. helicopter crash in western Iraq today killed 31 American Marines, CNN reported, quoting military officials. A U.S. military spokesman in Baghdad confirmed there were casualties but said he could not give an exact number. Earlier, the U.S. military said a Marine transport helicopter had crashed in the early hours of today and a search and rescue operation was under way. The military said the crash happened shortly after midnight in the western desert close to the Jordanian border, but it gave no details on the cause. — Reuters.

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated today, states: Six Iraqis and one US Marine were killed today as insurgents clashed with US troops and blew up a school slated to serve as a polling centre, pre-election violence that followed the deadliest day for US troops since the war's start. Another US soldier died in an accident. The Marine was killed and four others wounded when insurgents launched mortars at their base near Iskandariyah, about 30 miles south of Baghdad. Australian officials announced that one of two car bombings on Baghdad's dangerous airport road yesterday had injured eight Australian soldiers riding in a convoy escorting Australian government officials. Thirty US Marines and one Navy sailor died yesterday in a helicopter crash in bad weather in the western desert, and six US troops were killed in insurgent ambushes. Meanwhile, a Muslim youth group in Brazil issued an appeal for the kidnappers of a Brazilian hostage to release him. The appeal by the Alliance of Muslim Youth, broadcast on Al-Jazeera, noted that many Brazilians had opposed the Iraq war. In a continuation of the pre-election violence plaguing the country, three Iraqis were killed and seven injured when a roadside bomb missed a US convoy in Mahmoudiya area, 20 miles south of Baghdad this morning, according to the area's hospital director, Dawoud al-Taie. Near Tikrit, a roadside bomb killed one Iraqi bystander and narrowly missed another passing US military convoy, police said. The attack happened on a road near former dictator Saddam Hussein's home town, about 80 miles north of Baghdad, said police Lt. Shalan Allawi. In Samarra in the same region, armed men blew up a local school administration building this morning after first ordering the staff to leave, said police Lt. Qassim Mohammed. The destroyed building had been scheduled to be a voting center in Sunday's (Jan 30) elections. Sporadic clashes also erupted in Samarra this morning between US troops and armed men, killing one Iraqi civilian and injuring another, Mohammed said. US forces also exchanged fire with insurgents in Ramadi, capital of the insurgent-plagued province of Anbar west of Baghdad. In Baquba, the body of a colonel in the former Iraqi intelligence during Saddam's era, Talib Minshid, was found in the city, according to a Baquba hospital official, Mohammed Ali. Minshid had been abducted by armed men two days ago. In the same town, one Iraqi police officer was killed and four others injured by a suicide car bomb today, according to Adel Mulan, the head of the Diyala provincial police force. A US soldier died from a gunshot wound early today on a base near Tikrit in what the American military command called an accident. Another US soldier was injured when his convoy was attacked early today near Kirkuk by small arms fire and a roadside bomb, said Master Sgt. Robert Powell.

Three Iraqis were wounded when a mortar shell landed on a house in the town of Khalis, 50 miles from Baghdad last night, the hospital official said. Just days before Sunday's crucial election, four Iraqi National Guard soldiers and one officer also were kidnapped yesterday afternoon in Baghdadi, 90 miles west of Baghdad. The kidnapping occurred after the Iraqi soldiers' car was stopped by insurgents at a checkpoint, according to witnesses at the scene who saw the incident.

Baghdad, Jan 28 — A car bomb exploded close to a police station in southern Baghdad, killing four Iraqi civilians, police said today. Iraqi police and soldiers have been repeatedly targeted by insurgents ahead of the country's elections on Sunday (Jan 30). Guerrillas have also detonated bombs at several schools that were to be used as polling stations. They have also targeted election officials and members of Iraq's majority Shi'ite community, which is expected to cement its newfound political clout through the elections. — Reuters.

Baghdad, Jan 29 — Insurgents hit the US embassy with a rocket strike today that killed two Americans and wounded four and also killed 17 Iraqis and an American soldier on the eve of Iraq's landmark election. The rocket struck the American compound after dark, setting off an explosion that could be heard throughout the city centre. Most of the US embassy's nearly 1,500 staff work in the compound, part of Saddam Hussein's former Republican Palace. "It hit near the embassy building," embassy spokesman Bob Callahan said. "There are two dead and four who are wounded ... all Americans." Even as US-trained security forces barricaded streets, sealed land borders and closed Baghdad airport, more than a dozen polling stations were attacked and bloodshed continued to overshadow the final electoral countdown. A roadside bomb killed a US soldier in Baghdad, raising to 1,088 the number of troops killed in action since March 2003. A suicide bomber struck a US-Iraqi security center in the town of Khanaqin, north-east of Baghdad. The US military said three Iraqi soldiers and five civilians were killed. Al-Qaeda's network in Iraq, led by Jordanian militant Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, claimed responsibility and threatened mayhem when voters go to the polls tomorrow. — Reuters.

Baghdad, Jan 30 — Millions of Iraqis flocked to vote in a historic election today, defying insurgents who killed 35 people in a bloody assault on the poll. Voters cast ballots in higher-than-expected numbers in Iraq's first multi-party election in half a century. However, in parts of the Sunni Arab heartland, where the insurgency has been bloodiest and many people boycotted the election, polling stations were empty. Despite draconian security measures imposed by Iraq's US-backed interim government, militants launched a string of attacks to try to torpedo the polls. They struck mainly in Baghdad, rocking the capital with

nine suicide blasts in rapid succession. The Iraqi wing of al-Qaeda, led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, claimed responsibility. Despite today's violence, election officials said the turnout had been above expectations. They originally put it at 72% but later backtracked, saying possibly eight million had voted, which would be a little over 60% of registered voters. However, they acknowledged the figures were guesswork. The government had set a target of at least 50% of Iraq's 13 million registered voters as the barometer of success. With international monitors mostly staying away for fear of kidnapping, it was impossible to assess the fairness of the election or accuracy of the turnout estimates. After the polls closed, election workers started counting ballots by hand. Officials expect preliminary results in six to seven days and final results in about 10 days. At least 27 people were killed in Baghdad attacks, including suicide bombings carried out by a Syrian and a Chechen, interim Interior Minister Falah al-Naqib said. The deadliest attack was when a man with explosives strapped to his body killed six people in a polling station queue. Another bomber killed four people at a voting centre in the Sadr City slums, a Shi'ite stronghold. A suicide bomb also killed five people in a bus carrying voters south of Baghdad. A low Sunni turnout would damage the credibility of the election. Iraq's long-oppressed Shi'ite majority looked poised to take power. Many fear that instead of quelling the anti-US revolt, the poll could foment sectarian strife by further alienating minority Sunnis, delaying any withdrawal of American-led forces from the country. Interim Defense Minister Hazim al-Shaalan said today's violence would have been much worse were it not for stringent measures banning private cars from the streets, which prevented even deadlier attacks with car bombs. Streets were barricaded, borders sealed, airports closed and only official vehicles allowed out on the streets. — Reuters.

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated today, states: An investigation into why an RAF Hercules crashed into the Iraqi desert killing all 10 people on board could take weeks, it emerged today. The marshy terrain and hostile local forces are likely to hamper the painstaking hunt for clues, a Ministry of Defence spokesman said. He described as speculation press reports that they were considering the possibility a bomb may have been on board. "We are not going to speculate about the causes until we have got a clear picture," the spokesman said. "Bombs on board, missile strikes, explosions — that's a matter for the crash investigators to work through and advise on." Nine RAF personnel and one soldier died in Sunday's (Jan 30) crash, which was the biggest single loss of life to hit UK forces since military action in Iraq began. The MoD today refused to comment on newspaper reports that the soldier was an Army NCO attached to the SAS. Last night, Chief of the Air

Staff Air Chief Marshal Sir Jock Stirrup announced that a senior investigator was on his way to Iraq, where staff have already been on the ground sifting through the wreckage. Today, the MoD spokesman said there was no timescale for the procedure but made clear it was likely to take longer than a crash probe in the UK. An Iraqi militant group, Ansar al-Aslam, claimed yesterday on a website that it shot down the aircraft using an anti-tank missile. A second group of insurgents sent a video to Arabic TV channel al-Jazeera which claimed to show evidence that they brought down the plane. The relatively slow, low-flying Hercules, renowned for its reliability, came down in clear conditions 25 miles north-west of Baghdad on a routine flight.

London, Feb 2 — A press report, dated today, states: An Iraqi soldier has died in a bomb explosion while two civilians were killed by another bomb intended for a US military patrol. Both attacks took place in the Sunni Triangle, an insurgent stronghold north of Baghdad. The soldier died and another was wounded when an Iraqi army patrol was the target of a bomb attack around dawn near Dhuluiya, about 70km north of Baghdad, the army said. Late yesterday, a bomb apparently intended for a passing US army patrol killed two civilians driving in a car at Dijla, about 30km north of Baghdad, police said.

London, Feb 2 — A press report, dated today, states: An oil pipeline linking two of Iraq's major refineries was attacked today near the restive Sunni city of Samarra north of Baghdad, police and oil sources said. The pipeline linking the Baiji refinery north of Baghdad to the Dura refinery in the capital was hit by two bombs which exploded and caused a fire, police lieutenant colonel Mahmud Mohammed said. An official at the Baiji refinery said the pipeline was one of eight conveying oil to Baghdad. "The sabotaged pipeline has a capacity of 7,000 barrels per day," Majid Mannul said, without specifying the extent of damage or how long repairs would take. According to Finance Minister Adel Abdel Mahdi, attacks on the country's oil infrastructure have cost Iraq seven to eight billion dollars in exports since the March 2003 US-led invasion.

Kirkuk, Feb 3 — Militants ambushed and killed 12 Iraqi soldiers near the northern oil city of Kirkuk late yesterday, the Iraqi army said today. Spokesman Major-General Anwar Ameen said five gunmen shot the soldiers in the head after stopping their bus on a road leading to Kirkuk. Two soldiers survived and fled to a nearby village, he said. Most of the troops were on their way back from a vacation in the nearby city of Mosul. In another incident, two U.S. Marines were killed in action yesterday in the restive Anbar province west of Baghdad, the U.S. military said today. A military statement gave no details of the circumstances of their deaths. Since the invasion of Iraq in March 2003, at least 1,102 U.S. military and Pentagon

personnel have been killed in action in Iraq. Including non-combat deaths, the toll is 1,438. — Reuters.

ISRAEL

Gaza, Jan 26 — Israeli troops shot and killed a three-year-old Palestinian girl in the Gaza Strip, witnesses and medics said today, breaching a rare lull in violence brokered by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. Witnesses said troops guarding Tel Qatif settlement in central Gaza shot at the Palestinian town of Deir al-Balah today and that a bullet penetrated the home of Rahma Abu Shamal, striking her in the head. Israeli military sources said soldiers had opened fire after Palestinian militants launched mortar bombs or rockets at Israeli targets. It was not immediately clear if these were the shots that killed the girl, they said. Abbas has been trying to coax a cease-fire from militant groups spearheading a four-year-old Palestinian revolt ahead of Israel's planned withdrawal from Gaza later this year. Last week, Palestinian security police fanned out with Israeli assent in north Gaza to halt militant attacks on Jewish settlers and rocket fire at Israel, ushering in a calm unknown in the last years before Yasser Arafat's death in November. However, militants yesterday broke an eight-day silence and fired a makeshift rocket into southern Israel, causing no damage or injury. Israeli troops shot and lightly wounded three Palestinians in a car that apparently went through a red light at a major highway junction checkpoint in south Gaza. Now Palestinians plan to deploy hundreds more troops in a part of Gaza where militants frequently target Jewish enclaves where most of the coastal territory's 8,500 settlers live. — Reuters.

Gaza, Jan 28 — Palestinian security forces widened their control in the Gaza Strip today under orders from President Mahmoud Abbas to prevent attacks on Israelis in another important move toward reviving Middle East peacemaking. But in a sign of challenges ahead for Abbas, Hamas appeared to have made a strong showing in the first-ever municipal elections held in the Gaza Strip, seen as a test of strength between the Islamic militant group and the new leader. Building on a northern Gaza deployment a week ago, some 2,000 Palestinian paramilitary police began to fan out across the southern part of the territory, turning back the clock to the days of security cooperation and peacemaking with Israel. Some of the uniformed men, armed with assault rifles, took up positions between Jewish settlements on occupied land, often hit by mortar bombs and rockets launched by militants, and Palestinian towns. Others were headed to Gaza's border with Egypt, where Israel has conducted punishing raids in Palestinian residential areas to root out weapons-smuggling tunnels and militants. Over the past week, violence has dropped sharply in the Gaza Strip, where Abbas is trying to arrange a cease-fire in the run-up to a planned Israeli withdrawal

this summer. Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said yesterday conditions were right for a "historic breakthrough" on peace after measures taken by Abbas to bring calm. He said in a speech that if Palestinians worked to "fight terror" after more than four years of bloodshed, then Israel could move forward with a U.S.-backed peace "road map" meant to lead to a Palestinian state. President Bush, in an interview published today in *The New York Times*, said Abbas has shown strength in the early phases of his administration. "He is sending assurances that he will put a 100-percent effort into protecting the people on both sides of the issue from terrorists. And to me, that's an impressive start," Bush said. In a sign of a new U.S. push for peace, officials said Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice would visit the region early next month on the first trip of her new job. Palestinians said that in order to help Abbas, Israel agreed in principle to pull back troops from West Bank cities reoccupied during a four-year-old uprising and to free hundreds of prisoners. A senior Israeli official confirmed such a pullout was on the cards but said the government would not approve it until the Palestinians "come up with a proper plan" for implementation. The prisoners' issue would be on the agenda at Abbas's expected summit with Sharon next month, the official said. A Palestinian official said the talks may take place on Feb 8. — Reuters.

Gaza, Jan 31 — The Islamic militant group Hamas said it launched five mortar bombs at a Jewish settlement in the Gaza Strip today, after Israeli army gunfire killed a Palestinian girl. Witnesses said the shelling damaged a home in Neve Dekalim settlement. At least one ambulance was summoned to the scene but there was no immediate word of casualties. The violence strained a de facto cease-fire brokered by new Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. Earlier today, Israeli troops shot dead a 10-year-old girl in a schoolyard in the southern Gaza town of Rafah, witnesses said. The army said it was not aware of its soldiers having been involved in any shooting and was investigating. — Reuters.

IVORY COAST

United Nations, Feb 1 — The Security Council voted today to tighten a U.N. arms embargo on Ivory Coast in hopes of helping head off any new outbreak of civil war in the country. The resolution, drafted by France and adopted unanimously by the 15-nation council, authorised French and U.N. peacekeepers in Ivory Coast to enforce the arms ban by inspecting cargo shipments without advance notice at any port, airfield, military base or border crossing. It also called on government and rebel forces to help the United Nations compile a list of all arms in the country, with an eye to eventual disarmament, and authorised the naming of a panel of experts to see if the embargo was being enforced. Ivory Coast's government strongly

opposed the resolution, arguing it would allow France, the former colonial power, to interfere in its internal affairs. But French Ambassador Jean-Marc de la Sabliere said the measure put the Security Council solidly behind a political solution to the conflict. The resolution initially had been scheduled for a vote Friday (Jan 28), then again yesterday, but was twice delayed to give South African President Thabo Mbeki time to brief a meeting of African leaders in Nigeria on his efforts to mediate in the conflict on behalf of the African Union. The council first imposed the arms embargo in November, and de la Sabliere said the African Union favored the measure reinforcing it. The council has also approved targeted sanctions — such as a travel ban or a freeze on assets — against any government or rebel leaders found to be blocking implementation of the peace agreement. But council members have delayed putting those into effect in hopes of encouraging the leaders to quickly fulfill their commitments under the accord. — Reuters.

Abidjan, Feb 2 — Ivory Coast's rebels today welcomed the tightening of a UN arms embargo in the country but President Laurent Gbagbo's camp was more guarded and one of its hardline backers warned of trouble. The resolution adopted late yesterday authorises French and UN peacekeepers in the former French colony to enforce the arms ban by inspecting cargo shipments without notice at any port, airfield, military base or border crossing. "I think the strengthening of the embargo is a decision for peace. It's going to help peace. The (rebel) New Forces will submit to all measures in the embargo," New Forces spokesman Sidiki Konate said today in the rebel town of Bouake. A coalition of opposition leaders also welcomed the tougher embargo, saying that cutting the number of weapons circulating in Ivory Coast was the only way to allow free and fair elections slated for October 2005 to take place. But one influential hardline pro-Gbagbo militia leader said the United Nations was sowing the seeds for trouble ahead. "I am now fully convinced the UN is looking not for peace in Ivory Coast, but chaos," said militia leader Eugene Djue. "I don't understand these new measures coming at a time when everyone is making efforts to move towards peace." — Reuters.

KUWAIT

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated today, states: Heavy gunfire broke out early today in a region south of Kuwait City during a police operation to capture suspected Islamic extremists, a security force source and eyewitnesses said. The firing in the al-Qurain region came the day after a gunbattle involving suspected extremists that left three people dead and five injured near Kuwait City. The sources said the firing today came as police had surrounded an area in al-Qurain.

LIBERIA

Monrovia, Jan 25 — The Liberian government has imposed a dusk to dawn curfew on Harper, a port town near the southeastern border with the Ivory Coast, following two days of riots there related to a suspected outbreak of ritual killings. The United Nations said today it had sent extra peacekeepers to help quell disturbances in the small town 700 km southeast of the capital Monrovia. General Joseph Owonibi, the commander of the 15,000-strong UN peacekeeping force in Liberia, told UN radio that he suspected former combatants in Liberia's civil war of being behind the violence. Justice Minister Kabbineh Janneh said the disturbances began on Saturday (Jan 22) and culminated with a mob storming the police station in Harper on Sunday (Jan 23). A crowd of angry youths armed with sticks and metal bars broke into the cells and seized three men who had been arrested in the nearby town of Pleebo on suspicion of killing people for body parts to be used in magic rituals, he told IRIN. Two of the three suspects had been badly beaten up, while the other had disappeared, Kabbineh said. Owonibi said a dusk to dawn curfew was imposed in Harper yesterday night and Ethiopian peacekeepers had been rushed into the town to help out the Senegalese detachment of troops that was already based there. Janneh, who coordinates a government committee that oversees security operations, told IRIN that the curfew would remain in place in Harper "until the security situation there improves." He said investigations were underway to find the ringleaders of the riots. — Reuters.

Monrovia, Jan 28 — Nurses and doctors are refusing to return to work in the Liberian countryside because their salaries are too small and often late and the transitional government's promise to pay 18-months of salary arrears has failed to materialise. Klomah Seblee, president of the National Health Workers Association says health sector workers typically earn a government wage of between 10 and 20 US dollars a month. But a 50 kg sack of rice — the national staple — costs at least 22 dollars and sometimes as much as 30 dollars. The pay dispute is hampering efforts to restore basic services to more remote corners of Liberia, which is set to hold its first post-war elections in October.

NEPAL

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated Jan 30, states: Government forces killed at least 40 Maoist rebels in a clash in far western Nepal yesterday, state-run Radio Nepal said. During the clash, which occurred yesterday morning in a jungle of Kanchanpur district bordering India, government forces used long-range weapons and a helicopter to attack rebel positions.

Kathmandu, Feb 1 — Nepal's King Gyanendra sacked the government, declared a state of emergency and assumed power today, saying the leadership had failed to hold elections

or to restore peace amid an escalating civil war with Maoist rebels. The king had taken power for the next three years, and placed many politicians under house arrest, residents and Indian media said. "I have decided to dissolve the government because it has failed to make necessary arrangements to hold elections by April and promote democracy, the sovereignty of the people and life and property," the king said in an address on state radio. He said a new government would be formed under his leadership that "will restore peace and effective democracy in this country within the next three years", according to the Press Trust of India (PTI). Shortly afterwards a state of emergency was declared, PTI said, quoting Nepal's state-run television. Telephone land lines and mobile phone networks were apparently shut down in Kathmandu and communications links with the rest of the world disrupted. International flights were turned back from Kathmandu airport, and Nepali news websites went down, although road links with India remained open. A private radio station accessed over the Internet was broadcasting a bulletin recorded before the king's announcement. This is the fourth time the king has sacked a prime minister in less than three years. Nepal has had no parliament since 2002. The situation in the capital seemed calm and normal, sources said, but PTI said armoured vehicles with mounted machineguns were patrolling the capital and security had been stepped up. — euters.

Mumbai, Feb 2 — Indian companies that have invested in Nepal appear to have adopted a wait and watch policy after king Gyanendra declared a state of emergency earlier yesterday, after suspending the elected Government. Indian carriers including Indian Airlines, Jet Airways and Sahara Airlines had to cancel the flights to Kathmandu since all links, including air links, with Nepal have been suspended. India is one of the largest contributors to the Nepal tourism industry, accounting for about 30 per cent of the total tourist arrivals by air in 2004 at 86,328. Also, companies including Coca-Cola India, Dabur India Ltd, ITC Ltd and Hindustan Lever Ltd (HLL) have manufacturing operations in Nepal. While the CEO of Dabur Foods Ltd, Mr. Amit Burman, said it was too early to gauge the impact of this political development on the company's operations in Nepal, a Coca-Cola India spokesperson said the company was in touch with the partners there. Reacting to the suspension of air links between India and Nepal, the Assocham President, Mr M.K.Sanghi, said that the Governments of both the countries should strive to re-establish them. "Also, in such a situation, step should be taken to maintain the security of the Indian people and companies operating in Nepal." — Lloyd's Agents.

Kathmandu, Feb 2 — Nepal's King Gyanendra unveiled a 10-member cabinet under his leadership today, a day after he sacked the prime minister for failing to hold elections or end an

escalating civil war with Maoist rebels. Life carried on as normal on the streets of Kathmandu, but the rebellion-racked country remained virtually cut off from the rest of the world a day after the king assumed power in place of sacked prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba. The king declared a state of emergency and suspended civil liberties, including press freedom. He had placed many politicians under house arrest, Indian television said. All phone lines in and out of Nepal remained cut, and air links were still disrupted after several flights were turned back the previous day. The king's decision to take power for the next three years has drawn condemnation from the United States, from neighbouring India, from Britain and from the United Nations. In a volley of strongly worded statements, they said the move would play into the hands of the Maoists and called for the immediate restoration of democracy. Britain said it would review its security and development aid to the impoverished state. However, many Nepalis seemed happy to see the back of politicians widely regarded as corrupt and incompetent. Among those appointed to the new cabinet were Dan Bahadur Shahi as home minister and Ramesh Nath Pandey as foreign minister, New Delhi Television (NDTV) network said. Pandey had previously served as information minister and environment minister, and was a negotiator during unsuccessful peace talks with the Maoists in 2003. Like most of the appointees he is seen as a royalist. The Nepalese Embassy in Delhi said the king would chair the cabinet and no prime minister had been appointed. The king would attend a summit of South Asian leaders in Dhaka on Sunday (Feb 6), Bangladesh said. The Maoist rebels, who have been fighting to topple the monarchy since 1996, called for a three-day general strike from today in protest, the Press Trust of India said. The rebel leader, Prachanda, who uses one name, said the king's action smacked of "medieval feudal autocracy". — Reuters.

London, Feb 3 — A press report, dated today, states: Nepal's media has been subjected to total censorship, as part of emergency measures announced by King Gyanendra. Reports critical of the state of emergency declared yesterday have been banned for six months, according to a notice in the main daily newspaper. Phone lines and internet links have been cut, so news of a three-day general strike called by Maoist rebels has not reached the general public. The rebels have also rejected a request to return to the negotiating table. The Maoists previously refused talks with the previous government, saying they needed a direct dialogue with the king, but have now condemned the crackdown. The king's moves have been criticised by the UN, the US, the UK and rights groups, but he said he had to act as the government failed to protect Nepal from the Maoists. Meanwhile, the US State Department has advised American citizens against travelling to Nepal, while not banning them outright. A

planned summit of South Asian leaders has been postponed, mainly because of Indian concerns at the developments. Many basic rights have been suspended, including freedom of assembly, the right to privacy and the right against preventative detention. Soldiers and police in riot gear are everywhere in Kathmandu, particularly near student campuses where protests tend to take place. However, people have been saying they are too afraid to protest because so many fundamental rights have been suspended.

PAKISTAN

Islamabad, Jan 29 — Unidentified attackers blew up a natural gas pipeline in eastern Pakistan, disrupting supplies, officials said today, the second such attack in less than a month. A spokesman for the Sui Northern Gas Co., which distributes gas to central and northern Pakistan, said an 18-inch diameter pipeline was ruptured yesterday night near the main eastern city of Lahore, causing disruption in supplies to the city and several other areas. "Apparently it is a bomb explosion," a company spokesman said. He said engineers had repaired the damage and supplies had been fully restored. Mohammad Pervez, chief engineer for projects at the company, said investigations were under way to determine the cause of rupture but a militant attack could not be ruled out. "We are investigating the matter but prima facie it is a sabotage," he told Reuters. Police said suspected tribesmen fired two rockets and detonated two small bombs yesterday night in Quetta, capital of Baluchistan, but caused no casualties. Authorities have increased security for the Sui gas field, about 700 km southwest of the capital, Islamabad, and the military has said it plans to set up a permanent base in the area to thwart more attacks. — Reuters.

Karachi, Jan 30 — Pakistan largest state owned gas utility-Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) said that it had restored the supply of gas to Lahore and its adjoining areas after the suspension of supply for about 18 hours. The gas supply to several localities of the city and its adjoining areas, especially industrial areas on Raiwind Road, was suspended on Friday night (Jan 28) after the 18-inch diameter gas transmission pipeline on Sahiwal-Lahore section was ruptured near the left bank of Baloki-Sulemanki Canal at about 2200 hrs. The rupture, the SNGPL authorities said, appeared to be a "sabotage activity". As a result, the supply of gas was completely suspended to such areas in the city as the Defence Housing Authority, Cantonment, Thokar Niaz Beg, Raiwind Road, Johar Town and Multan Road, etc. The SNGPL officials said the gas supply was restored by its engineers and other staff at about 1600 hrs, yesterday afternoon. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Karachi, Feb 1 — A railway track near the Basti Darvesh Lashari Railway Station, 25km north from Dera

Ghazi Khan in western Punjab Province of Pakistan, was completely damaged when a powerful bomb exploded yesterday. According to local media reports, the rail traffic was suspended while Pakistan Railway staff and police reached the spot immediately, including Pakistan Railway divisional superintendent, SP vigilance and engineers. The bomb created a 15-foot crater. However, no casualties were reported. A railway engine carrying oil had crossed the section some 20 minutes before the explosion. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Karachi, Feb 2 — The major parts of Balochistan in western Pakistan are still facing hardship on account of electricity failure. The province was plunged into darkness last night when the third main 220 KV electric supply line was blown up in Sibi, south-east of Quetta. The terrorists planted heavy explosive material near the power supply circuit in the Mithri Pirak area of Sibi, which exploded at around 2115, local time. An official from the state run organisation Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) said that repair work has been started but declined to say when it will be completed.— Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Karachi, Feb 3 — Pakistan state run largest power and water development authority-Water and Power Development Authority- (WAPDA) said supply of electricity has been partially restored in Provincial capital of Balochistan Province of Pakistan. The supply was suspended on Tuesday night (Feb 2) when the third main 220 KV electric supply line was blown up in Sibi-the south east of Quetta city of Balochistan Province. Two major cities, Quetta and Sibi, were receiving power from a neighbouring region while repair work was underway on a transmission tower. However, vast area of Balochistan is still without electricity, Interior Ministry officials in Islamabad said, adding that it would take another two weeks to fully restore supplies. Meanwhile, the Federal Minister for Water and Power, Liaquat Ali Jatoi has taken serious note of sabotaging power transmission lines blown up by the miscreants and requested the Balochistan Government to provide foolproof security to the power installations. The blasts on transmission line has also caused a loss of millions of rupees to the national economy. The Minister requested the Governor and CM Balochistan to take action against the miscreants and provide security to the power installations for uninterrupted electricity supply to the people and the commercial and industrial sector. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

PHILIPPINES

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated today, states: The Philippines military says helicopter gunships and aircraft have attacked a suspected meeting between leaders of the Al Qaeda affiliated Abu Sayyaf and Jemaah Islamiah militant groups. The

strikes were based on intelligence reports that Abu Sayyaf chief Khadaffy Janjalani was meeting with three Indonesian members of the Jemaah Islamiah (JI) network there, said spokesman Colonel Franklin Del Prado. However he could not confirm if there were any casualties in the attack, which targeted houses in a marshy area on the outskirts of Datu Piang and Saudi Ampatuan towns in the southern island of Mindanao. Colonel Del Prado said that MG 520 helicopter gunships and OV-10 attack aircraft were used because ground forces had difficulty entering the marshy area. Troops had been dispatched to the area to assess the effect of the air strikes, he said. Janjalani heads the Abu Sayyaf, a local Muslim extremist group known mainly for kidnapping and bombing attacks against Christians and foreigners in the Philippines for over a decade. It has been linked by both Washington and Manila to the Al Qaeda network of Osama bin Laden. MILF spokesmen denied that their forces were in the marshy area hit by the Government.

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated today, states: At least 40 rebels and terrorists, including two from the terrorist network Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), were killed in an air strike at one Abu Sayyaf group's lair in the south, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) said today. Lt. Gen. Alberto Braganza, chief of the AFP's Southern Command, however, admitted no bodies have been recovered from Datu Piang town, Maguindanao, and the casualty figure was based on intercepted messages from the enemy. AFP public information office chief Lt. Col. Buenaventura Pascual said that the operation left five dead and three injured on the enemy side. Pascual said that one of the slain suspects was described as a "leader" of the combined elements of renegade Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), Abu Sayyaf and JI. Quoting intercepted messages, the military said that the fatalities and the wounded were under the protection of Commander Wahid Tundok, leader of the MILF rebels who attacked an Army detachment in Mamasapano town, Maguindanao, on Jan 9. The military demanded the MILF to turn in Tundok, which was rejected by the MILF leaders, prompting government forces to launch pursuit operations against the group. At around 1000 hrs, yesterday, Braganza ordered an air strike on a cluster of houses in Butilan marsh in Datu Piang town after receiving intelligence information that the rebels were holed up in the area, in the company of Abu Sayyaf and JI elements. According to the military, OV10 planes dropped bombs while MG520 helicopters fired rockets on the enemy lair. Members of the Joint Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities (JCCH) and the Malaysian-led International Monitoring Committee (IMC) went to the area to inspect the effect of the air strike, it said.

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated today, states: Twelve armed men were killed and three soldiers wounded

in an eight-hour firefight in the southern Philippines, according to a statement released by the military yesterday. Fighting erupted early yesterday after marines and police found the gunmen in a fortified position in Tubaran municipality of Lanao del Sur Province, the statement said. Authorities were tracking them over the killings of four soldiers.

RUSSIA

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated today, states: Russian special forces have stormed an apartment block in the North Caucasus town of Nalchik where suspected militants were holed up. Two police officers were lightly wounded in the intense gun battle that erupted this morning. A fire began in the building as the militants resisted the assault. Earlier, officials said they were confronted by up to six militants whom they linked to a December attack on the local anti-drug agency. During that attack the rebels killed four policemen and seized many weapons. The current siege in Nalchik started on Tuesday (Jan 25) night as an operation to arrest Muslim Atayev, who the authorities claim had led the attack on the drug agency. Officials said that Mr Atayev's wife and child, and possibly other women, were among those inside the building. Their fate is unknown. All adjacent buildings were evacuated, and the area was sealed off by hundreds of special troops and police. The siege is said to be part of a planned clampdown on the Yarmuk Jamaat group, which the authorities have blamed for the December attack. The group was operating in the Kabardino-Balkaria republic, of which Nalchik is the capital. The authorities say it was part of a radical Islamist network operating in Russia's volatile North Caucasus region and linked to Chechen rebels.

Moscow, Feb 2 — Chechen rebel leader Aslan Maskhadov has ordered all Chechen fighters to observe a ceasefire in their separatist war against Russian troops in February, a rebel Web site reported today. Site www.kavkazcenter.com published a statement from Shamil Basayev, Russia's most wanted man and the organiser of last year's Beslan hostage-taking, which ordered all fighters to refrain from any offensive operations until Feb 22. But Basayev was quoted by The Times newspaper in London as saying he still considered Russian citizens fair targets for future fighting. The newspaper also quoted him as saying in a Channel 4 television interview to be broadcast tomorrow that there were plans for more operations of the kind that killed more than 330 people at the hostage-taking at the school in Belsan. Basayev's statement on the Web site said Maskhadov had ordered his followers not to carry out diversionary attacks in Chechnya or in the rest of Russia, attacks on Russian bases, Russian convoys or vehicles, or on "traitors or unbelievers". The statement said fighters should "continue mining approaches to their bases and to

continue operations to destroy people or machinery of the enemy forces who are spying or attacking mountainous forested areas". The Web site said Maskhadov gave the order on Jan 14 as a gesture of goodwill but did not elaborate. "We do not react to Kavkazcenter. This is not an official organ," said a spokesman for Dmitry Kozak, Russian President Vladimir Putin's representative in the North Caucasus region. Although the ceasefire was addressed to all units of the "Armed Forces of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria", Maskhadov and Basayev are not thought to control all militants in the region, which includes restive provinces neighbouring Chechnya. — Reuters.

Moscow, Feb 2 — Gunmen killed a local politician and two of his bodyguards in the southern Russian region of Dagestan today, Interfax news agency reported. Another bodyguard was badly injured. Police General-Major Magomed Omarov, Dagestan's deputy interior minister, was driving through Dagestan's capital Makhachkala when automatic gunfire strafed the two cars carrying him and his bodyguards, Interfax said. Omarov had survived a previous assassination attempt in 2003, when his car was blown up in the centre of Makhachkala. — Reuters.

SOMALIA

Nairobi, Feb 2 — The governments of Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda have expressed their commitment to supporting a peace mission for Somalia by providing troops or equipment to the envisaged force, a statement said. The leaders of the six countries met in the Nigerian capital, Abuja, yesterday, as members of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) on the sidelines of the African Union summit. "There is an urgent need to provide security support to the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia to ensure its relocation to Somalia and guarantee sustenance of the IGAD peace process," they said in a joint communiqué. The newly created government, however, remains in Nairobi, where it was set up, because security concerns and lack of resources have prevented members of the administration from moving to Mogadishu, the Somali capital. The IGAD heads of state, who met under the chairmanship of Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, instructed the IGAD secretariat, in collaboration with the African Union, to establish a fund to cover expenses for the deployment of the peace support mission. They urged defence ministers and military chiefs of countries that would contribute troops and materiel to the mission to meet "urgently" to discuss, in consultation with the Somali government, the details and modalities of deploying the envisaged force in Somalia. The leaders also gave Museveni the mandate to seek from other countries in the region, AU members states and the international community troops, financial and technical support for the peace mission.

The IGAD heads of state "requested AU member states to give them the mandate for the deployment of a peace support mission to Somalia and expressed their hope that ultimately the mandate will be endorsed by the United Nations". — Reuters.

SPAIN

London, Jan 30 - A press report, dated today, states: A bomb has exploded at a hotel in the town of Denia in south-east Spain, police said. The blast happened in the Hotel Port Denia at about 1515 local time (1415 UTC), in the Alicante region. One person was slightly injured in the explosion, which badly damaged two floors of the hotel. Police said it followed a telephone warning from the militant Basque separatist group, Eta. The hotel was evacuated immediately after the warning call. The bomb, which was hidden in a backpack, exploded about half an hour later. The blast came two days before the Spanish parliament is scheduled to debate and vote on a Basque plan for independence from Spain, a proposal almost certain to be rejected.

SUDAN

Khartoum, Jan 26 — Renewed fighting in Sudan's Darfur region may have killed up to 105 civilians and displaced more than 9,000 last week, the United Nations said today. "It has been confirmed that the village of Hamada was nearly totally destroyed and that up to 105 civilians may have been killed, with the majority of victims being women and children," U.N. spokesman George Somerwill told a news conference. A U.N. assessment team was sent last week to the area of Hamada, Juruf and Gemeiza villages in South Darfur state, where the government launched a military campaign in December it said was to clear the roads of banditry. Aid community sources and rebels have said government planes bombed the area on Jan 19. Somerwill did not know how the people were killed, who the fighting was between or if aerial bombardment had caused the high number of casualties in Hamada. Aerial bombardment would be a direct violation of security protocols signed between the government and the two main Darfur rebel groups in November. The government says it uses aircraft to protect key supply routes and civilians from rebels, but it denies dropping bombs. Somerwill said 8,000 refugees had fled the fighting to Menawashi and 1,250 to Mershing, both nearby in South Darfur state. But he said the withdrawal from Darfur of Save the Children UK late last year had left the areas with "serious gaps in health and nutrition." Save the Children was the only international agency working in the areas. The Adventist Development and Relief Agency International (ADRA) said three of its Sudanese workers had been kidnapped in December in rebel-held Labado to the east of South Darfur state, where they were trying to drill wells. "ADRA is appealing for the release of three agency workers that were abducted at

gunpoint along with ADRA project vehicles ... while travelling through the then rebel-controlled area of Labado," said the statement, posted on ADRA's Web site yesterday. The government occupied Labado during the December campaign and has so far refused to withdraw to previous lines, unless the African Union takes up positions there to prevent rebels retaking the area. Darfur peace talks in the Nigerian capital Abuja are due to restart in the first week of February, but there is some doubt over whether one rebel group will attend. The previous round collapsed in December with rebels blaming the military operations in South Darfur. The African Union monitoring mission has expressed concern over the fragmentation of Darfur's two main rebel groups. There are now four known armed factions in Darfur, with many armed gangs also operating. — Reuters.

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated Jan 26, states: The Sudanese air force bombed villagers in South Darfur today, observers from the African Union reported, and an international aid organization said casualties were inflicted. "It is a major cease-fire violation," said the senior AU political officer for Sudan, Jean Baptiste Natama. An air force Antonov dropped bombs outside the town of Shangil Tobaya, about 40 miles south of El Fasher, at about 1500 hrs, the Khartoum-based official of a non-governmental organisation said in a phone interview.

Khartoum, Jan 29 — Sudanese police killed up to 20 people and injured 40 today when they opened fire on a crowd of easterners demonstrating in the city of Port Sudan, a local political leader said. A hospital source in the city said 17 people were killed and 20 injured when police opened fire on a protest march. An official source said the death toll was lower. Abdullah Moussa Abdullah, secretary-general of the Beja Congress in Red Sea state, said by telephone from Port Sudan that he had seen 17 bodies in the hospital morgue and had the names of three other people killed. Moussa said he was present in the morning when some 300 to 400 members of the Beja ethnic group gathered to prepare for a march to demand that the Khartoum government start negotiations with the Beja on sharing power and the country's resources. "There was a special police unit that appeared and just opened fire at them before they even moved," he said. The source at the hospital said all of the wounds were from bullets. "About 17 were killed and around 20 injured," added the source. Three days ago members of eastern tribes, mostly the Beja, presented a list of demands to the Red Sea state governor, including wealth and power sharing. They warned they would take unspecified actions if the demands were not met within 72 hours. "This time was up today and they started a march toward the Wali's (governor's) office," the hospital source said, adding the police stopped the march before it got very far. The source said seven

soldiers were injured by stones but only civilians sustained gunshot wounds. Moussa said the regional security committee had ordered a curfew throughout the city with effect from 1800 today until 0600 tomorrow. — Reuters.

TAJIKISTAN

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated today, states: A car bomb has exploded in front of the Emergencies Ministry in the Tajikistan capital Dushanbe, killing one and injuring four. The four had been passing by in a taxi at the time of the blast and suffered concussion. The Emergencies Minister says there are no other reports of casualties. Several other cars parked nearby had been burned by the blast, which shattered windows in nearby buildings.

TURKEY

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated Jan 26, states: The outlawed Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) has claimed that its militants were responsible for a fire that gutted a warehouse belonging to electronics manufacturer Beko outside of Istanbul, the private NTV reported today. A statement issued late yesterday by the PKK said that it had set it on fire on Monday (Jan 24), causing more than five million US dollars in damage at Beko's Beylikduzu storage facility, according to the report. Up to 35,000 electronics products, at least half of them TV sets, were destroyed in the blaze, according to a Beko spokesperson. The PKK statement said that the group would be stepping up attacks against targets in cities and built up areas if the Turkish armed forces did not cease the latest campaign to root out terrorist militants.

UNITED KINGDOM

London, Feb 3 — The Irish Republican Army (IRA), today, withdrew its conditional offer to disarm, but rejected British and Irish accusations that it is a major obstacle to lasting peace in Northern Ireland.

Labour Disputes



BANGLADESH

See under "Political & Civil Unrest."

BELIZE

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated Jan 27, states: A broad section of Belize's government work force went on strike at midday today, joining teachers, dock and energy workers who had walked out earlier to protest tax increases. A new budget passed by the Senate on Tuesday (Jan 25) would increase taxes on business, land and imports to meet what the government says are rapidly rising debt costs. The measure awaits the signature of the governor-general, Sir Coleville Young.

The extent of the walkout by government workers was not immediately clear. School closures began last week and by yesterday, nearly all were shut down. Teachers also are awaiting a promised eight percent pay increase that the government now says it cannot pay all at once. Water service workers have been intermittently interrupting water service since Monday (Jan 24). The 150 members of the Belize Chamber of Commerce held a two-day work stoppage last week.

BRAZILIAN AIRLINE PERSONNEL

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated Jan 26, states: The operational woes afflicting Brazil's financially troubled Vasp airline worsened as crew members voted to walk out tomorrow on an indefinite strike. The decision today by the National Aeronauts Union to begin the strike means 800 Vasp staff, including pilots and flight attendants, won't show up for work tomorrow. The union plans to hold another meeting Feb. 4 to evaluate the strike's progress. Vasp is weighed down by huge debts accrued since the 2001 recession that hit the industry. The debts include 760 million Brazilian reais (US\$284 million) owed to Infraero, the Federal Airport Authority, for unpaid airport fees dating back to the 1990s. The airline is only letting its aircraft fly if more than 50 percent of the seats are occupied, and the local press has reported that this amounts to no more than one flight per day. Vasp's share of Brazil's passenger flight market plunged from 11 percent at the end of 2003 to less than one percent at the end of 2004 amid the company's worsening financial situation, labour problems and an aging fleet. The airline is operating on a six-month emergency license granted by the government pending presentation of a comprehensive financial plan.

FRANCE

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated Jan 26, states: Ferries between Dover and Calais have been disrupted by wildcat strike action. SeaFrance cancelled three sailings of Cezanne today. Manet was stranded in Dover after industrial action by French seamen this morning, the company said. The operator faces further problems tomorrow with the possibility of further port blockades in France. "SeaFrance regrets that a national strike by French seamen has resulted in an unforeseen stoppage by Manet," a spokesman said today. "In addition, this situation will almost certainly result in disruption of services tomorrow with possible blockades on the road systems around the ports due to national strike action." The Dover Harbour Board has said strikes planned in France are in response to laws being discussed in the French parliament tomorrow. A spokesman for the port said SeaFrance crews were likely to strike and P&O traffic could be affected.

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated today, states: Dover's two largest ferry firms halted sailings today after a strike by French seamen closed Calais port. SeaFrance cancelled all sailings but P&O only stopped services when its freight ship was forced to turn back. The company was told it was too dangerous to try to land passengers or freight because pickets were lighting fires on the dock using old tyres. Kent Police closed the coastbound M20 between junctions 10 and 12 this afternoon for use as a lorry park. The rest of P&O's passenger fleet was still in Dover. However, SpeedFerries and Norfolk Line, which operate between Dover and Dunkirk and Boulogne, said both routes were operating normally. The blockade in Calais by SeaFrance workers, which is over new ferry employment regulations being introduced in France, was expected to be lifted at 2100, GMT, today. Tourists and lorries stranded by the dispute are being taken across the Channel via Eurotunnel shuttle services. Geoff Dossiter, external affairs director of the Kent-based Freight Transport Association, said the strikes, which were coming at monthly intervals, were causing "enormous costs and inconvenience" to companies, drivers and deliveries. He urged France "to get a grip on this tiresome and expensive behaviour and act to properly police its ports and allow the free flow of trade and passengers." The action also caused minor delays at other French ports, although Boulogne and Dunkirk were open as normal. Ferry services between Dover and Calais were initially disrupted yesterday by wildcat strike action and technical problems. The Dover Harbour Board said strikes in France are in response to laws being discussed in the French parliament.

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated today, states: Train services across most of France were to be disrupted for the third day running as rail workers protested the rape of a woman ticket inspector this week that they said highlighted rising violence in carriages and stations. Unions called the snap stoppages late Wednesday (Jan 26), one day after the 31-year-old employee was raped on a train going between the cities of Toulouse and Cahors in the south of the country. A 24-year-old passenger on the train who has a criminal record was arrested hours after the assault following a detailed description given by the victim. The strike has left millions of commuters across France struggling to get aboard the few trains running. Many did not go to work yesterday and looked likely to do the same today in 13 of the 23 regions in the country where workers voted to continue their stoppage. Southern France, especially around Toulouse and the French Riviera, was worst affected, with most services there cancelled. Repeated calls by management of the state rail company SNCF for an end to the strike have been ignored by unions, which are demanding increased security for train staff, including guarantees that ticket inspectors always operate in pairs. The

SNCF said in a statement that rail traffic was “slowly” getting back to normal, but it was unable to forecast the extent of disruptions today. Unions warned disruptions could continue if SNCF management did not review security measures for staff. They said that points agreed with the management Wednesday — including the hiring of 100 security training personnel — were “insufficient”. The proffered solutions “don’t solve the fundamental problem at all,” one train drivers’ union, the FGAAC, said, calling for more security officers to be employed. The opposition Socialist party called for a round-table discussion on rail workers’ security, saying the strike over the rape was “completely understandable”.

ITALY

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated today, states: Hundreds of Fiat workers in Italy went on strike on Jan 27, to protest against the company’s plans to produce cars in Iran. Fiat announced last week that it had entered into an agreement to begin production of several models in Iran later this year. The company eventually hopes to produce around 250,000 vehicles there annually. Workers at Fiat’s Mirafiori plant near Turin left work to take part in a march, citing fears that the production of cars in Iran would lead to job losses in Italy.

MALTA

Valetta, Feb 3 — A local press report, dated Feb 1, states: Three ships were yesterday awaiting instructions on whether to seek alternative dockyards in the Mediterranean as industrial action at Malta Shipyards entered its second day, leaving management counting losses and trying to save Malta’s reputation in the industry. The General Workers’ Union yesterday poured “cold water” over the management’s statements, describing them as an “over-reaction” to legitimate industrial action. Government Investments Minister Austin Gatt said yesterday he would “probably” have no choice but to declare Malta Shipyards Ltd bankrupt in a few weeks’ time as a result of the GWU’s actions. And the management has decided to pull the plug on marketing, claiming the ‘yards could not give a guarantee that work will be completed on time. Asked whether he suspected the government would take the cue from the latest industrial action to eventually shut down the shipyards, GWU general secretary Tony Zarb replied: “I don’t know what’s behind the management and the government’s reactions but God forbid if they intend to use the union as an excuse to close the shipyards”. The GWU has issued a “work to rule” directive after it clashed with management over two issues in particular: the payment of allowances to workers on an “unplanned night shift” and the engagement of subcontractors, which it objects to. Sources close to the shipyards said the yard had lost Lm120,000 (£192,000) in one day as a result of the industrial

action, though penalties could soar into millions of liri once ship owners took legal action, as some have claimed they would. “The real long-term damage will be done as the news reaches the international press and clients shy away from Malta. And in a ship-owning community of a few people, such news travels fast,” the sources added. The GWU says the directives issued are to “work to rule”. However, the sources said the situation on the ground is of general non-compliance, with workers essentially doing no work. “The shipyard is 90 per cent non-operational, which means it is at a virtual standstill,” the sources said. The shipyards are currently full of vessels, including super yachts, some of which are owned by the big players in global shipping. The sources said that two particular clients were trying to make arrangements to shift to other Mediterranean shipyards. What kept them here was the fact that they would not be able to sail without the classification standards. Another ship was out of port, awaiting instructions on whether to proceed to Malta, as was stipulated in its contract, or shift elsewhere. Another two clients have complained about the situation in writing to the shipyard. One ship owner wrote to the management warning that “the yard is fully responsible for any damages, loss of time and any costs whatsoever suffered by the vessels, owners or managers”. Superintendents of ships in the yard were in contact with the owners. No meetings were held yesterday between the government, management or the unions to try and find a way out of the impasse. Dr Gatt and GWU deputy general secretary Manuel Micallef have, however, agreed to meet later this week to discuss the matter. Mr Zarb denied that the shipyards were at a standstill and insisted that the union was merely taking action to protest against some issues which, he said, had been dragging on for some eight months. He said the union was objecting to the fact that a number of ship owners were subcontracting when the work could easily be assigned to Maltese workers. Mr Zarb said the problem did not lie with the minister but with the shipyards’ management, which he accused of intransigence. He asked why the management had not even bothered to put into practice certain clauses on which there was agreement. “We don’t know why the management has decided to react so drastically. It’s the management and not us that is keeping prospective clients away,” Mr Zarb said, pointing out that industrial action was perfectly legitimate in any shipyard. He described the shipyard workers and the unions as “responsible”, evidenced by the fact that they agreed to complete work on a major liner on Saturday before embarking on industrial action. The government had agreed to write off Lm300 million (£480 million) when the restructuring exercise at the yards was carried out in late 2003. Though losses in 2004 were some Lm1 million less than envisaged, the shipyards still lost

about Lm9 million (£14.4 million). The government is subsidising the shipyards to the tune of Lm8 million this year. — Lloyd’s Agents.

UNITED KINGDOM

London, Jan 30 — A press report, dated Jan 29, states: Firefighters at Glasgow Airport have gone on indefinite strike in a row over safety arrangements. Airport operator BAA said it was “business as usual” despite the action. The Transport and General Workers’ Union (T&G) said the strike was over planned reforms which would put airport staff and passengers at risk. BAA wants to replace its fire engine with a fire safety and prevention team. Bosses stress the proposals are the idea of the Civil Aviation Authority. Pledges have been given that the cash saved will be reinvested in safety. T&G regional industrial organiser Donald Munro said 56 of its 59 members walked out due to safety concerns. BAA said fire safety teams were in place at Aberdeen and Edinburgh airports. Talks at the conciliation service Acas have failed to resolve the dispute. The union said changes would increase response times from two to 14 minutes and would lead to the loss of the airport’s firefighting service. Stephen Baxter, managing director of Glasgow Airport, said he was disappointed at the strike action. He said: “BAA has robust contingency plans, approved by the Civil Aviation Authority, to ensure that the airport continues to operate safely and normally, with a fully-trained, professional fire service in place.”

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated today, states: A one-day strike by staff on Glasgows underground caused disruption for thousands of commuters this morning. Drivers and station staff are taking industrial action in a dispute over pay and holidays. It is expected to affect up to 40,000 passengers who would normally use the service throughout the day. The Transport and General Workers’ Union (T&G) said its members were unhappy with the latest pay offer of an increase of 5.9 per cent. Strathclyde Passenger Transport (SPT) however said it would not be increasing its offer. The dispute involves drivers, ticket collectors and safety workers and began after they rejected the two-year pay offer and objected to changes in holiday cycles. Douglas Ferguson, SPT’s Director of Operations said: “We are doing our best to minimise the disruption to travellers and settle this dispute as quickly as possible.”

Awards & Settlements



CLASS-ACTION SETTLEMENT, UNITED STATES

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated Jan 26, states: Five New York

area Armenian charities are splitting \$3 million with four Armenian groups in Los Angeles as a result of a \$20 million settlement between the New York Life Insurance Company and descendants of Armenians killed in the Turkish Ottoman Empire 90 years ago. Each of the charities received \$333,333. The rest of the money will be split among potential heirs and beneficiaries of the 2,300 life insurance policies New York Life sold to Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire prior to 1915. Armenians say more than 1.5 million Armenians were killed in the waning days of the Ottoman Empire from 1915 until 1919. They call it a genocide, but Turkey rejects the claim saying the numbers have been exaggerated. Three lawyers of Armenian background filed the class action lawsuit in 1999, contending that New York Life never compensated the families of those who bought policies. New York Life researched the issue and found 2,300 unpaid policies. Lawyer Brian Kabateck, says the particular charities were chosen because of their efforts to help Armenians who fled to the United States from the Ottoman Empire in 1915. "The reason \$3 million is being distributed immediately to charities is that a number of organisations that involve helping Armenians were selected because a number of families completely perished in the genocide and left no survivors," he said. "As a result of that, the money that is being distributed today is symbolic of money for charities and for charitable organisations." The charities must use the money for educational and cultural purposes or to help needy Armenians in the United States and abroad. Descendants of survivors have until Mar 16 to file claims. They can find information on the website armenianinsurance.settlement.com. Mr. Kabateck says many of the beneficiaries do not live in the United States. "We have taken a substantial effort to publicize in other centers of the world where Armenians have large populations: Russia, of course, Armenia. We have had people in Armenia giving press conferences and talking to people over there and making lists available in rural parts of Armenia. [In] Argentina, there is a very large Armenian population. France, in Marseilles there is a large population," he added. Mr. Kabateck says the lawyers are now trying to reach a settlement with two other insurance companies, but he would not divulge their names.

LIABILITY FOR CLEAN-UP OF INDUSTRIAL WASTE, UNITED STATES

London, Feb 2 — A press report, dated Feb 1, states: California Attorney General Bill Lockyer today announced that he has reached several landmark agreements which require Lloyd's of London and 15 other defendant insurers to pay the State of California approximately \$93 million to settle insurance claims for clean-up damages at the Stringfellow Hazardous Waste Site. The Lloyd's settlement, representing \$49 million of the total

amount, is particularly significant because Lloyd's was one of the state's major insurers, and the company's attorneys had been leading the defense against the state's claims. "The Lloyd's agreement represents a fair resolution of the state's claim against its insurance policy," said Lockyer. "Stringfellow is California's highest priority Superfund Site and we have spent more than 30 years and hundreds of millions of dollars to clean up the site. These settlements will help California recoup some of its expenses and allow us to focus our attention on the remaining defendants who are legally obligated to cover the Stringfellow clean-up costs." Located in the community of Glen Avon in Riverside County, Stringfellow was an industrial waste disposal site that accepted 35 million gallons of bulk liquid hazardous wastes between 1956 and 1972. California purchased numerous insurance policies from the defendants to cover potential liability associated with Stringfellow. In 1983, the state was sued in federal court by the companies that generated the hazardous substances sent to Stringfellow. The lawsuit, brought under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), sought to declare the state as de facto owner/operator of Stringfellow and, therefore, responsible for cleaning up the toxic site. In 1998, the State of California was found liable for Stringfellow based on legal findings that the State negligently investigated, designed and operated the site during the 1950s and 1960s, and then failed to timely address the pollution during the 1970s. While the litigation proceeded, the state entered negotiations with several insurers who sold general liability policies to California. In 1993, after many years of failed negotiations with the insurers, the state filed suit against Lloyd's and four other insurers in order to force the companies to honor their policies. In 2001, thirty additional insurers were added to the suit. Upon reaching the first settlement with Lloyd's, it was believed other insurers would be encouraged to step forward and make offers to the state in order to avoid a lengthy trial without one of the main parties to the state's lawsuit. Soon after reaching the agreement with Lloyd's, \$44 million in subsequent agreements were reached with 15 additional insurers, reducing to 19 the current number of defendant insurers. The case is scheduled for trial with the remaining non-settling insurance companies in Riverside Superior Court in March 2005. Since 1975, the state has been engaged in cleanup and other remedial work at Stringfellow. This work includes continued monitoring of Stringfellow to characterize the extent of contamination at the site and in the groundwater plume. State agencies have also sought to protect public health and the environment by constructing a cap, dam, extraction systems, treatment plants, surface water runoff control systems, and pipelines. The state estimates the

future cost of operating and maintaining Stringfellow, as well as cleaning up the plume of contaminated groundwater will exceed \$300 million. "California bought insurance to pay for damages such as those posed by the Stringfellow Site. These insurance company defendants should pay those claims," said Penny Newman of the Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice and a long-time community leader in the Stringfellow cleanup. "This settlement is an important step toward moving beyond litigation and toward the continued revitalization of our community."

MEDICAL MALPRACTICE, CANADA

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated today, states: A seven-year-old Utah girl left disabled after a botched delivery at a Vancouver, British Columbia, hospital will receive \$9,170 a month for the rest of her life as the result of a lawsuit settlement. Sidney Strachan was born May 19, 1997, but things went seriously awry during the labour and delivery at Nanaimo Regional General Hospital, according to the British Columbia Supreme Court. The girl suffers from cerebral palsy, vision impairment, severe feet and leg deformities, and epilepsy with grand-mal seizures. She can speak only basic sounds. Brain damage has reduced her cognitive powers, but she can walk. Her parents, Clifford and Holly Strachan, who now live in Salt Lake County, sued the hospital, the nurses and doctors involved, alleging a breach in the standard of care. By the time of the trial in February last year, some of the defendants had admitted liability. The Strachans subsequently reached a settlement with the hospital and some defendants, which the British Columbia Supreme Court approved yesterday. Sidney will receive payments of \$9,170, in U.S. dollars, each month starting immediately. If she lives as long as the most optimistic life expectancy projection suggests, she stands to collect \$6,382,320. Her legal fees are expected to be about \$800,000. In all, two doctors involved were found liable; two others had the case dismissed against them. Four nurses were found liable but one had her case dismissed. Delays in the case were partially due to the family's move to Utah and the need to hear from additional experts on local area health costs.

London, Jan 29 — A report from La Salle, PQ, states: A press report, dated today, states: The Supreme Court of Canada has ruled it will not hear an appeal of the largest medical malpractice award in Canadian history — clearing the way for a Smiths Falls, Ont, family whose daughter suffered severe injuries during birth to receive more than C\$10 million. In a ruling released yesterday, the court effectively ruled that in January, 2003, Ontario Superior Court Justice Denis Power properly awarded Melissa Crawford, 21, her mother, Jeanette Crawford, 62, and her father, Barry Crawford, 51, the money for the manner in which two doctors mishandled Melissa's 1983

delivery. Melissa, a non-verbal quadriplegic with cerebral palsy and respiratory problems, suffered brain damage at birth due to a lack of oxygen. She needs complete 24-hour care, including someone to feed her, change her diapers, give her medication and suction her mouth for mucus.

PERSONAL INJURIES, CANADA

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated Jan 27, states: A Superior Court judge has ordered a game park to pay more than Can\$2.5 million (£1.06) in damages to two people mauled by a Bengal tiger nearly nine years ago. In a decision handed down yesterday, Madam Justice Jean MacFarland rejected claims that David Balac, 31, and his former girlfriend, Jennifer-Anne Cowles, ignored posted signs warning visitors not to feed the animals and to keep their windows rolled up. The judge found African Lion Safari strictly liable for the attack and awarded Mr. Balac Can\$1.7 million and Ms. Cowles Can\$813,000 in damages. "There is no question . . . that tigers are dangerous, unpredictable, wild predators. Persons who display such animals in out-of-control settings should, in my view, be held strictly liable for any damage resulting from such display," Judge MacFarland said. The judge accepted the couple's testimony that their vehicle's automatic windows were closed prior to the attack and likely lowered inadvertently by Mr. Balac after a tiger butted against the car. Mr. Balac and Ms. Cowles sued the popular Rockton, Ont., tourist attraction for Can\$3.2-million for injuries they suffered in the attack on April 19, 1996, when Paka, a 113-kilogram Bengal tiger reached into the passenger window of the couple's car and bit down on the man's right arm, destroying muscles, tendons and nerves. The tiger also attacked Ms. Cowles, who was pregnant at the time, biting her on the hip and scalp and nearly dragging her out of the passenger window. Two other tigers tried to climb in through the driver's window as the couple struggled to get out of the attacking animal's clutches. One of the tigers managed to bite down on Mr. Balac's left arm. A lawyer for African Lion Safari said yesterday his client was "very disappointed" with the decision. Martin Smith said he was awaiting instructions from the game park on whether to appeal the decision and declined further comment. The court heard expert testimony that the horrifying attack turned Mr. Balac, an accomplished accordion player, into a recluse and left him disfigured and scarred physically and emotionally. Besides being in constant pain, Mr. Balac is unable to work and suffers from depression and memory loss. He has undergone several surgeries to correct the disfigurement. Ms. Cowles, a former exotic dancer and the mother of two, suffers from severe headaches as well as disfiguring scars on her hip, which, she told the court, ended her career as a "feature" dancer. The judge also awarded Mr. Balac's parents and

sister Can\$49,500 under the Family Law Act. They claimed Mr. Balac's injuries robbed them of his companionship and forced the family to take care of him. Ms. Cowles's mother and children also received Can\$45,000 in the decision.

PERSONAL INJURY, FLORIDA, UNITED STATES

London, Feb 2 — A court yesterday ordered Dillard's department store in St. Petersburg, Florida, to pay £4.7m to a girl aged seven who lost three fingers in an escalator accident.

RAILWAY ACCIDENT, UNITED STATES

London, Feb 3 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: A train conductor won an \$8.5 million settlement from a railroad after claiming that a 2002 collision between his commuter train and a freight train worsened his alcoholism. Patrick Phillips, 52, contended that a mild concussion suffered in the crash triggered a desire for alcohol that transformed him from a "controlled" alcoholic into one who drank himself into malnutrition and eventual dementia, his lawyer said. Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway confirmed yesterday that it settled the case out of court. Phillips' attorney, Jerome L. Ringler, said he and his client were "able to prove that what had occurred was a change in his behavior due to a microscopic injury to the brain." On April 23, 2002, the Burlington Northern freight train collided head-on with a Metrolink commuter train in Placentia, killing two people and injuring about 260. Phillips was taking tickets on the commuter train.

ROAD ACCIDENT, AUSTRALIA

London, Feb 2 — A press report, dated today, states: A p-plate driver left quadriplegic after a car crash on the NSW north coast was today awarded A\$4.3 million in damages, after suing the local council that was carrying out road works at the accident site. Jon Watt, now 25, suffered severe spinal injuries when he crashed his Holden sedan near Grafton in March 1998. He successfully sued Copmanhurst Shire Council in the NSW Supreme Court for negligence, claiming poor signage and loose gravel on the road led to the accident. Mr Watt was driving to his grandparents' house in Grafton when he passed through road works on the Summerland Way. The court was told that when he braked to avoid a kangaroo, his car fishtailed on loose gravel, hit an embankment and flipped over. The council had erected signs in the area limiting the speed to 60km/h, warning of road works and advising motorists to slow down. But Mr Watt argued the council should have displayed signs alerting drivers to the condition of the road, and repeated warning signs every 500m. Handing down his judgment today, Justice Timothy Studdert found the council should have cleaned away any build-up of loose gravel and put up signs warning of its presence on the road.

The council's failure to take such steps contributed to the accident, he said. But Mr Watt also failed to take reasonable care for his own safety, Justice Studdert found. The 18-year-old P-plate driver had been travelling at 80km/h - 20km/h over the limit - when he lost control of his car. He said he did not remember seeing signs warning of road works. But even if proper safety signs had been in place, and Mr Watt had seen them, he probably would not have slowed down, Justice Studdert said. "This accident occurred in broad daylight, in dry weather conditions," the judge said. "It seems to me that had he been keeping a proper lookout ... the plaintiff should have been aware that there was a change in the condition of the road surface." Justice Studdert said Mr Watt was driving too fast in the circumstances, which "contributed to the accident that occurred in very real measure". Had Mr Watt not shared responsibility for the accident, the judge would have awarded him \$6.5 million in damages. But he reduced the payout by a third, awarding damages of \$4.33 million.

ROAD ACCIDENT, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Jan 29 — A press report, dated Jan 28, states: A 62-year-old woman involved in a car crash that left her severely brain damaged and physically disabled is to receive more than £2m in damages. Joan Goldsmith, who lives near Great Barton in Suffolk, was involved in a head-on crash on the A143 just outside the village in September 2001. Civil proceedings against the driver of the other car, Marc Holliday, were due to go to trial on Jan 31, this year, but a £2.25m out-of-court settlement has now been provisionally agreed. Mr Holliday was convicted in October 2002 of driving without due care and attention. He appealed against his conviction, which was upheld at Ipswich Crown Court in April 2003. The family's lawyers brought civil proceedings against Mr Holliday which had been due to go to trial at the Royal Courts of Justice at the end of the month. The crash left Mrs Goldsmith, who is looked after by her husband and three daughters, with a severe brain injury, limited use of her left arm and leg. She also lost the sight in one eye.

ROAD ACCIDENT, UNITED STATES

London, Jan 30 — A press report, dated Jan 29, states: Missoula District Court jury yesterday awarded more than \$8 million to the families of two Arlee women killed in a 1999 vehicle crash, saying a defective tyre was responsible for their deaths. Defendants in the negligence and liability case included Les Schwab Tire Centers of Montana and Les Schwab Warehouse Center of Oregon. Marisa Wolverton, 45, and Heidi Lee Martinez, 32, died May 21, 1999, in a head-on collision with a 40-ton cement truck that had lost the tread from its front left tyre on Highway 93 near Ronan. According to the Montana Highway Patrol, the driver of the Polson Ready

Mix truck was headed south on the highway when the tyre, a retread, blew. The driver lost control of the truck, which crossed into the oncoming lane and clipped a flatbed trailer pulled by a sport utility vehicle. The cement truck then slammed into Martinez's Ford Escort station wagon, killing her and Wolverton. The verdict came yesterday night with the jury assigning 40 percent of the blame to Les Schwab Warehouse Center of Oregon, 20 percent to Les Schwab Centers of Montana, 20 percent to Mission Mountain Tire and 20 percent to Polson Ready Mix. The jury found that both Les Schwab Warehouse Center of Oregon, the company's headquarters, and Les Schwab Tire Centers of Montana had breached their warranty and were responsible for the defective retread. Robert Martinez and Dave Wolverton, representing the estates of their wives, were each awarded \$2.5 million in punitive damages from Les Schwab in Oregon and \$100,000 from Les Schwab Tire Center in Montana. Martinez was awarded \$1.7 million and Wolverton was awarded \$1.2 million in special damages. Bozeman attorney Monte Beck filed the suit in September 1999.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT, UNITED STATES

London, Feb 2 — A press report, dated Feb 1, states: A Santa Clara County, California jury has awarded \$2 million in punitive damages in a sexual harassment suit filed against Federal Express Corp. on behalf of two female employees. During the first phase of the trial, the jury determined a variety of findings including: sexual harassment, failure to take reasonable steps to prevent and correct discrimination and intentional infliction of emotional stress. At that time, the plaintiffs were awarded compensatory damages totaling \$328k. The punitive damages phase of the trial allowed the jury to decide the appropriate measure of monetary damages necessary to punish FedEx and deter this type of conduct from occurring again. Each plaintiff was awarded one million dollars in addition to the compensatory damages awarded previously. According to attorney John D. Winer, Kolainia Hettick had been working as a "Handler" in the document sort area from November 1999 until January 2003, when she determined that working conditions were so bad that she had to quit. Her coworker, Jana Bryant is a courier at the company's Sunnyvale location. The harassment consisted of stalking-type behavior, intimidating the employees in the workplace based upon a coworker's obsessive crush on Hettick and his feeling that Bryant was convincing Hettick not to respond to his persistent attempts to get her to go out with him. According to Winer, both plaintiffs claim that they had made numerous complaints to management about this unwelcome conduct and that FedEx failed to take adequate steps to investigate the employees' complaints and take prompt protective action required under the law.

TOBACCO RELATED ILLNESS, UNITED STATES

London, Feb 3 — A press report, dated today, states: A jury has awarded the family of a woman who smoked for nearly 50 years more than \$20 million in a wrongful death lawsuit against the maker of Kool cigarettes, the largest total judgment against a tobacco company in Missouri. The Jackson County jury awarded the family of Barbara Smith the punitive damages yesterday. Brown & Williamson officials called the damages "grossly excessive" and asked the judge to set aside the judgment. Smith smoked Kool cigarettes for nearly 50 years before quitting in 1990. She died 10 years later of a heart attack at age 73. She had heart and lung disease.

USE OF LIKENESS WITHOUT PERMISSION, UNITED STATES

London, Feb 2 — A press report, dated today, states: A jury has awarded \$15.6 million to a man whose image was used for years without his permission on Taster's Choice coffee labels. Russell Christoff, a former model from Northern California, posed for a two-hour Nestle photo shoot in 1986 but figured it was a bust until he stumbled across his likeness on a coffee jar while shopping at a drug store in 2002. A legal dispute with Nestle USA ensued, during which Christoff, 58, declined the company's \$100,000 settlement offer, and Nestle USA turned down his offer to settle for \$8.5 million. Last week, a Los Angeles County Superior Court jury ordered Nestle USA to pay Christoff \$15.6 million for using his likeness without his permission and profiting from it. The award includes five per cent of the Glendale-based company's profit from Taster's Choice sales from 1997 to 2003. During that time, Nestle sold the freeze-dried coffee with labels featuring Christoff's face in the United States, Mexico, South Korea, Japan, Israel and Kuwait. The company's Canadian arm started using his image in 1986. Nestle USA attorney Lawrence Heller said the company would appeal the verdict.



BANGKOK, THAILAND

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated today, states: The Thai capital's subway reopened to the public today two weeks after an accident injured about 200 people and prompted a closure and safety review of the six-month-old system. Transport Minister Suriya Jungrungreangkit conducted a final inspection of the trains before they rolled out under Bangkok to take thousands of rush-hour commuters along the 20-kilometre network. Officials shut down the Mass Rapid Transit Authority subway after empty carriages rolled into another train packed with some 700 commuters on

Jan 17. Two subway control room operators who wrongly ordered an automatic brake unlocked, as well as two drivers who carried out the order, have been charged with negligence causing serious injury to others. Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra demanded stringent retraining for staff to avert future accidents. Yesterday he and dozens of celebrities and top officials including Suriya took a test ride on the trains and he proclaimed the mass transit system safe.

CROOM, MARYLAND, UNITED STATES

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated Jan 31, states: Authorities say four train cars carrying coal have jumped off the tracks in Croom. Prince George's County Fire and Rescue spokesman Mark Brady says there are no reports of injuries. He also says the derailment won't affect passenger trains, which use separate tracks. Prince George's County police and CSX are investigating.

DRIGH ROAD STATION, KARACHI SINDH PROVINCE, PAKISTAN

Karachi, Feb 2 — Pakistan Railway said railway traffic on the mainline was disrupted following a derailment of a goods train at Drigh Road railway station in Karachi Sindh Province, in the early hours of yesterday morning. The train was carrying 60 empty wagons, being taken to Lahore for repair purposes at Mughalpur workshop. While it was passing through Drigh station, at about 0400 hrs, about a dozen wagons went off the track, as a result the railway line was blocked and was cleared after three hours when normal train movements restarted. Divisional Superintendent Railway Junaid Qureshi reached the spot of the derailment and supervised the rehabilitation work. An inquiry has been ordered to ascertain the cause of the derailment. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

GALLUP, NEW MEXICO, UNITED STATES

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated Jan 31, states: New Mexico police have closed about five blocks of US Highway 66 after five cars of a Burlington Northern Santa Fe freight train derailed today. Five cars carrying ethanol, a flammable liquid, left the tracks at the Gallup Rail Yard. The cars came off the tracks but did not overturn. When state police officers inspected the scene, they discovered two of the cars were leaking ethanol, though at this time, how much fuel spilled is unknown. Ethanol is a clear liquid produced from crops such as corn, wheat, sugar, and other agricultural feed. It is used as a clean, high-octane, high-performance fuel for vehicles and it can be highly flammable. Police plan to unload the remaining ethanol cars as a safety precaution and will pump the liquid from the cars into tankers. Personnel at the rail yard are the only people to be evacuated so far, and there have been no injuries reported. Several

roads were closed along US 66 following the derailment. A Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway spokesperson said the train was bound for Barstow, Calif., from Denver when it derailed.

GWANDA AREA, ZIMBABWE

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated today, states: A cargo train has been derailed in south-eastern Zimbabwe, spilling 40,000 litres of sulphuric acid near the catchment area of a dam, threatening the local water supply. The accident occurred on Wednesday (Jan 26) when the cargo train went off the tracks just outside the town of Gwanda. One container disgorged 40,000 litres of sulphuric acid into a stream that feeds the Mtshabezi River and a catchment area for the Mtshabezi dam that supplies Gwanda with drinking water. The spokesman of the Matabeleland South province, where Gwanda is located, said residents had been warned not to use water from river or the dam. Gwanda is about 100km from the country's second city Bulawayo. The train was running between Beitbridge, the main land frontier outpost with South Africa, and Bulawayo.

KOOLYANOBING AND MERREDIN AREAS, WESTERN AUSTRALIA, AUSTRALIA

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated today, states: An investigation will continue today into the cause of two train derailments east of Perth. Twenty freight wagons came off the tracks yesterday near the mining town of Koolyanobbing, about 200 kilometres from Kalgoorlie. In a second incident, 19 carriages derailed near Merredin, 260 kilometres east of Perth. The trains were carrying flammable goods such as solvents, paints, aerosols and acids when they left the tracks. The Western Australia Fire and Emergency Services Authority says no dangerous substances were spilled. The Australian Railroad Group, which operates the track, will today continue searching for the cause of the derailment.

LOS ANGELES AREA, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: Eleven people were killed and about 200 were injured in an accident involving two passenger trains near downtown Los Angeles early this morning, emergency authorities said. One of the Metrolink commuter trains struck a passenger vehicle before sideswiping the second train and plowing into a parked freight train, officials said. One of the train cars caught fire in the accident and another rolled to its side in the crash, which occurred just after 6am local time. Emergency teams were picking through the debris of the crash and could be seen carrying some victims away on stretchers.

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated Jan 27, states: A suicidal man who allegedly parked his SUV in the path of a commuter train and triggered

a horrific wreck that killed 11 people was charged with murder and could face the death penalty, authorities said today. The criminal case moved forward against Juan Manuel Alvarez as police and forensics experts worked to gather evidence from the crime scene and coroner's investigators searched the tangled wreckage for any remaining body parts. Prosecutors have not decided if they will seek the death penalty against Alvarez, who had been ordered by a court to stay away from his family after his wife alleged he abused drugs and threatened them. Authorities say he also had slashed his wrists and stabbed himself at some point during his aborted suicide attempt. He remained hospitalised today, and a court hearing was set for tomorrow. District Attorney Steve Cooley said Thursday prosecutors were evaluating Alvarez's mental state in deciding a possible punishment, but he asserted that the man's mental issues were no defence. Authorities say Alvarez drove his green Jeep Cherokee into the path of a Metrolink commuter train early yesterday. He then changed his mind and got out of the vehicle just before the Jeep was struck by a train heading to Los Angeles, police said. That train derailed, crashed into a parked freight train and struck another train heading in the opposite direction. The second train also derailed. Alvarez was charged with 10 counts of murder, but another count was to be added following the discovery of an 11th body in the mangled trains. Everyone from the crash was accounted for today. More than 180 people were injured, including seven who were in critical condition today. Meanwhile, police began collecting forensic evidence from the scene for the prosecution, using laser measuring devices to create a digital map of the wreckage. Two large cargo containers were brought in to store evidence. Police Sgt Tom Lorenz said evidence as large as a rail car may be preserved for the investigation and trial.

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated today, states: Los Angeles Commuter train service have resumed this morning following last week's deadly train crash in Glendale. Metrolink officials say a full service from Union Station in central Los Angeles to Ventura County and the Antelope Valley was restored starting at 0400 hrs. The service was suspended to allow the repair of damaged track after Wednesday's (Jan 26) crash that killed eleven and injured about 180 passengers. Both lines operated on a partial schedule Thursday (Jan 27) and Friday (Jan 28), when buses were used to detour passengers around a section of the damaged tracks.

MACKAY AREA, ALBERTA, CANADA

London, Feb 2 — A press report, dated Feb 1, states: A Canadian passenger train carrying 86 passengers smashed into a logging truck and derailed in Alberta, the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. reported today. The westbound Via Rail train with eight cars and two

locomotives was carrying 86 passengers and 15 crew when the accident occurred at a crossing yesterday afternoon. There were no serious injuries although the truck driver had to be cut from the wreckage about 90 miles west of Edmonton. Two investigators from the federal Transportation Safety Board were expected at the scene today. Passengers were taken by school bus to a community centre in the nearby town of MacKay, where volunteers supplied food. Via Rail said it immediately began making alternate travel arrangements for the passengers.

PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA, UNITED STATES

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated today, states: A Norfolk Southern freight train derailed in a Pittsburgh suburb early today, sending four cars into a river and forcing the evacuation of nearby residents. Thirteen of the train's 83 cars derailed at about 0530 hrs, in East Deer Township. Some of the cars came to rest perpendicular to the tracks, and four cars were in the Allegheny River. There were no immediate reports of injuries. Three of the derailed cars, including one in the river, were carrying hydrogen chloride, but officials said those cars were not leaking. Betsy Mallison, a state Department of Environmental Protection spokeswoman, said its staff and local and county emergency management officials were evaluating the accident. Some roads in the area were closed, and residents were being taken to a church as a precaution.

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated today, states: About 200 people were evacuated from their homes yesterday in the Creighton section of East Deer so private contractors for Norfolk Southern Railroad could remove from the Allegheny River a ruptured tanker car filled with a hazardous chemical. Four tankers and nine other rail cars derailed at 0528, yesterday, about 13 miles north of the Point. Two of the tanker cars that ended up in the river were filled with anhydrous hydrogen fluoride, a caustic concentrated gas that turns into hydrofluoric acid when mixed with water. One tanker is almost completely submerged. The river worked as a positive factor for the contents of the derailed tanker because the water diluted the hydrofluoric acid as it flowed downriver and helped prevent the gas from being released into the air, said Bob Full, the county's emergency management director. But removal of the damaged tanker, to be done sometime today, will be a delicate operation because of the danger posed by the potential release of the caustic hydrogen fluoride gas into the air once the tanker is removed from the water, he said. Water treatment plants downriver from the derailed tanker, including those of Pittsburgh and Shaler, are monitoring the quality of water from their intake lines for acidity. The DEP and Norfolk Southern will also monitor the water at the site

of the tanker spill to try and determine the degree of acidity in the water. The cause of the derailment is under investigation. As a routine matter in transportation accidents, toxicology tests will be done on blood drawn from the engineer, conductor and a conductor trainee after the accident, Norfolk Southern spokesman Rudy Husband said. The derailment occurred roughly in the middle of the 83-car train. By last night, Norfolk Southern had successfully removed the front and rear cars that remained on the tracks by using other engines to move them northeast to Altoona and southwest to Pittsburgh so contractors could gain access to the derailed cars, Husband said. The train, which stretched 5,512 feet, was on its way from the Conway railroad yards in Beaver County to Allentown in Eastern Pennsylvania. Seventeen of the 83 cars were empty. There were no reported injuries, but Allegheny County emergency management officials, between 0600 and 0800 yesterday, evacuated a half-mile area in the southwestern corner of East Deer. The county and the railroad also notified federal officials, including the FBI and the National Transportation Safety Board, as a matter of protocol. The FBI is required to be notified in the event of any railroad accident for homeland security reasons, Full said. The US Coast Guard closed off the two-mile stretch of the river between the Schmitt and Tarentum bridges to traffic yesterday. In addition, representatives from the Texas company that manufactured the chemical and other experts in hazardous materials from across the country were coming to assist in the clean-up, Full said. Norfolk Southern plans to bring in empty tanker cars and transfer the gas into them from the four 150,000-gallon derailed cars so it can be transported, Husband said. The railroad will not know how much of the chemical remains in the submerged tanker, however, until they get closer to the scene, he said. Between 15 and 20 Norfolk Southern trains a day travel on the railroad line up the north side of the Allegheny River, Husband said. The route is a secondary line to move freight; the main route runs east from Pittsburgh to Greensburg toward Johnstown. The last train to travel the auxiliary line before the derailment closed it was eastbound about 0400.

PUNJAB, PAKISTAN

Karachi, Jan 30 — Pakistan Railway said three bogies of a passenger train, en route to Mandi Bahauuddin from Lalamusa, were derailed near Shaheedanwali Canal Bridge in northeastern Punjab Province at 0730 hrs, yesterday. As a result, traffic remained suspended for quite some time and a number of trains were stopped at different stations. No casualties were reported except the damages to the bogies. An inquiry has been ordered. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

RIGA AREA, LATVIA

London, Feb 2 — A press report, dated today, states: Two people were killed and four others injured as two passenger trains collided near the central train station in the Latvian capital today, the Baltic News Service reported. The accident occurred at 1100 hrs, when a train arriving from Ogre, 34 kilometres southeast of Riga, collided with an empty passenger train that was travelling to the rail depot. The cause of the accident is under investigation.

London, Feb 3 — A press report, dated today, states: An engine driver was presumably responsible for the railway accident off Riga yesterday, spokeswoman for the Latvian Railways Birute Sakse told Tass. "The exact cause of the accident will be established after the "black box" is deciphered. Anyway, the main cause of the catastrophe is human error," the spokeswoman said. Three people have been killed, according to unofficial reports; fourteen were hospitalised, including three people in very serious condition. An el-train running at a speed of 30 kilometres per hour collided head-on with a passenger train Riga -Moscow that was heading for a railway terminal at a speed of 25 kilometres per hour with no passengers on board. The driver of the el-train ignored traffic lights and moved on when the red light was on, according to one of the versions studied. The number of casualties would have been higher if an emergency stop mechanism on board the Riga - Moscow train had not been activated, said Chief of the Latvian Railways Andris Zorgevic. Meanwhile, rescuers have been making efforts to remove two more injured people from the wrecked train.

SAUK RAPIDS, MINNESOTA, UNITED STATES

London, Feb 3 — A press report, dated today, states: The tail-end of a Burlington Northern Santa Fe train derailed in Sauk Rapids early yesterday afternoon, spilling three carloads of coal and briefly halting other trains. A wheel on one of the last cars broke, causing the car to slip off the track for about a mile before tipping the three cars, foreman Graham Hendrickson said. No one was injured. Sauk Rapids police said late yesterday they expect River Avenue to be closed to local traffic during the cleanup. The train was pulling more than 100 coal cars from the Powder River Basin mines on the Wyoming-Montana border to Becker when the cars tipped. Hendrickson estimates it could take two to three days to clean up the coal. About 50 trains run on the track each day, one of the busiest routes the railroad uses, Forsberg said. The railroad is investigating and would not comment on a cause. It is too early to estimate damages, he said. The railroad inspects the track several times a week and trains and cargo every 1,000 miles, Forsberg said. Warning devices every 25 miles detect excess heat.

Computer Systems



BAGLE VIRUS

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated Jan 27, states: Antivirus companies today reported the spread of a new variant of the mass-mailing PC virus known as "Bagle." The latest version of the malicious software, which some experts refer to as an e-mail worm, is rearing its head worldwide. By this morning, virus trackers in China, Japan, the United States and parts of Europe had reported instances of the threat. Trend Micro said that the new offshoot, which it calls "Bagle.AZ", is distributed as an e-mail attachment that cloaks itself as a delivery notification or confirmation. It uses "spoofed" e-mail addresses to appear to be from a known source, the antivirus software maker said. The Tokyo-based company said it first discovered the virus today in Japan, well before the start of business hours in the United States. An almost identical version of the virus, dubbed "Bagle.AY", also began appearing late yesterday, it said. Upon infecting a computer, the Bagle variant harvests any available e-mail addresses and inserts copies of itself into the PC's shared folders, Trend Micro said. It then uses the infected system to distribute itself to additional computers. Since the threat appeared outside business hours in the United States, Trend Micro believes the virus was contained relatively quickly and should pose only a minor threat to the large corporations that it was likely aimed at. Corporate servers typically contain thousands of e-mail addresses, making them an attractive target for e-mail borne virus attacks. Trend Micro has ranked the new virus as a medium-level threat. "This version could escalate, but it doesn't look that way right now," said David Perry, global director of education at Trend Micro. "It's not being widely circulated at present, and viruses that hit during the work day in the US tend to do a lot more damage." However, Perry highlighted the fact that the most dangerous time of the year for viruses, which typically stretches from March until May, is about to begin. He said the resurgence of Bagle, which has cooled down over the last few months, may be tied to the one-year anniversary of the threat's launch in 2004. "I couldn't tell you why this timeframe is so popular for virus activity, but there's little doubt that we'll see some significant attempts over the next several months," Perry said.

MIRSA-A/MIRSA-B VIRUS

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated today, states: A computer virus featuring a warning to Tony Blair from supporters of protest group Fathers 4 Justice looks set to cause chaos on the

Internet. Experts at virus firm Sophos have seen a surge in the email worm, which includes the message "We are NOW supporting Fathers 4 Justice. Tony Blair: you really should LISTEN to us or we will take further action". The note to the Prime Minister comes in a Word document attached to the infected email which either pretends to contain a CV or has subject lines including "How NOT to get Promotion", "Memorandum to all staff", "Urgent Document", "Extremely Important", and "Private and personal". If this file is accidentally opened, the mass mailing virus — known as Mirsa-A and Mirsa-B — will email itself out to all the users contained in the computer's address book. It also automatically creates an Internet link to the Fathers 4 Justice website.

VIRUSES IN 2004, WORLD-WIDE

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated Jan 31, states: The total economic damage from malware - viruses, worms and trojans - in 2004 is estimated to lie between USD 169 billion and USD 204 billion, making 2004 the worst year on record by a wide margin according to the mi2g Intelligence Unit, the world leader in digital risk. The year 2003 did not log even half of the malware economic damage figures attributable to 2004. With an installed base of around 600 million Windows based computers worldwide, this works out roughly as average damage per installed machine of between USD 281 and USD 340.

Miscellaneous



CARGO DISPUTE, CHITTAGONG, BANGLADESH

Karachi, Feb 2 — Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) of Bangladesh and custom authorities have asked (North) Korean general cargo Ryu Gyong (ex Long Xiang, 9013 gt, built 1983) to suspend offloading and not to leave port until the quality issue of imported 11,000 tonnes of wheat is resolved. It was imported from India by two private rice mills. The government has taken the action following reports that the wheat was not suitable for human consumption. The CPA ordered the ship not to leave the port till further order. The wheat was loaded in the vessel at the Bishakha Pottam port of India. It arrived at Chittagong port on Jan 18. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

London, Feb 2 — A press report, dated Feb 1 states: The unloading of 11,000 tonnes of low quality wheat imported from India by two private rice mills, has been suspended from general cargo Ryu Gyong in Chittagong port yesterday. The customs and Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) have taken the action following reports that the wheat was not suitable for human consumption. The CPA ordered the ship not to leave the port till further order.

Sources said, 11,000 tonnes of wheat was imported from India by two Noagaon-based firms Mabco Green Industry and Desh Auto Rice Mill. The wheat was loaded in Ryu Gyong at Bishakha Pottam, India. The ship had arrived at Chittagong Jan 18. Unloading of the wheat from the ship started at No.2 jetty the same day. The consignment obtained a quarantine clearance certificate from the Agriculture Department. Meanwhile, some of the wheat had already been unloaded. However, the magistrate of CPA Monir Ahmed Chowdhury detected the wheat unfit for human consumption during his visit to the jetty yesterday. He questioned the representatives of the importer about the wheat. The magistrate of CPA then ordered the unloading of the wheat to stop.

Karachi, Feb 3 — Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) said this afternoon that Korean general cargo Ryu Gyong has been shifted to the TSP jetty in Chittagong Port. The discharge of wheat from the vessel was stopped until a quality issue is resolved. The wheat was imported from India by two private rice mills. The government has taken the action following reports that the wheat was not suitable for human consumption. The CPA ordered the ship not to leave the port until further notice. It arrived at Chittagong on Jan 18 from India. — Lloyd's List Correspondent

CEMENT DISPUTE, MEXICO

Tampico, Feb 1 — There is no changes in the storage ship Mary Nour situation. The vessel is still in port and no date of departure programmed. — Lloyd's Agents.

COLLAPSE OF CRANE, BRAINTREE, MASSACHUSETTS, UNITED STATES

London, Jan 27 — A press report, from Braintree, Mass, dated Jan 26, states: A giant crane collapsed near a building at a former shipyard near Boston today, killing a worker and sending rescuers rushing to save others trapped under the twisted metal, authorities said. At least four people were injured, two of them seriously, and emergency crews searched all day for another worker, said David Traub, a spokesman for the prosecutor's office. The search was suspended at nightfall. Shipyard owner Dan Quirk told the Patriot Ledger the crane was being dismantled when it gave way, crushing part of the building. Twelve workers were inside at the time removing asbestos, Michael Cheney, a labour consultant who was also inside, told the newspaper. One injured man was buried under four feet of bricks, Cheney said.

FLOODING OF COLLIERY, NORTHUMBERLAND, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Jan 26 — A press report, dated today, states: More than 300 miners are to lose their jobs with the announcement that the north-east of England's last remaining deep coal

mine is to close. Production at Ellington Colliery in Northumberland has been at a standstill since gallons of water flooded the workings two weeks ago. Senior managers from UK Coal visited the site today, when they announced the pit is to close. UK Coal said it had been forced to end production for safety reasons. UK Coal said millions of gallons of water had flooded the workings and round-the-clock pumping to lower levels had been unsuccessful. The firm says experts had estimated there could be more than 100 million gallons in old workings and the surrounding strata from which water could be seeping. The company said 340 jobs would be lost with workers receiving payments relating to service and statutory requirements. UK Coal said it had invested more than £8m in the site since 2001, much of it on equipment which will not be recovered from the flooded coal face. The colliery made losses of £11m in 2004.

MUTINY ON TAIWAN FLAGGED VESSEL IN INDIAN OCEAN

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated today, states: The Chinese Embassy in Kuala Lumpur confirmed yesterday that 19 Chinese mainland seamen on a Taiwanese fishing boat which was seized in the Malaysian port of Johor Baru last Sunday (Jan 23) had returned to China Tuesday evening (Jan 25). A Malaysian Marine Police patrol vessel last Sunday intercepted fishing Dong Yih No.668 in the Malacca Straits and escorted it to Johor Baru. It is reported there was a suspected mutiny on the vessel. On board were captain Chen Kuoching, 44, and three other seamen from Taiwan, 19 seamen from China's mainland and six others from the Philippines. Dong Yih No.668 (not ref Dong Yih as previously reported) cut contacts with its headquarters in Taiwan after deep-sea fishing in the Indian Ocean on Jan 13. Commenting on the incident, Xu Zeyou, Counsellor in the Chinese Embassy, told Xinhua that the mutiny was triggered by bad industrial relations. The seamen on the fishing boat were not allowed to go on shore for a long time. In addition, the captain treated the seamen roughly and did not pay their salaries on time. The seamen from China's mainland demanded their payment and an early return home, according to the counsellor.

OUTBREAK OF "BIRD FLU"

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated today, states: Vietnam has just detected three more human cases of bird flu infection, raising the total in the country to 14, including nine fatalities, since late December 2004.

Hanoi, Jan 31 — Bird flu has killed a 10-year-old girl in southern Vietnam, doctors said today, and they hoped the death of a Cambodian women suspected of having the virus would force Phnom Penh to take preventative measures. The girl from the southern Vietnamese province of Long An died yesterday, a doctor at Ho Chi Minh City's Pediatric Hospital No.1 said,

raising the toll in Vietnam from H5N1 virus to 12 since the disease erupted again in December. The death toll from the Asian bird flu since the end of 2003 now stands at 44 — 32 in Vietnam and 12 in Thailand. Vietnamese authorities are waiting for test results on a 25-year-old Cambodian woman who was hospitalised on Jan 28 with a high fever and died yesterday. Her lungs had been badly damaged. If the case is confirmed, the woman would be the first person from Cambodia found to be infected and killed by the H5N1 poultry virus. A lab researcher at Ho Chi Minh City's Pasteur Institute said the woman's test results would be known by tomorrow afternoon at the earliest. Vietnamese state media said today seven Vietnamese were taken to a Hanoi hospital at the weekend on suspicion of having bird flu. Tests were being done, the Tuoi Tre newspaper said. Researchers in Ho Chi Minh City were also testing for bird flu samples from a 39-year-old man who died yesterday in the central city of Danang, said the Saigon Giai Phong daily. If confirmed, he would be the first casualty of the virus in central Vietnam.

Hanoi, Feb 1 — A Cambodian woman who died in Vietnam was killed by bird flu, a doctor said today. "We have been informed that tests showed she was infected by the poultry virus," said the doctor at the General Hospital of Kien Giang province which treated Tit Sakhan before she died on Sunday (Jan 30), two days after she was admitted with a high fever. Cambodian officials said they had no confirmation of outbreaks of the H5N1 virus in the country, but the World Health Organisation has said it might have hit Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar. Relatives of Tit Sakhan, 25, said some of their chickens had died and they had eaten them with her. A 24-year-old Vietnamese man was confirmed as having bird flu today, Nguyen Tran Hien, director of the National Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology, told a news conference. He said the man, the 18th case detected in Vietnam since December, was recovering after being taken to a Hanoi hospital on Jan 25. Ho Chi Minh City, home to 10 million people and next door to the delta, tried to stem the third wave of bird flu outbreaks by ordering the slaughter of all its ducks, which can carry the virus without showing symptoms. It had given officials until Sunday (Jan 30) to slaughter 150,000 ducks while a private firm will process 60,000 ducks for consumption, an official told Reuters. "We will soon be out making it happen," said the official at the city's Animal Health Department. The city has about 210,000 ducks. Half are raised outdoors on small farms, allowing a potentially rapid spread of the virus. Animal health officials said last week 31 of 148 samples taken from ducks in the city showed the presence of the virus. Health workers and market inspectors will ensure no ducks are raised locally for a year and all ducks being transported into Ho Chi Minh City will be seized for

destruction, often by burning, the Saigon Giai Phong newspaper said. By Jan. 30, the H5N1 virus had killed or resulted in the slaughter of more than one million poultry in 31 of Vietnam's 64 provinces, the Agriculture Ministry said. Last year, the epidemic wiped out 17 percent of Vietnam's poultry stock of 250 million. — Reuters.

OUTBREAK OF VIRUS ON BAHAMAS-FLAGGED PASSENGER VESSEL

London, Jan 29 — A press report, dated today, states: Passenger Veendam (55451 gt, built 1996) returned to Tampa from a cruise 12 hours early yesterday after a viral outbreak on board caused 204 passengers to become ill. The vessel was on a Western Caribbean cruise and was supposed to be in Costa Maya, Mexico, Thursday (Jan 27) and at sea all day yesterday, returning today. A spokeswoman for the operators, Holland America Line, said the vessel returned to port yesterday afternoon instead of this morning so it could undergo a "rigorous" cleaning before its next scheduled departure at 1700 today. All 1,220 passengers were offered between \$125 and \$250 in compensation, according to the spokeswoman. Before boarding, passengers said they were warned some customers on the previous sailing had become ill. While they were offered full refunds if they chose not to travel, some claimed they were not told about the extent of the problem. According to the spokeswoman, 77 passengers and crew got sick on the last sailing. She described the sickness as a stomach-flu. Samples are being sent to the Centres for Disease Control for testing.

OUTBREAK OF VIRUS ON BAHAMAS-FLAGGED PASSENGER VESSEL / VEENDAM F/UP

London, Feb 2 — Passenger Veendam sailed Tampa Jan 29.

Fires & Explosions



APARTMENT BUILDING, ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND, UNITED STATES

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated Jan 27, states: A fire that one official describes as "unmanageable" did massive damage to a Rockville apartment building this afternoon. Thirty families are homeless and damage is put at \$5 million, after flames tore through the Rock Creek Woods apartments on Twinbrook Parkway. Montgomery County Fire spokesman Pete Piringer says about 125 firefighters responded to what he calls a three alarm-plus blaze. No one was hurt. Investigators think plumbers sweating pipes in the basement started a fire in the walls that initially went undetected.

CAR PLANT, HIROSHIMA, JAPAN

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated today, states: Mazda Motor Corp., Japan's fourth-largest automaker, said it expects to resume full production of its fire-damaged factory in Hiroshima Prefecture in April. The carmaker will resume partial production of its RX-8 sports cars, Bongo truck and Roadster convertible next month. Mazda's Ujina No.1 factory was damaged in a fire on Dec 15 in its paint shop. The company is likely to lose 30,000 units in lost production, a smaller number than the 35,000 units estimated earlier, Mazda said in a statement today.

CHURCH, MASON AREA, MICHIGAN, UNITED STATES

London, Jan 30 — A press report, dated Jan 29, states: Fire ripped through the Eden United Brethren church near Mason yesterday and caused an estimated \$1.5 million in damage, fire officials said. The cause is under investigation. Rebuilding could cost millions and take months. Firefighters from at least 11 departments used 195,000 gallons of water on the flames yesterday. Still, the blaze destroyed the oldest part of the church, and there was considerable heat, smoke and water damage to the sanctuary, Mason Fire Chief David Scutt said. The church is insured. Ingham County fire investigators will visit the site early this week. Authorities may never be able to determine the fire's cause, Scutt said yesterday. "With the amount of damage, I don't know if we're going to be able to," said Scutt, who does not suspect arson.

FACTORY, TAKATSUKI, OSAKA PREFECTURE, JAPAN

London, Feb 2 — A press report, dated today, states: One man died and seven others were injured due to an explosion at an aluminum factory in Takatsuki, Osaka Prefecture, this morning, city officials said. The explosion took place at 1050 hrs at the factory owned by Takatsuki Diecasting, killing an employee of one of its subcontractors. Seven other men sustained burns and other injuries, with six of them injured seriously, they said.

MONT BLANC TUNNEL, FRANCE

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated today, states: The Italian operator of the Mont Blanc tunnel this week paid EUR 13.5 million (USD 17.5 million) into an account for the families of 39 people killed in a 1999 blaze in the Alpine link but has not admitted blame, according to a grouping of the families concerned. The SITMB company paid the money into a French escrow account where it would stay until 80 percent of the 238 family members of those killed agreed to accept it as a settlement, the head of the Association in Defence of the Families, Andre Denis, said late yesterday. SITMB's lawyer, Bernard Asso, confirmed the transaction, but stressed: "This is not an acknowledgement of liability." The

Italian company is one of 16 parties to be represented at a manslaughter trial opening Monday (Jan 31) that will seek to apportion responsibility for the tragedy. The other companies and individuals include the Belgian driver of the truck which was the origin of the fire; the truck's manufacturer, Volvo; the French managers of the tunnel, the ATMB; safety regulators; the mayor of the town of Chamonix; and a senior official from the French public works ministry.

PREMISES, MARTINSVILLE, INDIANA, UNITED STATES

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated Jan 26, states: Power was restored today to a section of the city where a fire destroyed a block-long, century-old building containing five businesses. The state fire marshal's office was investigating the cause of last night's fire, and no damage estimate was available, fire officials said. When the Martinsville Fire Department arrived last night, heavy smoke was coming from the building and fire had broken through the roof. Within two hours, the fire, which was hot enough to melt the metal siding and fold it back, had burned the former home of the Old Hickory Furniture building to the ground. Several fire departments battled the blaze that officials said appeared to have originated in the south-east part of the building. Several firefighters entered the building to try to attack the fire from inside but were driven back by extensive flames and heavy smoke. After the Old Hickory furniture factory closed, the building, which was constructed in the late 1800s, had gone through a series of uses and owners. Current owners Lisa and Garry Lee, of Nashville, had subdivided the building to allow use by multiple tenants. Cinergy cut electrical power to residents in the area to make it safer for fire crews who were worried about high voltage lines running in the alley beside the building. Fire crews were able to keep the fire from moving down a loading dock to an adjacent building that houses two businesses.

PREMISES, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated today, states: A fire in a commercial building in Melbourne's south-east today disrupted traffic and suburban trains. Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) firefighters feared the building could collapse after a wall became unstable during the blaze, which started about 1520 hrs. More than 20 fire trucks worked to contain the fire in a three-storey building at the corner of Glenferrie and Como streets in Malvern. MFB spokesman Trevor Woodward said traffic on Glenferrie Road, an arterial road, had been disrupted and trains on the nearby Pakenham and Cranbourne lines had been delayed because of the unstable wall. "At one stage there were fears that one of the walls could have collapsed on to the city-bound track and the amount of smoke that was coming out was also a hazard for trains," he said.

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated today, states: An Aus\$2 million (US\$1.54 million) office block fire closed a main railway line for nearly an hour today when wind threatened to blow a tin roof on to the tracks. The Frankston/Cranbourne/Pakenham line was closed at Malvern until after 1700 hrs. The blaze began on the second floor of the accountancy firm, Bell & Bell in Glenferrie Rd about 1520 hrs and spread quickly into the roof. It took more than 70 firefighters two hours to contain the flames.

SHOPPING COMPLEX, NEWTON ABBOT, DEVON, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated Jan 31, states: A report into a south Devon shopping complex fire says it was most probably started by an electrical fault. More than a third of Trago Mills' site near Newton Abbot was destroyed last October. The official report said the blaze could have been far worse if it had not been for the fire precautions which were taken by the store. The blaze was stopped from spreading by proper fire doors correctly closed. Fire investigation officer Peter Smith said other businesses should take note of the store's fire safety procedures. He said: "People ask why they should spend money on fire safety, why should they shut fire doors and have such a routine. Trago Mills is a perfect example of why. If you have a very serious fire, and haven't got that fire protection in place, the whole building burns down. As it was, the store was open again within 12 weeks. That is a fantastic example of fire safety."

WAREHOUSE, GRANDVIEW, WASHINGTON, UNITED STATES

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated Jan 26, states: Contaminated smoke from a burning warehouse containing farm chemicals prompted the evacuation of dozens of homes and businesses today. Half a dozen people complained of skin irritation or respiratory distress and sought treatment at a nearby hospital, said Lt Jim Keightley, State Patrol spokesman. Authorities evacuated a half-mile area around the Wilbur-Ellis Co plant that included about 100 homes — roughly 400 people — after smoke filled the air with a strong sulphur odour, he said. The cause of the fire was not immediately known. Officials said there was little risk of an explosion. A hazardous materials team entered the building and set up air monitors as the fire continued to smolder tonight. The Environmental Protection Agency set up air monitoring equipment outside the complex to help officials decide whether additional evacuations were needed. Shelters were also set up for the evacuees. The warehouse stores agricultural chemicals and fertilisers, according to Ken Cowdrey, Wilbur-Ellis' head of safety in Yakima. About five people work in the warehouse. "The chemicals are an irritant and some of them are toxic," Cowdrey said. A 13-mile stretch of Interstate 82 between Sunnyside and Prosser was closed, and

officials were unsure when it would reopen. The warehouse is on the north-west outskirts of Grandview about 40 miles south-east of Yakima. Wilbur Ellis, based in San Francisco, is an international marketer and distributor of agricultural and industrial products.

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated Jan 27, states: About 100 homes and businesses remained evacuated today as a chemical fire continued to burn in south-central Washington, sending potentially harmful smoke into the air. State and federal authorities were monitoring air quality near Wilbur-Ellis Co, an agricultural chemical and fertiliser retail operation where the fire broke out yesterday afternoon. Authorities had not detected dangerous levels of toxic chemicals in the air beyond 100 feet from the building, but about 400 nearby residents remained out of their homes tonight as a precaution, said Mark MacIntyre, a spokesman for the US Environmental Protection Agency. About 40 of them were staying at a shelter. "They want to be cautious, because the nature of the fire is still questionable," MacIntyre said. Dozens of people have been checked at area hospitals after complaining of skin irritation or respiratory problems. The fire was in a 40-by-80-foot building used to store agricultural chemicals and fertilizers in the complex, which includes a warehouse and office building on the outskirts of Grandview, about 40 miles south-east of Yakima. Authorities decided to let the fire burn itself out, saying that dousing it with water could increase the pollution risk and clean-up problems. Workers induced the fire to burn faster today by using a backhoe to tear the roof off the building and punch holes in its walls. Officials wanted the fire to consume the available fuel so they could get a closer look at the building tomorrow morning, MacIntyre said. A nearby section of Interstate 82 reopened this morning after being closed for about 18 hours. The Grandview School District, which serves about 3,000 students, was closed today as a precaution and was to remain closed tomorrow, MacIntyre said. The cause of the fire remained under investigation.

WAREHOUSE, ISTANBUL AREA, TURKEY

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

WILDFIRES, AUSTRALIA

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated today, states: Firefighters worked throughout the night trying to contain a large blaze in Victoria's west. The fire, which began as three separate smaller fires yesterday, has burnt out more than 2,600 hectares of bushland in the Little Desert National Park. Department of Sustainability state fire co-ordinator Andrew Graystone said fire crews hoped to contain the blaze before temperatures soared later today. "There is still quite a bit of work to do on this fire and we should have a clearer picture at first light," he said. "Overall we have completed 17 kilometres of control lines and there are a further four to complete

to have this fire contained." The fire began yesterday after a series of lightning strikes. Another 27 fires, also started by lightning near Portland in the state's south-west, were contained yesterday. Mr Graystone said no private property has been threatened. He said reconnaissance flights this morning would check whether any more fires had been caused by lightning overnight.

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated today, states: Firefighters have contained a large fire and a number of small ones south of Casterton, near the border between South Australia and Victoria. Police were forced to close the Glenelg Highway at Mount Gambier yesterday after the fires, thought under control, jumped containment lines. The blazes were caused by lightning strikes. Victoria's Country Fire Authority says 80 firefighters worked on about 27 blazes overnight to bring them under control.

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated today, states: The Country Fire Service says two scrub fires have now burned through more than 5,000 hectares of the Ngarkat Conservation Park, in the upper south-east of South Australia. One property at German Springs was threatened by fire last night, however CFS officer Leigh Miller says the blaze is mostly burning in inaccessible scrub. Mr Miller says predicted southerly winds should help volunteers contain the two fires. "Fortunately the fire weather conditions aren't very severe today, they're much like they were yesterday," he said. "So we run a fairly good chance of bringing it under control provided we have that concentrated effort in the morning. "The problem will be in the afternoon."

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated today, states: Efforts continued today to contain two fires burning in South Australia's south-east, the result of lightning strikes over the past 48 hours. The Country Fire Service said the larger of the two fires was burning in an area known as Rabbit Island on the southern boundary of the Mount Rescue Conservation Park. It has destroyed about 4,300 hectares of native scrub. The second fire has burnt across more than 1,600 hectares and was burning in an area called Jimmy Springs on the northern edge of the Mount Rescue park. The CFS said groundcrews worked through the night to establish fire breaks in an effort to slow the fires and bring them under control. It said the fires did not pose any threat to homes although people travelling in the area were advised to drive cautiously because of reduced visibility from low lying smoke. CFS spokesman Brenton Ragless said local residents should not be concerned by the smoke haze created by the fires. "The CFS has been inundated with calls from concerned residents reporting the smoke in the belief that a bushfire is burning in the direct area, but the community has been advised that this is not the case," Mr Ragless said. "The CFS appreciates the report of smoke sightings because it allows

firefighters to rapidly respond to an incident, but in this case we are reassuring the community that we are aware of the smoke and there is no further need to report it."

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated today, states: Firefighters are still battling two large blazes in the Ngarkat Conservation Park in South Australia's south-east, more than 48 hours after they were sparked by lightning. The Country Fire Service says about 14,000 hectares have been razed and firefighters are having trouble battling it because it is in inaccessible scrub. Water bombing aircraft are in the air and Country Fire Service spokesman Brenton Ragless says a significant amount of smoke is billowing from the area.

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated today, states: Firefighters are into their sixth day of battling a large blaze in the Ngarkat Conservation Park in South Australia's south-east near Tintinara that was sparked by lightning last Wednesday (Jan 26). The South Australia Country Fire Service (CFS) says two separate fires have now joined together and more than 19,000 hectares have now been burnt through. CFS spokeswoman Krista St John says the flames are now contained within established firebreaks. "The area the fire's burning in at present hasn't been subjected to fire since around 1961, so there's a reasonable amount of fuel there," she said. "The fire is sort of near some areas which burnt sort of around about 2003, so there is a considerable lesser amount of vegetation in those areas to burn which should help."

WILDFIRES, NEW ZEALAND

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated today, states: A fire in one of New Zealand's most significant wetland areas has been contained but not before destroying some of the rare and valuable plants and animals, the Department of Conservation says. A fire began about 1315 yesterday on Kaimaumau Rd and by 2000 hrs had destroyed 200ha of the DOC-owned Kaimaumau wetland reserve, about 24 km north-west of Kaitaia. After battling the blaze for hours firefighters left the area about 2000 hrs because of access difficulties, but foam and water continued to be dropped by helicopter, and DOC workers spent the night fighting the fire. DOC Kaitaia's community relations officer Carolyn Smith told NZPA this morning the fire had been contained. "We have ground crews mopping up, just hosing the area down and working with hand tools," she said. The extent of the damage was not yet known, she said. "The reserve is 3000 ha and 200 ha have been burned, so it is a loss but in proportion. "We won't know what the result is until after everything is settled down and we can go in and have a look." Northland Fire Service volunteer support officer Colin Kitchen said the cause of the blaze was not known but would be investigated.

London, Jan 30 — A press report, dated today, states: Some of New Zealand's most endangered species may

have been wiped out as a fire burned through bush just south of Cape Reinga. The blaze, which began on Friday (Jan 28) when a BMW car, driven by tourists, crashed down a bank and caught fire, wiped out 230 hectares of dry bush and scrub, home to some of the world's rarest plants and invertebrates. It led to the evacuation of 36 campers from campgrounds and tourists from Cape Reinga. The road north of Waitaki Landing was closed for 24 hours while the fire was being fought. Rare orchids, giant snails and a species of gecko were in the area that was destroyed in the blaze, which took firefighters more than a day to put out. Some of the species appear nowhere else in the world. About 70 people fought the fire over two days until it burned out yesterday afternoon, after jumping the road to farmland. Five helicopters with monsoon buckets doused the fire, while two bulldozers and a digger built firebreaks.



ACCIDENT, BRISBANE AIRPORT, AUSTRALIA

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated today, states: All flights at Brisbane Airport ground to a halt yesterday after a Heavy Lift 727 cargo aircraft skidded off the runway. Brisbane Airport spokesperson Jim Carden said the aircraft had a crew of three on board but no cargo. "It rolled off the runway at relatively low speeds," Mr Carden said. The Air Safety Transport Bureau is investigating the cause of the accident, which is believed to be related to steering equipment failure. The aircraft was stuck for two hours and caused some delays to passenger flights. Mr Carden said the incident highlighted the need for airports to have the capacity to deal with such events. "Even the small accidents have major impact. Larger incidents have the potential to cost the local economy tens of millions," he said. Heavy Lift was unavailable for comment.

ACCIDENT, PODGORICA AIRPORT, SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO

Bar, Jan 28 — At approximately 2330, Jan 25, a Montenegro Airlines aircraft Fokker 100, Identification code: 11321, coming from Belgrade with 78 passengers and a number of crew members on board, during landing at Podgorica Airport, slipped from the runway. After the accident, the fire brigade and a medical team attended, but no persons were injured. The aircraft's departure from Belgrade, scheduled for 1815 hrs was delayed to 2200 hrs. — Lloyd's Agents.

ACCIDENT, TETERBORO AIRPORT, NEW JERSEY, UNITED STATES

London, Feb 2 — A press report, dated today, states: A small jet skidded off

the runway at Teterboro Airport today, crossing a highway during the morning rush hour before slamming into a building. A traffic helicopter pilot for New York radio station WCBS said the aircraft went off the runway and broke through a fence. It appeared to strike at least one car. Television reports showed smoke billowing from the building and skid marks leading to the crash site. Route 46 closed in both directions and broadcast reports said the airport, in the northern New Jersey suburbs 12 miles from midtown Manhattan, was closed.

C-GVVS

London, Feb 2 — A press report, dated today, states: One person was killed and another taken to a hospital after a single-engine aircraft crashed yesterday evening about six miles from an airport, authorities said. Authorities did not release the names of the deceased passenger or the pilot, who was taken to Brunswick County Hospital. The aircraft, a Canadian-registered Cessna 210, crashed at 1850 six miles north-east of the Ocean Isle Airport in Brunswick County, said Christopher White, a spokesman for the Federal Aviation Administration in Atlanta. The pilot contacted air traffic controllers in Myrtle Beach, S.C., and reported mechanical difficulty before the crash, he said. Civietown Fire Chief Jeff Sheetz, one of the first to arrive at the scene, said the aircraft burst into flames as he arrived. "He talked to us, he was conscious and alert," Sheetz said of the aircraft. "We had to stop him from trying to go back to the aircraft to get his friend." State Highway Patrol 1st Sgt. J.O. Holmes said the National Transportation Safety Board and the Federal Aviation Administration would investigate the crash today.

London, Feb 2 — Cessna T210M (Centurion II), C-GVVS, crashed near Ocean Isle Beach, North Carolina, at 2353, Feb 1, while on a flight to Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The aircraft sustained substantial damage. One of the two persons on board was killed and the other suffered minor injuries.

C-GZYY

London, Jan 28 — Cessna 185F, C-GZYY, with tundra tyres, was en route from Tillsonburg, Ontario to Moosonee, Ontario. About 10 miles west of destination the pilot deviated to have a look at a skidoo trail and camp. The sky was overcast and the horizon was obscured. As the aircraft was manoeuvring at low altitude the wheels contacted the snow and the aircraft nosed down and overturned at 1500, EST, Jan 21. The aircraft was substantially damaged, however the pilot escaped without injury.

CRASH MOULAMEIN AREA, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated today, states: A pilot died when his helicopter crashed in a field in southern New South Wales today. Rescue workers were called to a property 10km east of the rural town of

Moulamein, north-west of Deniliquin, after reports a Robo 22 helicopter had crashed, a NSW police spokeswoman said. The pilot, who was the sole occupant, was incinerated in the crash, which happened about 0800, AEDT. The cause of the crash remained unclear. The man was yet to be identified. Crime scene investigators and air traffic safety officers were expected to arrive at the scene shortly, the spokeswoman said.

CRASH, BAGHDAD AREA, IRAQ

London, Jan 31 — The BBC reported today: An investigation has begun into an air force Lockheed C-130J, Hercules, crash which killed at least nine British soldiers in Iraq. The cause of yesterday's crash was not immediately clear, but wreckage was spread over a large area. Military sources say the death toll could rise to 15 after the Hercules crashed 40 kilometres (25 miles) north west of Baghdad. The Hercules, based at RAF Lyneham in Wiltshire, crashed in fine conditions at 1725, local time (1425 UTC), en route from Baghdad to Balad, which houses one of the largest US air bases in Iraq. US and UK forces secured the site of the crash, but the investigation could be difficult in the hostile territory. There are no British troops usually based in Balad and the purpose of the flight was unclear.

CRASH, GIBBSTON VALLEY, NEW ZEALAND

London, Jan 30 — A press report, dated today, states: Two men died in a light aircraft crash near Queenstown, yesterday. They were on a cannabis reconnaissance flight. Police have revealed that a detective from Queenstown was on board the aircraft, along with the pilot. The single-engined Cessna 172 went down in good weather in the Gibbston Valley, just after midday yesterday. Police have now revealed it was on a routine reconnaissance flight, looking for plots of cannabis. Accident inspectors are at the scene today.

CRASH, HELSINKI AREA, FINLAND

Helsinki, Feb 2 — A local press report, states: Immediately after taking off, a Cessna C208/L light aeroplane hit the ground at Helsinki-Vantaa, on Jan 31. The Swedish pilot remained conscious and was taken to a hospital in Helsinki. No other passengers were on board the aeroplane owned by Swedish airline company, Nordflyg Ab. The aeroplane was carrying dentist equipment and took off at 1858 hrs, bound for Orebro, Sweden. The weather was good when the accident took place. The traffic control alerted the rescue department and cancelled the air traffic during the search for aeroplane, which lasted about half hour. A rescue department helicopter spotted the aeroplane at 1930 hrs, in Helsinki-Vantaa airport area. According to PR-manager of Ilmailulaitos, Annika Kalan, the accident caused delays on Monday evening. The air traffic was back in schedule by 1000 hrs. The cause of the

accident is still under investigation at the accident research centre. — Lloyd's Agents.

CRASH, IASI AREA, ROMANIA

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated today, states: A mail plane crashed in northeastern Romania early today, killing the two pilots on board, the local radio station Radio Total reported. The plane was on its way from the Romanian capital to Hungary when it crashed near the city of Iasi, 400 km north of Bucharest, the radio quoted a local official as saying. Only the two pilots were reportedly on board. It was snowing when the accident occurred. No further details were available.

CRASH, KHARTOUM AREA, SUDAN

Khartoum, Feb 3 — A Sudanese cargo aircraft crashed outside the capital Khartoum today, killing all seven crew members, Civil Aviation Minister Ali Tamim Fartak said. "It was a cargo plane coming with goods. Before it could land in Khartoum it crashed... Seven crew members were killed — six foreigners and one Sudanese," he told Reuters. The foreigners were from eastern Europe, he added. He said he could not be more specific. The aircraft, coming from Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates and probably carrying aid, was due to land in Khartoum before heading on to Nyala in South Darfur state, he said. It belonged to a private Sudanese company called Air West, he added. The aircraft crashed at about 0900, local time, about 50 km outside the capital in the desert. Rescue and investigation teams are on the site. — Reuters.

CRASH, KURATAU, LAKE TAUPO, NEW ZEALAND

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated today, states: A light plane with four people on board has crashed near Taupo. Emergency services were alerted when distress beacons were activated early this afternoon. The crashed plane has been found at Kuratau, on the west side of Lake Taupo. Police say all four people on board have been found alive and uninjured.

CRASH, MENDOCINO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated Jan 27, states: A pilot from the state of Washington crashed into Pine Mountain in northern Mendocino County Tuesday (Jan 25), and very luckily, walked away from a substantially damaged aircraft with only a broken wrist and some bruises. Pilot Rod Stimmel was flying from Renton, Wash. to Lakeport in a 1962 Beech 35 airplane owned by Emerald City Flight Service of Safford, Wash., when the plane crashed into around 1630 hrs. According to FAA spokesman Donn Walker, Stimmel was in the process of diverting to the Ukiah Airport when the four-to-six passenger aircraft, commonly known as a Beechcraft Bonanza, crashed. He was

treated at Howard Memorial Hospital and released. "The FAA contacted us here at the Ukiyah Airport, advising us that a Beechcraft Bonanza was on the instrument approach — meaning it was approaching the airport in the clouds using the instruments in the aircraft only — and during the approach the aircraft disappeared off their radar," Ukiyah Airport manager Paul Richey said yesterday. He said the FAA attempted to call Stimmel multiple times but could not reach him, so Ukiyah Airport personnel were asked to do a ramp search at the airport — which was unsuccessful. "Then about 1810 hrs, I got another phone call from the FAA advising us the aircraft was confirmed down but the pilot had survived," Richey said. FAA investigators were at the crash scene yesterday. The cause of the accident has not yet been determined.

CRASH, MOUNT TAUPO, NEW ZEALAND

London, Feb 2 — A press report, dated today, states: Three people are dead after a light aircraft crashed on Taupo's Mount Tauhara at noon, today. Rescue Co-ordination Centre search and rescue officer John Dickson said in a statement the aircraft had been on its way from Kerikeri in the Bay of Islands to Taupo when it crashed about two thirds of the way up the mountain in thick bush. A rescue helicopter went to the site this afternoon with police and paramedics on board, but found no survivors, Mr Dickson said. He said weather conditions were not good at the time of the crash.

London, Feb 2 — A press report, dated today, states: Low cloud has forced police to abandon attempts to remove the bodies of three people killed when a light plane crashed near Taupo. It had been hoped to bring out the bodies of two tourists and the pilot before nightfall, but the helicopter pilot attending the scene of the crash says bad weather made that impossible. The three died when their Piper Seneca, owned by Christian Aviation, and en route from Kerikeri to Taupo hit Mt Tauhara east of the town. The Rescue Co-ordination Centre was alerted to the accident when it received a distress signal via satellite at about 1230 hrs, today. A rescue helicopter found the wreckage two thirds of the way up the mountain. Helicopter pilot John Funnell says attempts to retrieve the bodies were abandoned because of the weather. Funnell says the bodies have been extracted from the wreckage and are ready for removal, which should take place at first light tomorrow. Air accident inspectors are expected to start sifting through the wreckage tomorrow.

CRASH, PHILLIP ISLAND AIRSTRIP, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA

London, Feb 1 — A press report dated today, states: A light aircraft carrying three people has crashed while landing at the Phillip Island airstrip off the Victorian coast this morning. The landing gear on the Mooney aircraft collapsed causing it to skid before

coming to a halt just before 1000, AEDT. A pilot and his two passengers walked away from the incident unharmed. A spokesman for the Phillip Island Aviation Centre says the propeller hit the ground but the aircraft did not catch fire.

CRASH, TABRIZ INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, IRAN

London, Feb 3 — A press report, dated today, states: An aircraft, en route to Vienna, Austria, from Karachi, via Iranian corridor crashed at Tabriz International Airport yesterday. Director-General of the provincial Airports Affairs Office Ali Orang said the aircraft with six passengers and crew had landed in Tabriz airport for refueling but crashed upon take off. None of the passengers and the crew were hurt. The Iranian official said the aircraft belonged to the German-based International Air Ambulance Service, carrying two crew, the representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross and an Australian girl patient as well as two accompanying passengers. The technicians of Tabriz Airport along with representatives of the foreign company are now busy working to remove the technical fault of the aircraft, he said.

EMERGENCY LANDING, CAIRO AIRPORT, EGYPT

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated today, states: Air France Boeing 474 with 470 passengers aboard made an emergency landing in Cairo after it was not allowed to touch down at Paris's Charles de Gaulle airport. Officials at the French airport refused to give the aircraft the greenlight due to a navigation problem, Russian Gazeta Ru agency reported. In Egypt twelve passengers were given first aid treatment and the aircraft was refueled. The aircraft has headed for the Belgian airport in Austin.

EMERGENCY LANDING, SCOTTSBLUFF, NEBRASKA, UNITED STATES

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated Jan 27, states: A Casino Express Boeing 737 with 119 passengers on board made an emergency landing last night in Nebraska. Officials at Western Nebraska Regional Airport in Scottsbluff said the aircraft lost an oil line, and one engine shut down. The aircraft landed safely a little before 1900, Mountain time, with crash emergency crews waiting but not needed. Airport Manager Darwin Skelton said the aircraft was bound for Elko, Nevada, from Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Another Casino Express aircraft was sent to Scottsbluff to pick up the passengers and fly them the rest of the way to Nevada.

EMERGENCY LANDING, STRAHAN AREA, TASMANIA, AUSTRALIA

London, Feb 2 — A press report, dated today, states: Four New South Wales tourists escaped injury today after their seaplane was forced to make an emergency landing on water off Tasmania's west coast. The Cessna 185

was to take the tourists from the popular tourist town of Strahan to St Johns Falls on the Gordon River, a trip which usually takes 90 minutes, a Tasmania Police spokesman said. But the pilot of the aircraft, belonging to the Strahan-based Wilderness Air, made a mayday call to Strahan Marine Radio at 1330, AEDT. Search and Rescue in Canberra was notified and alerted Tasmania Police, who sent out a rescue helicopter with police and a paramedic on board. The helicopter spotted the aircraft, which had landed on the water, at 1445 hrs with the passengers and pilot uninjured, the spokesman said. The plane had experienced engine trouble during take-off and the pilot immediately put the aircraft into the water, he said. Two yachts in the area took the tourists and the pilot back to Strahan.

F-GYPI

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated Jan 27, states: A Bell-3 helicopter with six crew members was declared missing in the south Peru jungle, by the General Civil Aeronautics Direction (DGAC), yesterday. The aircraft, belonging to a company in charge of moving natural-gas in the Camisea deposits, lost communication with the base yesterday when doing routine operations near Apurimac River, in La Convencion province. In addition to the pilot, there were five technicians on board, who inspect the gas-pipeline which connects the northwestern part of the Andean department of Cusco to the Peruvian coast. The police and rescue brigades are searching for the helicopter and its occupants, local reports said.

Lima, Jan 28 — AS 350 (Ecureuil), F-GYPI, owned by Heliamerica, based in Lima, was reported missing between Cusco and Ayacucho in the South of Peru with six persons on board. The owners had hired the unit for supervision work on the Camisea pipeline owned and operated by Transportadora de Gas del Peru (TGP). The helicopter was found yesterday in an inhospitable jungle zone approximately 40 kms from accessible areas. Two of the occupants have died and the remaining four including the pilot are reported to be seriously injured. — Lloyd's Agents.

FIRE ON AIRCRAFT, MALTA AIRPORT, MALTA

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated today, states: Thirty-eight passengers and six cabin crew escaped unhurt today when smoke started to billow from an Alitalia aircraft which was due to take off at Malta International Airport. The fire broke out at 1150, CET, and the captain first noticed it when the smoke started to billow from the engine. It was said that the smoke could have been coming from a technical fault. Firemen soon made the whole situation safe once again. Alitalia said that the aircraft left later at 1315, CET, to Malpensa in Milan.

N2882A

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated Jan 31, states: A small aircraft crashed today near a private airstrip in Adelanto in San Bernardino County, killing the pilot, authorities said. The Cessna 180 crashed into a field shortly after noon while nearing the dirt airstrip, said Gary Mayer, operations officer for the Federal Aviation Administration in Seattle. "The pilot was executing a low approach and lost control," Mayer said. The pilot's name was not immediately released. No one else was onboard and there were no other injuries. TV footage showed the wrecked aircraft upside down in the field west of Highway 395. Adelanto is located about 65 miles east-southeast of downtown Los Angeles.

London, Feb 1 — Cessna 180, N2882A, crashed near Adelanto, California, at 2019, Jan 31. The aircraft sustained substantial damage. The one person on board was killed.

N351LG

London, Jan 31 — Eurocopter AS 350B3 (Ecureuil), N351LG, crashed near Taos, New Mexico, at 0305, Jan 30. The aircraft was destroyed. The two persons on board were not injured.

N49BA

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated Jan 26, states: Federal investigators said extremely dense fog and an apparent engine problem may have contributed to the crash of an Embraer EMB-110P1 (Bandeirante) (N49BA) which killed a pilot in Swanzy this month. Douglas Nelson of Hampden, Maine, died when his aircraft went down as he tried to land in thick fog at Dillant-Hopkins Airport. The National Transportation Safety Board is not making conclusions yet, but a preliminary report it released yesterday said fog was so dense a police officer reported he could see less than 15 feet. It also suggests one of the aircraft's two engines was shut down when it crashed. Nelson had been rerouted to Swanzy because the weather was too bad for him to land at Manchester.

N8526M

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated Jan 27, states: The pilots of a US Air Force T37 training jet saw a crop duster moments before the two aircraft collided 5,000 feet above rural southwestern Oklahoma on Jan 18, the National Transportation Safety Board said today in a preliminary report on the fatal crash. Killed in the accident was Dierk Nash, 39, who was flying the Air Tractor 502B (N8526M) crop duster from its manufacturer in Olney, Texas, to a buyer in Huron, South Dakota. The preliminary report listed no exact cause for the collision, and officials said the investigation could take months to complete. Flight instructor Capt. Christopher S. Otis was piloting the Air Force training jet at the time and noticed the bright yellow Air Tractor out of the far right corner of his eye as the two aircraft were travelling at 5,000 feet, according to the NTSB

report. A few moments later the crop duster was heading toward the right side of the training jet, according to an interview with student pilot 2nd Lt Roderick V. James. The Air Force pilots said they felt a spinning motion and inverted rolling before they ejected from the aircraft. Their aircraft plummeted into an open field nose first before catching fire. Nash's aircraft came down a few feet away and caught fire. James suffered minor injuries, Otis was uninjured. Nash, a farmer and crop duster pilot from Wheatley, Arkansas, had been flying in airspace commonly used by pilots at Sheppard Air Force Base for military training exercises. Nash was not required to file a flight plan and his aircraft was not equipped with a radio or a radar receiver or transmitter, according to the NTSB report. Air Tractor personnel said Nash had a hand-held radio aircraft transmitter and a hand-held global positioning system unit when he left the airport at about 1100 hrs.

N911AE

London, Jan 31 — Learjet 35A, N911AE, ran off the runway at Kansas City, Missouri, at 0417, Jan 29. The aircraft sustained substantial damage. The two persons on board were not injured.



Product Recalls

BMW MOTOR VEHICLES, WORLD-WIDE

London, Feb 2 — A press report, dated Feb 1, states: BMW is to recall all cars equipped with a faulty diesel fuel-injection pump supplied by parts maker Robert Bosch. The company said the faulty part does not represent a safety risk and the recall only affects pumps made in December and January. BMW added that it was too early to say how many cars were affected or how much the recall would cost. The German company is to extend a planned production break at one of its plants due to the faulty Bosch part. The Dingolfing site will now be closed all next week instead of for just two days. The additional three-day stoppage will mean a production loss of up to 3,600 vehicles, BMW said, adding that it was confident it could make up the numbers later. Bosch has stopped production of the part but expects to restart tomorrow. The faulty component does not represent a safety risk but causes the motor to stall after a significant amount of mileage. Audi and Mercedes Benz were also supplied with the defective diesel fuel-injection pumps but neither of them have to recall any vehicles. A spokesman for DaimlerChrysler, parent company of Mercedes Benz, said it will however have to halt some production. It is to close the Mercedes factory in Sindelfingen on Monday and Tuesday.

Audi said it had been hit by production bottlenecks, due to a shortage of unaffected Bosch parts.

BMW MOTOR VEHICLES, WORLDWIDE

London, Feb 2 — A press report, dated today, states: Bayerische Motoren Werke AG said it has raised its recall estimate to 21,500 vehicles from about 13,000 that were said yesterday to be affected by faulty diesel fuel pumps supplied by Robert Bosch GmbH. A company spokesman said about 6,000 of these vehicles are in Germany.

CHAMOIS BLANKETS, UNITED STATES

Washington, DC, Jan 24 — The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission announces the recall of about 92,000 Chamois Blankets in voluntary co-operation with Pottery Barn Kids, of San Francisco, Calif. Consumers should stop using recalled products immediately unless otherwise instructed. The decorative stitching on the blanket's edge can come loose, allowing a child to become entangled in the yarn. This poses a strangulation hazard to young children. Pottery Barn Kids has received four reports of incidents involving the decorative stitching coming loose. No injuries have been reported. This recall involves children's chamois blankets made of 100% polyester. The blankets were sold in yellow, pink, blue and green, and the reverse side of all the blankets are white. Decorative yarn in a coordinating color is stitched around the blanket's edge. The blanket measures 30-inches wide by 40-inches long and are labeled for stroller use. A label on the blanket reads "pottery barn kids" and "Made in Korea." Sold at Pottery Barn Kids' stores nationwide, through the Pottery Barn catalog, and PotteryBarnKids.com from December 2002 through December 2004 for about \$30. Manufactured in Korea. Consumers can remove the decorative stitching or contact Pottery Barn Kids for information on how to receive a replacement or refund. — Consumer Product Safety Commission.

ELECTRONIC AIR CLEANERS, UNITED STATES

Washington, DC, Jan 24 — The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission announces the recall of about 67,000 Aprilaire Electronic Air Cleaners in voluntary co-operation with Research Products Corp., of Madison, Wis. Consumers should stop using recalled products immediately unless otherwise instructed. The air cleaner's plastic inner housing and filter are not flame-resistant. If electrical arcing occurs in the cleaner, a fire can develop. This poses a risk of burn injuries and property damage. Research Products has received six reports of fires involving these air cleaners. No injuries were reported. The recall involves all Aprilaire Model 5000 Electronic Air Cleaners. The air cleaners are almond colored, and located near the heating and cooling equipment. An identification label on

the access door reads "Aprilaire Model 5000." Sold by independent HVAC dealers nation-wide from June 2000 through December 2004 for an installed price of about \$800. Manufactured in United States. Consumers should immediately turn off the unit or unplug it. Consumers also should contact Research Products Corp. to receive a free repair kit containing the flame-retardant inner housing and filter. — Consumer Product Safety Commission.

FORD MOTOR VEHICLES, CANADA AND UNITED STATES

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated today, states: Ford Motor Co. of Canada Ltd. is recalling about 38,600 vehicles to replace speed control switches because of fire risks. Company spokesperson John Jelinek said yesterday the recall involves 2000 model year F-150 pickups, Expedition and Navigator sport-utility vehicles and 2001 F-Series Supercrew trucks that have the cruise control option. Overheating of the speed control switches may spark fires under the hoods of vehicles, according to the company. Ford will notify customers so the company can disable the switches and will contact them again when parts become available for replacement. The company is recalling about 754,000 vehicles in the United States. Jelinek said Ford has not received any reports of fires in Canada but there have been 63 alleged fires related to the switch in the U.S. One person may have been injured there.

HONDA MOTOR VEHICLES, JAPAN

London, Feb 3 — A press report, dated today, states: Honda Motor Co said yesterday it will recall about 93,000 Fit subcompact cars because their brake lamps may not work. The cars in question were produced between June and December last year, Honda said in a report to the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport.

HONDA MOTORCYCLES, JAPAN

London, Jan 26 — A press report, dated today, states: Honda Motor Co said yesterday it will recall about 1,600 motorcycles in three models for free replacement of defective brakes. The recall applies to 908 motorbikes made by Honda between January 2002 and May 2004 and 700 assembled by Honda of America Manufacturing Inc between August 2002 and March 2004, the company said in a report to the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport.

NISSAN MOTOR VEHICLES, JAPAN

London, Feb 2 — A press report, dated today, states: Nissan Motor Co said yesterday it will recall a total of 184,315 minivans, cars and station wagons free of charge to fix their mufflers and mechanisms to limit the emissions of carbon monoxide. Subject to the recall are the Liberty, Presage, Basara, Serena minivans, the Bluebird Sylphy sedan, the Wingroad and Avenir station wagons, as well as the Primera

sedan and station wagon manufactured between Jan 11, 2002, and May 24, 2004.

OIL-FILLED ELECTRIC HEATERS, UNITED STATES

Washington, DC, Jan 26 — The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission announces the recall of 70,000 Model 5101 oil-filled electric radiator heaters in voluntary co-operation with Lakewood Engineering & Mfg. Co., of Chicago, Ill. Consumers should stop using recalled products immediately unless otherwise instructed. Welds can rupture, expelling hot oil that can burn nearby consumers. Lakewood is aware of 28 reports of incidents, including one burn injury from spewing oil. An additional 14 heaters with ruptured welds have been returned to Lakewood. The recalled heaters are portable electric radiator-style heaters with six fins, one of which has the control panel attached to it. The units are grayish-white in color and have the name "Lakewood" printed below the handle indentation on the control panel. The model number "5101" is printed on the UL label on the lower right side of the control panel. Sold at retailers nationwide, including Wal-Mart and Ace Hardware, from August 2004 through November 13, 2004 for between \$34 and \$40. Manufactured in United States. Consumers should immediately stop using these heaters, unplug them and contact Lakewood to determine if their heater is part of the recall. Lakewood will provide a free replacement heater to each consumer who has a recalled heater. — Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Bucharest, Jan 31 — Due to bad weather, wind north-north-east Beaufort 7-8 (near gale-gale), sea 5-6 feet. Constantza port was closed at 0605, Jan 30 and was reopened at 0600, today. Midia port was closed at 2115, Jan 30 and was reopened at 0715, today. Mangalia port was closed at 1100, Jan 29 and was reopened at 0745, today. Sulina channel was closed at 1000, Jan 29 due to bad weather and was reopened at 1000, today. — Lloyd's Agents.

TRAMPOLINES, UNITED STATES AND CANADA

London, Jan 25 — A press report, dated today, states: Jumping Inc. is recalling about one million trampolines and nearly 300,000 trampoline enclosures after receiving reports of injuries including lacerations and a concussion, the Consumer Product Safety Commission said today. Welds on the trampoline frame can break, and the mounting brackets on the "FunRing" enclosures have sharp edges that can cut skin, the commission said. The Mesquite, Texas-based company has received 47 reports of welds breaking, which resulted in at least 21 injuries. Sharp edges on the enclosures caused at least a dozen injuries, including nine serious lacerations, the CPSC said. The 14- and 15-foot trampolines, sold alone and with the enclosures, have eight legs that fit into perpendicular sockets welded to the top

rails. The recall does not include trampolines with weldless sockets that fit over the connecting top rail pieces. The recalled enclosures have vertical poles connected at the top by arches. The two products, manufactured in the United States and China, were sold together at discount department and toy stores nationwide and in Canada from July 1999 to December 2003 for \$350 to \$450. Sold separately until February 2004, the trampolines cost \$180 to \$220, and the enclosures went for \$150 to \$250.

Port Conditions



KENYA

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated today, states: The container terminal at Mombasa Port was filled to capacity yesterday, threatening to ground operations. Major port users warned that the port could attract huge vessel delay surcharges (VDS) following the crisis that started with the arrest of port chiefs two weeks ago. The Kenya Ships Agents Association (Ksaa) and Kenya International Freight and Warehousing Association (Kifwa) officials said the decision making process on key container terminal operations had been impaired. In a joint statement, Kifwa national chairman Mr Joseph Ng'etich and Ksaa national chairman, Mr Issa Muslim, said the arrest of the top Kenya Ports Authority (KPA) managers had paralysed operations. They said the move resulted in a pile up of cargo at the container terminal. Currently, they protested, 8,000 20ft equivalent units (TEUS) of imported containers are lying at the port, adding that more containers were arriving. "Critical decisions are required in order to avoid the disaster of congestion in the port. This might lead to VDS in not too distant future," they warned. The port chiefs were arrested over the handling of a container with cocaine worth Sh6.4 billion at the port. Meanwhile, Mr Brown Ondego, the embattled KPA managing director, is expected to resume duty this week. Port officials confirmed yesterday that five senior KPA managers arrested alongside Ondego had already resumed work. Ondego was released after spending a night in Nairobi police cells, while the other senior officers were freed last Friday (Jan 21). Sources at port said those arrested with Ondego but freed last Friday resumed their duties on Monday (Jan 24). They are harbour master and chief operations manager Captain Twalib Khamis, container terminal manager Mr Akida Jeruman, chief security officer Sylvester Ndongole, verification officer Mr Charles Mageta and port operations consultant Mr Calvin Otory. Mr Otory is a key figure in port operations as he

Port Conditions

supervises cargo documentation and links up KPA management and port stakeholders while Mr Mageta takes care of cargo verification. Ondego and the rest of the officials were arrested

and released and ordered to report to the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) headquarters in Nairobi every week on different dates and times.

SYRIA

Lattakia, Jan 15 — Waiting time is presently 24 hours at Lattakia and 48 hours at Tartous. — Lloyd's Sub-agents.

Port Delays

Country/Port	Date of report	No.of vessels waiting and/or days delay
Australia		
Abbott Point	31 Jan-02Feb-2005	Coal: 1 vessel berthed, 1 anchored; 8 vessels due by 19/2; up to 2 days berthing delay expected subject to cargo availability and berth congestion.
Brisbane	31 Jan-02Feb-2005	Grain: 2 vessels due by 9/2, both to load wheat; up to 2 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability. Coal: Fisherman Island coal berth: 1 vessel berthed; 4 vessels due by 12/2; no delays expected.
Dalrymple Bay	31 Jan-02Feb-2005	Coal: 3 vessels berthed, 39 anchored; 43 vessels due by 27/2. Up to 20 days berthing delay subject to cargo availability and berth congestion.
Dampier	31 Jan-02Feb-2005	Iron ore: Parker Point: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 3 anchored; 8 vessels due by 15/2; 1-7 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; a 3 day maintenance shutdown is in progress; East Intercourse Island: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 1 anchored; 11 vessels due by 17/2; up to 6 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; shippers will always consider a shift to a lay-by berth for loaded vessels awaiting HW; shippers are experiencing cargo shortages of some grades and stockpile problems; some vessels will berth out of turn and berthing line-up may change at short notice.
Esperance	31 Jan-02Feb-2005	Grain: 3 vessels due by 15/2, 1 to load barley, 2 wheat; 1-5 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability. Iron ore: 2 vessels due by 3/2; up to 2 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Geraldton	31 Jan-02Feb-2005	Grain: 4 vessels due by 14/2, 2 to load wheat, 2 barley; up to 3 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Gladstone	31 Jan-02Feb-2005	Coal: R.G. Tanna coal terminal: 1 vessel berthed, 7 anchored; 30 vessels due by 27/2; up to 6 days berthing delay expected subject to port congestion and cargo availability. Barney Point: 1 vessel berthed, 1 anchored; 10 vessels due by 2/3; up to 2 days delay expected due to cargo availability and berth congestion.
Hay Point	31 Jan-02Feb-2005	Coal: 2 vessels berthed, 3 anchored; 8 vessels due by 11/2. Up to 2 days berthing delay expected subject to cargo availability and berth congestion.
Newcastle	31 Jan-02Feb-2005	Coal: Kooragang 4, 5 and 6: 3 vessels berthed, 4 anchored; 38 vessels due by 20/2; Dykes 4+5: 2 vessels berthed, 4 anchored; 16 vessels due by 21/2; no unallocated vessels; 3-6 days delay expected prior to berthing due to planned maintenance at Kooragang terminal and cargo receipt. Grain: Six vessels due by 10/2, all to load wheat; 1-4 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Port Adelaide	31 Jan-02Feb-2005	Grain: No. 27 berth: 6 vessels due by 21/2, 2 to load wheat, 3 barley, 1 malt; no delays expected.
Port Hedland	31 Jan-02Feb-2005	Iron ore: BHP Iron Ore Pty. Ltd., Mt. Newman (Nelson Point), "A" berth: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 2 anchored; 3 vessels due by 6/2; 2-4 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; "B" berth: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 2 anchored; 6 vessels due by 8/2; up to 4 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; BHP Iron Ore Pty. Ltd., Goldsworthy (Finucane Island) "C" berth: 2 vessels due by 4/2; no delays expected; Westyard "D" berth: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 3 anchored; 3 vessels due by 3/2; 1-4 days delay expected due to berth congestion, maintenance shutdowns and cargo availability.
Port Kembla	31 Jan-02Feb-2005	Coal: 12 vessels due by 26/2; CB-1: 1 vessel due 3/2; up to 1 day's delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability. Grain: 5 vessels due by 17/2, 3 to load canola, 2 wheat; up to 3 days delay expected.
Port Walcott	31 Jan-02Feb-2005	Iron ore: 2 vessels berthed and loading, 4 anchored; 8 vessels anchored; 15 vessels due by 25/2; up to 3 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability. On or about 21/2, shippers intend to replace approx. 6 km of conveyor belting. The berth is expected to be out of service for approx. 7 days. Every effort will be made to ensure that vessels berth in order of arrival; however, due to product constraints, this may not be possible. Shippers advise that stores, air freight and crew baggage can no longer be delivered to vessels or taken off at berth. With immediate effect, all stores, airfreight and bags must be delivered/removed by launch.
Portland	31 Jan-02Feb-2005	One vessel due 2/2 to load wood-chips; no delays expected.
Brazil		
Paranagua	01 Feb-2005	Seventeen vessels berthed of which 2 sugar loaders, 3 fertiliser dischargers, 2 reefer loaders, 3 pellets loaders, 5 other loaders, 2 container dischargers; 16 vessels waiting in roads, of which 15 to load (2 pellets, 1 sugar, 12 others), 1 to discharge fertiliser; 34 vessels due over the next 7 days.

Port Conditions

Rio Grande	01 Feb-2005	Six vessels berthed of which 1 potassium chloride loader, 2 wheat loaders/dischargers, 1 rice loader, 1 soya oil loader, 1 petroleum discharger; 7 vessels waiting in roads; 38 vessels due over the next 10 days.
Santos	01 Feb-2005	Twenty vessels berthed of which 1 Ro/Ro, 1 bulk fuel oil loader, 1 gasoline loader, 4 chemical products loaders/dischargers, 6 sugar loaders, 1 bulk wheat discharger, 1 bulk citrus juice loader, 2 bulk salt dischargers, 1 full container loader/discharger, 1 bulk pellets loader, 1 bulk fertiliser discharger; 16 vessels waiting in roads; 120 vessels due over the next 7 days; Private terminals: Terminal 37: no vessels; Tecondi: 1 full container loader; Termares: 1 other loader; Rodrimar: 2 full container loaders; Cosipa: 1 bulk coal loader; Ultrafertil: no vessels; Cargill: no vessels; Santos Brasil: no vessels; Cutrale: 1 bulk pellets loader; Dow: no vessels.
Sao Sebastiao	01 Feb-2005	Three vessels berthed, 3 waiting in roads; 12 vessels due over the next 10 days.
Vitoira	01 Feb-2005	No vessels berthed; Terminal Vila Velha: 1 container loader/discharger, 1 cellulose loader; Tubarao: 3 iron ore loaders, 1 fertiliser discharger, 1 malt discharger; Praia Mole: 3 steel products loaders; Portocel: no vessels; Ubu: 2 iron ore loaders; 18 vessels waiting in roads; 12 vessels due over the next 7 days.
Bulgaria		
Bourgas	31 Jan-2005	Eleven vessels in port operating, of which 10 loading (1 bulk ammonium nitrate, 2 concrete/iron, 4 coils, 1 barley, 1 sunflower seeds, 1 empty), 1 vessel discharging coal; 5 vessels waiting in roads, of which 4 to load (1 cigarettes, 1 coils, 1 sunflower seeds, 1 empty), 1 to discharge iron ore; 14 vessels due, of which 7 to load (1 scrap, 1 copper anodes, 1 coils, 1 lead, 3 containers), 7 to discharge (3 containers, 1 LAB, 1 coal, 1 iron ore, 1 billets).
Chile		
Valparaiso	31 Jan-2005	Four vessels berthed, 4 berths vacant; 2 vessels anchored; 15 vessels due this week.
Egypt		
Alexandria	31 Jan-2005	Thirty-two vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 26 general cargo, 3 bulk carriers, 1 tanker, 1 containers, 1 passenger vessel; 14 vessels dry-docked; 19 vessels at inner anchorage, 4 at outer anchorage.
Damietta	31 Jan-2005	Seventeen vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 12 general cargo, 2 bulk carriers, 3 containers; 5 vessels at outer anchorage, 1 at inner anchorage.
Suez Canal	31 Jan-2005	Thirty vessels transiting Northbound, 19 Southbound.
Israel		
Ashdod	01 Feb-2005	No labour problems. Nine vessels loading at berth (7 general cargo, 2 bulkers), 13 vessels discharging at berth (8 general cargo, 5 bulkers), 4 vessels loading/discharging at berth (3 containers, 1 car carrier); 1 bulker waiting at anchorage to load, 3 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (2 general cargo, 1 bulker), 4 vessels waiting at anchorage to load/discharge (2 containers, 2 tankers); 1 vessel under repairs/dry-docked, 1 awaiting orders; 21 vessels due, with 2-3 days delay expected.
Haifa	01 Feb-2005	No labour problems. Four vessels loading at berth (2 general cargo, 2 bulkers), 9 vessels discharging at berth (5 general cargo, 4 bulkers), 9 vessels loading/discharging at berth (6 containers, 1 car carrier, 2 tankers); 3 bulkers waiting at anchorage to load, 4 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (1 general cargo, 3 bulkers); 2 vessels under repairs/dry-docked, 1 awaiting orders; 25 vessels due, with 2-3 days delay expected.
Pakistan		
Karachi	01 Feb-2005	Three vessels loading at berth (1 rice, 1 naphtha, 1 MOL), 4 discharging at berth (1 tallow, 1 chemicals, 1 general cargo, 1 phosphorus), 3 loading and discharging containers; 2 vessels waiting at anchorage to load containers, 5 waiting at anchorage to discharge (2 container, 1 crude oil, 1 fuel oil, 1 MEG); 5 vessels due (4 container, 1 general cargo), with no delays expected.
Port Qasim	01 Feb-2005	Fourteen vessels discharging at berth (11 ore, 1 wheat, 2 palm oil); Fourteen vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (11 ore, 1 MEG, 1 prxyline, 1 fuel oil); QICT berth: 1 container vessel.
Poland		
Gdansk	31 Jan-2005	Four vessels loading at berth (2 coal, 2 bulkers), 3 discharging at berth (2 bulkers, 1 general cargo); 8 vessels under repairs/dry-docked; no vessels waiting at anchorage; 1 bulker waiting in roads; 23 vessels due.
Gdynia	31 Jan-2005	One general cargo vessel loading at berth, 3 vessels discharging at berth (1 general cargo, 1 grain, 1 coal); 10 vessels under repairs/dry-docked; no vessels waiting at anchorage, none waiting in roads; 36 vessels due.

Port Conditions

Russia

Novorossiysk	31 Jan-2005	Seventeen vessels in port operating, all loading, of which 2 bulk ammonium nitrate, 1 WRIC, 1 bulk cement, 1 HBI, 1 scrap, 1 steel billets, 1 steel billets/coils/WRIC/steel sheets, 1 copper/vehicles, 1 lead, 1 zinc/lead, 1 pipes, 1 copper, 1 cellulose, 1 equipment, 1 barley, 1 UAN solution; 7 vessels waiting in roads, all to load, of which 1 steel billets/other/equipment, 1 bulk NPK, 1 wheat, 1 equipment, 2 coils, 1 bulk cement; 90 vessels due, of which 83 to load (2 HBI, 3 DRI, 10 coils, 11 aluminium, 3 slabs, 2 zinc/lead, 2 zinc, 6 bulk NPK, 6 copper, 2 wheat, 1 onions, 1 sodium sulphate/WRIC/coils, 1 ammonium sulphate, 1 bulk ammonium nitrate, 3 bulk urea, 1 diesel oil, 1 copper/coils, 1 steel billets/slabs, 5 steel billets, 4 pipes, 1 slabs/coils, 1 steel sheets, 1 coils/steel billets, 4 WRIC, 1 WRIC/pipes/steel billets, 6 pig-iron, 1 scrap, 1 bulk cement, 1 equipment), 4 to discharge (2 construction materials, 1 sugar, 1 non-ferrous metals), 3 to discharge/load containers. Oil terminal: 3 tankers berthed, all loading crude oil; 7 tankers in roads, all to load, of which 6 crude oil, 1 fuel oil; 13 tankers due, all to load, of which 11 crude oil, 2 fuel oil.
Tuapse	31 Jan-2005	Oil products: 3 vessels berthed, 2 loading gasoil, 1 naphtha; 1 vessel in roads to load crude oil; 6 vessels due by 4/2, of which 1 fuel oil, 3 gasoil, 1 crude oil, 1 naphtha.

Spain

Cadiz	01 Feb-2005	Fourteen vessels in port of which 5 operating (3 Ro/Ros, 1 wheat, 1 cement), 9 vessels under repair; no delays.
Sagunto	01 Feb-2005	Sixteen vessels in port operating of which 10 discharging steel products, 1 loading bulk fertiliser, 4 Ro/Ros discharging/loading general cargo, 1 vessel loading/discharging steel products; no vessels outside commercial wharf; 4 days berthing delay at present.

Ukraine

Illichevsk	31 Jan-2005	Ten vessels in port operating, of which 6 loading steel products, 3 discharging ore, 1 discharging/loading containers; 7 vessels in roads of which 5 to load (1 ferrous metals, 1 equipment, 3 steel products), 2 to discharge/load containers; 17 vessels due, of which 15 to load (1 oil, 14 steel products), 2 to discharge (1 barley, 1 slabs).
Mariupol	31 Jan-2005	Fifteen vessels in port operating, all loading, of which 7 steel, 1 fire-clay, 2 coal, 1 coke, 2 barley, 1 ammonium saltpetre, 1 sulphur; 11 vessels in roads, of which 10 to load (6 steel, 1 fire-clay/containers, 1 sulphur, 1 coal, 1 sunflower beans), 1 to discharge/load containers/pipes; 37 vessels due, of which 34 to load (19 steel, 5 coal, 6 fire-clay, 2 sulphur, 2 barley), 3 to discharge (1 magnetite, 1 foodstuffs, 1 equipment).
Odessa	31 Jan-2005	Twenty-one vessels in port operating, of which 15 loading (8 metal, 1 wood/metal, 1 wood/sugar, 1 wood/sugar/citrus, 1 scrap, 1 ore, 1 wheat, 1 corn), 3 discharging (2 citrus, 1 luggage), 2 discharging/loading containers, 1 passenger vessel; 8 vessels in roads, of which 4 to load (2 metal, 1 scrap, 1 wheat), 1 to discharge citrus, 3 to load/discharge containers; 60 vessels due, of which 42 to load (31 metal, 3 pig-iron, 5 corn, 1 grain, 1 barley, 1 wheat), 4 to discharge (2 oil, 1 iron ore, 1 general cargo), 14 to discharge/load containers.

United States

Columbia River	01 Feb-2005	Columbia River draft advisory: Maximum permissible deep draft is 40 ft. 0 ins.
Galveston, TX	01 Feb-2005	No new restriction in draft (normal 39 ft. 6 ins. max. channel draft reported – 40 ft. 0 ins. with ideal conditions). Channel open under normal traffic. ADM-Farmland terminal: 1-2 days delay expected.
Houston, TX	01 Feb-2005	Normal 40 ft. 0 ins. max. channel draft reported. Channel re-opened to all traffic. LDC Dreyfus terminal: no delays expected; Cargill terminal: 2-3 days delay expected.
Kalama, WA	01 Feb-2005	Kalama export terminal: 6 days delay expected; United Harvest terminal: 1 day's delay expected.
New Orleans	01 Feb-2005	Mississippi River terminal berthing delays: Cenex-Harstates/Myrtle Grove: 3 days delay expected. Cargill-Westwego: 3 days delay expected. ADM/Ama: 10-12 days delay expected. Bunge/Destrehan: 6 days delay expected. ADM/ Destrehan: 10-12 days delay expected. ADM/Reserve: 10-12 days delay expected. Cargill/Reserve: 3 days delay expected. Peavey/Paulina: 1 day's delay expected. Zen-Noh/Convent: 2 days delay expected. Cargill/Baton Rouge: no delays expected. Mississippi River mid-stream buoys - estimated berthing delays based on new vessel presented as load-ready and weather permitting: Mile 121.5 ADM (Gemini) - Destrehan: 4 days delay expected; Mile 158.0 Cargill (K2) - Convent: no delays expected; Mile 180.0 Cooper (America) - Darrow: 2 days delay expected. Fifteen-day forecast for Carrolton Gauge/New Orleans: expected to decrease to 13.8 ft. by 10/2/05 Mississippi River recommended draft restrictions: SW Pass to Pilottown - 47 ft. for all vessels; Pilottown to Nola – 47 ft. for all vessels; New Orleans (Mile 233.5) to mile 180 in. -45 ft. for all vessels (vessels with drafts up to 47 ft. have been handled but are approved by pilots on a case-by-case basis based on current river conditions); Note: Motiva Convent dock no.1 is restricted to a maximum draft of 38 ft. (fw) until dredging is completed. Dock no. 2 is restricted to 30 ft. (fw); Mississippi River Gulf outlet: 31 ft. for all vessels;

Port Conditions

Portland, OR	01 Feb-2005	Grain terminal: 1 day's delay expected; CLD Irving terminal: 1 day's delay expected; CLD, O Dock terminals: no delays expected.
Seattle, WA	01 Feb-2005	Louis Dreyfus (Pier 86) terminal: 2 days delay expected.
Tacoma, WA	01 Feb-2005	Temco terminal: 2 days delay.

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