

March 25 2005

## Italian state ferry spat spills over in private sector stoppage

by John McLaughlin, Lloyd's List Correspondent — Monday March 21 2005

**T**HE long-simmering feud between Italian state-owned ferry operator Tirrenia and its private-sector rivals broke into the open once again last week, with a two-hour work stoppage by small operators in the Gulf of Naples in protest at what they see as unfair competition from Caremar, one of a string of small companies operating under the Tirrenia umbrella.

In a statement issued on Wednesday, Moby Lines president Vincenzo Onorato said the Gulf of Naples operators "intend to call the attention of the European Union, the Italian government, the Campania region and other relevant institutions to the impossibility of running a healthy business when faced with continuous cost increases and competition from a public company strengthened by continuous state subsidies".

### Pricing policy

Mr Onorato — whose company does not operate in the Gulf of Naples but joined the strike in sympathy, halting operations for two hours on its Elba service between Piombino and Portoferraio — charged that Tirrenia's subsidy-fuelled pricing policy amounted to dumping.

A withering response on Thursday from Caremar, Saremar and Toremar, the three Tirrenia units operating in the region, expressed "amazement at the obstinacy with

which some private shipowners continue to allege the distortion of competition from payments made to these companies for maintaining connections with the smaller islands".

It noted that the same shipowners had protested those payments to the European authorities in 1999, and that, after long study, the European Commission ruled in March last year that they were admissible.

The Tirrenia companies charged last week that these private operators "are now trying to get what they had counted on getting from the EC by hurting their own customers".

### Offset

That EC ruling found that state aid to five regional companies within the Tirrenia group, intended to offset the cost of providing what is essentially a public service to the smaller Italian islands, was legal. The aid is to remain in force until 2008. At the same time, the Italian government had stated that it would embark on Tirrenia's privatisation once the EC ruled on the matter, yet there appears to have been no progress on that count to date.

Indeed, much to the irritation of its private rivals, the state-owned ferry group has spent heavily to renew its fleet in the interim, most recently building the €120m

cruise ferry Sharden, sistership of the Nuraghes, at Fincantieri's Castellamare di Stabia yard.

The vessel has capacity for 3,000 passengers and 1,085 vehicles and like the Nuraghes was built to cruiseship standards.

### Expensive

The arguments made to the EC duly resurfaced last week. As Mr Onorato put it: "The difference between the 'controlled' prices charged by the state company, and the more expensive rates calculated at market prices by the private shipowners risks creating a genuine case of commercial dumping, such that the prices charged by the private shipowners are no longer competitive, even if they offer higher levels of service."

The three Tirrenia companies countered that the private operators benefited from a 50% relief on social security and welfare contributions for their employees, a benefit Tirrenia's regional units had been unexpectedly denied.

They added that Tirrenia's operations do not have the freedom that the private operators have to set prices, sailing schedules or routes, exactly because they report to various government ministries. The companies themselves had sought to increase prices for some time, they said.



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

Vessel	Type	Flag	Class	GT	DWT	Bit	Casualty
<i>ALIDA GORTON</i>	general	SWE	LR	12,750	14,240	1977	Sustained damage to rudder stock Mar 9 while stopped in an ice field in the St. Lawrence Gulf, in lat 49 04N, long 62 58.12W. Sailed Mar 13 for dry dock at Les Mechins, for repairs.
<i>DAIHATSU MARU NO.8</i>	vehicle carrier	JPN	—	699	1,078	1986	In collision with barge <i>Eikei</i> off Moji Mar 11 in dense fog. Bow damage in way of forepeak tank, which flooded. Discharged cargo at Nakatsu and proceeded to Imabari Mar 13 for drydocking.
<i>DD.1</i>	ro-ro	TUR	—	335	—	—	Sank in lat 40 57.45N, long 28 56.85E, Mar 12, due to bad weather. Bosphorus closed to shipping. Seven LPG tanks retrieved. Bosphorus re-opened late same day.
<i>EIKEI</i>	barge	—	—	461	—	—	In collision with vehicle <i>Daihatsu Maru No.8</i> off Moji Mar 11 in dense fog. Damage to port side hull. Discharged cargo at Ube and proceeded Mar 12 for Wakamatsu for repairs.
<i>ENTERPRISE</i>	bulker	ATG	NV	6,389	8,709	1985	Reported engine breakdown off Port Kembla, in 34 27.9S, 150 54.1E, Mar 15. Towed into Port Kembla.
<i>EXPLORER 1</i>	fishing	—	—	—	—	—	Reported fire on board in lat 52 49N, long 06 03W, Mar 13. Sank in lat 53 00.8N, long 06 00.4W, Mar 14. All 3 crew rescued.
<i>GABRIELLE</i>	part container	ATG	GL	3,978	5,273	1994	Reported 16 Mar 2005 salvage services being rendered under LOF following gearbox problems off Cat Island, in lat 24 24N, long 75 31W. One tug on scene, another due Mar 16. Under tow Mar 16, bound West Palm Beach.
<i>KEGAN DAVID DREW</i>	fishing	USA	—	94	—	1995	Lost steering in north-east Yucatan Straits Mar 16, due to hydraulic problems. Another vessel in attendance, awaiting US Coast Guard vessel.
<i>KURI PEARL</i>	—	—	—	—	—	—	Sank at Gove 12 Mar 2005 during cyclone "Ingrid."
<i>KYROS</i>	general	COK	—	771	859	1966	Arrived Hitra Mar 11 for repairs after touching bottom. To be put on slipway Mar 15.
<i>LAUREN</i>	support vessel	USA	—	93	—	1973	Capsized and sank at South Timalier Block 21, about 20 miles south of Fourchon, Mar 13. All 4 crew rescued. Salvage plans being drafted. Investigation under way.
<i>LUJIN II</i>	general	PRK	RM	5,987	8,900	1976	Had main engine failure near Constantza after sailing Constantza Mar 7. Returned to Constantza Mar 11 in tow to carry out repairs.
<i>TRISHNA</i>	—	—	—	—	—	—	Sank in Gabkhan Channel, Bangladesh, after collision with tanker <i>Jamuna</i> Mar 10. Eleven of the 12 crew safe. Navigation in the channel severely disrupted. Refloating operations under way 13 Mar.

# CONTENTS

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

<b>Marine, including Overdue &amp; Missing Vessels</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Piracy</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Port State Control</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Seizures &amp; Arrests</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Pipeline Accidents</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Pollution</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Weather &amp; Navigation</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Earthquakes</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Volcanic Activity</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Political &amp; Civil Unrest</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Kidnappings</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Labour Disputes</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Awards &amp; Settlements</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Railway Accidents</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Robberies &amp; Thefts</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Fires &amp; Explosions</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Aviation</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Product Recalls</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Port Conditions</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Port Conditions charts</b>	<b>36</b>

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## The following reports are reprinted from Lloyd's List



### ALEXANDROS (Panama)

London, Mar 12 -- A press report, dated today, states: The Egyptian Foreign Ministry today confirmed that general cargo Alexandros, which disappeared on Jan 4 off the Libyan coasts, sank with 10 Egyptian sailors on board missing, the official MENA news agency reported. Two months after its disappearance, Libyan and Egyptian authorities concluded that the vessel had most probably sunk, an Egyptian Foreign Ministry source was quoted as saying. The vessel left Aqaba for Tunisia on Dec 31. It sent an SOS on Jan 4 before disappearing near the Libyan coasts. After strenuous search operations, the Libyan authorities told the Egyptian Foreign Ministry on Feb 1 that the vessel was not found in Libyan territorial waters.

### ALGA (St. Vincent & Grenadines)

Aarhus, Mar 16 -- General cargo Alga left Aarhus Mar 15 for Klaipeda. -- Lloyd's Agents.

### ALIDA GORTON (Sweden)

London, Mar 14 -- General cargo Alida Gorthon (12750 gt, built 1977) sustained damages to its rudder stock, while stopped in an ice field in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, in lat 49 04N, long 62 58.12W, on Mar 9. The vessel is now bound for dry dock for repair. (Note -- Alida Gorthon sailed Philadelphia Mar 5 for Canada.)

Montreal, Mar 15 -- General cargo Alida Gorthon, Philadelphia for Three Rivers, encountered heavy ice conditions during transit following recommended ice route. The vessel, under icebreaker escorts, got stuck in ice at several locations Mar 10. The crew noted something wrong with the rudder which could not be moved more than 10-15 degrees to starboard. Inspection revealed no damage to rudder or propeller but the rudder stock was found twisted 27-28 degrees with rudder stock housing slightly indented. Class required immediate repair. Vessel departed for Les Mechins, Verreault Navigation Inc at 1430, Mar 13, for permanent repairs. -- Lloyd's Agents.

### ANNTORO (Norway)

Trondheim, Mar 11 -- Kvernhusvik Shipyard, at Hitra, inform there is still no decision regarding possible repairs to general cargo Anntoro. -- Lloyd's Agents.

### ARATERE (New Zealand)

London, Mar 11 -- A press report, dated today, states: After a month of sailing with freight only, the Cook Strait ro/ro Aratere is likely to be allowed to take passengers next week. Subject to a final inspection, the

Maritime Safety Authority expects Aratere to resume carrying passengers from Monday (Mar 14). The vessel developed steering problems on the way into Wellington Harbour last month and was ordered to only carry cargo until the MSA was satisfied it was safe. MSA acting director Bruce Maroc says the ferry has undergone a very robust and systematic assessment.

### ARKLOW SAND (Netherlands)

London, Mar 16 -- General cargo Arklow Sand sailed Rotterdam 1320, Mar 14 and passed Dover Strait same day for Corunna.

### ASPEN (Panama)

Managua, Mar 9 -- General cargo Aspen arrived Corinto Feb 22 from San Juan del Sur and is still in port. -- Lloyd's Agents

### ATHOS I (Cyprus)

London, Mar 16 -- A Delaware River Oil Spill Joint Information Centre report, dated Mar 15, states: Crude oil tanker Athos I, latest updates: Four hundred and sixty-eight responders are working in the command centre and along the Delaware River. Some 191,695 gallons of oil and oily liquid has been recovered and 13,557 tons of oily solids (cleanup materials and oil) have been collected. Experts report 385 birds have been released and 184 birds are reported deceased. Seventy-eight percent of the heavily oiled areas, 55% 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. Out of 21 marina's needing decontamination, 15 have been fully decontaminated. Ninety-six recreation boats have been decontaminated.

### ATLAS SKY (NIS)

Poznan, Mar 15 -- Bulk Atlas Sky (20456 gt, built 1983), Riga for Newport, with a load of 30,000 tonnes of coal, had generator failure and was towed to Gdynia by tug Varius. Master advised that repairs will be finalised Mar 18 and is due to depart Mar 19. -- Lloyd's Agents.

### BALTIYSKIY 21 (Russia)

London, Mar 15 -- General cargo Baltiyskiy 21, Villanova (? Villanueva y Geltru), for Casablanca, passed Tarifa 1023, Mar 12.

### BARGE BREAKAWAYS, OHIO RIVER, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 16 -- A press report, dated Mar 15, states: The Coast Guard has disciplined the master of tug Jon J.Strong found to have misjudged Ohio River currents during a January flood, leading to a barge accident that closed 42 miles of the waterway for nearly two weeks. In an investigative report the Coast Guard said it warned of high and fast-moving water the day before the Jan 6 accident but the tug master "failed to request an assist tow during

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severe weather conditions and he failed to ensure his tow and vessel was adequate given the river conditions." Based on its investigation, the Coast Guard suspended Victor A. Baker's merchant mariners licence for one month and placed him on two months' probation. Baker was also required to attend refresher courses in navigation and pilot house management. "He was an experienced pilot," Coast Guard investigator Lt. Chris Vargo said today. "That why we're requiring him as part of the settlement agreement to go through a refresher course." Jon J.Strong stalled in the current as it was pushing 12 coal barges out of the Belleville Lock and Dam. Nine barges broke free and three of them crashed into the dam, jamming its water control gates open. A fourth sank next to the dam. Because the gates could not be closed, water levels in the river between Belleville and the Willow Island Lock and Dam fell too low for barges to navigate. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers closed the section between Jan 19 and Feb 1. The closure cost about \$2.5 million a day in lost commerce and resulted in two class-action lawsuits by residents who say the drop in water caused their riverfront property to erode and slip. According to the Coast Guard report, Baker and the company, B&H Towing Inc of Paducah, Ky, decided not to delay the trip because the tug had successfully navigated a stretch of river immediately downstream from the Belleville lock. "The information used by both B&H Towing and the Master in making the determination to push 12 loaded barges did not accurately represent the true conditions at the lock prior to this casualty," the report said. Vargo said when Jon J.Strong left the lock, it did not have enough momentum to push into the oncoming current. "The water in the lock chamber is nowhere near the same current as the river," he said. To break into the current, some masters back up their tows to get a running start. Because of the amount of debris in the lock chamber, Baker pushed the tug into the river so debris accumulated in front of the two leading barges could be swept into the river. He then backed the barge into the chamber about 200 to 300 feet so he could get a running start. Once it hit the current "it just stopped," Vargo said. "That's what the investigation concluded. The reason it stalled out, there was obviously a lack of power," he said.

#### **BAUMWALL (Germany)**

London, Mar 12 -- General cargo Baumwall arrived Hamburg 1306, Mar 10, from Oxelosund and sailed 2310, Mar 11 for Klaipeda.)

#### **BBC SCOTLAND (Gibraltar)**

Messina, Mar 16 -- General cargo BBC Scotland is still at Messina undergoing main engine repairs. The vessel is expected to sail Mar 17 for Korsakov. -- Lloyd's Agents.

#### **BROTHER JOY (South Korea)**

Busan, Mar 15 -- According to owners of general cargo Brother Joy the vessel will arrive at Busan Mar 17 for repairs, but its repair schedule has not yet been decided at this time. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents.

#### **BRUNHILDE SALAMON (Marshall Islands)**

Zeebrugge, Mar 13 -- Bulk Brunhilde Salamon (39126 gt, built 2001), bound Terneuzen, reported with engine trouble near Flushing Roads at 1610, local time, Mar 13. Two tugs attending and vessel will move to anchorage near Flushing Roads for investigation. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents. (Note -- Brunhilde Salamon left Tubarao Feb 15 for Ghent.)

Zeebrugge, Mar 13 -- Bulk Brunhilde Salamon was towed to Flushing Roads anchorage and anchored at 1817, local time, following engine trouble. Engine problem was resolved at 1933, local time, and vessel now awaiting high water before proceeding to Terneuzen. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents.

Maassluis, Mar 15 -- Bulk Brunhilde Salamon moored alongside at Ghent at 0945 this morning. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents.

#### **BRUNO SALAMON (Panama)**

Istanbul Mar 11 -- Bulk Bruno Salamon (38431 gt, built 1998), Norfolk for Nikolayev, grounded near Ahirkapi at 1120, local time, Mar 10. There has been no change in the vessels' position. -- Lloyd's Agents. (Note -- Bruno Salamon sailed Norfolk (USA) Feb 19 and subsequently passed Gibraltar Mar 4.)

London, Mar 14 -- Following received from Ankara MSRCC, timed 1120, UTC: Bulk Bruno Salamon remains aground but tugs on scene have just started refloating efforts.

London, Mar 16 -- Following received from Ankara MSRCC, timed 1110, UTC: Bulk Bruno Salamon is still aground at present.

#### **CAPE FLATTERY (Hong Kong)**

London, Mar 15 -- A press report, dated today, states: Divers are seeing reef fish returning to rescued coral heads at the site of last month's grounding of bulk Cape Flattery. While there were a few small fish swimming around some of the toppled corals as they lay on the sea floor, communities of marine life seem to be returning to coral heads that have been set upright by divers, said John Naughton, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration marine biologist. "We're seeing large numbers of fish utilizing the colonies. The density seems greater. We see damselfish, po'opa'a (stocky hawkfish), wrasses and other things, including some invertebrates, mostly crabs," he said. Repairs to the damaged coral are progressing even as life is returning to the area. Working in water 30 to 65 feet deep, divers have been cementing broken coral heads back to the reef floor. As of Friday (Mar 11), they had affixed more than 400 coral heads, ranging in size from 6 inches to 3 feet.

Additionally, they cemented together 72 clusters of broken corals, forming what were described as coral flower arrangements of broken but still-living corals. Most of the damage was caused by cables between tugboats and Cape Flattery, which ran aground off Kalaeloa Barbers Point Harbour on Feb 2 and was pulled free eight days later. "Despite the big swell we've seen, we've inspected the work and everything's locked in. We're real pleased," Naughton said. Naughton said that early on, divers used straight concrete, which can take some time to harden. Recently, the teams of divers have been working with concrete to which a bonding agent has been added, which speeds hardening. "We have about 10 minutes. On some of the bigger coral heads, we have a diver stay and hold it still. It's working real well," he said. Dive teams also have identified for recovery a few pieces of man-made debris, including pieces of cable, hose and miscellaneous objects, he said. The team consists of government divers, with help from contractor Cates International.

#### **CATALYST (Panama)**

See "Gibraltar" under "Port State Control."

#### **CHEMBULK NEW ORLEANS (Singapore)**

London, Mar 17 -- Understand salvage services have been rendered to chem.tank Chembulk New Orleans (20033 gt, built 2003), loaded, by Nippon Salvage under Lloyd's Open Form following grounding near Cartagena, Colombia. Vessel was refloated Mar 12 and arrived Cartagena anchorage same day where understand only slight scratches found on bottom. (Note -- Chembulk New Orleans, from Mejillones, passed Panama Canal Mar 7.)

#### **CPT COSTAS (Cyprus)**

London, Mar 12 -- Following received from Australia RCC, timed 0340, UTC: Bulk Cpt Costas (70595 gt, built 1981) stopped in lat 19 06S, long 116 59E due to a gas leakage in its engine-room. Vessel is effecting repairs and rectifying problems by itself.

London, Mar 12 -- Following received from Australia RCC, timed 1155, UTC: Bulk Cpt Costas completed repairs and has since arrived Dampier.

#### **CRISTOFORO COLOMBO (Belgium)**

Rotterdam, Mar 17 -- The attempt to salvage hopper dredger Cristoforo Colombo was terminated without result. -- SMIT Internationale NV.

#### **DAIHATSU MARU NO.8 (Japan)**

Moji, Mar 14 -- Vehicle Daihatsu Maru No.8 (699 gt, built 1986), Amagasaki to Shimonoseki, with vehicles, was in collision with barge Eikei, 461 gt, which was being pushed by tug Taiyou Maru No.18, Moji for Ube, with crushed rock, off Moji, in dense fog, at approximately 0625, Mar 11. Daihatsu Maru No.8 sustained bow damage in way of forepeak tank and

the forepeak tank was flooded. No oil leak or injuries nor cargo damage was reported. After discharging part of the cars at Shimonoseki on Mar 11, the vessel sailed for Nakatsu the same day and upon completion of discharge of the remaining cars there, it returned to Shimonoseki on Mar 12 for authorities' investigation. Upon completion of the investigation it sailed for Imabari for drydocking and necessary repairs yesterday. Eikei sustained damage to its port side hull, but no oil leak or injuries was reported. After discharge of the cargo at Ube the barge went to Wakamatsu for necessary repairs on Mar 12. -- Lloyd's Agents.

#### **DD.1 (Turkey)**

Istanbul, Mar 13 -- Turkish maritime authorities closed the Bosphorus shipping channel today to all traffic after a roll-on roll-off ship (DD.1, 335 gt) carrying liquefied petroleum gas (believed in road tankers) sank due to bad weather, a shipping official said. Seven LPG tanks, which floated to the surface after the ship sank, were retrieved. -- Reuters.

London, Mar 13 -- Following received from Ankara MSRCC, timed 1135, UTC: Ro/ro DD.1, Kartal for Zeytinburnu, sank in lat 40 57.45N, long 28 56.85E, at 2205, local time, Mar 12. All three crew and five passengers were rescued.

London, Mar 13 -- A press report, dated today, states: A Turkish ship carrying liquefied petroleum gas sank near the entrance of the Bosphorus waterway, forcing authorities to close the channel, officials said. The ship sank late yesterday in the Marmara Sea off Istanbul's suburban Zeytinburnu neighbourhood, authorities said. Rescuers safely retrieved the vessel's "eight" crew members and managed overnight to drag the ship's seven 22-ton petroleum gas tanks to shore, authorities said. But the Bosphorus was closed today to shipping as a precaution, local officials said. Some local ferry services were also cancelled. A news agency reported one of the tanks was punctured, but official Baris Tozar said there no environmental damage. Authorities were investigating the cause of the accident, Tozar added.

London, Mar 13 -- A press report, dated today, states: Turkish ro/ro DD.1, laden with seven units 22 tons capacity LPG tanker trucks from Kartal bound Zeytinburnu, sank at C4 anchorage zone 2205, local time, yesterday. Eight crew members and drivers rescued. Floating seven lpg tanker trucks have been taken under control by the coastal safety and salvage administration teams. Istanbul strait traffic was suspended at 2230, local time, yesterday

London, Mar 13 -- A press report, dated today, states: Maritime officials in Istanbul struggled for hours to retrieve several LPG tanker trucks from the Bosphorus Strait after the ship (ro/ro DD.1) carrying them sank. The accident raised alarm over the safety of Istanbul's coastal areas, including

residential districts, in case of an explosion. Authorities closed the Bosphorus Strait to maritime traffic after a ro-ro vessel carrying seven tanker trucks loaded with 138 tonnes of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) sank in the waterway late yesterday. The authorities said they took control of the drifting vehicles after battling bad weather and the treacherous currents of the Bosphorus for about 10 hours. "The danger is over," Baris Tozar, deputy undersecretary of the transport ministry, said, adding that an explosion would have endangered long stretches of the coast. The official explained that four of the trucks were tied safely at a quay on the city's Asian side. The three others were still lying on rocks at the shore of the Ahirkapi district on the city's European side, but were under control, he said. One of them had begun to leak after hitting a rock, but all gas had been discharged and posed no danger. Unable to approach the three tankers from sea due to bad weather, the authorities were planning to tow them to a safe dock later in the day, Tozar said, adding that the operation still required a measure of caution. "There is still some danger, even though it is not a serious one," he said. "All precautions have been taken." Authorities closed all traffic on the seafront road and evacuated fishermen's facilities on the coast. Fire-fighters and ambulances were also put on alert. Officials also launched an investigation into the ro-ro vessel, which Tozar said was sailing in the waterway with dangerous cargo on board outside the permitted hours and despite the bad weather conditions. The Bosphorus was expected to be reopened later today.

London, Mar 14 -- A press report, dated today, states: Authorities closed the Bosphorus Strait to maritime traffic after a ro-ro vessel (ro/ro DD.1) carrying seven tanker trucks loaded with 138 tonnes of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) sank in the waterway late Saturday. The authorities said they took control of the drifting vehicles after battling bad weather and the treacherous currents of the Bosphorus for about 10 hours. Five of the tankers were towed safely to a quay on the Asian side by yesterday afternoon. The Bosphorus was re-opened to traffic at around 1900, UTC, an official from the crisis desk of the coastal safety agency said. The two other vehicles were still lying on rocks at the shore of the Ahirkapi district on the European side, but were under control, he said. All gas in one of them was discharged after the tanker hit a rock and began leaking. The other one also started leaking while authorities attempted to tow it, forcing work to be called off until this morning. All traffic on the seafront road was closed and fishermen's facilities on the coast evacuated.

#### **DETTIFOSS (Antigua & Barbuda)**

London, Mar 16 -- C.c. Dettifoss sailed Rotterdam 2005, Mar 14, arrived Hamburg 1405, Mar 15 and sailed 2245 same day for Gothenburg.

#### **DIYA KOWULLA (Sri Lanka)**

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

#### **ECSTASY (Panama)**

London, Mar 11 -- A press report, dated Mar 10, states: A five-day cruise to Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula has turned into a "cruise to nowhere" because of engine problems aboard the Carnival cruise passenger Ecstasy, company officials said. Ecstasy was standing off the port of Progreso, Mexico, today awaiting arrival of parts for a repair, Carnival spokeswoman Jennifer de la Cruz said. The vessel, with more than 2,000 passengers, departed Galveston 12 hours late Monday (Mar 7) but so far is expected to return to Galveston on schedule at 0800 Saturday (Mar 12), she said. Passengers were advised in writing before departure that an engine problem had developed on last week's cruise, de la Cruz said. A letter distributed to passengers offered a full refund if they chose not to sail. "The letter defines several different scenarios and one of them was that the vessel might not be able to go to any port," de la Cruz said. Although the letter warns of a possible "cruise to nowhere," it calls a trip without any Mexican port visits "unlikely." The vessel was scheduled to arrive in Cozumel, Mexico, at 0900 Wednesday and arrive in Playa del Carmen, Mexico, for a day's visit today. Although the vessel's speed and itinerary changed, all other systems and services are normal, de la Cruz said. Passengers will receive a 50 percent refund on this week's cruise and a 25 percent discount on any three- to eight-day future cruise with Carnival, de la Cruz said. Passengers also are to receive \$40 each to cover the cost of meals they purchased before departing Galveston, she said.

London, Mar 12 -- A Carnival Cruise Line release, dated Mar 11, states: Passenger Ecstasy Mar 12 departure: We have been experiencing problems with the ship's propulsion system. We have brought special technicians onboard to assist our onboard technical team in making the required repairs. This problem is only impacting the ship's cruising speed and all other systems and hotel services are operating normally. Since we have not yet completed the repair, we think it is unlikely that the ship will be able to operate its scheduled itinerary. However, should the problem be fixed in time, and the ship be able to operate at normal cruising speeds, we will proceed to Cozumel and Calica as originally planned. Should we be unable to provide the normal itinerary and require a modified itinerary to include one Mexican port of call, Progreso, Calica or Cozumel, we will provide the following compensation: 1. 25% refund of the cruise fare paid for this cruise. We will process this refund within two weeks. 2. 25% discount on a future 3 to 8 day Carnival cruise. This discount will be available on departures through Dec 15, 2006 (Christmas and New Years cruises are

excluded). This offer is non-transferable. Should we be unable to reach a port of call on this sailing, we will provide the following compensation: 1. 50% refund of the cruise fare paid for this cruise. We will process this refund within two weeks. 2. 25% discount on a future 3 to 8 day Carnival cruise. This discount will be available on departures through Dec 15, 2006 (Christmas and New Years cruises are excluded). This offer is non-transferable. Should you elect to cancel, you may receive a full refund or future cruise credit.

London, Mar 13 -- A press report, dated today, states: After five days on passenger Ecstasy hundreds of passengers disembarked in Galveston yesterday seething with anger at Carnival Cruise Lines. Many interviewed said they were tricked into wasting money and vacation time puttering around the Caribbean on a disabled ship. Some said the most exciting part of the cruise was a protest in which they unsuccessfully demanded all their money back because they could not make landfall at Cozumel. Jennifer de la Cruz, spokeswoman for Miami-based Carnival, said the 2,000 passengers were warned before boarding Monday they might go on a "cruise to nowhere" because one of the ship's two propulsion systems was damaged. She said passengers were offered the chance to cancel and receive full refunds, and about 80 did so. Those who went on the cruise were refunded 50% of their fares, and offered an additional cruise at a 25% discount, de la Cruz said. In addition, each passenger was given a \$40 credit because the ship took off several hours later than expected Monday because of the mechanical problems. She said the Ecstasy is seaworthy, and that no passengers were in danger during the trip. Another cruise was scheduled to depart yesterday. De la Cruz said engineers would try to fix the engine problem, but passengers would be offered the same compensation if the problem is not corrected. Many passengers, scoffed at de la Cruz's claim that they were notified about the ship's problems. De la Cruz said travel agents were notified Mar 4 that the ship might have problems, but she acknowledged many passengers may not have heard anything until after arriving to Galveston on Monday because most travel agencies are closed on weekends.

#### **EGASCO FORTUNE (Egypt)**

Alexandria, Mar 13 -- Bulk Egasco Fortune is still under arrest at Alexandria. -- Lloyd's Agents.

#### **EIKEI**

See Daihatsu Maru No.8.

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

London, Mar 13 -- A press report, dated today, states: A cable tangled in a propeller led to the second incident in five weeks of supply Eland (298 gt, built 1969) running aground in West Newport. Eland ran aground around

2100 Friday (Mar 11), but the exact cause is uncertain, said Newport Beach Lifeguard Lt. John Mitchell. Lifeguards were on scene to keep beach visitors at a safe distance from the ship. The vessel has been floating just offshore for about the last two months, helping manage a 1,200-foot pipe carrying sediment dredged from the Santa Ana River to an offshore disposal site between Fern and 60th streets. "What we do know is the fact that Friday afternoon in an attempt to pull the dredge pipe back offshore in a position to start production again, one of the cables wrapped around one of the propellers," Mitchell said. A diver freed the cable, but Eland may have lost manoeuvrability long enough to drift inland, or its anchor may have slipped. Two tugs tried to pull the ship back to sea during high tide yesterday morning, the same procedure worked when Eland ran aground Feb 6, but one of the cables pulling the vessel broke and the effort failed, Mitchell said. Workers were expected to try again at high tide yesterday evening. The project was supposed to be wrapping up about now. Heavy storms and damaged pipes have caused minor delays, and the fast-approaching nesting season of the endangered least terns, which live on an offshore island near the dredging project, could mean the dredging will drag on until this fall.

London, Mar 13 -- Following received from Coast Guard Los Angeles, timed 0740, UTC: Supply Eland was refloated about two hours ago.

London, Mar 15 -- A press report, dated today, states: Supply Eland that went aground in Newport Beach was towed to Long Beach for an inspection yesterday, two days after it ran ashore. Eland was refloated at 2205 Saturday (Mar 12) after being stuck on a shoal since late Friday, said Tony Migliorini of the US Coast Guard. The latest incident may have been caused by a cable wrapped around a propeller, he said.

#### **ELBE (Netherlands)**

Maassluis, Mar 11 -- Museum tug Elbe is still under repair, but has been shifted to the port of Maassluis. At this moment it is unknown when the vessel will sail again, but the vessel will never undertake commercial activities again. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents.

#### **ENERGIZER (Netherlands)**

Bucharest, Mar 16 -- C.c. Energizer completed propulsion system repairs and sailed Constantza Mar 15 for Odessa. -- Lloyd's Agents.

#### **ENRICO IEVOLI (Italy)**

See "Brittany, France" under "Pollution."

#### **ENTERPRISE (Antigua & Barbuda)**

London, Mar 16 -- Following received from Australia RCC, timed 0430, UTC: At 2000, UTC, Mar 15, bulk Enterprise (6389 gt, built 1985) reported engine breakdown in lat 34 27.9S, long 150 54.1E, 1.7 miles off Port Kembla. Vessel was subsequently towed into Port Kembla.

#### **EXCALIBUR**

London, Mar 14 -- A press report, dated today, states: An inquest into the death of four sailors has been told a poorly manufactured keel could have caused their yacht to overturn off the New South Wales mid-north coast. Melbourne yacht Excalibur capsized off the coast of Port Stephens in September, 2002, when its keel broke into two pieces in rough seas. The body of Christopher Heyes was found with the upturned yacht, while Anne-Marie Pope, Tracy Luke and Peter McLeod were all presumed to have drowned. Two people, including the yacht's skipper, were rescued after seven hours in the water. The Coroner's Court was today told a police examination of the salvaged yacht showed the keel broke in two, at a point which had previously been cut, and was then "poorly" welded together. The inquest is set down for two weeks.

#### **EXPLORER 1**

London, Mar 14 -- Following received from Coastguard Dublin MRCC, timed 1100, UTC: Fishing Explorer 1, 80 foot converted trawler, three people on board, reported at fire on board in lat 52 49N, long 06 03W at about 1740, UTC, Mar 13. Arklow and Wicklow lifeboats tasked. Vessel Le Emer took over surveillance of casualty at 0041, UTC but not to attempt to extinguish fire. Casualty reported sunk in lat 53 00.8N, long 06 00.4W at about 0054, UTC. Crew safely rescued and an attempt will made to locate and buoy the casualty on seabed today.

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

London, Mar 17 -- An Alaska Marine Highway System press release, dated Mar 15, states: Alaska Marine Highway System officials announced today that passenger ro/ro Fairweather departed the Ketchikan shipyard for Juneau this morning. It will resume its schedule of service between Juneau and Haines and Skagway on Thursday morning (Mar 17). It will sail to Sitka on Friday.

#### **FARLEY MOWAT (Canada)**

London, Mar 11 -- A press report, dated Mar 10, states: Research Farley Mowat has now left Port Aux Basques and is heading for a dry dock in Lunenburg, NS. The vessel was forced to take refuge in Port Aux Basques on Sunday (Mar 6) after it started taking on water off Cape Breton. The Canadian Coast Guard escorted the vessel into port. A small hole in the hull has been temporarily repaired. The first officer said they expected to arrive in Lunenburg on Saturday.

Montreal, Mar 14 -- Research Farley Mowat sailed from Port aux Basques, Newfoundland at 1514, Mar 10 and arrived at Liverpool, NS, at 1400, Mar 12. Understand vessel is at Liverpool to effect hull repairs at the local marine slip. -- Lloyd's Agents.

#### **FLECHA (Malta)**

See "Crew of Maltese Vessel at Wallaroo, Australia" under "Labour Disputes."

**GABRIELLE (Antigua & Barbuda)**

London, Mar 16 -- Understood salvage services are being rendered to part c.c. Gabrielle (3978 gt, built 1994), with 60 empty containers on board, by Titan Maritime under Lloyd's Open Form following gearbox problems off Cat Island (lat 24 24N, long 75 31W), Bahamas. A tug arrived on scene a short while ago and another tug is due on scene later today.

Nassau, Mar 16 -- Part c.c. Gabrielle is now under tow by a tug from Titan Maritime, en route to West Palm Beach, Florida. -- Lloyd's Agents.

**GOLDEN MERCHANT II (Hong Kong)**

London, Mar 12 -- C.c. Golden Merchant II was reported at 0227, Feb 27 at berth 103 Quebec, with ETD 0630 that day for Montreal. Vessel was then reported at Section 67, Montreal, from Feb 28 until Mar 5, then at Section 66 next day but not in port Mar 7.

**GRAND PHOENIX (Panama)**

Avonmouth, Mar 11 -- On docking at Portbury on the am, tide, yesterday, vehicle Grand Phoenix (59300 gt, built 2005) came into contact with Portbury pier causing damage to the port side. Temporary repairs were carried out yesterday and overnight and vessel is expected to sail this morning. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Mar 14 -- Vehicle Grand Phoenix sailed Bristol 1100, Mar 11 and subsequently arrived Ghent 2053, Mar 12 and sailed 1442, Mar 13 for Bremerhaven.

**HANYANG GAS (South Korea)**

Busan, Mar 14 -- Lpg Hanyang Gas is still at Busan. Understand the vessel will sail during April, bound for a Chinese port, for scrapping. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents.

**HENRIETTE (NIS)**

London, Mar 13 -- Information received from Sandnes, dated today, states: General cargo Henriette is still under repair at Karmsund Shipyard, ETC unknown.

**HIGHLINE 26 (Malaysia)**

See "Malacca Strait" under "Piracy."

**HOPE BAY (Netherlands Antilles)**

Santiago, Mar 11 -- At 0800, local time, today, the crane "Demag," operated by Messrs. Agunsa, fell on ref Hope Bay (8896 gt, built 1996), during loading operations at Pier No.8, Valparaiso. The crane was loading containers of fruit. Due to this, four containers stowed on board sustained heavy dents on the upper side, by the heavy crane, which still lays on the vessel. One of the containers fell into the sea and efforts are being made to recover this unit. Investigations are being carried out in order to determine the cause of this casualty. Surveyors are on board now. First works will be made to dismount the crane. No visible damages to the vessel were recorded. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Mar 15 -- Ref Hope Bay sailed Valparaiso Mar 12 for Balboa.

**HUA LING (China)**

See c.c. MSC Christina.

**IDATEN (Japan)**

See "Malacca Strait" under "Piracy."

**JAMUNA (Bangladesh).**

See Trishna-1.

**JM 2 (North Korea)**

London, Mar 13 -- Understand general cargo JM 2 was refloated Feb 26 and was towed to Buyukdere anchorage.

**JON J.STRONG (U.S.A.)**

See "Barge Breakaways, Ohio River, United States"

**KARMSUND (Norway)**

Trondheim, Mar 11 -- Molde Port Authorities inform that general cargo Karmsund was towed from the harbour quay to Bolsnes Yard, Molde. It is estimated that repairs will be completed by the end of this week or the beginning of next week. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Trondheim, Mar 14 -- Bolsnes Yard, Molde, inform that repairs to general cargo Karmsund not completed yet. -- Lloyd's Agents.

**KASCO (Liberia)**

London, Mar 16 -- Chem.tank Kasco arrived Singapore 1659, Mar 14 and sailed 2350 same day for Belawan.

**KATERINA (Malta)**

See under "Pollution."

**KEGAN DAVID DREW (U.S.A.)**

London, Mar 17 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Fishing Kegan David Drew (94 gt, built 1965) lost steering capabilities due to hydraulic problems in north-east Yucatan Straits, today. Coordination Centre contacted vessel Stellar Dream, only 22 miles from Kegan David Drew. At same time, controllers diverted USCGC Mohawk, which at time was 11 hours away. Stellar Dream currently on scene awaiting USCGC Mohawk.

**KURI PEARL**

See "Cyclone "Ingrid"" under "Weather & Navigation".

**KYROS (Cook Islands)**

Trondheim, Mar 15 -- General cargo Kyros (771 gt, built 1966) arrived Kvernhusvik Shipyard, Hitra, Mar 11, for repairs after it touched bottom. Vessel will be put on slipway today and no estimates as to how long repairs will take. -- Lloyd's Agents.

**LAUREN (U.S.A.)**

London, Mar 15 -- A Coast Guard Morgan City press release, dated Mar 14, states: Personnel from Coast Guard Marine Safety Office Morgan City are investigating what caused liftboat Lauren (93 gt, built 1973) to capsize and sink yesterday at South Timbalier Block 21, about 20 miles

south of Fourchon, La. All four crew members onboard the liftboat were rescued by the crew of vessel International Leader and were transported ashore without injuries. The Coast Guard has completed initial questioning and standard drug and alcohol testing. A light sheen has been sighted at the location of the vessel, sunk in about 31 feet of water. The Coast Guard has determined that there is minimal threat to maritime traffic due to the vessel's proximity to a nearby rig. Salvage plans are currently being drafted by the vessel's owner, Offshore Liftboats, L.L.C., of Galliano, La.

**LUJIN II (North Korea)**

Bucharest, Mar 14 -- General cargo Lujin II (5987 gt, built 1976) sailed Constantza Mar 7 for Bejaia but sustained main engine failure near Constantza port. The vessel returned to Constantza port in tow Mar 11, reportedly to carry out further repairs. -- Lloyd's Agents.

**MALAKAND (Pakistan)**

See Moawin.

**MARTINA M (St. Vincent & Grenadines)**

Ymuiden, Mar 16 -- General cargo Martina M remains aground. Fuel removal is continuing. There is no estimation as to when the vessel will be refloated. -- Wijmsmuller Salvage B.V.

**MATIAS F.ERAUSQUIN**

Buenos Aires, Mar 10 -- Both the hull and machinery surveys on bulk Oneida have now been completed. Vessel is technically released by the Argentine Coast Guard but due to a judicial restraint it can not move from its current location. The bodies of two of the four missing crew members of sand vessel Matias F.Erausquin were found today. The vessel is detained by a Federal Judge of Concepcion del Uruguay. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Buenos Aires, Mar 11 -- Bulk Oneida is still anchored at Km. 238 of the River Parana. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Buenos Aires, Mar 17 -- Vessel Matias F. Erausquin remains sunk at Km 227 of the River Paran. Guaz' and refloating attempts are currently being made. Bulk Oneida remains anchored at Km 238 of the River Paran. -- Lloyd's Agents.

**MOAWIN (Pakistan)**

London, Mar 10 -- A press report, dated today, states: Fire broke out on a Pakistani navy tanker (PNS Moawin) undergoing repairs today at a dock in Karachi, killing six people and injuring 95 others, a spokesman said. The fire was blamed on "human error" during maintenance work, said navy spokesman Lt. Cmdr. Salman Ali. He said 101 people were brought to Karachi's PNS Shifa Naval Hospital. "I confirm that six people died and 95 are being treated," he said, adding that as many as 54 people were listed in serious condition. Helicopters swarmed over the site of the accident.

London, Mar 11 -- A press report, dated today, states: Six people were killed and about 95 injured when a Pakistan Navy support ship (PNS Moawin) caught fire during a maintenance operation yesterday, navy and hospitals officials said. "There was a small spark during the maintenance operation which turned into a massive fireball," a senior navy official told Gulf News. "At least 6 personnel died in the fire and 95 were injured," he said. At least 55 of them are seriously hurt, he said. "The death toll is likely to climb because many of the victims have suffered serious burns," said a doctor at PNS Shifa hospital. Navy sources said that the tanker was badly damaged in the fire. The ship, which was anchored at the Pakistan Navy Dockyard, serves as auxiliary vessel that serves as one of two fleet tankers. It formerly belonged to the Dutch Navy. General cargo Malakand (12395 gt, built 1980), standing nearby was also slightly damaged, they said. Salman Ali, a Pakistan Navy spokesman, said the fire was triggered during the maintenance work. "The fire has been extinguished," he said. Helicopters swarmed in the air over the tanker, which was sitting on a dock in the Arabian Sea.

London, Mar 11 -- A press report, dated Mar 10, states: At least six people have died and more than 90 others have been wounded in a fire on navy vessel PNS Moawin, docked in Karachi. A navy spokesman said that the wounded - some of whom are reported to have been severely burnt in the restricted dockyard area - were being treated in a navy hospital. Officials refuse to speculate on what could have been the cause of the fire. Mr Ali said that the blaze broke out during maintenance work on PNS Moawin, an auxiliary vessel that serves as one of two fleet tankers. It is reported to be badly damaged.

Karachi, Mar 12 -- The Pakistan Navy yesterday set up a board of inquiry to probe into a fire which broke out on Pakistan Navy oil tanker Moawin (not PNS Moawin as reported in issue of Mar 14) at the PN dockyard in Karachi on Thursday. The fire which engulfed the ship when it was undergoing routine maintenance and cleaning work killed six people on the spot and injured about 100. Two of the injured died later, raising the toll to eight. Pakistan's port authority said that general cargo Malakand, owned by state owned Pakistan National Shipping Corporation (PNSC) was loading rice at Karachi Port berth 21. Earlier, it had a small fire in deck safety locker room, which was immediately controlled. No damages were reported. A source of port authority pointed out that it was anchored far away from Moawin at the PN dockyard. -- Lloyds List Correspondent

#### **MOON LAKE (Honduras)**

Varna, Mar 11 -- General cargo Moon Lake is still aground near Varna, representing no danger for navigation.

Machinery and equipment on board, and everything possible, has been robbed. Even parts of the vessel have been scrapped by unknown robbers. No salvage operations are anticipated so far. The Varna Municipality, the present owners of the vessel, have not undertaken any actions in order to refloat or to sell the vessel for scrap. -- Lloyd's Agents.

#### **MSC AL AMINE (Morocco)**

London, Mar 16 -- An International Tanker Owners Pollution Federation report, dated Mar 15, states: As a result of a minor collision with another vessel while at berth in the port of La Goulette general cargo MSC Al Amine was sent to an anchorage on the western side of the Bay of Tunis on Feb 14. During the night of Feb 15 a storm caused the vessel to drag its anchor and it subsequently drifted on to rocks off Ain Oktor beach, near the town of Korbous. There were no crew injuries. The vessel had an unconfirmed quantity of bunker fuel (IFO 180) on board along with 75 tonnes of diesel. As a result of the grounding all four of the double-bottom bunker tanks were open to sea along with cargo holds No. 2 and 3 and the engine-room. The spilled fuel oil stranded on a 1.5 km stretch of the cobble and boulder shoreline at Ain Oktor under the influence of the north westerly winds. At the request of Assuranceforeningen Gard, the vessel's pollution insurer, Alex Hunt arrived on site for ITOPF on Feb 17 to liaise with local authorities and make assessments of the extent of contamination and shoreline clean-up operations. Fortunately onshore winds kept the oil ashore, enabling the authorities to focus on removing the gross contamination from the relatively short stretch of coastline at Ain Oktor using manual clean-up methods. Within the space of 10 days the bulk oil and oily debris had been removed and the authorities had demobilised the clean-up by Feb 28. In order to refloat the grounded vessel the services of SMIT Salvage were contracted at an early stage and resources had arrived on site by Feb 18. By Feb 25 MSC Al Amine had been successfully refloated and towed to dry dock after making repairs to the damaged holds and transferring the remaining bunker fuel to intact ballast tanks. Secondary clean-up operations are scheduled to begin on Mar 21 with an emphasis on the use of high pressure washing to clean the oil from contaminated cobbles and boulders. The specialised French clean-up company, Le Floch DÉpollution, will be carrying out this work with assistance from local contractors. It is expected to take approximately 60 days to finish cleaning the shoreline at Ain Oktor. ITOPF will be making periodic visits to the site throughout this operation.

#### **MSC CHRISTINA (Cyprus)**

London, Mar 13 -- Following received from Beijing MRCC, timed 0715, UTC: C.c. MSC Christina in collision with

bulk Hua Ling: The aft section of Hua Ling sank Mar 11.

London, Mar 15 -- Following received from Larnaca RCC, timed 0805, UTC: C.c. MSC Christina is now at Ningbo for inspection and repairs.

#### **MSC DENISSE (Panama)**

Jakarta, Mar 12 -- C.c. MSC Denisse (presumed in tow of tug Nimble) arrived Jakarta Mar 5 and left Mar 7 for Singapore.

#### **NAN SHA NO.38 (China)**

Hong Kong, Mar 14 -- Ferry Nan Sha No.38 is at Hong Kong, awaiting repair of bow damage. General cargo Zhong Hang 908 is at Zhong Shan, awaiting repair of hull damage in way of port side forward shell plating. -- Lloyd's Agents.

#### **NORTH ISLAND PRINCESS (Canada)**

London, Mar 10 -- Ro/ro North Island Princess (841 gt, built 1958) struck the terminal dock in Westview, B.C., lat 49 52N, long 124 33W, at 2020, PST, Mar 8.

#### **ODIN (Antigua & Barbuda)**

London, Mar 17 -- Following received from Coastguard Humber MRSC, timed 0126, UTC: At 0015, UTC, general cargo Odin (2997 gt, built 1994), destination Goole, was reported aground, on mud, in the River Ouse, in lat 53 42.4N, long 00 48.3W. Vessel has one pilot on board. Vessel is not obstructing navigation. Two tugs have been ordered and it is understood that a refloating attempt will be made after 0900, UTC. (Note -- Odin sailed Blacktoft Anchorage 2223, Mar 16 for Goole.)

London, Mar 17 -- Following received from Coastguard Humber MRSC, timed 1133, UTC: General cargo Odin is still aground. Salvors are still attempting to arrange tugs.

London, Mar 17 -- Following received from Coastguard Humber MRSC, timed 1225, UTC: General cargo Odin was refloated at 1223, UTC and is now alongside at Goole. No damage.

#### **OHMINESAN (Panama)**

London, Mar 17 -- Crude oil tanker Ohminesan arrived Fujairah anchorage Mar 13 and sailed Mar 15 for Kharg Island.

#### **ONEIDA (Malta)**

See Matias F.Erausquin.

#### **ORIENTAL RIVER (Panama)**

See Sunny Falcon.

#### **P&O NEDLLOYD BRISBANE (Netherlands)**

London, Mar 17 -- C.c. P&O Nedlloyd Brisbane sailed Singapore Feb 27.

#### **PACIFIC SKY (U.K.)**

London, Mar 17 -- A press report, dated today, states: Some 1,400 passengers on P&O-owned passenger Pacific Sky (46087 gt, built 1984) have been stranded in New Caledonia for the past two days, due to what is described as an engine failure on the,



South Pacific-touring vessel, local media report. The failure occurred as the ship was on a stopover on the Isle of Pines (lat 22 37S, long 167 29E), south of Noumea, a regular stopover on the vessel's Melanesian tour that also includes Vanuatu and Fiji. Local television RFO reports Pacific Sky was on its way back to Noumea, with only one operational propeller. The passengers were to be airlifted later this week back to Australia, onboard specially chartered planes, the company indicated.

#### **PALAWAN (Antigua & Barbuda)**

London, Mar 16 -- Understand ro/ro Palawan (5752 gt, built 1997), from Lumut, Brunei, is due to arrive Dubai anchorage (Jebel Ali) at 1700, local time today in tow of tug Al Towfan with gearbox problems. -- Lloyd's Agents.

#### **PAN AMBITION (South Korea)**

Portland, Oreg, Mar 11 -- Bulk Pan Ambition is still at Portland Ship Repair Yard. The vessel is expected to complete repairs around Mar 24. -- Lloyd's Agents.

#### **PAULA (Republic of Ireland)**

Trondheim, Mar 11 -- It has now been decided that trawler Paula will be rebuilt at the yard of Eidsvik Skipsbyggeri AS, 5463 Uskedalen, West Norway. The vessel will be towed to the yard this weekend. It is estimated that the rebuilding will be completed during August/September this year. -- Lloyd's Agents.

#### **PIERRE RADISSON (Canada)**

London, Mar 14 -- During an ice breaking operation icebreaker Pierre Radisson (5910 gt, built 1978) lost the use of a propulsion engine when the turbo-charger exploded at Tadoussac, Quebec, in lat 48 08N, long 69 40W at 0330, Mar 13. There was no injury reported. The degree of damage was considerable.

#### **QUEEN OF VANCOUVER (Canada)**

Vancouver, Mar 10 -- Ro/ro Queen of Vancouver has completed repairs and will undergo sea trials tomorrow. The vessel is expected to resume normal operations on the Swartz Bay-Tsawwassen route on Mar 12. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Vancouver, Mar 15 -- Ro/ro Queen of Vancouver is now operating on its normal route between Swartz Bay and Tsawwassen. -- Lloyd's Agents.

#### **REINE (Panama)**

Santo Domingo, Mar 11 -- Ro/ro Reine is still under repairs and no indication when the repairs will be completed. -- Lloyd's Agents.

#### **RICKMERS GENOA (Marshall Islands)**

London, Mar 10 -- Following received from the operators of general cargo Rickmers Genoa, timed 1118, UTC: The fire on board Rickmers Genoa has been extinguished and the vessel is proceeding towards Dalian at slow speed, with tug escort.

London, Mar 11 -- Following received from the operators of general cargo Rickmers Genoa, dated today: Due to prevailing weather conditions, Rickmers Genoa is now proceeding to the estuary of the Yangtze River under its own power, accompanied by salvage tugs. Consequently, Shanghai has become an option as port of refuge, which is currently under investigation. The weather forecasts indicate an improvement for tomorrow with wind direction changing to west and wind forces dying down. Meanwhile, the search for the fourteen missing seamen had to be abandoned with no results, due to the weather situation. The entire cargo on board Rickmers Genoa will have to be discharged at the port of refuge, where the damage to the vessel and the cargo will be assessed.

London, Mar 14 -- Following received from the operators of general cargo Rickmers Genoa, dated today: Rickmers Genoa is still proceeding towards the Yangtze estuary.

London, Mar 15 -- Following received from the operators of general cargo Rickmers Genoa, dated today: Rickmers Genoa is now anchored in the Yangtze River estuary and is awaiting a berth.

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

London, Mar 14 -- Norway's national map service has been charged for failing to point out underwater rocks blamed for capsizing of bulk Rocknes that claimed 18 lives. The vessel ran aground and capsized in January 2004, in an inlet near the port city of Bergen while en route to Germany with a load of stone. The National Mapping Authority was aware of the newly discovered underwater rock formation that the vessel hit, but did not include a warning about it in its regular published listings that are used by vessel's pilots and other navigators, the prosecutor said. The agency claimed it had provided adequate information on the hazard, and would prepare a report to the district prosecutor before he decides whether to proceed with an indictment.

#### **RODSHER (Latvia)**

Brest, Mar 11 -- On Mar 5, general cargo Rodsher sustained main engine troubles, while on a ballast voyage between Bordeaux and Zeebrugge. The crew unsuccessfully attempted to effect repairs and the vessel's Captain was required by the Coast Guard to take a tow from French tug Abeille Flandres. The tow was "passed" at 0630, Mar 5, and the vessels proceeded to Brest, arriving there the same day. Reportedly due to a conflict in paying the towage fees, the vessel was later seized by the tug owners. Although the transfer of funds would be now a question of hours it is not known if the vessel will be released before the weekend. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Brest, Mar 16 -- General cargo Rodsher departed Brest Mar 14, bound for Zeebrugge. -- Lloyd's Agents.

#### **RONJA COMMANDER (NIS)**

London, Mar 11 -- Following received from Coastguard Stornoway MRSC, timed 0019, UTC: At 2055, UTC, Mar 10, fish carrier Ronja Commander (1021 gt, built 2003), in lat 57 19.7N, long 07 13.8W, reported that they had fouled a propeller and required assistance in stabilising the vessel. Supply vessel Ronjafisk is proceeding. Ronja Commander has moored alongside a fish farm and has secured five temporary anchors. Divers to assist vessel at first light.

London, Mar 11 -- Following received from Coastguard Stornoway MRSC, timed 1204, UTC: Fish carrier Ronja Commander: Divers arrived on scene 0838, UTC, and commenced diving operations. At 1100, UTC, Ronja Commander informed Coastguard Stornoway MRSC that divers had cleared propeller shaft and no damage to vessel. Ronja Commander now proceeding Mallaig with supply vessel Ronjafisk, ETA 1650, UTC. Search and rescue operations terminated 1214, UTC.

#### **RYU GYONG (North Korea)**

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

#### **SNORRE A**

London, Mar 11 -- A press report, dated Mar 10, states: Norway's Petroleum Safety Authority (PSA) said in a scathing report today that the gas blow-out on oil platform Snorre A on Nov 28-29 was due to "a general failure in Statoil's planning, procedures and assessments". PSA Director General Magne Ognedal said that the conclusion of an investigation into the incident was that only circumstances separated the blow-out from a major disaster costing many lives. The incident was, fortunately, solved without injury. The PSA report uncovered 28 "non-conformities" with regulations and a range of issues that demand improvement. The authority was severely critical of Statoil's inability to note and correct the total failure of technical, operational and organizational barriers that could have prevented the blowout. The PSA has ordered Statoil to investigate and improve four consistent failures: "deficient assessments of overall risk, deficient involvement of management, breach of requirements for well barriers and a failure to comply with controlling documentation". Ognedal said that the blow-out at Snorre A marked "a sad day in Norwegian oil history" and said the PSA report should be reviewed carefully by the entire industry.

#### **SNOW CRYSTAL (Cayman Islands)**

Durban, Mar 15 -- Ref Snow Crystal completed repairs and sailed Durban Mar 12 for Cape Town, where it arrived Mar 14. -- Lloyd's Agents.

#### **SOULA (North Korea)**

Limassol, Feb 28 -- General cargo Soula is still under arrest at Limassol. -- Lloyd's Agents.

**SPIRIT OF VANCOUVER ISLAND (Canada)**

London, Mar 14 -- A press report, dated today, states: One of the two major vessels ferrying passengers from Swartz Bay to Tsawwassen is out of commission, due to mechanical problems. Most of this week Queen of Saanich, which holds 360 cars, will replace the much larger ro/ro Spirit of Vancouver Island (18747 gt, built 1994), with a capacity of 470 vehicles. It's out of service after divers found a rope wrapped around the propellers Saturday night (Mar 12). The tug of the rope broke a seal and about 12 litres of oil spilled into the water, according to Deborah Marshall, spokeswoman for B.C. Ferries. An absorbent fabric boom was placed around the vessel to soak up the oil. "That's the proper environmental thing to do," she said. The removal of Spirit of Vancouver Island Sunday led to one-and two-sailing waits for travellers stranded at ferry terminals. The pattern of delays could continue. "Tomorrow engineers will give a definite timeline for the dry-dock and how long it will take to fix it," said Marshall, late yesterday. The vessel is expected to be in dry dock for repairs for at least a few days. There are two vessels that make eight round-trips between Sidney and the Lower Mainland during the week, with three vessels running Friday and Sunday.

London, Mar 15 -- A press report, dated today, states: B.C. Ferries passengers faced long waits because ro/ro Spirit of Vancouver Island had to be pulled from service. Traffic began backing up Sunday morning (Mar 13) when the vessel was taken out of service before its first sailing. Divers found a rope caught in the starboard propeller, which caused a seal to leak oil. Those waits could continue, with the 470-car, 2,100-passenger vessel docked for emergency repairs until at least Thursday (Mar 17). B.C. Ferries hopes to keep traffic moving by bringing in smaller vessels and adding sailings on the busy Swartz Bay-Tsawwassen route. But the replacement vessels, including the 376-car, 1,656-passenger Queen of Esquimalt, have lower capacities than Spirit of Vancouver Island. The situation has been made worse because Spirit of British Columbia is out for a major refit, and isn't expected back until the weekend.

**STENA DANICA (Sweden)**

London, Mar 13 -- A press report, dated Mar 11, states: Passenger ro/ro Stena Danica (28727 gt, built 1982) is at present in dry dock at Cityvarvet, Gothenburg, after having hit the seabed. (Note -- Stena Danica which operates between Gothenburg and Frederikshavn is understood to have touched bottom off Frederikshavn last week and was still out of service today.)

Gothenburg, Mar 13 -- Passenger ro/ro Stena Danica touched bottom late Mar 7 while approaching Frederikshavn. The vessel returned to

Gothenburg same night, however, there is a minor dispute between the Inspectorate and Stena Line. The vessel should have remained in port until properly checked. A dent, 40 metres long, on bottom was noted but no holes. Vessel is presently at Cityyard, Gothenburg. -- Westax Marine Services AB.

Gothenburg, Mar 13 -- Passenger ro/ro Stena Danica arrived Cityvarvet for docking Tuesday evening, Mar 8. Damage was sustained in bottom structure, indent at starboards side well over 40 metres and one metre wide, just below various tanks, which required to be emptied and cleaned before changed steel plates. Also the transverse structure beams affected in some way. On port side, approximately 12 by one metre dent between the main engines, where some problems noted on its way back to Gothenburg - possibly some shifting of position affecting main crankshaft with increased temperature. Also additional dent port side, located aft of the above damage, approximately one square metre. Perhaps some 6-8 tons of steel to replace, but yet full amount not known. The emptying and cleaning of the tanks makes the repair more expensive and requires more time, but extent of position of the machines still to be found out. Cityyard are working around the clock and ETD from the dry dock Mar 16, and so far on schedule.

A local press report, dated Mar 12, states: Head inspector Jan Borgman of the inspectorate was called at 2350 Monday telling him about the Stena Danica grounding while approaching Frederikshavn which occurred at approximately 2130 hrs that evening. The vessel departed around 2230 hrs after first investigation. Vessel sustain damage in bottom of around 40 metres length and some leakage noted as well but no risk for the vessel. The exact circumstances are still not known but it was said that the vessel made a 50-degree turn to starboard just prior to the grounding. This to avoid "a generally grounder area." -- Westax Marine Services AB.

Gothenburg, Mar 17 -- Passenger ro/ro Stena Danica left dock at 1220, yesterday and is presently at the quay for small repairs for delivery tonight. Vessel will proceed into traffic on schedule tomorrow. -- Westax Marine Services AB.

**SUNNY FALCON (Panama)**

Busan, Mar 15 -- The permanent repairs to chemical/oil carrier Sunny Falcon were completed Mar 11 and the vessel sailed from Busan for Ulsan for loading cargo the same day. General cargo Oriental River arrived/berthed at Central Pier, Gamcheon Harbour, Busan Mar 10 for repairs. Permanent repairs were completed Mar 15 and the vessel shifted to Pier No.7, Busan, for loading cargo. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents.

**SVEAFJELL (Norway)**

Trondheim, Mar 11 -- There has been no change in the situation of general

cargo Sveafjell. The vessel is still at Kvernhusvik Shipyard. -- Lloyd's Agents.

**TAIYOU MARU NO.18**

See Daihatsu Maru No.8.

**TASMAN SPIRIT (Malta)**

London, Mar 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: Pakistan is likely to get \$32 million soon as compensation from an international fund for sea pollution along the Arabian coast, caused by crude oil tanker Tasman Spirit in August, 2003. Official sources said the country succeeded in acquiring compensatory payment after it became a signatory last month to the International Convention on Civil Liability for oil pollution damage. "It enabled the country to meet its liability regime for compensation against any claims due to pollution by persistent oil escape or discharge from a vessel," said an official. "The CLC-92 (Civil Liability Convention 1992) ensures that adequate compensation is available to persons who suffer oil pollution damage resulting from maritime casualties involving oil-carrying vessels." He said the final estimate of the international body suggested that the country would receive a total of \$32 million in compensation for the oil spill from Tasman Spirit from the International Oil Pollution Compensation Fund, created in 1992. "However, the International Convention on Civil Liability places the liability of such damage on the owner of the vessel which discharges the polluting oil," said the official. Tasman Spirit, carrying about 67,500 tonnes of Iranian crude oil, ran aground in July, 2003, and within a month it broke in two, resulting in a huge oil spillage. The vessel spilled about 31,000 tonnes of oil before it was plugged. The officials said the government initiated the case for access to CLC-92 in September, 2003, and the ministry of ports and shipping last month submitted the application for the ratification of CLC-92 to the International Maritime Organisation. The spillage caused widespread and heavy damage to the environment, and serious concern over public health in the city. Experts feared the disaster would have long-term effects on the environment and marine resources. The vessel was finally towed out of Karachi port in March, 2004, and beached at Gadani. Representatives for the vessel's owners sold the two sections of the vessel to local firms for Rs103 million.

**TOR III (North Korea)**

Mersin, Mar 15 -- According to information from Kemer Port Management, work on general cargo Tor III is continuing. -- Lloyd's Agents.

**TRANSFER (Antigua & Barbuda)**

London, Mar 12 -- A press report, dated Mar 11, states: Part c.c. Transfer that went aground at Lighthouse Reef over two months ago remains high and dry atop the coral

and there is a great likelihood that its owners will be fined heavily for causing environmental damage. That's the word from Major Gilbert Swaso of the Port Authority, who has recently concluded the Harbour-master's inquiry into the incident. The findings of that investigation is that the grounding on the night of Jan 6, 4.2 miles south of Sanbore Caye, was caused by negligence on the part of the master. It will now be up to the Department of the Environment to determine an appropriate fine under the terms of the Environmental Protection Act. That determination, however, will have to wait until the ship is pulled off the reef so scientists can get a good look at the extent of the damage to the coral. That long delayed salvage operation should commence shortly once one of several bids are accepted by the insurance company. All pollutants have been removed from the ship, including diesel and engine oil, so there is little chance of further damage. What is less certain is whether Transfer can remain afloat once removed from its perch. If not, a quick decision will have to be made to cut the lines and allow the ship to plunge into a final resting place in waters that range up to several miles deep.

#### **TRI SAMUDRA (Indonesia)**

See "Malacca Strait " under "Piracy."

#### **TRISHNA**

London, Mar 11 -- A press report, datelined: Jhalakathi, Mar 10, states: Clunker loaded vessel Trishna, from Chittagong, sank in the Gabkhan channel near Bangladesh-China Friendship Bridge after colliding with product tanker Jamuna (816 gt, built 1979), according to reports. One of the 12 crew of the sunken vessel was missing while others swam ashore or were rescued. Officials said Trishna bound for Bashundhara cement factory at Mongla was allegedly hit hard by Jamuna and sank at 1700 hrs.

See Trishna-1.

#### **TRISHNA-1**

London, Mar 12 -- A press report, dated today, states: Gabkhan channel has been virtually closed as clinker-laden cargo vessel Trishna-1 (before reported as Trishna) capsized after a collision with product tanker Jamuna making navigation in the narrow channel very difficult. The signaling system of the channel was out of order during the time of accident. As a result normal navigation in river routes linking Khulna and Mongla with Chittagong, Barisal, Dhaka and other parts of the country was being disrupted since Thursday afternoon (Mar 10). Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) has sent a team headed by Md. Shahjol, deputy director, conservation and salvage operation, for rescue and recovery operation there. Md. Shahjol said, the vessel sank under 40 feet deep water with 1,000 tonnes of cargo and extra load of mud and sand carried by water. So it is very difficult to recover the

vessel immediately and the possibility of crossing the channel bypassing the sunken vessel during the time of high tide is now under study. Meanwhile, on Thursday, cargo vessel Sugandha-2 got stuck in a shoal in Gabkhan channel creating more problems. A Dhaka bound rocket steamer Lepcha and river vessel Sonartari were compelled to anchor at Kawkhali and Jhalakati river port and to wait for indefinite period as the connecting Gabkhan channel was declared closed for navigation till further notice after the accident. The last report received from the area at 1700 yesterday said, Lepcha has crossed Gabkhan channel very cautiously under supervision of the BIWTA officials. But Sonargaon, Khulna bound other vessels of the rocket service were unable to cross the channel and anchored at Jhalakati river port as it was larger than Lepcha. Saiful Islam, Barisal Port Officer, said Gabkhan Bridge was the highest bridge of the country to facilitate safe navigation of the large and heavy water transports in the channel. The signaling system, which controlled the plying of incoming and out going vessels at the both ends of the channel has been out of order for a long period. So without increasing depth of the channel by immediate dredging, the navigation through it would not be normal. The only alternative way to link Khulna and Mongla with upper parts of the country is crossing through the Sandhya River via Shikarpur river port. But the Major M A Jalil Bridge, locally known as Shikarpur Bridge, built over that river is not of sufficient height for the large water transports. Trishna-1, loaded with 1,000 tonnes of cement and bound for Bashundhara cement factory at Mongla from Chittagong, was hit by Jamuna and sank in the Gabkhan channel near Bangladesh-China Friendship Bridge on Thursday afternoon. One of the 12 crews of the capsized vessel, was missing while others swam ashore or were rescued. (See Trishna in issue of Mar 14.)

Karachi, Mar 13 -- Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority has launched rescue operations to refloat the clinker-laden coaster vessel Trishna-1. One of the 12 crew of the vessel is still missing. Meanwhile, due to this mishap, normal navigation in river routes linking Khulna and Mongla with Chittagong, Barisal, Dhaka and other parts of country was being disrupted. As a result, many oil tankers and cargo vessels were stranded on both sides of the channel. The one-way channel will not be open for free movement until the capsized vessel is salvaged. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Karachi, Mar 14 -- The sunken coaster Trishna-2, previously reported Trishna-1, the body of its lost sailor have not been rescued four days after they capsized at the Gabkhan channel, southern Bangladesh. The coaster sank at the channel after a collision with tank Jamuna on Thursday (Mar 10). -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

#### **VENTURE II (New Zealand)**

London, Mar 11 -- A press report, dated today, states: Yacht Venture II sprang a leak off Kapiti Island on Tuesday (Mar 8) because of rust in its steel hull, the New Zealand Maritime Safety Authority said. MSA spokeswoman Heidi Brook said a marine surveyor had inspected the vessel after the incident, where crew members were put ashore on Kapiti Island while emergency repairs were made. The surveyor found the vessel was leaking because of a small hole due to corrosion. "He checked it out and there was nothing to suggest it was a bigger defect," Ms Brook said. The hull had been patched with concrete and the surveyor would check it out again after its scheduled return to Wellington tomorrow, she said.

#### **VICUNA (Chile)**

Santos, Mar 17 -- Following received from Sub-agents Paranagua: The local agents inform that the Smit Tag Salvage Co. is now cutting the midship section of chemical/oil carrier Vicuna into three pieces and still removing parts of vessel's stern. The completion of service is scheduled for the end of March, early April. -- Lloyd's Agents.

#### **WARRENDER (Australia)**

London, Mar 12 -- Following received from Australia RCC, timed 0340, UTC: C.c. Warrender ex Riverside Cloud (946 gt, built 1995) ran aground in lat 11 37S, long 136 18E at 2151, Mar 11. Vessel refloated at 2300, UTC, same day. Vessel sustained no damage.

#### **YANG XHO (Bolivia)**

See "Japan" under "Port State Control."

#### **YUAN DA NO.8 (Cambodia)**

Yokohama, Mar 15 -- General cargo Yuan Da No.8 sailed Niigata Feb 28 for Zhangjiagang. -- Lloyd's Agents.

#### **ZHONG HANG 908 (China)**

See Nan Sha No.38.

#### **ZIM NOVOROSSIYSK (Malta)**

London, Mar 14 -- Following received from Ankara MSRCC, timed 1125, UTC: C.c. Zim Novorossiysk (15560 gt, built 1977) grounded in Istanbul area Mar 13. Vessel subsequently refloated under own power and has now anchored nearby. (Note -- Zim Novorossiysk, from Odessa, passed Istanbul, westbound, Mar 13.)



#### **MALACCA STRAIT**

London, Mar 12 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Pirates who abducted the captain and a crew member of tug Highline 26 in Malaysian waters have released both hostages after nine days, receiving no ransom but stealing the captain's

cash, police said. The pirates released unharmed the Malaysian captain and an Indonesian crew member of the vessel at the central Port Klang on Wednesday (Mar 9). They took \$US1,200 from the captain, Wong Check Tung, a police officer said. In the February 28 attack, four gunmen who reportedly spoke an Indonesian dialect boarded the tug vessel, which was pulling a coal-laden barge to the northern port of Lumut in the Straits of Malacca, and fired several shots at the crew. Both of the freed hostages gave statements at a police station after their release and then returned to their shipping company, the officer said.

London, Mar 14 -- Following notice to mariners issued today: Malacca Straits, piracy information. At 1055, UTC, Mar 12 in lat 03 37.3N, long 99 36.8E, several pirates armed with machine guns and rocket propelled grenades boarded a tanker underway. They kidnapped master and chief engineer and left. The pirates ordered the crew not to proceed to Belawan which was its next port. So far no ransom demand has been received and whereabouts of hostages are unknown. Vessels requested to be cautious.

London, Mar 14 -- A press report, dated today, states: Thirty-five pirates armed with machine guns and rocket launchers seized fully-laden product tanker Tri Samudra (1289 gt, built 1977), Samarinda for Belawan, cargo methane gas, in the Malacca Strait early Saturday (Mar 12) evening, a piracy watchdog reported today. The ship has been released but the master and chief engineer were kidnapped and the pirates are demanding a ransom, Noel Choong, regional manager of the Piracy Reporting Centre of the International Maritime Bureau (IMB), said. "The pirates attacked the ship as it was heading towards Belawan and ordered it to sail to Dumai. During the journey to Dumai the master and chief engineer were kidnapped and taken off the ship," Choong said. The ship, sailed by the remaining crew members, arrived in Dumai yesterday. "The status of the master and chief engineer are unknown. The hijackers are negotiating with the ship's owners for their release," he said. The ship's owners believe the pirates were rebels from the Free Aceh Movement (GAM), which has been fighting for independence for Aceh province in the north of Sumatra island, Choong said. Malaysia said on Friday that it would boost security in the Malacca Strait with a 24-hour radar system to guard against attacks by terrorists and pirates. Deputy Prime Minister Najib Razak said a Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency would be operational by the end of the year to improve security in the strait.

London, Mar 14 -- Salvage tug Idaten (498 gt, built 1997) was attacked by pirates this evening, 39 nautical miles south-west of the island of Penang. The Master, chief engineer and "chief officer", two of whom were Japanese and one Filipino, were kidnapped in

the attack an official involved in the fight against piracy said. The crew managed to send out a distress call, and the IMB in Kuala Lumpur had given the information to the Malaysian marine police to send a patrol boat to intercept the attack.

London, Mar 14 -- Following received from the International Maritime Bureau, dated today: Salvage tug Idaten, towing construction barge Kuroshio, was attacked by armed pirates about 75 miles south-west of Penang at around 1800 today. The attackers in three fishing boats abducted the master, chief engineer and third engineer. The remaining 11 crew members on the tug and the 154 crew members on the construction barge are safe. The tug and barge were bound from Batam by Myanmar. The IMB Piracy Reporting Centre passed the information to the Royal Malaysian Navy, who sent patrol boats PZ1 and PZ2 to the location of the attack, lat 04 17N, long 99 46E, and are currently escorting the tug and barge back to Penang. The whereabouts of the abducted crew members is unknown.

London, Mar 14 -- A press report, dated today, states: Malaysia, Indonesia and Japan scrambled to rescue four vessel's officers and a sailor kidnapped by pirates in audacious armed raids on a tanker and a tug in the Malacca Strait. Malaysia deployed five patrol boats and a helicopter today, and Indonesia sent three warships into one of the world's busiest waterways in response to a sudden spike in attacks after Asia's Dec 26 tsunami appeared to put the strait's pirates temporarily out of action. In Japan, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi ordered government agencies to work to rescue two Japanese among the kidnap victims, but Chief Cabinet Secretary Hiroyuki Hosoda said Tokyo had yet to make contact with the pirates. "We are not seeing any progress at all. At this moment we have no new information. We have yet to find the hostage-takers as well as the victims," Hosoda, Japan's government spokesman, told a news conference. Asked if the pirates wanted a ransom, Hosoda said "there is no such thing" but added he could not reveal many details due to the sensitivity of the situation. Japan's coast guard said it would consider dispatching patrol vessels and aircraft to the area if Malaysia asked for help. However, Malaysia's marine police force commander Abdul Rahman Ahmad said Malaysia would stand by its policy of not allowing foreign gunboats except those from Indonesia and Singapore to patrol the Malacca Strait. The issue of security in the strait has become sensitive since Japan and Western governments expressed concern recently that terrorists could hijack a tanker to use as a floating bomb or to block the vital channel and disrupt world trade. The strait is the quickest route from the Indian Ocean to the South China Sea and carries a third of world trade and half its oil supplies. The first attack

came at the weekend when a gang of 35 pirates armed with machine guns and rocket launchers boarded product tanker Tri Samudra, which was carrying 1,300 tonnes of methanol, and fled with cash and two hostages -- the master and the chief engineer. The abductors have already demanded a ransom of rupiah two billion (US\$214,000) from the vessel's owner, Humpuss Intermoda Transport, said Lieutenant Colonel Edi of the Indonesian eastern fleet information centre. In the second attack, salvage tug Idaten, towing a construction barge, was boarded by armed pirates who kidnapped captain Nobuo Inoue, chief engineer Shunji Kuroda and a Filipino crewman identified by Manila as Sangdang Paliawan. Japan said today it was doing its utmost to secure the release of the kidnap victims. The foreign ministry has set up a task force to handle the crisis and asked Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore for help, said Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura. In the Philippines, foreign department official Pedro Chan said Manila was co-ordinating with Malaysia to win the release of the Filipino sailor and his Japanese colleagues. The tug with its 11 remaining crewmen and the 154 workers on the barge -- from Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Myanmar -- were escorted to Malaysia's Penang island by marine police. Penang police chief Christopher Wan Soo Kee said the pirates pretended to be fishermen to get close to the tugboat before producing M-16 rifles and rocker launchers. The tug, which belongs to Nippon Steel and was on its way from Indonesia's Batam island to Myanmar, was hit by five rifle shots but nobody was hurt, he said. A surviving Japanese crewman said that it all happened in just 10 minutes, with a fishing vessel crashing into the tug and four pirates storming the Japanese vessel. "We heard warning shots and discovered two holes in the vessel," he said. All the 14 crewmen -- eight Japanese and six Filipinos -- were on deck and threw their hands in the air, Jiji said.

## Port State Control



### GIBRALTAR

London, Mar 16 -- Understood chem.tank Catalyst (6159 gt, built 1972) arrived Gibraltar at 0740 today and has been detained following an inspection by port surveyors. The vessel is currently anchored in the bay.

### JAPAN

London, Mar 12 -- A press report, dated today, states: For the crew of ref Yang Xho (1077 gt, built 1978) the nightmare is finally over. More than a year ago, the Bolivian-registered

vessel arrived at Otaru port with a load of crabs. It intended to stay only a few days. But then, bureaucratic limbo ensnarled the vessel and its 15-member Ukrainian crew in Japan in a tangled knot involving safety violations and an unreachable owner who stopped paying their wages. The crew had to depend on the kindness of the locals to even eat. But now, thanks to arduous negotiations by a transport group, the ship has been allowed to leave. Finally the vessel was towed away on Feb 24 for repairs in South Korea. Three crew members flew home the next day; 12 others had left earlier. By then the three had received part of their wages, with a promise the rest would be paid later. The fiasco began after the ship arrived from Russia on Dec 1, 2003. Tokyo at the time had stepped up port state controls-safety inspections. The transport ministry's inspectors found 13 safety-regulation violations on Yang Xho. For one, the ship did not have a lifeboat. For another, the Bolivian authorities' endorsement for the crew's licenses was missing. Its owner was unreachable. The crew's wages were stopped. The crew had no idea who the owner, who resides in Belize, really was. Tokyo sent inquiries to the Japanese Embassy in Bolivia, where the ship was registered. But it was in vain; ship registration was a mere formality. Eleven months passed without progress. Fearing the ship might eventually be abandoned, Otaru city officials meanwhile wrote a letter to the owner, urging swift action. They handed it to the crew, but they had no way to deliver it. The Japanese coordinators for the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) stepped in to negotiate with the owner's agent in the United States. Persuaded by the ITF, 12 crew members, including captain Viktor Sinitsin, left the ship for home. But the other three insisted they be paid back wages before leaving. It was not until February that the ITF succeeded, at last, in getting, by way of the owner's agent, a promise from the ship owner for wage payments and repairs in South Korea. The owner also paid back the costs of the crew's stay.



## Seizures & Arrests

### **AL BIRUNI (Egypt)**

Alexandria, Mar 13 -- General cargo Al Biruni remains under arrest at Alexandria. -- Lloyd's Agents.

### **AL IDRISI (Egypt)**

Alexandria, Mar 13 -- -- General cargo Al Idrisi remains under arrest at Alexandria. -- Lloyd's Agents.

### **B&E DOS (Philippines)**

Manila, Mar 13 -- Graft and corruption charges are to be filed

against Port of Batangas customs officials for allowing the release of a misdeclared cargo of cornstarch on board general cargo B&E Dos, Philippine Interior Secretary and National Anti-Smuggling Task Force (Nastaf) chief Angelo Reyes said. Smuggling charges are also being prepared against the consignee of the cargo and the owner of B&E Dos. B&E Dos is still detained at Cebu. The vessel was arrested by Nastaf officials on Feb 15 while it was unloading its cargo of cornstarch in Cebu port. Nastaf officials said that the owners of the cargo had paid only one percent instead of the 20% duty which should have been paid if the cargo was properly classified. The vessel's cargo of 3,000 tonnes of cornstarch was consigned to AVU Trading Inc. Nastaf authorities said that B&E Dos sailed directly from China to Batangas where its cargo was misdeclared with the connivance of customs authorities. The vessel then proceeded to Cebu where it was apprehended. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

### **BROTHER SKY (South Korea)**

London, Mar 15 -- General cargo Brother Sky (4729 gt, built 1996), which arrived Hong Kong 1312, Mar 11, from Yantian, is today reported at Pun Shan Shek Anchorage, Hong Kong, under arrest.

London, Mar 17 -- General cargo Brother Sky sailed Hong Kong 1043, Mar 16.

### **DAMANIA-1 (India)**

Mumbai, Mar 10 -- Ferry Damania-1 is still anchored in stream in the harbour, arrested by the High Court. - - Lloyd's Agents.

### **EGASCO FORTUNE (Egypt)**

See under "Marine."

### **ELQUI (Uruguay)**

London, Mar 17 -- A press report, dated Mar 15, states: The Falkland Islands Court in Stanley informed yesterday the owners and master of detained longliner Elqui, allegedly surprised poaching in South Georgia's waters that they face three charges each for permitting the vessel to fish without a licence. A pre-trial review will take place Apr 4, and the preliminary trial date has been set for Apr 18. FIBS reports that the master of the boat, Christian Enrique Vargas and defence lawyer Richard Marlor representing the owners, Jeneagles Corporation both pleaded guilty to permitting the boat to carry an unstowed fishing line and gear without a licence and for failing to notify the Grytviken Marine Officer prior to entry. However Ros Cheek said that it was the duty of the Court that the correct person or company is charged with an offence and admitted the prosecution has had difficulty establishing the correct owners of the vessel. Nevertheless Mr. Richard Marlor said that he was acting on behalf of the owners, Jeneagles and had received a fax from them

instructing him to represent the master and ship owners of Elqui in respect of the vessel's activities.

### **ENDEAVOR II (Greece)**

Karachi, Mar 16 -- Kanika Marine Ltd, the successful bidder of crude oil tanker Endeavor II, is expected to deposit tomorrow the remaining amount out of \$7.011 million in Sindh High Court (SHC) to take its delivery. It earlier deposited 10% of bidding value while making a request for balance amount until Mar 17. However, Endeavour II is still under arrest at Karachi Port. Funds will remain with court until its case is resolved. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

### **FORTUNE 1 (Indonesia)**

Cape Town, Mar 11 -- Fishing Fortune 1 is still in Cape Town. -- Lloyd's Agents.

### **GEPARD (Cyprus)**

Maassluis, Mar 11 -- Tug Gepard is still under arrest at Flushing. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents.

### **JAESUNG NO.801 (South Korea)**

London, Mar 12 -- A press report, dated Mar 10, states: Argentine Navy corvette ARA Drummond arrested Korean jigger Jae Sung (? fishing Jaesung No.801, 430 gt, built 1978) Mar 9 allegedly poaching in Argentina's exclusive economic zone (EEZ), some 190 nautical miles east of the Port of San Julian, Santa Cruz province. Jae Sung was air detected and when approached by ARA Drummond tried to flee. However after a short chase the jigger finally stopped and was inspected by a boarding party which, according to Navy sources, discovered several mismatches between hold contents and documentation, and proceeded to its arrest. Jae Sung was then escorted to the Port of San Julian, where it will face charges. This is the fourth incident involving foreign flagged jiggers allegedly poaching in Argentina's EEZ since the beginning of the 2005 squid season.

### **JOSE ANTONIO NORES (Spain)**

London, Mar 12 -- A press report, dated Mar 10, states: On Feb 25, the Argentine Coast Guard arrested fishing Jose Antonio Nores for alleged illegal fishing in the EEZ, 198 miles east of Rasa Island, in the northern area of the Gulf of San Jorge. The trawler was released after Mr. Manuel Nores, owner of the vessel, accepted to pay a US\$200,000 fine. However Mr. Nores' lawyer, Alberto Penelas, interviewed by La Voz de Galicia insisted that as the master of the vessel repeatedly claimed, and following two reports from experts, it was "fully proved" that the vessel Jose Antonio Nores never entered Argentina's EEZ..

### **MERCAN A. (Turkey)**

Bahrain, Mar 13 -- Bulk Mercan A. is still at Bahrain under arrest by the local authorities. -- 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.

**ODYSSEUS (Greece)**

London, Mar 17 -- As a result of the owners of passenger Odysseus (9821 gt, built 1962) being under liquidation, the subject vessel is to be sold at public auction on Apr 6. (Note -- Odysseus arrived Eleusis Jul 9.)

**RAJ SEVAK**

Mumbai, Mar 14 -- Tank Raj Sevak, arrested at Mumbai Jul 12, remains under arrest at P & V Channel, awaiting further order. -- Lloyd's Agents.

**SALEM FOUR (St. Vincent & Grenadines)**

Alexandria, Mar 13 -- General cargo Salem Four is still under arrest at Alexandria. -- Lloyd's Agents.

**SOULA (North Korea)**

See under "Marine."

**TRITON (Greece)**

London, Mar 17 -- As a result of the owners of passenger Triton (13995 gt, built 1971) being under liquidation, the subject vessel is to be sold at public auction at Piraeus on Apr 6.

**TVILLINGER**

Trieste, Mar 9 -- General cargo Tvillinger, now renamed Villinger, left Trieste in tow of tug Mario B., Mar 8, for Aliaga, to be scrapped there. Just for this voyage vessel is under the North Korean flag and its owners are Dido Steel Corp. S.A. of Monrovia. -- Lloyd's Agents.

**WORLD RENAISSANCE (Greece)**

London, Mar 17 -- As a result of the owners of passenger World Renaissance (11429 gt, built 1966) being under liquidation, the subject vessel is to be sold at public auction at Piraeus on Apr 6. (Note -- World Renaissance arrived Piraeus Oct 29.)

**Pipeline Accidents****BAIJI AREA, IRAQ**

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

**CUATOTOLAPAN, VERACRUZ STATE, MEXICO**

Mexico City, Mar 16 -- Workers at Mexico's state oil monopoly Pemex spent today cleaning up yet another oil spill, the latest in a series of leaks in recent months from its old and rusting pipeline network. Pemex said workers recovered five cubic metres of crude oil spilled near the rural community of Cuatotolapan in Veracruz state yesterday and said they were repairing the pipeline. Environmental watchdog Profepa, whose inspectors visited the spill site today, estimated 5,000 litres of crude oil spilled out from the pipeline, which it said was corroded. The company, which pays 61 percent of its revenues

in tax, says it needs 150 billion pesos (\$13.4 billion) for urgent repairs to its pipelines, half of which are more than 30 years old and corroded, according to Mexico's IMP oil research institute. -- Reuters.

**Pollution****BRITTANY, FRANCE**

Brest, Mar 11 -- Chem.tank Enrico Ievoli (9959 gt, built 2000) was in the Bay of Biscay yesterday afternoon when an overflight by a French Navy aircraft noticed the presence of suspect residues lying in the wake of the vessel. The Public Prosecutor's Department of Brest was advised accordingly and immediately requested the vessel to divert towards Brest. The vessel obeyed the orders of the French Navy and arrived Brest under escort at 0345 today. Junior Minister Francois Goulard was advised of the event and decided immediately to go to Brest to meet the vessel in company with the sub-prefect of Brest and a representative of the Public Prosecutor's Department. A guarantee of Euro450,000 was claimed by the High Court of Brest to allow departure of the vessel. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Mar 14 -- Chem.tank Enrico Ievoli sailed Brest Mar 11 and arrived Antwerp 1332, Mar 13.

**CUATOTOLAPAN, VERACRUZ STATE, MEXICO**

See under "Pipeline Accidents."

**KATERINA (Malta)**

London, Mar 16 -- Bulk Katerina passed Suez Canal northbound Feb 13, and subsequently arrived Sagunto Mar 9, reportedly from Xingang, and sailed Mar 11.

**Weather & Navigation****CANADA**

London, Mar 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: Damage is estimated in the millions today after a heavy storm surge pounded Newfoundland's east coast, washing out roads, wharves and breakwaters. Environment Canada says the potential for further damage is lower than it was yesterday, when the storm started. Tonnes of ice were pushed into communities from Bonavista Bay to the Avalon Peninsula. Flatrock, Hants Harbour and Cavendish were among some of the hardest hit areas. A \$2-million breakwater in Flatrock was destroyed by the ice and waves. In Duntara in Bonavista Bay, ice crushed a wooden wall that had been recently

constructed to hold back high waters and tore off a canopy that covered the wharf. Waves lifted massive chunks of ice over the breakwater, filling the harbour in Sibley's Cove in Trinity Bay.

**CHINA**

London, Mar 12 -- A press report, dated today, states: Heavy snow and rain in south-west China's Yunnan province has left at least 15 people dead and 10 missing, state media reported yesterday. Blizzards and rainstorms have ravaged the Lisu Autonomous Prefecture since the weekend, with snow falls in mountain areas of up to one metre deep, Xinhua news agency said. Communication and power lines have been cut and houses and farmland ruined. The local government has rushed tons of food and other relief supplies to disaster-affected people, the agency said.

London, Mar 16 -- A press report dated today, states: Severe and unseasonal snow storms have left at least 36 people dead in southwest China, with about 190,000 people snowed in and 21,000 collapsed houses, a news report said today. More than eight million people have been affected by the blizzards in Yunnan province, which normally enjoys a mild climate but had a metre of snow in some areas between Mar 3-12, the semi-official China News Service said. The province's economic losses due to the bad weather conditions were estimated at 2.5 billion yuan (300 million dollars).

**CYCLONE "INGRID"**

London, Mar 10 -- A press report, dated today, states: The strongest storm to hit north-eastern Australia in decades has weakened after reaching land but could intensify later in the day, meteorologists said. Cyclone "Ingrid," which earlier had been defined as a maximum category five storm, was downgraded to category one, said Cathy Muller, a senior meteorologist at the Tropical Cyclone Warning Centre in Brisbane. Gusts of up to 120 km an hour were recorded at the centre of the storm near Aurukun at the far northern tip of Australia, she said. The storm, which has not hit densely populated areas, has caused little damage to communities so far but could hit several west coast towns on its way back out to sea. The storm's activity has created rough seas in neighbouring Papua New Guinea with five people dead after their open boat capsized off the country's south coast on Tuesday, officials said.

London, Mar 11 -- A press report, dated today, states: Parts of the Northern Territory were being evacuated today as Cyclone "Ingrid" threatened to reintensify and batter coastal communities. After menacing far north Queensland for more than a week, "Ingrid" was expected to strike somewhere near the 4000-strong mining town of Nhulunbuy by early tomorrow after edging closer to Northern Territory from the Gulf of Carpentaria. Northern Territory

forecaster Ashley Patterson said the cyclone, which was moving west at about 20 kph, could intensify into a category three system and wreak havoc on the state's indigenous coastal communities. "It's a category two at the moment and it's possible it could develop a bit further before it reaches Nhulunbuy early tomorrow," he said. A cyclone warning has been issued for coastal and island communities between Milingimbi and Groote Eylandt, including Nhulunbuy, with a cyclone watch extended to Cape Don.

London, Mar 11 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0600, UTC, today, the centre of tropical cyclone "Ingrid" was located near lat 12.3S, long 138.7E, approximately 460 nautical miles east of Darwin, Australia, and has tracked west-north-westward, or 290 degs, over the past six hours, at five knots. The position is accurate to within 30 nautical miles and is based on the centre being located by satellite. Present wind distribution: maximum sustained winds: 80 knots, gusts 100 knots. Radius of 64 knot winds: 10 nautical miles in all four quadrants. Radius of 34 knot winds: 60 nautical miles in the north-east quadrant, 70 nautical miles in the remaining three quadrants. The track for "Ingrid" has slightly shifted equatorward which will cause the system to track along the coast of northern Australia and maintain intensity. At 0600, UTC, Mar 12, the centre is predicted to be near lat 11.7S, long 135.0E, with maximum sustained winds of 85 knots and gusts to 105 knots.

London, Mar 12 -- A press report, dated today, states: Strong winds from tropical cyclone "Ingrid" - upgraded to its original strength of category five - are battering the tip of the Northern Territory. But the destructive core of the big storm is out to sea, sparing communities its full force. "The eye of the cyclone is quite small but it is the strongest part so thankfully it's out at sea and none of these towns have been hit by its full force," a spokesman from the Cyclone Warning Centre said. At 1430, AEDT, "Ingrid" was heading west towards Cape Don and Point Stuart, about 130km east of Darwin, at 20km/h. Police in Darwin said they were not yet feeling any impact of the cyclone, which was moving in their direction, but were warning residents to be prepared. Earlier today, the cyclone - then rated a category four - skirted the small mining town of Nhulunbuy, on the Gove Peninsula, and community of Elcho Island, in the Arafura Sea. Early reports indicate no injuries but large amounts of debris had fallen from trees, downing power lines.

London, Mar 13 -- A press report, dated today, states: Croker Island, north-east of Darwin, has been badly damaged, but there have been no reports of injuries as Cyclone "Ingrid" continues its destructive path across the Northern Territory top end. The island's indigenous community was being lashed by winds of up to 290km/h today as the category five

cyclone headed across the Arafura Sea and towards Darwin. Cyclone "Ingrid" was predicted to move west and strike Darwin some time tonight. A spokesman for NT emergency services said early reports from Croker Island indicated there were no injuries, but the island had suffered "a large amount of damage", including structural damage. Part of the roof on the island's schools had been torn off, he said. "A number of cars have been damaged and most trees have been blown over. Residents are still sheltering from the cyclone in the island's emergency shelter and a full assessment of damage will be made when the gale force winds reduce over the next few hours." Cyclone "Ingrid" earlier passed near Goulburn Island and while strong winds had blown down many trees, the spokesman said there had been no damage to buildings. Communities on the Tiwi Islands were preparing for the cyclone with their local Counter Disaster Committees supervising preparations, he said. A cyclone warning is current for coastal and island communities between Daly River Mouth and Maningrida, including the Coburg Peninsula, Darwin and Tiwi Islands.

Sydney, Mar 14 -- The port of Darwin was closed overnight as the eye of tropical cyclone "Ingrid" passed 100 km north of the Northern Territory capital, battering the Tiwi islands on its way. The port was expected to re-open this morning. Two ships due to enter port yesterday had remained at sea at the request of the harbour authorities. They were the product tanker Bright Pacific and the 23,900 dwt general cargo C.S.Ocean laden with clinker. Only one of Perkins Shipping Group's coastal fleet was at sea during the track of the storm across the Top End. The Warrender, on the weekly Karumba/Weipa/Gove service, sought refuge in the Wessel Islands last week as the cyclone hit the Gove region, but is now back in Karumba. One vessel was in the Gulf of Carpentaria, out of the storm track, and the remaining five ships in the Perkins fleet were all able to reach Darwin just before the storm hit. Perkins chief executive Peter Hopton said that three ships would be expected to load or discharge tomorrow, while the ro/ro Frances Bay had already left for Gove. Mr Hopton said the company would be reviewing the weather outlook today, and expected normal operations to resume by mid-week. Supplies are now likely to be scarce in some communities in the region, he said. One Perkins's maintenance shed at Gove was damaged by the storm. Full cyclone precautions had already been taken in Darwin, with the East Arm quay crane secured, and all barges, tugs, and pontoons safely moored. NT government offices are open today, although schools have remained closed. The cyclone warnings should be lifted some time today. -- Lloyd's List Daily Commercial News.

London, Mar 14 -- A press report, dated today, states: Tropical cyclone

"Ingrid" has hurled its 235kph force at the Tiwi Islands north of Darwin, ripping off roofs, levelling one home and flinging huge mahogany trees onto buildings. Residents of the two islands, Bathurst and Melville, remained bunkered down in emergency shelters as they continued to be battered by 120kph gales and torrential rain. But the conditions were nothing compared to what Ingrid dished out during a direct hit on the Tiwis yesterday night, before it steered into the Timor Sea away from Darwin which largely escaped the fury. Winds gusting to 235kph lashed Bathurst and Melville overnight, cutting communications to the mainland, leaving them without power and with a substantial damage bill. Northern Territory police said the category three storm cost the island communities a house, swept roofs off a school and several other properties, and uprooted old trees and dumped them onto buildings. But no-one had been killed or injured and residents were incredibly grateful for that, NT police Darwin region controller Max Pope told reporters. In Darwin, which caught only the edge of the cyclone, little damage was reported from overnight winds. However the city remains on alert. Commander Pope said many Tiwi residents were still taking shelter from the strong winds, but some had ventured out to assess the damage. Bathurst Island's emergency services coordinator Graeme Fregon said residents were incredibly relieved that everyone had emerged safe. "We have no power, we have no communication - just one satellite phone ... if that's all we've got wrong, then we've come off pretty well," he said. "Ingrid" had cleared the Tiwis by 1000 hrs, today. The Bureau of Meteorology said it was moving out into the Timor Sea and was expected to track to the south west for the next couple of days, away from Darwin. Commander Pope said police were receiving reports of damage and devastation across Australia's top end after "Ingrid"'s destructive journey. He said authorities were preparing to rescue 10 people who had been stranded by floods on a remote part of Elcho Island, off the NT coast, after Ingrid hit two days ago. The storm also ripped through a pearling fleet of six vessels causing more than Aus\$1 million damage at Gove, in north east Arnhem Land, on Saturday (Mar 12), police said. Some of the boats had gone down, others had been damaged, police said, but could not provide further details. East of the Tiwis, on Croker Island, residents were still waiting to have power and water supplies restored after "Ingrid" hit, but emergency supplies including blankets and tarps had arrived. Darwin will remain on alert until authorities are satisfied the city is in no danger.

London, Mar 14 -- Following received from the Meteorological office, dated today: Tropical cyclone "Ingrid" near lat 11.7S, long 129.2E, at 0600, UTC. Movement for the past six hours 255

degrees at seven knots. Position accurate to within 25 nautical miles. Maximum sustained winds 100 knots, gusts 125 knots. Radius of 64 knot winds 25 nautical miles all quadrants. Forecast position lat 12.0S, long 128.1E at 1800, UTC, today. Maximum sustained winds 110 knots, gusts 135 knots. Radius of 64 knot winds 25 nautical miles. Forecast position lat 12.5S, long 126.9E at 0600, UTC, Mar 15. Maximum sustained winds 125 knot, gusts 150 knots.

London, Mar 14 -- A press report, dated today, states: Cyclone "Ingrid" has left the 200 residents of Croker Island, about 200 kilometres north-east of Darwin, with no running water and only enough food for two days. The cyclone struck Croker early yesterday and its devastating path across the island can be seen from the air, with trees stripped bare for kilometres. The Jarbu fishing lodge is obliterated and most buildings are extensively damaged, including the school and teachers' accommodation. Survivors say they cannot believe no-one was killed or injured. Power lines have been extensively damaged on Croker Island and at Nguui on Bathurst Island but the power houses were not affected. Croker residents are using their bare hands and limited machinery to clear access for Power and Water Authority workers who are expected to land this afternoon. Power and Water Corporation contractors have flown to a number of communities on the Tiwi Islands to restore lines. But wind has prevented them from flying to Melville Island. The corporation's Bertram Birk says power lines and the power house that services Milikapiti and Pirlangimpi are damaged. "We've got the planes all on stand-by, we just need clearances to get there, with both staff and contractors," he said. "But we really need to do an assessment on the ground so we can clearly document what materials we need and make arrangements to get them over there." Contact has been re-established with all remote communities in the Northern Territory's Top End. Police were most concerned about the Milikapiti community, which does not have a police presence. The core of the cyclone passed close by, with winds reaching more than 200 kilometres-per-hour. But Northern Territory police say that while the community has no power or water, it received minimal structural damage. In Nguui, a house and store were damaged and in Pirlangimpi a house was flattened. Parts of the school roof are missing at Snake Bay. Police say they are unable to put a figure on the cost of cyclone damage to communities. But Commander Max Pope says a pearling operation at Nhulunbuy, on the north-east coast of Arnhem Land, suffered about A\$1 million damage. Commander Pope says six vessels in the pearling fleet were sunk or damaged when the operation took a direct hit from the cyclone. Meanwhile, a recovery team will be sent to Elcho Island, off the north

Arnhem Land coast to rescue ten people who were stranded after "Ingrid" lashed the region. Heavy rain cut roads to the community, so the residents were unable to return. Commander Pope says that, while they do not have much shelter, the residents do have some supplies. The Bureau of Meteorology says Cyclone "Ingrid" has completely crossed the Tiwi Islands and is now in the Timor Sea. "Ingrid" is still listed as a category 3 cyclone. It is moving west-south-west at 10 kilometres-an-hour, away from Darwin. A cyclone warning continues for coastal and island communities between Cape Hotham and Daly rivermouth, including the Tiwi Islands and Darwin. A cyclone watch extends south-west to Mitchell Plateau in Western Australia.

London, Mar 14 -- A press report, dated Mar 15, states: Cyclone "Ingrid" is expected to track towards Western Australia's Kimberley coast today after battering islands off the Northern Territory coastline with torrential winds and rain. The cyclone damage is expected to run into millions of dollars. At 0718, AEDT, the category 4 cyclone is currently in the Timor Sea, almost 300 kilometres west of Darwin and 305 kilometres north-east of Kalumburu in Western Australia, moving west at 10 kilometres-an-hour. A cyclone warning has been issued for coastal and island communities between Port Keats in the Northern Territory and WA's Mitchell Plateau. Wind gusts up to 120 kilometres-per-hour are expected to develop there tonight.

Sydney, Mar 15 -- A cyclone which has battered Australia's north for a week has re-intensified into a top category five storm, with destructive winds up to 320 kmh, as it prepares to slam into the coast for a third time. Cyclone "Ingrid" is forecast to hit Australia's sparsely populated northwest Kimberley coast tonight after gaining strength during the day as it swirled over the Timor Sea. The storm has strengthened as it crossed the Gulf of Carpentaria, before battering the small Tiwi islands north of the tropical city of Darwin on Sunday (Mar 13) night and Monday. Darwin, which was destroyed by a similar cyclone on Christmas Day in 1974, was spared the wrath of the storm, which weakened temporarily yesterday only to again re-intensify as it made its way down Australia's west coast, nicknamed "cyclone alley". Late on Monday, Ingrid was located in the Timor Sea about 290 km north of the town of Wyndham in Western Australia state and was expected to cross the coast during the night. Weather officials have warned of extensive flooding when "Ingrid" hits, due to "dangerously high tides" and heavy rain. -- Reuters.

London, Mar 15 -- A press report, dated today, states: The Northern Territory Government says it will be seeking Commonwealth funding to help cover the repair bill from Cyclone "Ingrid." Croker Island, 200 km north-east of Darwin, was the community

worst affected by the cyclone, with winds in excess of 300 km per hour, flattening buildings and cutting essential services. Chief Minister Clare Martin will visit affected communities today and says early estimates put the repair bill at \$5 million. Ms Martin says the situation is not bad enough to warrant calling a state of emergency but that is not required to qualify for natural disaster funding. "We don't have to declare a state of emergency, you declare a state of emergency if the disaster is of such a scale that we don't feel we can cope with it and when you look at what happened, no-one's been injured," she said. "Immediate needs of those communities are being addressed so a state of emergency wouldn't actually be a productive thing to do." Ms Martin says the true cost of "Ingrid" is still being assessed. "What we've got is a co-ordinator across Government to actually make sure that all agencies are working together on this and we'll be doing assessments," she said. "We started yesterday and we'll continue to do those assessments to understand what the dollar implications are and how quickly we can move." Meanwhile, residents in the north Kimberley are preparing for the impact of Cyclone "Ingrid" as it bears down on Western Australia. The cyclone has re-intensified and has been upgraded to a category four system with winds of 260 km an hour at its centre. Andrew Burton of WA's Cyclone Warning Centre predicts Ingrid will take a south-west track today and cross near the Aboriginal community of Kalumburu tomorrow.

London, Mar 15 -- A press report, dated today, states: Residents have been evacuated from a remote community in the path of Cyclone "Ingrid," a category five system which is tipped to cross Western Australia's Kimberley coast tonight. Forecasters predict "Ingrid" will cross the coast somewhere between the Mitchell Plateau and the small town of Wyndham. The Aboriginal community of Kalumburu is the most likely area to be affected by the winds of up to 320 km per hour at the cyclone's centre. Emergency services district manager, Graham Down, says the sick, elderly and babies have been flown out of the community. At least one pearl farm and several offshore oil and gas rigs along the coast have also been evacuated. A cyclone warning is in place for coastal and inland communities between Port Keats in the Northern Territory and Kuri Bay in Western Australia. The warning includes Wyndham and extends inland to Drysdale River Station. Ingrid is in the Timor Sea, 200 km north-east of Kalumburu, and is moving south-west at 15 km per hour. Croker Island Northern Territory Chief Minister Clare Martin has visited the community worst hit by "Ingrid," which whipped over islands to the north of the Territory this week. "Ingrid" crossed Minjilang on Croker Island, 230 km north east of Darwin, as a category five system on Sunday



morning. Winds in excess of 300 kilometres per hour flattened buildings and damaged essential services. Power and Water Corporation staff have arrived to reconnect power and Work Safe officials are expected to tomorrow to deal with asbestos from older damaged buildings. Thieves The Northern Territory's Power and Water Corporation says thieves took advantage of cyclone preparations by stealing fuel from a power station in Darwin. It says about 30,000 litres of fuel was siphoned from a tank at Berrimah power station early yesterday morning. The corporation says that someone may have noticed the tanks being filled in preparation for the cyclone and decided to take advantage of the situation. The Office of Environment and Heritage is assessing the best way to clean up an unknown amount of fuel that was spilled on the ground of the station during the theft. Police are still investigating the matter.

London, Mar 15 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: Tropical cyclone "Ingrid" near lat 13.2S, long 127.5E at 0600, UTC, today. Movement for the past six hours 230 degrees at eight knots. Position accurate to within 20 nautical miles. Maximum sustained winds 130 knots, gusts 160 knots. Radius of 64 knot winds 35 nautical miles all quadrants. Forecast position lat 14.3S, long 126.8E at 1800, UTC, today. Maximum sustained winds 125 knots, gusts 150 knots. Forecast position lat 15.2S, long 126.7E at 0600, UTC, Mar 16. Maximum sustained winds 110 knots, gusts 135 knots.

London, Mar 15 -- A press report, dated Mar 14, states: Cyclone "Ingrid"'s destructive rampage across the Top End has sunk a vessel and left a multi-million-dollar damage bill for Australia's cultured pearl industry. Vessel Kuri Pearl, a modern 24-metre pearling vessel, sank early on Saturday morning (Mar 12) in Gove harbour after its engine-room was holed and flooded, industry officials said. No crew were hurt, and the vessel is now lying half-submerged in shallow water. The vessel, worth an estimated \$2 million, was owned and operated by Arafura Pearls, whose pearl farm in Elizabeth Bay off Gove was also severely damaged by the cyclone. "The farm had the eye of the cyclone go right over it. All personnel were earlier removed but most of the infrastructure has been destroyed," said Steve Arrow, owner of the nearby Arrow Pearls farm. "We suspect widespread damage but have been unable to get a vessel out for a look." Mr Arrow said damage to his and other pearl farms off the Top End coast would probably run into millions of dollars including damaged or destroyed infrastructure and stocks of pearl shell. Australia's cultured pearl industry is worth about \$250 million a year. A spokesman for Arafura Pearls confirmed damage to their pearl farm had been extensive. Arafura Pearls, an unlisted company, is run by Australian Pearl Management whose principal

owners include former WA premier Peter Dowding. Meanwhile yesterday, dozens of workers based in remote pearl farms along Western Australia's north-west coast were being evacuated. Paspaley Pearling chief executive officer John Kelly said the move was a precaution against "Ingrid" moving south-west along the Kimberley coast. Mr Kelly said it was too early to assess damage from the cyclone, which passed close to Paspaley-operated pearl farms off Coburg Peninsula. "Because of the cyclone, we've evacuated the Northern Territory pearl farms and flown everyone out. We are in the process of evacuating the Kimberley farms," he said.

London, Mar 15 -- A press report, dated today, states: The Northern Territory Government says it will be seeking Commonwealth funding to help cover the repair bill from Cyclone "Ingrid". Croker Island, 200 kilometres north-east of Darwin, was the community worst affected by the cyclone, with winds in excess of 300 kilometres-per-hour, flattening buildings and cutting essential services. Chief Minister Clare Martin will visit affected communities today and says early estimates put the repair bill at A\$5 million. Ms Martin says the situation is not bad enough to warrant calling a state of emergency but that is not required to qualify for natural disaster funding.

London, Mar 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: Severe tropical Cyclone "Ingrid" has hit the remote community of Kalumburu in Western Australia's northern Kimberley. The community is being lashed by wind gusts up to 260 kilometres-an-hour as the eye of Cyclone "Ingrid" passes just north of the Kalumburu. The community has been bearing the brunt of the system since it hit early this morning. Gary Boterhoven from the weather bureau says Kalumburu is experiencing destructive winds. The extent of the damage will not be known until the cyclone passes. The cyclone has now been downgraded to a category 4 system.

London, Mar 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: Cyclone "Ingrid" was edging inland after destructive winds demolished an exclusive eco-resort and pummelled an Aboriginal community in Western Australia's far north for more than 10 hours. By the time it hit the coast of the Kimberley region about 2130 hrs, yesterday, tropical cyclone "Ingrid" had regained its previous fury with destructive winds gusting at up to 260kph. The eye of the then category five cyclone passed just to the north of the Faraway Bay resort, 100km west of Kalumburu, completely destroying the eight cabins, workshop, staff accommodation and generator shed. After hitting Faraway Bay, "Ingrid" spiralled towards Kalumburu, where evacuations of many of the town's 300-odd residents had been proceeding throughout yesterday. The cyclone had lessened slightly to a category four system by the time it reached

Kalumburu about 2300 hrs, but it was sufficiently strong to batter the settlement with six hours of unrelenting, destructive winds. The township was continuing to experience winds of up to 125kph, but "Ingrid" was downgraded to a category three as it moved further south and was expected to continue weakening. "Within 24 hours it is most likely not going to be a cyclone any longer," Linda Paterson, of the Cyclone Warning Centre in Perth, said. Reports from Kalumburu indicated no major damage, although water and electricity supplies were cut. State Emergency Service spokesman Mick McInerney said three houses had superficial structural damage, and the mission garage and workshop were also slightly damaged. Fire and Emergency Services Authority (FESA) crews were waiting for the winds to further abate before deciding whether to fly into the community to begin mopping up. "In Kununurra, we have helicopters sitting on the ground at the moment waiting to actually deploy into Kalumburu as soon as the winds will allow it," FESA spokesman Allen Gale said. Authorities have not had any reports of injuries resulting from "Ingrid". According to the Bureau of Meteorology, by mid-morning "Ingrid" was 25km west-south-west of Kalumburu and 220km west-north-west of Wyndham, moving south-west at 5kph. "Ingrid"'s destructive core, with gusts to 175kph, was expected to move away from the Kalumburu area shortly, but winds of up to 140kph could continue to affect the area within 65km of the centre, including Kalumburu, for several hours. Gales with gusts to 120kph were affecting the coast between Mitchell Plateau and Wyndham, but the cyclone was expected to follow a more southward track, causing gales to extend to Drysdale River Station during the afternoon and possibly Gibb River. Tides will be higher than normal along the coast north and north-east of Kalumburu and heavy rain was likely to cause flooding of low-lying areas.

London, Mar 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: A tourist resort built to showcase the beauty of northern Australia fell victim to nature when it was flattened by cyclone "Ingrid." The exclusive Faraway Bay resort, on Western Australia's remote north-western coast, promotes itself an eco-retreat which "feels like the edge of forever, where a few days can feel like a week." Resort staff knew the feeling when "Ingrid" moved in packing winds of 280 km a hour. Owner Bruce Allison said they hid in a metal shipping container while the cyclone raged around them, emerging this morning to find most of Faraway Bay consigned to oblivion. "The main building, the actual frames, they are massive log, they are still there but everything else is gone," Allison told ABC radio. "All the workshop, all the staff quarters, all the cabins, they're all gone," he said. No one was injured at the resort, which was temporarily closed as it

prepared to greet guests for the busy Easter period. State Emergency Services said power lines were brought down at Kalumburu, although the community suffered no major damage. "Ingrid" was downgraded to category two late today. It was expected to weaken as it moved further inland and forecasters said it was likely to lose cyclone status late tomorrow.

#### IRAN

London, Mar 13 -- A press report, dated today, states: Three people are reported to have died and thousands have fled their homes as a result of floods in Iran. The rising waters have been caused by continuous rain, some of the heaviest in the past three decades. This rain and the floods it has caused have affected most of the country but the provinces in the west and north east have been hit particularly hard. About 100 villages have been flooded in the western province of Lorestan. Some of them are reported to have completely disappeared under the water. Officials in the province have called on people to move into temporary shelters which are being set up in schools and university buildings across the affected areas. The rain that started two days ago has also caused serious landslides damaging several major dams and bridges. Roads and railway links have been blocked and water supplies cut off in some of the provinces north west of the capital. And in the northern outskirts of Teheran itself, local officials have warned that some buildings may collapse and called on residents to leave them. Many fear the situation could get worse as the rain is expected to continue.

#### IRAQ

London, Mar 15 -- A press report, dated today, states: Berthing and sailing operations at the Basrah and Khor Al Amaya terminals were temporarily suspended due to strong winds at 2300, local time, last night.

London, Mar 16 -- Berthing and sailing operations at the Basrah and Khor Al Amaya Oil Terminals resumed yesterday afternoon. The operations had been halted due to strong winds Mar 14.

#### KAZAKHSTAN

London, Mar 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: In the Shoulder village, South Kazakhstan oblast as a result of ceaseless rains and thawing of snow 62 dwelling houses had been overwhelmed, three bridges and three conduct pipes broken down. Ice gorge on Syrdaria triggered off a washout of the check dams on the left bank of the river lower the Kazalinsk hydraulic project, Kyzylorda oblast. Abai and Urkendeu are under the threat of flood.

#### MADAGASCAR

Antananarivo, Mar 16 -- Thirteen people have died and nearly 9,000 have been left homeless after several weeks of heavy flooding in

Madagascar, the Interior Ministry said. Villages were engulfed last week when the eastern Lake Alaotra burst its banks. -- Reuters.

#### PORTUGAL

London, Mar 12 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: A severe drought in Portugal has cost farmers one billion euros in damages since September, a level that is set to rise further, the head of the main farmers' association said yesterday. Livestock farmers had been the hardest hit as pastures have run out of grass in many parts of the interior and south of the country, causing the price of feed to soar. But virtually every sector of the agriculture industry has been hurt by the lack of rain, from citrus growers in the southernmost province of Algarve to milk producers in the usually more rainy north. Portugal receives the majority of its precipitation during winter months but most of the country has recorded precipitation levels since September which were well below normal levels. In January, rainfall was less than 20 percent of usual levels across mainland Portugal, according to the national weather office. The office blamed a persistent high-pressure zone over the country for preventing storm systems from moving across the Portugal and causing it's worst drought in decades. The dry weather has led desperate farmers to cut leaves off trees to feed their starving herds and caused millions in crop damage, while in several remote villages authorities have resorted to importing water for drinking and washing by truck because local wells have run dry.

#### RUSSIA

London, Mar 14 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: All Novorossiysk oil terminals closed due to adverse weather yesterday evening. Heavy southerly swell up to four metres. According to the forecast, no improvement is expected until noon, today.

London, Mar 14 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: A cyclone hit south Kamchatka in the small hours of today. The wind is strong, and snowfalls are heavy. Waves are high in the Sea of Okhotsk and the Pacific. Vessels are not departing the port of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky. The departure of a tanker with 2,600 tonnes of diesel fuel onboard for the Koryak autonomous district has been delayed, a source in the Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky commercial seaport said. The wind reached 30 metres per second on the shore, and waves are five to seven metres high. Fishing vessels are sheltering hiding from the gale in bays. The wind reached 24-32 metres per second in the south-east and south-west of the Kamchatka region. Heavy snowfalls in the Ust-Bolsheretsk and Yelizovo districts and the city of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky have reduced visibility to 500 metres. Weathermen have given a storm warning. The cyclone is moving inland.

It has almost reached the Koryak autonomous district. Flights to the continent are suspended. A side wind reached 20 metres per second on the runway of the Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky airport.

#### THAILAND

London, Mar 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: Severe drought affecting many parts of Thailand would cause the kingdom economic damage of more than 10 billion baht (US\$250 million) if the situation is not relieved, said a securities house. "We expect the drought to add to food-price inflation and lower agriculture exports during the second quarter," newspaper Nation today quoted a report of the Phatra Securities as saying. The drought has already affected 13.5 million rai (21,600 square kilometres) of farmland, causing hardship to 9.6 million farmers, said the Phatra report issued yesterday. Direct loss of farm production was expected to reach 7.4 billion baht (US\$185 million), while decreased agriculture products exports and trade along main rivers would add up the losses, according to the securities house. Entering the dry season in March, many parts of Thailand have reported severe drought. The government last week declared eight zones as the worst draught-hit areas, while local press reported water lines in some reservoirs have dropped to a dangerous low level. In a bid to relieve the drought, the Agriculture Ministry has ordered the stopping of the second-crop planting by 90 percent nationwide. Rice is Thailand's main agricultural output, more than 75 percent of which is produced during the main planting season in the second half of the year. Phatra Securities estimated the drought could cause Thailand to lose about five-10 percent of total annual rice production, while damage of cattle raising and fruits planting was also predicted. Although the damage bill would be minimal compared to the country's gross domestic product of more than six trillion baht (US\$150 billion), the draught along with rising oil prices might push up price and inflation rates.

#### TROPICAL CYCLONE "WILLY"

London, Mar 10 -- A press report, dated today, states: Tropical cyclone "Willy" had been upgraded to a category two system and was expected to intensify as it moved towards the north-west coast of Western Australia, the Bureau of Meteorology said tonight. "Willy" was 680km north-northwest of Karratha and moving west-southwest at 17km/h. "The cyclone is expected to intensify as it continues to move to the west-southwest but will not impact the WA coast within the next 48 hours," the bureau said.

London, Mar 11 -- A press report, dated today, states: A tropical cyclone hovering off the north-west Western Australian coast has been upgraded to a category three system. Tropical

Cyclone "Willy" is about 680 kilometres north-west of Karratha at 1313, AEDT, moving in a south-westerly direction. The weather bureau says it is not expected to cross the coast for at least 48 hours. No warnings have been issued at this stage.

London, Mar 13 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: The category three cyclone "Willy" will weaken tomorrow and is not expected to hit the West Australian coast. At midday, WST, "Willy" was 485km north-west of Exmouth, moving south west at about 15km/h, and is still classified as a category three system. Large swells are predicted on the western Pilbara coast line during the weekend.

Sydney, Mar 14 -- Tropical cyclone "Willy", off Western Australia, is expected to weaken after passing southwest within 500 km of the North West Cape, and creating some large swells. -- Lloyd's List Daily Commercial News.

London, Mar 14 -- A press report, dated today, states: The threat to Western Australia from tropical cyclone "Willy", which has been hovering off the state's coast for three days, has petered out. Forecasters say the cyclone, which has been downgraded to a category two system, will weaken rapidly over the next two days and move further out from the coast. It is presently located 600km west of Exmouth, moving west south-west at 8kph.

London, Mar 14 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: Tropical cyclone "Willy" near lat 21.7S, long 107.5E, at 0000, UTC, today. Movement for the past six hours 260 degrees at seven knots. Position accurate to within 40 nautical miles. Maximum sustained winds 35 knots, gusts 45 knots. Forecast position lat 21.8S, long 106.5E at 1200, UTC, today. Maximum sustained winds 30 knots, gusts 40 knots. Forecast position lat 21.9S, long 105.5E at 0000, UTC, Mar 15. Maximum sustained winds 25 knots, gusts 35 knots.

#### **TROPICAL CYCLONE "WILLY"**

London, Mar 11 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0600, UTC, today, the centre of tropical cyclone "Willy" was located near lat 16.5S, long 112.6E, approximately 350 nautical miles north-north-west of Learmonthport, Australia, and has tracked west-south-westward, or 240 degs at 10 knots, over the past six hours. The position is accurate to within 30 nautical miles and is based on the centre being located by satellite. Present wind distribution: maximum sustained winds: 90 knots, gusts 110 knots. Radius of 64 knot winds: 25 nautical miles in all four quadrants. Radius of 34 knot winds: 150 nautical miles in the north-east and north-west quadrants and 160 nautical miles in the south-east and south-west quadrants. At 0600, UTC, Mar 12, the

centre is predicted to be near lat 18.8S, 109.8E, with maximum sustained winds of 100 knots and gusts to 125 knots.

#### **TURKEY**

London, Mar 12 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Traffic was suspended for northbound tankers in the Istanbul Strait at 0958, local time, today, due to poor visibility and snow. One daylight-restricted tanker's passage has been postponed until further notice. - Daylight-restricted tankers arriving today may enter the TSS on the next day of arrival to the southern entrance to the Strait of Istanbul. Traffic was suspended on the Istanbul Strait for southbound tankers at 0958, local time, today due to poor visibility and snow. The passages of two daylight-restricted tankers have been postponed until further notice. Daylight-restricted tankers arriving today may enter the TSS on the same or next day of arrival as per TSVTS instructions, weather permitting.

London, Mar 15 -- Traffic was suspended in the Canakkale Strait for northbound tankers at 0900, local time, today due to poor visibility and dense fog. Traffic was suspended in the Canakkale Strait for southbound tankers at 0900, local time, today, due to poor visibility and dense fog. Traffic was suspended in the Istanbul Strait for northbound tankers at 0330, local time, due to poor visibility and dense fog. Traffic was suspended in the Istanbul Strait for southbound tankers at 0315, local time, this morning due to poor visibility and dense fog.

#### **TYPHOON "ROKE"**

London, Mar 15 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: Tropical storm "Roke" near lat 11.9N, long 136.0E at 0600, UTC, today. Movement for the past six hours 280 degrees at 15 knots. Position accurate to within 40 nautical miles. Maximum sustained winds 55 knots, gusts 70 knots. Radius of 50 knot winds 20 nautical miles all quadrants. Forecast position lat 11.9N, long 132.6E at 1800, UTC, today. Maximum sustained winds 60 knots, gusts 75 knots. Forecast position lat 11.6N, long 129.0E at 0600, UTC, Mar 16. Maximum sustained winds 65 knots, gusts 80 knots.

London, Mar 16 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today, states: Typhoon "Roke" near lat 11.7N, long 128.9E at 0600, UTC, today. Movement for the past six hours 265 degrees at 24 knots. Position accurate to within 40 nautical miles. Maximum sustained winds 65 knots, gusts 80 knots. Radius of 50 knot winds 25 nautical miles all quadrants. Forecast position lat 11.7N, long 125.5E at 1800, UTC, today. Maximum sustained winds 65 knots, gusts 80 knots. Forecast position lat 12.1N, long 122.2E at 0600, UTC, today. Maximum sustained winds 60 knots, gusts 75 knots.

Manila, Mar 17 -- Two passenger ferries capsized during a fierce typhoon in the central Philippines today, killing at least three people and leaving eight missing, officials said. Typhoon "Roke", packing winds of 105 km per hour near the centre and gustiness of 135 kph, grounded sea, air and land travel in most parts of the central Philippines. "We have prevented up to 80 domestic ferries from leaving their ports to avoid accidents," said Lieutenant Armand Balilo, a spokesman for the Philippine Coast Guard. "Two ferries capsized due to strong winds and giant waves." Balilo said a ferry bound to the island of Cebu with 30 passengers overturned off Camotes island in the central Philippines, and three people drowned. Two were missing while the rest were rescued by fishermen in the area. Another ferry with 15 passengers sank near Leyte island, he said. Six people were reported missing in the accident. Balilo said more than 5,000 people were stranded in most parts of the central Philippines. Alfonso Cusi, general manager of the Manila International Airport Authority, said 24 domestic flights from Manila to the popular Boracay resort island were also grounded, affecting at least 500 foreign and domestic tourists. Elma Aldea, head of the office of civil defence, said two coastal villages on Leyte island were evacuated due to rising flood waters. Electricity was also cut due to strong winds, snapping power transmission lines. Schools, at all levels, were suspended on Cebu and Panay islands, areas bearing the brunt of Roke's furious winds and rains, Aldea told reporters. -- Reuters.

London, Mar 17 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: Typhoon "Roke" downgraded to tropical storm near lat 11.5N, long 121.3E at 0600, UTC, today. Movement for the past six hours 290 degrees at 16 knots. Position accurate to within 55 nautical miles. Maximum sustained winds 45 knots, gusts 55 knots. Forecast position lat 11.8N, long 118.2E at 1800, UTC, today. Maximum sustained winds 45 knots, gusts 55 knots. Forecast position lat 11.3N, long 115.1E at 0600, UTC, Mar 18. Maximum sustained winds 40 knots, gusts 50 knots.

#### **UNITED KINGDOM**

London, Mar 16 -- A press report, dated Mar 15, states: The cost of the January floods to Cumbria could top £250m, insurers say. The Association of British Insurers says work to repair damage to affected communities in the county could take months to complete. It says the total cost of winter storms to the entire north of England and southern Scotland could be £500m. The government is likely to foot a large part of the bill, with seven local authorities in the county so far making official requests for help. An ABI spokesman said: "We are looking at between £200m and £250m for the damage in Carlisle and Cumbria. If that were to include the rest of the

north of England and southern Scotland, we are talking about £500m." Parts of Carlisle are still uninhabitable, with many homeowners and businesses still awaiting insurance settlements. Carlisle City Council chief executive Maggie Mooney said: "We are working with the insurance companies and with our insurers and with the government as well." She said an application had been made for government help under a scheme to help local authorities in emergency situations.

#### VIETNAM

London, Mar 11 -- A press report, dated Mar 10, states: Seven Vietnamese fishermen died and 17 are still missing after bad weather capsized four boats, border guards said. The boats, carrying eight fishermen each, sunk 200 miles from Con Son island off central Khanh Hoa province on Mar 4 due to strong winds. Of the 32 people on board, only eight were rescued by passing foreign ships. "We have to wait another three days to be sure about the fate of the missing fishermen," one border guard soldier said. "Many local boats have not returned home and we hope that they were rescued by some of them."

#### YEMEN

London, Mar 17 -- A press report dated yesterday, states: Torrential rain and floods caused the death of at least eight people in various parts of Yemen, officials said yesterday. Most casualties occurred in the region of Hadramout in southeastern Yemen, which was swept by heavy rain Monday (Mar 14).

## Earthquakes



#### INDIA

London, Mar 14 -- A press report, dated today, states: Two earthquakes measuring 5.5 and 5.3 points on the Richter scale were registered off shore India's Andaman and Nicobar Islands yesterday, the Indian meteorological department reported. There have been no reports on casualties or damage.

#### INDONESIA

London, Mar 14 -- A press report, dated today, states: A strong aftershock measuring 5.7 on the Richter scale today rattled the capital of Indonesia's tsunami-ravaged Aceh province but there were no casualties or damage, officials said. The earthquake which struck at 0515 hrs was centred under the Indian Ocean floor 78km north-west of Banda Aceh, the head of Aceh's meteorology and geophysics office, Syahnan, said. He said that there were no reports of damage or casualties.

London, Mar 17 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: A strong undersea earthquake rocked parts of

Indonesia's tsunami-ravaged Aceh today, but there were no immediate reports of damage or casualties. The magnitude six quake did not trigger a tsunami, said Syahnan of the local Meteorology and Geophysics Agency. The quake struck at 0639, GMT, and was centred beneath the Indian Ocean, 67 miles south-east of the province's capital Banda Aceh. The epicentre was 19 miles beneath the earth's surface.

#### IRAN

Tehran, Mar 13 -- An earthquake measuring 5.9 on the Richter scale shook southeastern Iran today, the state news agency IRNA said. IRNA said the area affected was the southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchistan, which borders Pakistan. There were no immediate reports of casualties. -- Reuters.

#### NEW ZEALAND

London, Mar 14 -- A press report, dated today, states: An earthquake measuring 6.4 on the Richter scale shook the New Zealand's North Island and parts of the upper South Island early today. The strong quake was centred off the coast of Taranaki in the Tasman Sea, 160km northwest of Wellington at a depth of 150km. Geological and Nuclear Science duty seismologist Peter McGinty said the tremor hit at 0408 hrs. Its proximity in the South Taranaki Bight meant the quake was felt in many parts of both islands -- from Wanganui and as far south as Christchurch. The institute was not expecting any aftershocks and did not believe the tremor was a precursor to a massive earthquake. New Plymouth and Wanganui police said by 0600 hrs, no reports of damage had been received. A spokesman for Wanganui police said the quake lasted more than 30 seconds but felt like a "gentle shake". Nelson police said they had received no reports of damage and the quake had not been felt strongly. However, Blenheim police said it had been "a strong jolt". Emergency services said there had been a few reports of items falling off shelves. It followed a minor tremor of 2.9, located 120km north of Dunedin yesterday at 2019 hrs.

#### NICARAGUA

London, Mar 15 -- A report, dated today, states: A moderate earthquake occurred at 0015, UTC, today. The magnitude 5.8 event has been located near the coast of Nicaragua in lat 11.05N, long 86.21W, hypocentral depth was estimated to be 55 km.

#### SOUTH-EAST ASIA

London, Mar 10 -- A press report, dated Mar 9, states: India said tsunamis that hit its coasts in December caused damage worth 2.5 billion dollars. Indian Home Minister Shivraj Patil told parliament yesterday that 10,273 people died while 5,823 had been listed as missing since Dec 26 when the waves slammed into the states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and the Andaman and Nicobar

archipelago in the Indian Ocean. As many as 5,640 of those still listed as missing lived in the Andamans string of islands which bore the brunt of the devastation. India, which last month extended a 8.21 billion rupee (190 million dollar) aid package to the Andamans, was also handing out 510 million dollars to Tamil Nadu and 54 million dollars to Kerala for post-tsunami rehabilitation, Patil said. Patil added that India had set up a "core group" to plan long-term reconstruction and to find measures to build "multi-hazard proof permanent houses". He added that 100 percent subsidies from the government and banks would be given to fishermen for catamarans lost in the tsunamis.

Karachi, Mar 12 -- The Sri Lanka government will get Euro 733,000 from Netherlands to finance cost of the refloating of hopper dredger Diya Kowulla (819 gt, built 2003, not Diyakawa as reported in issue of Jan 17) which was washed off to the pier of the Galle Port due to the tsunami tidal waves in Sri Lanka on Dec 26. The expenditure will be funded from the grant funds allocated to Sri Lanka by the Netherlands Government for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of damage caused by the tsunami, according to a press release. The refloating of the dredger will be carried out by a Netherlands company-IHC who built the dredger, and take care of the required repair if needed at Colombo Port. The Sri Lanka Ports Authority (SPA) under the financing from Netherlands Government bought this dredger one year ago. The Secretary to the Ministry of Finance and Planning Dr. P. B. Jayasundera signed the agreement on behalf of the Government of Sri Lanka and Ms Susan Th Blankhart, the Ambassador of the Royal Netherlands Embassy signed the Agreement on behalf of the Netherlands Government. -- Lloyds List Correspondent

London, Mar 15 -- Hopper dredger Diya Kowulla, lifted onto the quay at the port of Galle by the Dec 26 tsunami, was returned to the water over the weekend. The dredger's mooring lines held against the force of the giant wave, leaving the vessel high and dry and sitting upright along the quay, having caused no damage or injury. Diya Kowulla was taken onboard Jumbo heavylift vessel Jumbo Javelin on Friday (Mar 11), in a lift operation financed by Dutch development bank FMO from Dutch aid funds. The vessel is due to move to Colombo for inspection and maintenance, so that it can be returned to class for the Sri Lanka Ports Authority. Main contractor IHC Holland Engineering & Renovation oversaw Jumbo undertaking the hoisting project, which entailed the temporary welding of eight special hoisting eyes to the dredger.

#### TURKEY

London, Mar 13 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: A strong earthquake shook southeastern Turkey today, injuring 15 people and

damaging some 150 houses, authorities said. The quake, which had a preliminary magnitude of 5.7, struck this morning and was centred in Karliova, a town in rural Bingol province, 430 miles east of Ankara, the Istanbul-based Kandilli observatory said. Provincial Gov. Vehbi Avuc of Bingol said the quake caused damage in Karliova and six villages in the region. "There is no loss of life," Avuc told private NTV television. Local Gov. Erkan Capar of Karliova said some 120 houses in the town were damaged. He said 28 other houses were damaged in six nearby villages and that 15 people were reported injured overall. The government sent tents, blankets and other relief to the snow covered area, where some villages were cut off by heavy snowfall. The quake caused an avalanche that partially blocked the main highway between the city of Erzurum and the town of Cat, and was felt in several neighbouring provinces, the Anatolia news agency reported.

London, Mar 14 -- A press report, dated today, states: A strong earthquake shook eastern Turkey today, damaging buildings and injuring at least 11 people two days after another quake in the region, authorities said. The earthquake with a preliminary magnitude of 5.9 was centred in rural Bingol province at struck at 0135, GMT, toppling several buildings that had been badly damaged in Saturday's magnitude 5.7 tremor, officials said. Authorities said there no reports of any deaths.



**Volcanic Activity**

**COLIMA, MEXICO**

London, Mar 11 -- A report, dated Mar 10, states: Colima erupted twice on Mar 10. The first eruption at 1410 hrs lasted five minutes and sent ash to a height of 30,000 ft. The second eruption at 1755 hrs was less intense than the first, with a plume of 22,000 ft.

**MOUNT POPOCATEPETL, MEXICO**

London, Mar 11 -- A report, dated Mar 10, states: Mount Popocatepetl volcano near Mexico City erupted hot ash and lava, which started fires, on Mar 10. The fire occurred near the town of San Nicolas de los Ranchos.



**Political & Civil Unrest**

**AFGHANISTAN**

London, Mar 17 -- A press report, dated today, states: At least five people have been killed and more than 30 wounded in a blast blamed on

Taliban fighters in Kandahar, according to a senior security officer in the southern Afghan city. A senior security official, who requested anonymity, says the explosive devices had been planted in a bag by the road side in the Azrati Baba area of the city.

**BURUNDI**

Bujumbura, Mar 14 -- Rebels in Burundi killed four people and looted homes and shops in the most serious attack since a referendum on a new constitution boosted hopes for an end to the country's civil war. The army said today fighters from Burundi's only remaining Hutu rebel group, the Forces for National Liberation, killed two men, a woman and a young boy yesterday in the hills outside the capital Bujumbura. The rebels denied the killings. It was one of the first attacks since voters approved a constitution on Feb 28 that guarantees majority rule. -- Reuters.

**COLOMBIA**

Bogota, Mar 10 -- Colombian Marxist guerrillas accused Ecuador of breaking an "agreement" with them by arresting guerrillas, a disclosure which contradicts President Lucio Gutierrez's denials that he has had no contact with foreign rebels. "We call on the government on Col Lucio Gutierrez to honor our agreements," said the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia in a communique posted on their Web site (www.farcep.org) late yesterday. It did not say what the agreements were. But the announcement will strengthen Colombia's long-held suspicions that Ecuador often turns a blind eye to rebels crossing the two countries' jungle border in return for the guerrillas not breaking Ecuadorean laws by kidnapping, robbing or killing. It could also anger the United States, whose support has been key to preserving Gutierrez's shaky governing coalition, and which regards the rebel army known by the Spanish initials FARC as a terrorist organization. The government made no immediate comment on the FARC comments. But Gutierrez, a former army colonel, has denied claims by one of his former top aides that the president secretly met a top FARC rebel before his election in 2002 to ask them to not to carry out military operations in Ecuador. In its communique, the 17,000-strong FARC criticised Ecuador for arresting a senior rebel commander in Quito early last year and for arresting seven other rebels in February. It accused Gutierrez of "servility" to the United States and Colombia. "Honoring our frontier commitments, we have not made any military incursions into neighboring countries, strictly respecting their sovereignty, and we demand this be reciprocated," the FARC said. The embarrassing announcement came as Gutierrez's congressional coalition is under strain following the dismissal of the entire Supreme Court last year. The United

Nations said it suspects the government of compromising judicial independence and the opposition accuses Gutierrez of seeking dictatorial powers. The FARC's claim of a deal with Ecuador also highlights concerns about the potential Colombia's four-decade-old conflict has for destabilizing the region. Colombia has just patched up its most serious diplomatic dispute in years with Venezuela, after it engineered the abduction of a FARC rebel attending a conference in Caracas. Paraguay has also accused the FARC of involvement in the kidnapping and murder of the daughter of a former president. Oil-exporting Ecuador is home to the only US military base in South America. But Washington is likely to favour Colombia in any dispute involving the FARC. Colombia is the closest US ally in Latin America and has received 3 billion dollar in mainly military US aid since 2000 to crack down on rebels and its cocaine industry. -- Reuters.

London, Mar 13 -- A press report, dated today, states: Clashes and violence raged through Colombia yesterday, leading to the death of at least 37 people, police and local media reported. In northern Colombia, government troops and militants of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN) clashed yesterday, with 27 rebels and six government troops killed and 78 members of the rebel groups captured, according to local media. Meanwhile, near the city of Barrancabermeja, four members of the same family were killed by rightwing paramilitaries, police said. (See issue of Mar 14.)

London, Mar 15 -- A press report, dated today, states: Four guerrillas of the rebel Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and three of the National Liberation Army (ELN) were killed in clashes with government troops on Sunday (Mar 13) and early yesterday, said the military. One ELN member was killed in an exchange of fire in Cocorna, Antioquia, and two more of the same leftist group died in clashes in Hacari, Norte de Santander. Four FARC guerrillas were also killed, two in Meta, one in Huila and the other in Tolima. The military also seized weapons, explosives, ammunition and documents which will be analyzed by the army intelligence.

**DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO**

Bunia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mar 11 -- Hundreds of United Nations troops launched a major offensive in north-east Congo today to hunt down militiamen who killed nine UN Bangladeshi peacekeepers last month, a UN military source said. "We are conducting a cordon-and-search operation as well as trying to apprehend the perpetrators of the killing of the Bangladeshis," the source said. The operation north-east of the town of Bunia in the Ituri district involved around 500 peacekeepers and started at around 0730, local time, the source said.

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

Witnesses said rotations of UN helicopter gunships had been leaving Bunia airport throughout the morning. The United Nations has been criticised in the past for being ineffective in reining in marauding militias in the east of Democratic Republic of Congo but has said it plans to step up operations to dismantle militia training camps in the region. -- Reuters.

London, Mar 15 -- A press report, dated Mar 14, states: The United Nations has given rebel militias in the Democratic Republic of Congo's north-eastern Ituri region two weeks to give up their weapons. Monuc head William Lacy Swing did not say what action would be taken against militias if they failed to comply. The UN force has stepped up its operations in Ituri since nine Bangladeshi peacekeepers were killed by militiamen last month. The UN mission has 16,700 soldiers, making it the largest peacekeeping mission in the world. Monuc has faced criticism for doing too little, too late to end the conflict in eastern DR Congo.

### INDIA

London, Mar 11 -- A press report, dated today, states: Kerala Chief Minister Oommen Chandy told the State Assembly today that a strong police force, including the Rapid Action Force of the CRPF, had been deployed in different parts of Kannur district to put down violence following the murder of Hindu Aikyavedi district Secretary Aswini Kumar by an eight member gang at Iritti in the district yesterday. Replying to the notice for an adjournment Motion sought to be moved by Mr M V Govindan Master (CPI-M), he said violence would not be tolerated and it would be put down with a heavy hand. Mr Chandy said top police officials including an Inspector-General were camping the area. He said Aswini Kumar was stabbed to death by an eight-member gang at Iritti after intercepting a bus in which he was travelling. He died on way to the Medical College Hospital at Pariyaram. Mr Chandy said six people had been injured in violence following the incident. Twenty-seven houses, 20 shops and four places of worship were also attacked following the incident. The Chief Minister said 50 people had been taken into custody and the Crime Branch police had been entrusted with the investigation of the murder of Aswini Kumar. Describing the incident as unfortunate, Mr Chandy said attempts at fomenting communal trouble would be sternly dealt with. He sought the co-operation of all sections of people to restore peace in the area. A Minister would be sent to the area to lead peace initiatives. Speaker Therambil Ramakrishnan refused leave for the Motion following the statement of the Chief Minister. Leader of the Opposition V S Achuthanandan urged the government to convene an all-party meeting to restore peace in the district. Seeking leave for the Motion, Mr Govindan Master alleged police inaction in

containing the violence. He said 35 houses were set on fire and several people were injured in the violence which was spreading to new areas. Prof A D Musthafa(Cong), another member from Kannur district, urged the government to enforce prohibitory orders in the district.

London, Mar 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: At least seven people have been injured in a grenade attack by suspected separatists in Indian-administered Kashmir, the authorities say. The militants threw a grenade at soldiers guarding a bank in the town of Poonch, 240km from the winter capital, Jammu, police say. The authorities say the grenades missed their target and exploded among a group of people outside the bank. Two of the victims are in a "serious condition", senior police official Salim Baig said.

### IRAQ

Baghdad, Mar 11 -- A suicide bomber struck a Shi'ite mosque during a funeral in the northern city of Mosul yesterday, killing at least 46 people and wounding dozens more in a fresh attack against Iraq's newly empowered majority. Violence rages as Iraqi politicians struggle to form a new government after Jan 30 elections which gave Shi'ites power after decades of Sunni domination under Saddam Hussein. A proposed alliance between a Shi'ite bloc and Kurdish parties to form Iraq's next government may be in jeopardy with the most sensitive issues still unresolved, politicians involved in the talks said yesterday. The two parliamentary groups have between them two thirds of the seats needed to form a government, but disagreements over which sect receives what have stalled negotiations, leaving the country in limbo since the polls. Tensions have risen in Iraq's north between the three main groups that populate the area, the Shi'ites, the Kurds and the Sunnis. The Kurds, who want to extend an autonomous region in the north, dominate the area and have encouraged those who fled under Saddam Hussein to return home. In Kirkuk, newly returned Kurds trying to reclaim land clashed with Iraqi police. Two National Guards were wounded, police said. -- Reuters.

Mosul, Mar 11 -- The death toll from a suicide bomb attack on the funeral of a respected Shi'ite professor in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul has reached 50, with nearly 80 wounded, the US military said today. The suicide bomber walked into a large crowd at the funeral in a tent at the mosque compound yesterday evening and then detonated an explosive belt in the latest attack on the newly empowered majority that was oppressed under Saddam Hussein. Doctors said the toll could rise further, and added that several children who had been at the funeral were missing. The mainly Sunni Arab insurgents fighting to overthrow Iraq's US-backed government have mounted frequent attacks on Shi'ites. Shi'ite leaders say

the attacks are an attempt to provoke sectarian civil war, and have told their followers not to seek revenge. An alliance of mainly Shi'ite Islamist groups won more than half the seats in Iraq's new parliament in the Jan 30 elections, and is poised to appoint Ibrahim Jaafari, currently one of the country's vice presidents, as prime minister. Sunni Arabs have hardly any representation at all in parliament -- very few people voted in Sunni Arab areas due to fears of unrest and calls for a boycott of the election by several leading Sunni parties. Shi'ite leaders insist they will reach out to Sunni Arabs and bring them into the political process to prevent sectarian rifts in Iraq from widening. -- Reuters.

London, Mar 13 -- A press report, dated today, states: Insurgents have blown up an oil pipeline in Thathar, nine kilometres west of the city of Samarra. The attack took place yesterday and fire continued to burn from the pipeline hours after the blast.

London, Mar 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: Insurgents blew up an Iraqi oil pipeline today which conveys crude from the northern Kirkuk oil fields to Baiji refinery north of Baghdad, setting huge fire, officials said. "A bomb was planted under an oil pipeline causing huge fire, on the east side of Tigris river in Fatha area near Baiji," an official in Baiji refinery said. Black and thick smoke could be seen over the area, about 200 km north of the capital, as security forces and teams of firefighters raced to the scene to put out the fire, he said.

Baghdad, Mar 15 -- Iraq's leading Shi'ite Muslim and Kurdish politicians are nearing a deal to form a government after six weeks of wrangling following historic post-Saddam elections, officials from the two sides said today. "We expect to sign a declaration in the next few days on general principles that include dealing with the city of Kirkuk according to the interim constitution," Mohammad Bahr al-Uloum, a member of the majority Shi'ite bloc in parliament, said. That means Iraq would still be without a new government when its first parliament convenes tomorrow and the session could be largely ceremonial. Another Shi'ite politician expressed doubt a new government was imminent, saying there were internal disagreements between both blocs that could delay a deal. The Shi'ite alliance won a slim majority in the Jan 30 vote and the Kurds came second, winning between them the two thirds of seats needed to form a government. But efforts to form a government have been stymied by haggling over sharing posts and Kurdish demands over the northern oil center of Kirkuk. A senior Kurdish politician said the Kurds had agreed to deal with Kirkuk according to the interim constitution, which says land disputes there must wait until a new constitution is written by October and a census is held to determine the ethnic mix of the city. "There is agreement with the United Iraqi

Alliance on these principles," he said. Iraqi officials hoped the elections would help reduce suicide bombings, shootings, kidnappings and beheadings, but insurgents have kept up the violence in a bid to topple the government and drive out U.S. troops. A car bomb that targeted a U.S. convoy near a petrol station in Baghdad killed one person and wounded four others today, police sources said. In a separate incident, a blast near the Ministry of Health wounded two people. A suicide bomber in a car blew himself up, killing a U.S. soldier on patrol and injuring several Iraqis and a policeman, the U.S. military said. Six other soldiers were wounded in the attack which raised to at least 1,158 the number of American troops killed since the 2003 invasion. Al Qaeda organization in Iraq said in an Internet statement it carried out the attacks on a highway near al-Amel neighborhood in Baghdad. Frustrations with the security crisis were underlined by a third day of protests in several cities by Iraqis enraged by reports that relatives of a Jordanian suicide bomber suspected of killing 125 people in the town of Hilla had celebrated him as a martyr after the attack last month. In Hilla, thousands of people condemned the blast, the single bloodiest attack in postwar Iraq. They held up banners saying "no to terrorism" and called on Arabs to speak out against praise of suicide bombers. The Iraqi government, led by interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi, has strongly condemned what it called "the expressions of joy" exhibited by the bomber's family. A prolonged political stalemate could work in favor of pro-American Allawi, who will stay in power until a new government is formed. Allawi has been trying to forge political alliances in a bid to keep his job. The United Iraqi Alliance has put forward Shi'ite Islamist Ibrahim al-Jaafari as its candidate for prime minister. But the Kurds fear that Islamic fundamentalism could spread under him. The Kurds are demanding one of their main leaders, Jalal Talabani, become president. But Arabs at a gathering in Kirkuk today said that would be unacceptable. "The demands of the Kurds over the presidency are unreasonable. Iraq is an Arab country and its president must be an Arab," said Wasfi al-Assi, general secretary of the Arab Front in Kirkuk, which boycotted the elections. Meanwhile, Italy will start to withdraw its soldiers from Iraq this September, Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi said today, adding to the list of U.S. allies looking to cut their troop levels. In a television interview, Berlusconi said he was also in discussions with British Prime Minister Tony Blair about a total exit strategy from Iraq, adding the people of both countries wanted their troops to return home. Italy has the fourth largest foreign contingent in Iraq after U.S., British and South Korean forces. -- Reuters.

Baghdad, Mar 16 -- Iraq's new parliament met for the first time today more than six weeks after elections, but rival blocs failed to agree on a government and al Qaeda insurgents targeted the meeting with a mortar barrage. During the two-hour inaugural ceremony, politicians pledged stability in Iraq, after windows rattled and lights flickered when mortars struck the fortified Green Zone compound. No damage or casualties were reported in the attack claimed by al Qaeda's wing in Iraq. Without a government in place, the parliament cannot yet draft legislation to try to bring normality to a country plagued by relentless violence. There is tentative agreement that Ibrahim Jaafari of the Shi'ite Dawa party will be prime minister and Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani will be president, with a Sunni Arab candidate probably being offered the job of parliament speaker. But talks have stalled over Kurdish demands to expand their northern autonomous zone to include the strategic oil city of Kirkuk and over the fate of the Kurdish peshmerga militias, which Shi'ites want absorbed in Iraq's official security forces. The Kurds also want guarantees Iraq will remain secular. Jaafari said a deal would be reached soon. "Within two weeks you will see the birth of a new government," he told reporters after the parliament meeting. Under Iraq's interim constitution, parliament must agree on a president and two vice presidents by a two-thirds majority. Those three will then appoint a prime minister. The assembly must also oversee the writing of a permanent constitution. Current Prime Minister Iyad Allawi and President Ghazi al-Yawar, both of whom keep their jobs until a new government is agreed, told the assembly the process must be inclusive and involve Sunni Arabs, who have little parliamentary representation after many of them stayed away from the polls. The delay in forming a government has angered many Iraqis, after more than eight million people defied suicide bombers and mortar attacks to vote in the Jan 30 elections. They want urgent action to improve security and restore basic services. Some Iraqis say the deadlock is playing into the hands of insurgents determined to wreck the political process. In Baquba, northeast of Baghdad, a suicide car bomb exploded at an Iraqi army checkpoint today, killing three Iraqi soldiers and wounding eight people, police said. Al Qaeda's wing in Iraq also claimed the Baquba attack in an Internet statement. -- Reuters.

#### IRAQ-KUWAIT

London, Mar 11 -- A press report, dated Mar 10, states: The United Nations panel overseeing compensation for victims of Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait has approved new awards worth \$265 million, mostly to families of people who died in Iraqi detention, officials said. Joe Sills, spokesman for the UN

Compensation Commission, said today that the panel approved a total of \$161 million in claims from families of 602 people who died in Iraqi custody, as well as two people injured by land mines. Before Saddam Hussein's ouster in 2003, Iraq refused to confirm the deaths of many prisoners seized during the conflict. "These 602 families have lived for years with the hope that their loved ones were alive," said Sills, adding that sums to be paid out would include compensation for more than a decade of mental anguish. Most of the families are Kuwaiti, said Mojtaba Kazazi, chief of the commission secretariat, but Kuwaiti authorities also filed claims on behalf of around 30 families of citizens of Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iran, Jordan and India, he said. The panel has now approved claims worth a total of \$52.1 billion. Money to pay the claims comes from Iraqi oil sales. Payments, however, are running well behind approvals for compensation claims. The overall amount released for individuals, companies and governments is now \$19 billion, the commission said. However, the commission has decided to speed up payments to the families of the deceased detainees. Each of the 602 families will get an initial payment of at least \$100,000 by April, he said. All claims are expected to be decided by June, 2005, when the panel will close itself down. The panel is made up of the 15 UN Security Council member countries. The council decided in 2003 that the income to pay for the reparations would be 5% of Iraqi oil sales.

#### ISRAEL

Ramallah, West Bank, Mar 14 -- Israel agreed today to begin the long delayed handover of three West Bank cities to Palestinian control on Wednesday (Mar 16), Palestinian and Israeli officials said. The decision emerged only hours before a planned meeting of Palestinian factions in Cairo at which President Mahmoud Abbas will try to get militants to finalize their offer of a ceasefire with Israel. Militant leaders had said earlier they would agree to a truce only if Israel freed more Palestinian prisoners and began withdrawing soldiers from Palestinian cities that Israel had reoccupied during the last four years of violence. Israeli political sources said Israel had agreed at a separate meeting today to be more flexible about releasing Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails. Israel had pledged to hand over five West Bank cities before a Feb 8 peace summit in Egypt, but delayed because of disagreement over the scope of a pullback and because of a Feb 25 suicide bomb attack that killed five Israelis in Tel Aviv. But at a meeting near Tel Aviv today, Israeli Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz and Palestinian Interior Minister Nasser Youssef agreed Israel would withdraw troops from the West Bank town of Jericho on Wednesday, defense ministry officials said. Israel will hand over a second

West Bank town, Tulkarm, next week, and a third, Qalqilya, the following week, they said. Saeb Erekat, the chief Palestinian negotiator, said Israel also agreed to let Palestinian police armed with pistols enter a village north of Jericho and agreed not to hunt down wanted Palestinians living in Jericho. Israeli officials said Israel would remove one of two disputed checkpoints near Jericho, and Erekat said Israel had said it would remove the other roadblock in another month. -- Reuters.

London, Mar 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: Israeli and Palestinian security commanders were wrapping up a joint tour of Jericho today, the final step in handing over the quiet West Bank town to Palestinian security control. The handover follows weeks of dispute over the removal of three army roadblocks ringing the town. In a compromise, Israeli troops were taking down one barrier today and leaving two in place for another month. Jericho is the first of five towns to be handed to the Palestinians in coming weeks, in line with agreements reached at a Mideast summit last month.

Jericho, West Bank, Mar 16 -- Israeli forces transferred control of Jericho to the Palestinians today, a move likely to help Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas commit militants to a cease-fire so he can talk peace with Israel. Palestinian militants were close to agreeing a formal halt to attacks on Israel, Palestinian officials said, although their discussions were continuing at a meeting in Egypt on how long such a truce should last. The handover was wrapped up after several hours with a handshake between Israeli and Palestinian security commanders on the edge of town. The deal permits armed Palestinian police to operate with an obligation to keep militants in check. In return, Israel agreed to end arrest raids and ease crippling restrictions on movement of the region's 40,000 inhabitants. -- Reuters.

#### **KENYA**

Nairobi, Mar 15 -- At least 30 people were killed during a village raid by militiamen today in one of the deadliest such attacks in northeastern Kenya, police said. Police said most of the 22 villagers killed in the early morning attack on Elgolicha village near Mandera on the Somali border were women and children. Eight militiamen were also killed. "Thirty people have been killed so far, 22 are the victims of the attack who are mostly women and children and eight of the attackers have been shot down by security forces and they are still pursuing them," police spokesman Jasper Ombati said. The area has been the scene of previous fierce fighting between rival Somali clans, which local leaders say have been fuelled by disputes over natural resources and politics. Violence has erupted in several other parts of the country in recent months mainly due to disputes over land and natural

resources. Clashes have flared-up in the Rift Valley province where dozens have been killed during clashes between the Kikuyu, Kenya's biggest tribe, and Maasai herdsmen over access to water and land. -- Reuters.

#### **LEBANON**

Beirut, Mar 11 -- Almost all Syrian troops have left north Lebanon, ending an unbroken 29-year presence and underlining Syria's diminishing role in its small neighbour. In Beirut, the opposition indicated today it would spurn a call by reinstated pro-Syrian Prime Minister Omar Karami for a national unity government, deepening a political crisis ahead of parliamentary elections scheduled for May. A security source said the Syrians had not yet vacated two intelligence offices and two military posts in and around the northern town of Tripoli but could do so within 24 hours. All other positions, including a large base at an airstrip, were evacuated overnight and thousands of soldiers and hundreds of vehicles crossed into Syria, witnesses said. Syrian forces first entered Lebanon in 1976 early in the civil war. Their numbers have declined to 14,000 from a peak of 40,000 but they had never before abandoned the north. Syrian troops also continued to return home or move eastwards from the Beirut area in line with a phased withdrawal plan agreed this week amid intense global pressure on Damascus to lift its military and political grip on Lebanon. Lebanon's pro-Syrian cabinet fell last week after an outcry over the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri but Karami was reappointed yesterday in a move opposition leaders said would only prolong political uncertainty. "We don't think that this appointment gives the Lebanese hope," Druze leader Walid Jumblatt said in Moscow, describing it as "a disappointment and an extension to the crisis." The United States, which has been demanding that Syria end its involvement in Lebanon, criticised Karami's reappointment. Lebanon's Defence Minister has said the first phase of the withdrawal plan, which calls for a Syrian pullback to the eastern Bekaa Valley, will be completed next week. Beirut and Damascus will then decide how long any Syrian troops remain. The UN resolution demands a full Syrian withdrawal, the disarming of militias and free elections. -- Reuters.

London, Mar 17 -- A press report, dated today, states: Between 20 and 30 Syrian workers in Lebanon have been killed in anti-Syrian attacks in recent weeks, Hizbollah's chief said today. Anger at Syria's role in Lebanon has risen sharply since the killing of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri last month, with many Lebanese and the opposition blaming Syria for the death. Syria has denied any role and is withdrawing its forces from Lebanon under international and Lebanese opposition pressure.

#### **NEPAL**

London, Mar 11 -- A press report, dated today, states: Nepal's former prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba has been freed more than month after he was sacked by the king and placed under house arrest. His release comes as his leading opposition party says it will challenge the country's state of emergency with a series of protests next week. The Nepali Congress says members will risk arrest by holding sit-ins in front of government offices nationwide. Police said several other detainees leaders and activists were also released today, including former Home Minister Purna Bahadur Khadka. No reason was given for their release. There has been national and international pressure on the king to free the detainees. Protests since the takeover have therefore been sporadic, although some rallies were held on Tuesday (Mar 8), with about 200 protesters detained. Senior leader of the Nepali Congress and former minister Ram Sharan Mahat said the new campaign would be peaceful and non-violent. He said other partners in a five-party alliance opposing the king's move were expected to join it, but he ruled out an alliance with Maoist rebels who have been engaged in a bloody insurgency to overthrow the monarchy. Mr Mahat said the Nepali Congress had also directed its workers not to go into hiding or exile abroad. A number of leaders and activists have gone into hiding or exile in India to avoid arrest. The second biggest opposition party, the Communist Party of Nepal, has also said it will step up its protests. "From Monday, our protests will take a bigger shape," said one party leader, Birod Khatiwada. In a separate development, Pakistan's outgoing ambassador to Kathmandu, Zamir Akram, has said Islamabad is willing to offer Nepal weapons to counter the Maoist insurgency there. India and Britain have suspended military aid following the royal coup. Mr Akram said in the Rising Nepal newspaper: "We have offered possibilities of training. We are also ready to provide arms if that is required by Nepal."

Kathmandu, Mar 13 -- Nepal's Maoist chief said today the rebels would call countrywide protests including transport blockades and strikes against King Gyanendra's Feb 1 power grab. Rebel leader Prachanda also asked the guerrillas to step up attacks on security forces to protest the king's move to suspend democracy, end civil liberties and impose strict curbs on the press. As part of the planned protests, the Maoist leader called for an 11-day nationwide strike from Apr 2 and asked people to join in it in large numbers. Prachanda's statement came as Nepal's mainstream political parties were gearing up to defy a ban on protests tomorrow by kicking off fresh anti-monarchy rallies across the country. Security forces in Nepal have been quick to crush small protests against the king's seizure of power, bundling away political and human right



activists in vans to detention centres. Mainstream parties have refused to join the rebels in protests unless the Maoists, who want set up a single-party communist republic, gave up the use of violence. Under the state of emergency, which gives soldiers sweeping powers, authorities have banned media reports that Kathmandu views as encouraging the rebels. -- Reuters.

Kathmandu, Mar 14 -- Nepal security forces today arrested hundreds of people calling for the restoration of democracy in the biggest protests since King Gyanendra seized power last month, political parties and witnesses said. The Himalayan kingdom's five main political parties had called on their members to defy a ban on protests to register their opposition to last month's "royal coup". The biggest protest was in the eastern town of Janakpur but a crackdown by security forces muted the response elsewhere. "Hundreds of protesters waving party flags shouted slogans denouncing the king's move, and the sporadic protests continued for more than two and a half hours," said Brij Kumar Yadav, a journalist in Janakpur. The Communist Party of Nepal (UML) said 500 activists were arrested in Janakpur, while Yadav estimated there had been 300 arrests there. There were at least 100 other arrests around the country, party sources and witnesses said, including 15 in the capital Kathmandu. Police said 12 people were injured in a baton-charge in Mahottari town in eastern Nepal. In Kathmandu, a planned protest fizzled before it had begun, with riot police and reporters outnumbering protesters in the city's Asan bazaar but there were sporadic gestures of defiance. -- Reuters.

#### PAKISTAN

London, Mar 14 -- A press report, dated Mar 13, states Unidentified saboteurs blew up a 20-inch diameter pipe supplying gas to Karachi at the Garhi Hasan Canal, 50 kilometres northwest of Shikarpur in Sindh, en route to Pakistan Petroleum Limited's Sui Gas Purification Plant in Sui, Balochistan, at about 0100 hrs, today. A bomb planted by saboteurs destroyed a six-inch portion of the line on the Sindh-Balochistan border, causing a 10-foot deep ditch. The police have already arrested several suspects. "The blast only damaged a reserve pipeline and it has failed to disrupt the gas supply," Sukkur District Police Officer Din Muhammad told reporters.

Karachi, Mar 14 -- Pakistan state owned gas utility-Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) said a powerful explosion occurred at about 1300 hrs in the early hours of yesterday, near the Garhi Hasan Canal, some 50kms north-west of Shikarpur, en route to Pakistan Petroleum Ltd's (PPL) Sui Gas Purification Plant in Sui, Balochistan. The explosion did not cause any damage the piling carrying a main SSGC pipeline, but the pipeline itself was damaged and a

gaping hole was caused in the ground. The local administration arrived quickly at the scene after the explosion. A spokesman of SSGC in a statement pointed out the purported intention of saboteurs, who caused the explosion, was to disrupt the flow of gas in a vital sector of the SSGC transmission network, carrying gas from Dadu and Zamzama gas fields, upstream to Sui, from where it is loaded on to the SNGPL transmission lines going north to the Punjab and NWFP. Fortunately, the saboteurs failed in causing any disruption to the supply of gas, as an alternative SSGC transmission line now carries gas to the Sui Plant, in place of the pipeline that was damaged in the blast. As a result, there was neither any leakage of gas nor fire caused. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

#### RUSSIA

London, Mar 14 -- A press report, dated Mar 13, states: Russian security forces today killed a Chechen militant warlord in a special operation, the Chechen Interior Ministry said. Kantash Mansarov, leader of the extremist Jamaat group of Grozny, was killed in an operation in the morning, the ministry's spokesman Ruslan Atsayev was cited by Itar-Tass news agency as saying. Mansarov staged an armed resistance when the security forces were trying to detain him and was killed, Atsayev said, adding that an officer with the local security forces was injured in the skirmish. Mansarov was recently appointed "the emir" of Grozny in charge of rebel underground operations in the capital of Russia's Chechnya republic after his predecessor Yunadi Turchayev was killed a month ago.

#### SOMALIA

United Nations, Mar 14 -- Weapons are still pouring into Somalia at "a brisk and alarming rate" despite a 1992 U.N. arms embargo, threatening efforts to install a new national government, U.N. monitors reported today. Despite rising prices, individuals from both the new transitional federal government and opposition groups are buying up the illegal weapons, according to the latest report from the monitoring group. While demand for financing has soared, buyers are finding the money inside and outside the north-east African nation from sources ranging from illegal charcoal exports and printing counterfeit currency to school and university fees and looting, the report by the group of four outside experts said. The group recommended tightening controls along Somalia's borders and coastline. It said neighbouring countries should coordinate better and share information to improve their effectiveness. The monitoring group turned over to the U.N. Security Council a sealed draft list of arms embargo violators, in the event the council plans future enforcement measures. The monitoring group gathered information, documents and

pictures showing that despite the new government, "or perhaps because of it, arms embargo violations continued to occur at a brisk and alarming rate." It said the arms shipments easily circumvented neighbouring states' efforts to block them. With most of the weapons flowing to opposition groups, "there is a seriously elevated level of threat of possible violence against the peaceful establishment in Somalia of the transitional federal government," the group said. The opposition groups "are well organized and funded and have publicly expressed their intent to violently oppose the transitional federal government and any international supporters that may provide military support inside Somalia," it said. -- Reuters.

#### SRI LANKA

London, Mar 11 -- A press report, dated today, states: Sri Lanka's Tamil Tiger rebels have admitted to having an airstrip in the northern territory they control, a pro-rebel website reported yesterday. The Tigers' chief peace negotiator Anton Balasingham told Norwegian peace broker Erik Solheim at a meeting in London yesterday that the airstrip existed before the rebels entered into a ceasefire with the government in 2002, the TamilNet website said. The statement was the first public confirmation that the Tigers have an airstrip in the rebel-held Kilinochchi district amid government fears that the guerrillas are acquiring air power. The government also suspects that the Tigers possess light aircraft based on surveillance photos. The air force knew "a long time back" that the Tigers had an airstrip, but in "our recent observations around January the aircraft were spotted," air force Commander Air Marshal Donald Perera said.

London, Mar 12 -- A press report, dated today, states: At least three people were critically wounded when suspected Tamil Tiger rebels threw a grenade into the office of a rival group in eastern Sri Lanka today, military officials said. The attack was the latest in a spate of violent incidents between the Tiger rebels and a breakaway faction that Scandinavian truce monitors fear could result in the collapse of a ceasefire. The victims were inside the People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE) office in the restive town of Batticaloa, 300 kilometres east of Colombo, officials said. "The PLOTE office had police guards, but the attacker managed to throw a grenade and escape," the military official in Batticaloa said by telephone. Other officials said arrangements were being made to airlift the victims to Colombo for treatment. At least 10 people have been killed in separate incidents in the eastern province in what the military described as an upsurge in rebel internecine clashes.

#### SUDAN

Khartoum, Mar 14 -- Sudanese government troops attacked a Darfur

rebel group today breaking a ceasefire in the western region of Sudan, the rebel group said. "As we speak we are under attack by government troops in about 40 cars and about 600 Janjaweed (militia)," Khalil Abdallah, the political secretary of the rebel National Movement for Reform and Development (NMRD), told Reuters from Darfur. "This shows they are not respecting the ceasefire agreement at all," Abdallah said. The rebel splinter group, based mainly along the border between Sudan and Chad, was formed early last year after commanders split from the leadership of one of the two main Darfur rebel groups. The NMRD and the Sudanese government signed a ceasefire in December but talks mediated by Chad have since broken down. -- Reuters. (See issue of Feb 22.)

London, Mar 17 -- A press report, dated Mar 16, states: Foreign United Nations staff in the west of Sudan's war-torn Darfur region have been withdrawn due to threats from pro-government militia. UN envoy to Sudan Jan Pronk said the threats arose because authorities in West Darfur were trying to disarm the Janjaweed militia. The Janjaweed are accused of killing and raping villagers and driving two million from their homes. Khartoum denies links to the Janjaweed, but admits arming some militia. Some 30 foreign staff have been withdrawn to West Darfur state capital El Geneina. The UN is in discussion with the authorities in West Darfur to try and resolve the situation and is also trying to contact the militia. Mr Pronk said while the overall situation was improving in Darfur as a whole, some spots were so bad humanitarian activities had to be suspended to the detriment of those who needed help. Most of Darfur's two million displaced live in refugee camps. In the last 18 months, the UN estimates at least 180,000 people have died in Darfur of illness and malnutrition.

## Kidnappings



### BRAZIL

London, Mar 15 -- A press report, dated Mar 14, states: Football star Luis Fabiano has appealed to the Brazilian media for silence over the kidnapping of his mother. On Friday (Mar 11) gunmen abducted Sandra Helena Clemente from her house in Campinas, north-west of Sao Paulo. It is the third time a footballer's mother has been kidnapped in four months in Brazil, and the second kidnapping in the past two weeks. The FC Porto star asked Brazilian media to "maintain their distance" and not to give out information. In a statement from his agent, Mr Fabiano said he would try and keep the media as best informed as he could, according to the AFP news agency. Police have not yet said

whether they have received a ransom demand for Mrs Clemente but money appears to be the likely motive. Police say Mrs Clemente was on her way to meet a friend when she was snatched by two gunmen, who bundled her into a car before driving off. Two weeks ago, the mother of Sao Paulo forward Grafite was taken hostage. She was freed by police a day later. Less fortunate was the mother of Robinho, a player hailed by some as the new Pele. She was kidnapped in November at a family party and spent 40 days hostage before being released unharmed. A ransom was reportedly paid.

## Labour Disputes



### BELGIUM

London, Mar 12 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Some 40 flights carrying 1,500 persons have been affected by the strike of Belgocontrol staff yesterday, between 1130 hrs and 1330 hrs. Nine departing flights and seven arriving flights were cancelled, and five flights were diverted to the Netherlands. SN Brussels Airlines as the main user of the airport was the most affected, with four cancelled flights. Their passengers were rerouted on other flights. Thirteen flights, including two African flights, were delayed by one to two hours.

### CREW OF MALTESE VESSEL AT WALLAROO, AUSTRALIA

Sydney, Mar 14 -- The International Transport Workers Federation has asked the Federal Government to establish how the captain of a bulk carrier could be allowed to use a localised industrial dispute on board his vessel to declare a level 2 security alert under the International Ship and Port facility Security (ISPS) Code. Level 1 is the normal security level for day-to-day ship and port operations. Level 2 indicates a heightened state of alert, while level 3 is the highest. Filipino crew on board the Maltese flag bulk Flecha (37661 gt, built 1982) voted to go on strike on Saturday (Mar 12) after the captain refused to negotiate with the ITF over pay and conditions. The 23-year-old bulk carrier, owned by Cardiff Marine in Piraeus Greece and chartered by the Australian Wheat Board, is alongside the grain berth in Wallaroo, South Australia, ready to load. The crew, however, has downed tools for the third day, saying they are underpaid and have been denied fresh food and water. When the crew called on the ITF for help on Saturday, and two of their colleagues were sent to hospital with injuries, the Greek master of the ship used an international security alert to raise the gangway and prevent the ITF representatives coming aboard. ITF national coordinator Dean

Summers described the move as an outrageous breach of maritime security, which recognises the right of access for welfare and labour organisations. "The ITF is responsible for crew on these ships of shame and demands that the Wheat Board ensure they don't charter ships that abuse or exploit workers," Mr Summers said. "At a time when shipowners are raking in record profits they can't even supply water, food or medical treatment, let alone minimum wages for third-world crews." Mr Summers called on the Australian Government to send a clear message to international shipowners visiting Australian ports that manipulation of the security code would not be tolerated. An AWB spokesman could not be contacted before press time. -- Lloyd's List Daily Commercial News. (Note -- Flecha arrived Wallaroo Mar 10.)

London, Mar 15 -- A press report, dated today, states: The striking Filipino crew of a Maltese-registered vessel (bulk Flecha), berthed at Wallaroo on Yorke Peninsula in South Australia, has unwittingly sparked an international security alert. The 16 men, who have been on strike since Saturday (Mar 12), locked themselves in their cabins yesterday as union officials negotiated on their behalf. They said they had been denied fresh food and water and were being underpaid, and they refused to load the vessel until their demands were met. After they called in the International Transport Workers' Federation, the vessel's Greek master raised the ship's security level from one to two, which means there is a "heightened risk of a security incident". Although it has since been reversed, the security upgrade prevented union officials from boarding. The vessel was chartered by the Australian Wheat Board to take 50,000 tonnes of wheat to the Middle East. An ITF delegate was on board late yesterday, speaking to crew and representatives of the ship's owner, Cardiff Marine. The federation's Australian co-ordinator, Dean Summers, said the workers had been denied "basic human rights". They complained their drinking water was cloudy and had a bad taste and they were being fed only canned or stale food. He said the security alert permitted the ship's captain to raise the gangway. "This is an outrageous breach of maritime security which recognises the right of access for welfare and labour organisations," he said. Mr Summers said the federation would seek signed guarantees that the crew members would not face any reprisals for their action. "The crew have locked themselves in their cabins for most of the day because they were concerned about what would happen to them," he said. An Australian Wheat Board spokesman said the vessel had been chartered under international protocols, but the board was talking to representatives of the owner to try to resolve the dispute. The vessel would take up to four days to load.

London, Mar 15 -- A press report, dated today, states: The International Transport Workers' Federation says it is disappointed that a replacement crew has been ordered in to replace striking workers aboard a Maltese vessel (bulk Flecha) that is berthed at Wallaroo in South Australia. Nine crew members have been on strike since Saturday (Mar 12), claiming they have been denied fresh food and water. Dean Summers, from the federation, says negotiations with the Greek owners will continue until they implement international minimum standards on board the vessel. He says repatriation will be negotiated for some of the workers, who wish to leave the ship. Mr Summers says shipping officials are trying to break the strike. "They're importing a strike-breaking crew and we certainly don't want to see this issue deteriorate into that level."

London, Mar 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: Striking Filipino sailors on bulk Flecha are behind a threat to indefinitely block the Wallaroo grain wharf in South Australia. Local unions yesterday refused to allow the Maltese-flagged vessel to be serviced or loaded and said it would not leave until the crew's demands were met. If the issue were not resolved soon, other union members, including linesmen and tugboat operators, were expected to join the protest. Union officials say the delay is costing the vessel's owner \$50,000 a day. Nine Filipino crew members have asked for local union help, claiming they are underpaid and have been denied fresh water and food. The Australian Wheat Board had chartered the vessel, in the belief its owner had signed an international maritime agreement on labour standards. Maritime Union of Australia deputy state secretary Jake Field said Wallaroo workers would not load the 50,000 tonnes of grain on to the vessel until the issue was resolved. The vessel's owner, Cardiff Marine, based in Greece, earlier refused to sign an agreement with the International Transport Workers Federation that would guarantee back-pay and improved conditions. But last night, the shipping company agreed to talks and the union anticipated that workers would be able to load the vessel tonight providing the issues were resolved. The ship arrived on Thursday (Mar 10) and was to leave for Iraq on Saturday. (See issue of Mar 16.)

Sydney, Mar 16 -- A strike on board bulk Flecha, alongside at Wallaroo, South Australia is continuing as the maritime union urges the Federal Government to intervene in the dispute. Filipino seafarers on board Flecha stopped work on Saturday (Mar 12), alleging that they had been underpaid and denied fresh food and water. The master invoked anti-terrorism rules to stop union representatives boarding his vessel to talk to the striking seafarers, the International Transport Workers' Federation has claimed. Maritime

Union of Australia deputy secretary Jake Field said that Flecha's crew, under a Greek captain, were being exploited, adding the crew had locked themselves in their cabins in fear of their safety. Mr Field said MUA workers would refuse to service the vessel, or allow it to leave port, until "something is done about breaches in basic humanitarian standards". "If this isn't resolved quickly, other MUA members may also refuse to work on the vessel," he said. He said Flecha's operators had prevented union officials assisting the crew. "It's time the Federal Government intervened," Mr Field said. "Serious human rights abuses and commercial exploitation is taking place in Australian waters." Local unions yesterday refused to allow the vessel to be serviced or loaded and said the vessel would not leave until the crew's demands were met. If the issue were not resolved soon, other union members, including linesmen and tugboat operators, were expected to join the protest. Dean Summers, from the International Transport Workers Federation, said the strike highlights a flaw in the way AWB checks standards on charter vessels. "We hold charterers responsible: whether it's the Australian Wheat Board, whether it's a container ship, those charterers, if they are Australian, should take that responsibility," he told the ABC. Mr Summers said the AWB generally does take care in this respect. An AWB spokesman said the company follows a series of protocols and checks on all ships before they are chartered. -- Lloyd's List Daily Commercial News.

London, Mar 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: There has been a resolution to a dispute involving the crew of bulk Flecha berthed at Wallaroo on South Australia's Yorke Peninsula. This morning Australian union officials acting on their behalf struck a deal that will see them receive a combined total of \$50,000 in back pay. They will also be flown back to the Philippines by the end of the week. A replacement crew will arrive shortly. The ship had been chartered by the Australian Wheat Board and should finally start loading this afternoon. The board says it acted in good faith when taking on the ship and had been unaware of the conditions on board.

#### FRANCE

London, Mar 10 -- A press report, dated today, states: Cross-Channel ferry services between Dover and Calais are waiting for a national French union strike to end this evening. P&O and SeaFrance have had no sailings to Calais since yesterday afternoon because of the industrial action. P&O says it is aiming for an 1845, GMT, departure from Dover and its ferry is ready to leave Calais as soon as the strike is lifted. Operation Stack was in force on the M20 overnight between yesterday and today meaning waiting lorries had to park up on the motorway. P&O spokesperson Brian Rees said he

hoped there would be no significant traffic backlog after the strike ends, because some of the waiting freight was sent over to Zeebrugge. All the main French trade unions were taking part in a 24-hour strike to protest against government economic reforms. The Freight Transport Association said the action would cost freight companies about £1m. Further delays are now expected on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of next week when one of Calais large berths is closed for repairs, leaving only one working berth for all large cross-Channel ferries.

London, Mar 11 -- A press report, dated today, states: Air traffic in and out of Paris slowly returned to normal after an air controllers' strike that forced hundreds of passengers to spend the night at Charles de Gaulle airport, officials said. The stranded passengers were unable to find hotel rooms after their flights were cancelled because of the strike against the privatisation of the state-owned airport operator Aeroports de Paris. An Air France spokesman said the situation would return to normal this afternoon. "We are laying on bigger planes than those initially scheduled to absorb our passengers from Thursday," the spokesman said. "We hope to absorb all our passengers through the morning." Airport officials reported one-hour delays on arrivals and departures at Charles de Gaulle, due in part to poor weather conditions across Europe, while at Orly, delays were described as "not very significant". The air traffic controllers' strike coincided with nationwide actions that brought the capital's metro and bus system to a standstill, closed classrooms and government offices, and saw a mass demonstration by tens of thousands pressing the government to maintain the 35-hour work week and other benefits. Most of the about 150 departing flights that were cancelled at Charles de Gaulle were to medium-haul destinations, airport sources said. Another 90 arriving flights were cancelled. At Paris's other main airport, Orly, cancellations were somewhat lower and fewer passengers were stranded because many live in the Paris area.

#### INDIA

London, Mar 12 -- A press report, dated today, states: Millions of commuters in India's financial and commercial capital had to trudge through congested streets from the railway stations yesterday, as about 45,000 employees of the BEST, the transport undertaking, went on a strike. Mumbai's efficient bus transport network was crippled following the strike, called by four major trade unions. Police also reported stray cases of violence and stone-throwing, as striking workers attacked the few buses that were being operated. The BEST (Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport undertaking) workers are striking over a cut in their wages. The BEST, which is owned by the

municipal corporation, also supplies electricity to commercial and domestic consumers in south Mumbai. However, power supply remained unaffected.

#### ITALIAN AIRLINE PERSONNEL

London, Mar 15 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Alitalia has cancelled 88 flights for tomorrow because of the latest strike by flight attendants, scheduled for the entire day. Alitalia said the cancellations include 54 domestic, 32 international and two intercontinental flights. The walkout was called by Sult, one of several labour confederations representing the airline's staff. The workers are in contract renewal negotiations. Workers have been worried about restructuring plans, which include cutting some 3,700 jobs and separating the airline's ground service operations from its flight business.

London, Mar 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: The 24-hour strike of hostess and stewards of Sult trade union started at midnight in Fiumicino airport. Due to the strike Alitalia has announced the cancellation of 88 flights.

#### ITALY

London, Mar 11 -- Thousands of Fiat SpA workers who fear for their jobs at the struggling Italian group went on strike today and held a demonstration in Rome. The eight-hour strike was called at Fiat plants across the country. The protest in Rome drew as many as 10,000 people, according to Italian news agency Apcom, and disrupted traffic in the capital's centre. The workers are also demanding that Fiat invest more in technology to develop new models, increase its market share, and eventually safeguard its labour force.

### Awards & Settlements



#### ASBESTOS-RELATED ILLNESS, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Mar 15 -- A press report, dated Mar 14, states: Aviva and Zurich Insurance are to appeal a legal decision which found that insurance firms were liable to pay compensation for asbestos. The High Court ruled last month that people with pleural plaques, scarring on the lung lining due to asbestos exposure, could receive compensation. The firms had said it was not a disease as it had no symptoms. The potential cost of UK pleural plaque claims could amount to between £200m and £1.4bn over the next 35 years. Their move came as a claimant in the case challenges his pay-out amount. Ellis Hindson, who was awarded £7,000, had applied for damages of nearly £43,000. Damages of between £5,000 and £15,000 have been awarded to tens of thousands of

people with pleural plaques since three High Court rulings in the 1980s made the condition "compensatable." The High Court case, heard last month, centred on a bid by the two insurance companies to stop pay-outs to people with pleural plaques. The court concluded that anxiety over developing asbestos-related diseases was a valid basis on which compensation could be paid. But it did reduce the level of compensation that could be awarded in future pay-outs. Aviva said it would appeal because Mr Hindson's latest action showed the previous ruling "has not brought clarity to the issue." It added: "We also have some concerns over the logic of the previous judgement from a legal perspective and feel the level of damages awarded remain too high." Zurich said it was appealing after a "close and careful review of the judgement." Last month's ruling was also made against the UK government, which remains liable for asbestos claims involving the former state-run shipbuilding industry. But the government said it would not be joining the insurance companies in the appeal.

#### MEDICAL MALPRACTICE, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Mar 15 -- A press report, dated Mar 14, states: A 10-year-old boy from Northallerton has been awarded £3.3m in compensation after he was born brain damaged. Lawyers for William Gaudie told judges at London's High Court that staff at Friarage Hospital failed to deliver him quickly despite "signs" of distress. Through his mother the boy sued the Northallerton Health Service NHS Trust, who made a "very prompt" admission of liability, the court heard. Mr Justice Moses said the money will be needed to fund a "lifetime of care". James Watson, QC, representing William, told the court hospital staff failed to intervene in time during the delivery, with oxygen starvation and irreversible brain damage the result. Northallerton Health Services NHS Trust ran the Friarage from 1992 to 31 March 2002 when it was dis-established. Management is now co-ordinated by South Tees Hospital NHS Trust.

#### PATENT INFRINGEMENT, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 17 -- A press report, dated Mar 16, states: Research In Motion, maker of the popular BlackBerry messaging device, settled a three-year-old patent dispute today by agreeing to pay \$450 million to NTP, a company that holds a patent on a primitive form of wireless e-mail. In exchange for the one-time payment, NTP will give Research In Motion "an unfettered right to continue its BlackBerry-related wireless business without further interference from NTP or its patents," RIM said in a statement. The case was being appealed in Virginia. Citing "confidentiality restrictions," Marisa Conway, a spokeswoman for RIM, said

the company could not comment on the settlement. It said it would discuss the issue when it reports its fourth-quarter results on Apr 5. Jason P. Tsai, an analyst at ThinkEquity Partners, said the settlement "may seem like a lot of money, but if they had lost in court, RIM potentially could have been shut down in the United States." Several court decisions had indeed gone against Research In Motion. In August, 2003, a federal court ordered the company to make royalty payments that, according to Michael Urlocker, an analyst at UBS Securities, could have totaled more than \$1 billion. That court also banned the sale of BlackBerry handsets and Research In Motion's e-mail services in the United States, but held off on that order pending an appeal. During the initial trial, RIM said that it did not copy NTP's patents, arguing that they were too general and broad to be valid. It also said that because the software in dispute existed only on servers at its headquarters in Canada, the American courts exceeded their jurisdiction. "RIM fought these patents tooth and nail," said Donald E. Stout, a co-founder of NTP and the company's legal counsel. "But now that they've settled, what they said and what they believed doesn't matter anymore. When a settlement like this occurs in a case, it says that people can do business with NTP." Uncertainty over the legal action had been a concern for many investors and customers of Research In Motion, based in Waterloo, Ontario. Research In Motion has set aside \$137 million for the settlement. It said that it would take a charge for the remaining \$313 million against its fourth-quarter results. Despite the settlement's size, it is unlikely to seriously hurt Research In Motion. Kona Shio, an analyst with Conscius Capital Partners in Montreal, forecast that the company would have \$600 million in cash at the end of this year, even after the settlement.

#### PERSONAL INJURY, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Mar 13 -- A press report, dated Mar 11, states: The devoted wife of a security guard left severely disabled after an accident at work was given the chance by the High Court today to have his child. A judge in London ruled that a damages payout of more than £3 million to tragic Bhawesh Patel, who suffered "catastrophic" head injuries in 2001, should include a sum for "assisted conception" for his wife. As a result of Mr Justice Treacy's decision, Mrs Patel will receive around £13,000 towards the cost of realising the couple's dream of having a family. Mr Patel, 33, of Stanmore, Middlesex, was gravely injured when he fell from the tailgate of a four-wheel-drive vehicle driven by a colleague as he went with other security staff to help break up a fight at a leisure centre in Stevenage, Hertfordshire. His severe brain injury has left him dependent on carers for

all of his activities - he is unable to manage his own affairs and will need 24-hour care for the rest of his life. Legal proceedings for compensation were launched by his wife on his behalf against the insurers of the driver of the vehicle and the men's former employers, Midas Security Group. Mr Justice Treacy said that in January last year Mr Patel's action in negligence was compromised before another High Court judge - who approved an acceptance of liability by the defendants subject to a reduction of 25% in respect of contributory negligence - on the part of Mr Patel. Since then substantial agreement had been reached between the parties on assessment of damages.

#### ROAD ACCIDENT, AUSTRALIA

London, Mar 15 -- A press report, dated today, states: The New South Wales Court of Appeal has reinstated a \$3.7 million payout to a girl left brain damaged after being run over while crossing a Blue Mountains road. Nadia Ryan was nine when she was hit by a truck as she crossed a service road adjoining the Great Western Highway on Jul 9, 1994. She was holding the hand of her father Gregory when they crossed the road near the Blaxland Shopping Centre. However, she let go and was hit by a truck driven by Jack Pledge. Now 19, Nadia was left brain damaged after the accident and successfully sued Mr Pledge, the Blue Mountains Council and the Roads and Traffic Authority in the NSW Supreme Court for negligence. NSW Supreme Court Justice John Dunford awarded her \$3.7 million in April 2001. But the NSW Court of Appeal reduced the amount of damages a year later to \$2.925 million. Justice Dunford had found Mr Pledge was negligent in failing to keep a proper lookout and travelling at a speed of close to 60km/h which was "excessive" because of the road's narrowness and visual obstruction of thick shrubbery on a nearby nature strip. This finding was not challenged on appeal.

#### TRADEMARK INFRINGEMENT, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 15 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Philip Morris USA, the largest cigarette maker in the United States, has been awarded \$173 million US in damages from Swiss cigarette retailer Otamedia in a trademark-infringement suit. Philip Morris USA, a subsidiary of New York-based Altria Group Inc., said the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York ordered Otamedia to pay the fine for selling Philip Morris USA-brand cigarettes in the U.S. The company's brands include Marlboro, Benson & Hedges, Merit and Virginia Slims. Otamedia operated the Internet site yesmoke.com, which sells cigarettes around the world and avoids many of the import tariffs and taxes subject to domestic retailers. Philip Morris USA first sued Otamedia in 2002, winning a January 2003 U.S. District Court

injunction against the company. Otamedia, which was renamed Yesmoke SA, ignored the order, Philip Morris said. In 2004, the court then ordered Otamedia to surrender its U.S. website, yesmoke.com, to Altria. That Internet site now redirects to Philip Morris USA's site. Otamedia continued to sell cigarettes in the U.S. from another website yesmoke.ch.

### Railway Accidents



#### BHATAPARA AREA, INDIA

London, Mar 14 -- A press report, dated today, states: Traffic on the busy Howrah-Mumbai section was disrupted today following the derailment of a goods train near Bhatapara railway station, near Raipur. Seven wagons of the empty goods train derailed near Bhatapara, between Raipur and Bilaspur stations, affecting train traffic on both up and down lines, chief PRO of South-East-Central (SEC) Railways Jagdeesh Kumar said. However, the cause of the mishap is not yet known, he said. The derailment has affected over a dozen trains, including Geetanjali Express, Mumbai Mail, Kurla Express, Azad Hind Express, he said adding, work for the restoration of track has already started.

#### BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA

London, Mar 11 -- A press report, dated Mar 10, states: At least 129 people were injured today by a collision between two urban trains on a bridge, at Buenos Aires. The emergency director of the city government, German Fernandez, said that the crash took place when the train stopped on the bridge and was rammed by another one in movement, in Palermo neighbourhood. Those injured received assistance on the spot by firemen and police agents who took them aboard ambulances to nearby hospitals. Fernandez affirmed that out of the 129 injured, 65 were hospitalized, none of them seriously hurt, although the majority are cuts and concussions. The collision occurred on a seven-metre-high bridge. The authorities said they do not know why the first train stopped. The spokesman of the firm Trenes de Buenos Aires, Gustavo Gago, said the speed-limit of 40 kilometres-per-hour perhaps prevented the tragedy from being more serious.

#### MASKINONGE, QUEBEC, CANADA

London, Mar 15 -- A press report, dated today, states: A train derailed yesterday on a stretch of track running through the village of Maskinonge in the Mauricie region. Two locomotives and three freight cars of a Quebec Gatineau Railway train derailed about 0530 while travelling along Highway 138, the Surete du

Quebec said. The two workers inside the train were unhurt. The train was not carrying dangerous materials.

#### PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC

London, Mar 16 -- A press report, dated today, states Two people have died and three were injured when a Prague tram derailed and slammed into a group of commuters at one of the Czech capital's busiest stops. The tram veered off the tracks and its second carriage ploughed into the crowd waiting to board at the Karlovo namesti stop, Simona Cigankova, a spokeswoman for the city rescue services, said. The accident, which took place around 1630, AEDT, seriously disrupted morning traffic in downtown Prague for several hours. A woman died after the impact pushed her into the path of a moving lorry, and a man died when he was struck as he stood at the tram stop. "The rear carriage swept a woman under a passing truck and she died, and it killed a man standing on the platform," Prague fire service spokesman Vaclav Hladik said. Three women, aged 30, 44 and 58, were taken to hospital, two of them with serious injuries. Officials immediately opened an inquiry to determine the cause of the accident.

#### SANTA FE SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 11 -- A press report, dated today, states: Several cars of a Union Pacific freight train detached from a locomotive and went off the tracks and into a warehouse in Santa Fe Springs today. The accident was reported at 1750 hrs at Los Nietos Road and Pioneer Boulevard on a Union Pacific spur line, Lt. Wyatt Powell of the Whittier Police Department, which patrols Santa Fe Springs, said. No injuries were reported.

#### THUA THIEN-HUE PROVINCE, VIETNAM

Hanoi, Mar 12 -- At least 11 people were killed and around 200 injured when a north-south express train was derailed in central Vietnam today, officials said. A nationwide broadcast of state-run Vietnam Television (VTV) showed two carriages that had been thrown off the track and left lying on the bank of a lake. Eight of the train's 13 carriages had been derailed, it said. "The train was running too fast," a Vietnamese witness said in the broadcast. "Shortly later we heard a loud sound. We ran and started breaking windows to get out the injured people." VTV said the military were using boats to rush the injured to hospitals in Hue city. Officials said around 200 survivors had been hurt. About 30 of the injured were in a critical condition, said railway officials and rescue workers in Phu Loc district in the central province of Thua Thien-Hue, 400 miles south of Hanoi. Police and railway officials were investigating the cause of the accident. The train left Hanoi yesterday with 500 passengers and a

crew of 29 on what would have been a 1,000-mile, 29-hour journey to the commercial southern hub Ho Chi Minh City. The accident blocked the line and brought other trains to a halt. An official from the state railway authority told VTV rescue workers were working to ensure traffic resumed tomorrow. -- Reuters.

London, Mar 14 -- A press report, dated today, states: The death toll from a train accident in central Vietnam has climbed to 13 and dozens of injured passengers are still being treated in hospital. Railway officials say traffic will resume by midday (local time), a day after a north-south express train derailed 650 kilometres south of Hanoi. Two of the train's 13 carriages were flung from the track. Doctors at hospitals in the nearby cities of Hue and Danang say a total of 55 passengers have been admitted for treatment.

London, Mar 15 -- A press report, dated today, states: Vietnamese police said over-speeding is attributed to the train derailment in central Thua Thien Hue on Mar 12, which is considered the most tragic rail accident in Vietnam in the past 30 years. After probing into the train's black box, the police concluded that the train was running at a speed of 68 kmh just before the accident occurred, instead of 40 kmh as stipulated, local newspaper Transport reported today. The accident killed 11 local people, severely injured 70 others, damaged 8 out of 13 compartments, and blocked other trains from running for 26 hours. It occurred in Phu Loc district when the train with 500 passengers and 29 staff was travelling from Hanoi capital to Ho Chi Minh City.

London, Mar 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: Police have arrested the driver of a train that derailed on the weekend, killing 11 people in Vietnam. Bui Thai Son has been charged with violating railway regulations and disregarding the speed limit, leading to grave consequences. He has been remanded for four months by a court in the central province of Thua Thien-Hue. Son reportedly admitted his mistake, saying that after he noticed the high speed it was too late to apply the brakes. The train was reported to have been travelling at 69 km per hour, nearly double the limit. Eight of the train's 13 carriages derailed and the track was blocked for a day.

## Robberies & Thefts



### SECURITY VAN, DUBLIN, REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

London, Mar 15 -- A press report, dated today, states: It is believed that up to 4m euro may have been stolen in a raid on a security van in Dublin yesterday. A gang of armed and masked men stole the cash after

kidnapping the family of a cash delivery van driver and holding them hostage overnight. Irish police have said it was too early to say if paramilitaries were involved in the robbery. Gardai will also not confirm the amount stolen in the raid, but say that between 2m and 4m euro was taken.

## Miscellaneous



### CARGO DISPUTE, CHITTAGONG, BANGLADESH

Karachi, Mar 13 -- General cargo Ryu Gyong has now reported to the Chittagong port authority that it is to leave on Mar 16. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Karachi, Mar 16 --The shipping agent of general cargo Ryu Gyong said this afternoon that the issue of the quality of the vessel's cargo of wheat had been resolved and the government had given permission for the vessel to discharge at Chittagong. The vessel is expected to begin discharging its cargo immediately. The vessel has informed the port that it will sail on Mar 18. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

### COLLAPSE OF RAMP, CALAIS, FRANCE

London, Mar 13 -- A press report, dated Mar 12, states: Cross-channel travellers are being warned to expect further disruption next week following the collapse of a loading bay at Calais last month. The collapse left the port with only two berths big enough for large cross-channel ferries, one of which will be closed for repairs from Monday. P&O said its services from Dover would be subject to more delays and cancellations on Monday and Tuesday. SeaFrance said 10 of its 15 scheduled crossings would be unaffected. Its other services may be subject to some delays. It comes after French strike action caused two days of ferry disruption. No P&O or SeaFrance ferries were able to leave Dover from Wednesday afternoon until Thursday evening due to the 24-hour French national strike. The ferry service between Dover and Calais has been badly disrupted since the loading bay collapse in early February. There are regular delays of between two and four hours for passengers heading to Calais and lorry traffic through the port has been badly affected. P&O said the disruption had cost the company millions and it would be seeking compensation from the Port of Calais. Hoverspeed's catamaran crossing, which resumes on Wednesday after the winter break, uses a different terminal so should be unaffected.

### OUTBREAK OF "BIRD FLU"

London, Mar 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: The Government confirmed today an outbreak of bird flu in South Sulawesi and West Java,

suggesting slaughtering of infected chickens and vaccination. "Yes, it is avian influenza. But the viruses have not mutated," Minister of Agriculture Anton Apriantono said after meeting President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. Anton said the outbreaks in West Java in January and South Sulawesi last month had killed thousands of chickens. He said the ministry had ordered an isolation for South Sulawesi from inter-island chicken trading.

### OUTBREAK OF RABIES, CHINA

London, Mar 16 - A press report, dated today, states: A southern Chinese province's worst rabies epidemic in a decade has prompted authorities to kill unvaccinated dogs and limit the animals' movement between counties, the government said. Guangdong province, which borders Hong Kong, reported 244 cases of the disease last year -- an increase of 41 percent from 2003. Rabies has been reported in eight cities in the populous province. The provincial health bureau has ordered the killing of all dogs that have not been vaccinated within a 1.5-mile radius of villages where rabies was reported, and in counties where two or more cases have been reported. Affected counties have also been banned from selling or transferring the dogs that have been killed, and are not allowed to import dogs for one year. The report did not say whether there were reports of people affected by the disease.

### POWER OUTAGE, SOUTH AUSTRALIA

London, Mar 14 -- A press report, dated today, states: Homes, businesses and commuters were thrown into chaos today by widespread power failures across Adelaide and areas of South Australia. An electricity interconnector between Victoria and South Australia failed just after 0700, CDT, and power was still to be restored to most of the affected areas an hour later. The blackouts hit many Adelaide suburbs although the Central Business District appeared unaffected. Power was also cut to areas east of the city, including Murray Bridge, as well as regional centres in the midnorth and the south-east of the state. Earlier today, ETSA Utilities spokesman Craig Cock said it was unclear what had caused the problem. "I don't know whether it's the power line or a power station that has fallen off," he said. Mr Cock said the issue would be managed by the national electricity authority. He was unsure how long the disruptions would continue. "The fact that it happened so suddenly, to restore everything to normal is going to take some time," he said on ABC radio. "My estimate would be at least a couple of hours." He said it was likely power would be restored to areas progressively as supplies became available. Police said the power failures also caused major traffic problems throughout Adelaide, with traffic lights out and the Glenelg to city tram also out of action.

## Fires & Explosions

### APPLE PACKHOUSE, HAWKES BAY, NEW ZEALAND

London, Mar 12 -- A press report, dated today, states: A fire in Hawkes Bay has demolished one of the biggest apple packhouses in the area. More than 100 employees at Longview Packhouse managed to escape unharmed as fire teams fought to contain the blaze that also threatened a nearby house. Ten metre flames chewed through the volatile packing materials quickly. The smoke plume was visible more than 30 kilometres away in nearby Napier as fire crews from all over the region were called to the scene. Water supply was initially a problem with crews grasping at any source available. The packhouse is one of the biggest in the country packing apples for export for around 30 growers. "This isn't even the middle of our season - probably not even a quarter into it, so its going to be major," says Packhouse worker Aileen Gillespie. Emergency crews from all over the district were stretched, not only battling the main blaze for several hours but also trying to stop it from spreading to a near-by house. "We managed to keep the fire away from the house which was being affected by the radiated bins that were on fire when we arrived as well," says Hastings chief fire officer Ray Brown. It is not yet known how the fire started inside the packhouse and an investigation is now underway.

### BERTH, UMM QASR, IRAQ

London, Mar 15 -- Silo berth No.10 at Umm Qasr has been damaged by a fire which broke out in two engines running the conveyor belt last night. Initial estimates indicate that it will take about three weeks to repair the damage and get the silo operational again. In the meantime, the port will have to rely on mobile evacuators for the discharge of wheat at berths 1 and 12. As there are currently four bulk wheat vessels in port, and another two at the pilot station, it is estimated that there will be a delay of approximately 15-20 days.

### CATHEDRAL, MADISON, WISCONSIN, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 15 -- A press report, dated Mar 14, states: A fire tore through St. Raphael Cathedral today, destroying the roof of Madison's oldest church and damaging its recently renovated steeple. Madison Bishop Robert Morlino said church officials need to determine the condition of the structure - the seat of the 11-county, Roman Catholic diocese - before deciding whether the building can be saved or whether a new cathedral would have to be built from the ground up. A passer-by called the Madison

Fire Department at 0532 hrs, after seeing flames shoot out a window of the cathedral, said Bernadette Galvez, a public information officer for the department. Firefighters arrived from a station three blocks away within minutes. No one was injured in the blaze, the cause and cost of which were not known late today. Firefighters first attacked the blaze from inside the cathedral, but were soon called out of the building because of the danger of a structural collapse, Chief Debra Amesqua said. As of late today, fire investigators had not been able to re-enter the church, built in 1854. The steeple was the most visible element of a \$1 million renovation completed in November. The project also included infrastructure improvements, and further refurbishments were planned, church officials said. Although damaged, the steeple remains structurally sound, fire officials said. The cathedral was appraised at \$13 million in 2003 and is insured, said Greg Keller, the diocese's finance director.

### CHURCH, TACOMA, WASHINGTON, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 14 -- A press report, dated Mar 13, states: An early morning fire that destroyed the Grace Missionary Baptist Church today was intentionally set, the Tacoma Fire Department said. Investigators labeled the fire as an arson due to evidence of multiple fire starts on the rear exterior of the building, said Deputy Chief Ron Stephens. The fire caused an estimated \$1 million in damage, Stephens said. No one was injured in the fire reported at about 0145 hrs. Investigators believe an accelerant similar to gasoline was used, Stephens said. An investigator from the federal Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms was working with Tacoma police and fire departments to determine if any federal laws had been broken in the fire.

### COAL MINE, QITAIHE CITY, HEILONGJIANG PROVINCE, CHINA

London, Mar 15 -- A press report, dated today, states: A coal mine blast trapped 19 miners in China's north-eastern Heilongjiang province today, the official Xinhua news agency said. The accident occurred at the Xinfu coal mine in Qitaihe city, according to the Heilongjiang Provincial Administration of Coal Mine Safety, the report said. Rescuers were trying to enter the tunnel. Further investigation was under way, it said. Meanwhile, at another mine in central China, six workers had been trapped for 25 hours after a mudflow, Xinhua reported. The mudflow broke out under the Yaozishan coal mine in Ningxiang County of Hunan Province late on Sunday afternoon, trapping the six workers in an underground tunnel, Xinhua said. "The trapped workers have still hopes of survival, though the oxygen was estimated to support them more than 10 hours," said Yan

Yinchu, vice director of the local working security monitoring bureau.

Beijing, Mar 15 -- Sixteen miners trapped after a coal mine gas explosion in north-east China have been found dead, Xinhua news agency reported today. One miner had been rescued and two were still missing, it said. The accident happened today at a mine in Qitaihe, Heilongjiang province. "The rescue operation is still going on, and the cause of the explosion is under investigation," Xinhua said. -- Reuters.

### FACTORY, CHRISTCHURCH, NEW ZEALAND

London, Mar 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: Firefighters could be at the scene of a major blaze that started in a Christchurch paper recycling factory today for days. Twelve fire engines were sent to the Colledge factory in the suburb of Bromley after the alarm was raised at 0500 hrs, today. "When the crews walked in there was nothing, just a small flame in the ceiling," Christchurch deputy chief fire officer Greg Crawford said. "Twenty seconds later it flashed across the roof," he told NZPA. By 0730 hrs, the factory, which is crammed full of compressed recycled paper, was fully alight but had been contained. "We're basically employing the 'surround and drown' technique using unmanned pumps around the factory." The fire had been contained within the factory's concrete walls, which were bowing and "moving about a bit". Firefighters would be at the scene for the next two or three days, he said, adding that he could not say what had started the fire because it was too dangerous to enter the factory.

### FACTORY, MELBOURNE, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA

London, Mar 13 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: A Victorian spa business has been devastated by fire for the second time in four years. Fire has caused millions of dollars damage to Signature Spas at Hallam, south-east of Melbourne this afternoon. Fire crews used cherry pickers to fight the fire because of the danger of the tilt-slab construction collapsing.

### FACTORY, RHYMNEY, GWENT, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Mar 15 -- A press report, dated today, states: Two primary schools were closed today because of fumes from a blaze at a plastics packaging factory on an industrial estate in south Wales. Gwent Police said people living near the Budelpack factory on the Heads of the Valleys Industrial Estate, Rhymney, should stay indoors with windows shut. Police said the smoke from the blaze is not toxic but could be a mild irritant. The fire, which took hold in three buildings, was discovered by a police patrol at 0420, GMT, today. South Wales Fire Service said it had sent 24 appliances to three buildings at the factory, which makes plastic

packaging. Two buildings were destroyed, while a fire in the third building at the site was under control by 1000, GMT. The A469 road was closed by police but had been reopened by 0630, GMT. All roads leading into the industrial estate remain closed and police have advised people in the area to stay indoors and keep windows shut until smoke from the blaze has subsided. Budelpack Rhymney makes pharmaceutical packaging including sachets, bottles and tissues. Peter Baillie, an councillor from the Twyn Carno ward in Rhymney, said the situation had been contained swiftly by the authorities.

#### **FACTORY, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA**

London, Mar 11 -- A press report, dated today, states: A massive factory blaze that closed a major Sydney road is expected to burn well into the night. More than 150 firefighters planned to go into the Ashfield furniture store and factory to fight the blaze, even though there was a risk of walls and the ceiling collapsing. The building on Parramatta Road in inner-western Sydney, has been burning since about 0900, AEDT. The blaze forced the evacuation of 200 residents and workers and closed the city's major east-west highway. Outbound lanes are expected to remain closed until early tomorrow. The fire, which sent flames 10 m into the air and plumes of black smoke across the sky, had been contained inside the factory, but was not yet under control, New South Wales Fire Brigade Superintendent Ian Krimmer said. "It's expected to burn into the night," Supt Krimmer said. Two people were treated for smoke inhalation and two firefighters were taken to hospital with minor injuries, he said. Firefighters from 28 Sydney stations were preparing to go into the burning building to fight the blaze, he said. "We are about to commence an aggressive internal attack, our objective is to try to extinguish this fire overnight and have it out by morning," Supt Krimmer said. "There are several imminent collapses of walls and roofs (and) this has been the reason for our strategies. Our main priority is the safety of fire crews." People at risk had already been evacuated but there were a number of streets affected by smoke, which were being monitored.

London, Mar 14 -- A press report, dated today, states: A factory destroyed by fire in Sydney has been demolished. Demolition of the Brescia Furniture factory at inner-western Ashfield finished yesterday morning after the building was gutted in a huge blaze which began on Friday (Mar 11), police said. The cause of the blaze is still unknown.

#### **MILL, NINETY SIX, SOUTH CAROLINA, UNITED STATES**

London, Mar 11 -- A press report, dated Mar 10, states: Many people cleared out of their homes tonight as an old mill building burst into flames. Firefighters swarmed in to drown the

inferno filling the sky for miles around with an orange glow, authorities said. The fire started about 0630 hrs at the four-storey brick building, which covers two blocks, according to Pat Dixon, the town's police chief. He said when he got there he saw black smoke coming from the top floor and ten minutes later flames burst through the roof. No one apparently was in the building, which has been closed for years, Dixon said. He said it was to be torn down, its parts broken down and sold overseas. He said he was aware of no injuries, but that state Department of Health and Environmental Control officials were on hand because of uncertainty about what chemical might be in the building. The Red Cross opened an emergency shelter at Temple Baptist Church at 95 Saluda St. in Ninety Six, according to Red Cross spokeswoman Ashley Engler. It was unclear exactly how many people left their homes, but Dixon estimated it may have been more than 100. He said evacuation wasn't mandatory and some people stayed at home. Dixon said he was aware of no injuries. Nineteen fire departments responded, some from other counties. Firefighters were still battling the blaze late tonight. It was unclear how the fire started.

#### **PREMISES, FOREST PARK, OHIO, UNITED STATES**

London, Mar 11 -- A press report, dated Mar 10, states: Last week's \$10 million fire at Faxon Machining in Forest Park was caused by an equipment malfunction, the Ohio Fire Marshal's Office said yesterday. Members of 18 local fire departments helped put out the smoky five-alarm fire on Mar 2. The fire started just before 0800 hrs, in an oil treatment machine at the 150,000-square-foot complex. A small amount of oil spilled into a nearby creek, said Ohio EPA spokeswoman Heather Lauer. Cleanup is going well and is expected to take about two weeks, she said. Crews onsite dammed water upstream from the spill to divert it to a retention basin. At the spill site, non-soluble oil is being skimmed from the surface of the water for proper disposal. Water-soluble chemicals are being pumped to sanitary sewers.

#### **PREMISES, FORT SCOTT, KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI, UNITED STATES**

London, Mar 13 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Fire that raged through Fort Scott's historic downtown destroyed at least seven buildings and damaged about a half-dozen others, the fire chief said today. No one was injured. Strong wind fanned the blaze, which started just before 1400, yesterday in The Other Bar on Main Street, Mayor Gary Billionis said. Firefighters remained at the scene today. The cause of the blaze had not yet been determined, city officials told merchants today. They estimated property losses in the

millions of dollars. At least seven buildings were gutted, Fire Chief Jeff Davis said. Those buildings and possibly two others will have to be demolished, then rebuilt to conform with the historical nature of the downtown area, City Manager Richard Niendstedt added. Fire departments from 10 to 15 nearby communities fought the blaze and two Kansas Army National Guard helicopters dropped water.

London, Mar 14 -- A press report, dated today, states: Federal officials have been called in to help investigate the fire that hit downtown Fort Scott on Friday (Mar 11). The National Response Team from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and ATF agents from Wichita and Kansas City will help Fort Scott officials with the investigation. Senior Special Agent Paul Marquardt says the fire caused about ten million dollars in damages. He says Fort Scott officials asked for ATF assistance because of the size of the fire. ATF developed the National Response Team in 1978 to help with major fire and explosive scenes. The fire hit Fort Scott's downtown Friday. It was largely controlled yesterday. At least nine buildings are destroyed and four more are damaged.

#### **PREMISES, GAITHERSBURG, MARYLAND, UNITED STATES**

London, Mar 10 -- A press report, dated today, states: The fire at the Bugaboo Creek Steakhouse is finally out but firefighters remain concerned the roof may collapse. The fire started around 0515 this morning in the 1500 block of Shady Grove Road in Gaithersburg. Montgomery County Fire and Rescue spokesman Pete Piringer says it took firefighters nearly three hours to put the blaze out because the restaurant had a lot of "false ceilings" and "layers of roof" that was trapping the fire. Piringer says damage to the building is estimated at \$2 million. No one was hurt. The cause of the blaze is still under investigation.

London, Mar 11 -- A press report, dated Mar 10, states: A pre-dawn fire caused about \$2 million in damage to a Gaithersburg steak house. About 100 firefighters, working in subfreezing temperatures, battled the fire at the Bugaboo Creek Steak House. Investigators believe the fire started from a build-up of grease in an exhaust and ventilation system, but they are still sifting through the building, said Pete Piringer, a spokesman for the county fire and rescue service. The restaurant is owned by RARE Hospitality International, an Atlanta-based hospitality company. Authorities believe the fire had been burning for some time when a passerby called 911 at 0515 hrs, Piringer said. The last person in the restaurant left at 0300 hrs, so no one was there when the fire started, he said. There were no injuries reported. Although firefighters were able to quickly knock



down much of the fire, it spread "into concealed spaces," Piringer said. "The roof had been renovated a few times so there were layers of roofing." Firefighters were forced to back out of the building at one point when it seemed the heating and air conditioning units on the roof might fall into the building. They isolated a secure collapse zone, Piringer said at 0930 hrs.

#### **PREMISES, LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS, UNITED STATES**

London, Mar 17 -- A press report, dated Mar 16, states: Fire has destroyed a historic building in Little Rock, Arkansas, that was destined to become a museum on African-American life. There has been no word on what caused the fire. The building was built in 1911 and was the national headquarters for the Mosaic Templars, a major black social organization that dates back to the 1880s. The Mosaic Templars Building Preservation Society announced a campaign last summer to raise money for a planned \$8.5 million renovation, with work having already been done to the third floor. The fire broke out at around 0200 hrs, this morning, and brought down most of the historic structure.

#### **PREMISES, OAK RIDGE, TENNESSEE, UNITED STATES**

London, Mar 10 -- A press report, dated today, states: A fire this morning damaged two family businesses in Oak Ridge. The fire burned the Buffalo Grille and Pub, along with Nature's Marketplace at 205 Oak Ridge Turnpike. Firefighters say their efforts have left severe water damage. It took about an hour to put out the blaze. Oak Ridge Fire Chief Mack Bailey said the fire started in the Buffalo Grille in a hood vent and spread into the attic. He said the building had been remodeled. It has two roofs and an uncertain number of ceilings. Some workers were inside the Buffalo Grille when the fire started but they escaped unharmed. The businesses are owned by a brother and sister. The investigation into the cause of the fire is underway and firefighters remained on scene Thursday afternoon, in case of hot spots.

#### **PREMISES, SITRA, BAHRAIN**

London, Mar 15 -- A press report, dated today, states: A major blaze gutted a construction company building in Sitra yesterday. The fire broke out at about 1145 hrs at the Projects Construction Company, near the Sitra Health Centre. A Bahraini worker suffered a fractured leg as he was trying to run out of the building while two other employees sustained minor injuries. The single-storey building houses the company's office, carpentry workshop, mechanical and painting workshop and other sections. Company commercial manager Michael McAuley said the company has suffered a "big loss" from the fire but it was too early to give an estimate for the damage. "The cause of

fire is under investigation. We still do not know what happened but this is a big loss for the company," he said. "The insurance company will come and assess the damage costs after the fire officials give us a report," he added. Many fire engines from all the fire stations in Bahrain were called to the scene. It took them several hours to put it out. He said that two of the labour camps located near the company suffered smoke damage.

#### **PREMISES, ST. CHARLES, ILLINOIS, UNITED STATES**

London, Mar 10 -- A press report, dated Mar 9, states: St. Charles Authorities are investigating an early morning fire that destroyed a pizzeria and left surrounding businesses with smoke damage, causing nearly \$1 million in damage. A reward is offered for information leading to the arrest of the person responsible for the fire at Rosatti's Pizza, in Prairie St., officials said. "The fire is suspicious and is being investigated" by police in conjunction with the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the St. Charles Fire Department, said St. Charles police Lt. Paul McCurtain. A door to the building had been forced open, McCurtain said, and bank bags with an undetermined amount of cash inside them were found to be missing after the fire was put out. St. Charles firefighters were called to the pizzeria shortly before 0300 hrs, said Joseph Schelstreet, St. Charles assistant fire chief. Workers at a neighbouring tobacco store who were doing inventory noticed smoke and called 911, Schelstreet said. The restaurant was heavily involved in fire when firefighters arrived, he said. Firefighters were able to control the blaze in about an hour, Schelstreet said. The pizzeria was gutted, he said. The 10-unit strip mall includes three restaurants - Rosatti's, a Chinese restaurant and an ice cream parlor. All three had to throw away their food inventory, Schelstreet said, leading to the high damage estimate. "Health department regulations require the food is disposed of," he said. Electrical service to the entire centre also came through Rosatti's, Schelstreet said. Until that service can be restored, all of the stores will remain closed.

#### **PREMISES, WINNIPEG, MANITOBA, CANADA**

London, Mar 16 -- A press report, dated Mar 15, states: A fire Friday (Mar 11) that resulted in up to Can\$1.5 million (US\$1.24 million) in damages to a St. James apartment block was caused by a faulty extension cord. Residents of 18 apartments on the fourth floor and others with extensive smoke damage are expected to spend at least a week in a hotel or with friends and family while the clean-up is completed. Crews from at least three fire restoration companies were cleaning up apartments throughout the building yesterday.

#### **PRISON, HIGUEY, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

London, Mar 11 -- A press report, dated Mar 10, states: The death toll from a fire in a Dominican prison rose to 136, four days after one of Latin America's worst jailhouse fires, an official said today. Two more prisoners died in the past two days, one from a bullet wound and another from smoke inhalation, said Sergio Sarita Valdez, public health undersecretary. Rival gangs battling for control of the drug trade in the Higuey jail, about 103 miles east of Santo Domingo, set bedding ablaze and jammed the locks from the inside of their cell block on Monday (Mar 7). Survivors said prisoners who ignited the fire had a pistol and three machetes, shooting and hacking prisoners who tried to escape. Two of the 16 injured people remained in critical condition today, Sarita said. Thirty bodies were buried together in Higuey's public cemetery on Tuesday after relatives identified them. Authorities plan to begin burying 40 prisoners who had not yet been claimed by relatives tomorrow. The unclaimed bodies have been photographed and identified by cross-checking finger prints and dental records with prison registries, Valdez said. "If in a week or a year relatives show up, we can show them the documentation we have," Valdez said. "If there is still any doubt, we can dig up a coffin and do a DNA test." The government has appointed a five-member commission to investigate how prisoners smuggled weapons into the prison. That report is expected next week. The burned cell block, called Vietnam, had at least 178 inmates, though its maximum capacity was about 25.

#### **REFINERY, ROXANA, ILLINOIS, UNITED STATES**

London, Mar 12 -- A press report, dated Mar 9, states: Firefighters around the area converged on ConocoPhillips refinery early yesterday, but in the end it was the refinery's own fire crew that quickly extinguished an industrial blaze. A smoldering fire that ignited on a crude oil distilling unit around 0100 hrs was extinguished in minutes by company firefighters at the Wood River refinery, said Melissa Erker, a spokeswoman for ConocoPhillips. Erker said workers discovered a smoldering fire in an "upper column" of the distilling unit, which was temporarily shut down for scheduled maintenance. "The fire was contained to a small area," she said. She said residual material inside the column caught fire. The distilling unit is what turns crude oil into gasoline.

#### **WAREHOUSE, CINCINNATI, OHIO, UNITED STATES**

London, Mar 11 -- A press report, dated Mar 10, states: Environmental clean-up operations are continuing at Queen City Barrel in Cincinnati's Lower Price Hill neighbourhood. There, an Aug 19 five-alarm fire caused an estimated \$5 million in damage. Cincinnati Fire Investigation

Unit Commander Capt. Dan Rottmueller said yesterday he did not know when the cleanup would be complete. Queen City used the 400,000-square foot warehouse on South Street to clean and recycle industrial barrels for re-use. The building's remains were razed after the fire. Queen City is now doing business at other buildings it owns in the area.

**WILDFIRES, AUSTRALIA**

London, Mar 14 -- A press report, dated today, states: Victorian fire crews are battling three fires that jumped containment lines during controlled burns in the state's east. The largest fire is at Licola, in Victoria's high country 260km east of Melbourne, where Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) crews were conducting a controlled burn over 3000ha of rugged country 10km north of the town. DSE state fire controller Mark Woodman said the fire began spotting ahead of containment lines on Saturday (Mar 12), and had now burned an extra 480ha, including some private land. The fire had spread to forested private property and had damaged some fences, but no other private property was under threat, Mr Woodman said. A second fire along the Acheron Way, between Warburton and Marysville east of Melbourne, had been sparked by a controlled burn, Mr Woodman said. The fire was burning close to a steep slope in mountain ash country, which had hampered the firefighting effort, but crews were close to controlling the blaze, Mr Woodman said.

**WILDFIRES, UNITED STATES**

London, Mar 14 -- A press report, dated Mar 13, states: Fire crews in Comanche County are battling a 4,000 acre wildfire that has been burning since yesterday afternoon. Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management spokeswoman Michelann Ooten says the fire started at about 1400 yesterday. High winds and dry conditions have fueled the fire that has a 2-and-a-half mile fire blazing. Ooten says about 15 structures are in the fires path. State fire crews are on standby to use helicopters and a fire retardant liquid to help control the fire. Earlier this weekend, state officials issued a Red Flag fire alert, saying conditions were favorable for massive fires.



**ABORTED TAKE-OFF, EZEIZA AIRFIELD, BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA**

London, Mar 15 -- A press report, dated today, states: US-bound United Airlines aircraft with 173 passengers and a crew of 12 on board had to abort its takeoff late yesterday due to an engine fire, an Argentine Air Force

source said. The incident, in which two injuries were reported, briefly shut down operations at Ezeiza International, Buenos Aires' busiest airfield. The Boeing 767, bound for Chicago, was about to take off when one of its engines caught fire. Passengers had to flee on inflatable emergency slides, an air force spokesman said.

**C-FLPB**

London, Mar 17 -- Piper PA-32-300 (Cherokee Six), C-FLPB, crashed at Holmes County Airport, Ohio, at 1515, EST, Mar 14. The aircraft sustained substantial damage. The one person on board was seriously injured.

**C-FSJF**

London, Mar 10 -- At 0700, Mar 7, Air Canada flight 1083, Canadair Regional Jet aircraft, C-FSJF, was preparing for a flight from Philadelphia to Toronto/LBPIA. On the ramp at Philadelphia with passengers and crew on board, the left wing of the aircraft was struck by a baggage cart causing damage to the winglet. The flight was cancelled.

**C-GJVX**

London, Mar 10 -- At 1948, Mar 5, Air Canada flight 900, Airbus A321-200 aircraft, C-GJVX, was being off-loaded at the gate in Fort Lauderdale/Hollywood International airport after a flight from Toronto/LBPIA. A loader struck the aircraft and pierced the skin to the left of the forward cargo door. The aircraft was removed from service for repair.

**C-GPAT**

London, Mar 16 -- A press report, dated today, states: Aviation investigators from the United States and Canada are trying to determine why a 27-foot-tall rudder broke off an Airbus A310 (C-GPAT) near the coast of South Florida last week. Aviation safety experts said they were stunned to see pictures of the plane after it landed because nearly the entire rudder was gone. It appears to have broken off the Air Transat charter plane about 30 minutes after it left Varadero, Cuba, en route to Quebec on Mar 6. The pilot thought he had a flight control problem but did not know the extent of the trouble. "When he landed the aircraft, he had no idea he didn't have a rudder," said Rachel Andrews, a spokeswoman for Air Transat, a Canadian airline that has 10 A310s. None of the 270 people on board were injured. Aviation safety experts said the pilot was able to land because the rudder is needed only after engine failure or when landing in a crosswind. Clay McConnell, a spokesman for France-based Airbus, said his company was assisting Canadian authorities with the investigation. "We're obviously very pleased that the plane did what it was supposed to do and landed safely," he said. Airbus is urging airlines to inspect the 400 A310s and A300-600 planes with the same rudder system. "This is a purely a precautionary

procedure, because at this point we don't know what happened," said McConnell. The French aviation authority, which oversees Airbus, is expected to make the inspections mandatory. The Transportation Safety Board of Canada is investigating the incident and has been assisted by its US counterpart, the National Transportation Safety Board. Investigators said they are having difficulty because the rudder fell off somewhere between Cuba and Florida, probably in international waters. The plane was built in 1991 and had its last scheduled maintenance, a relatively short inspection, on Mar 1, the airline said. A preliminary examination of the plane's flight data recorder indicates the pilots did not make any major rudder commands like those that caused an American Airlines A300 crash in New York in November 2001. The plane - minus its rudder - is still sitting in Cuba. John Cottreau, a spokesman for the Canadian Transportation Safety Board, said the investigators will remove a large section of the tail and take it to an Airbus factory in Germany, where it will be examined.

**CRASH INTO SEA OFF BELIZE CITY, BELIZE**

See V3-HFW.

**CRASH, ABUJA, NIGERIA**

London, Mar 15 -- A press report, dated Mar 13, states: One hundred and nineteen passengers aboard a Chanchangi Airline aircraft escaped unhurt yesterday in Abuja as the aircraft crash landed. The incident occurred around 1600 hrs, at the Nnamdi Azikwe International Airport, Abuja. Details of the accident were still sketchy last night as there was no statement from either the airline or the Federal Airport Authority of Nigeria (FAAN). The plane which had taken off from the Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Ikeja, Lagos landed on its belly due to excessive breeze. "The incident occurred when the plane was about to land. The breeze forced it to crash land, it rained about that time and the plane landed on its belly rather than the tyres," said one eyewitness at the Nnamdi Azikwe Airport. All the passengers were promptly evacuated by FAAN officials and workers. There was no closure of the airport. Officials of the Ministry of Aviation could not be immediately reached last night to speak on the incident.

**CRASH, BAGHDAD, IRAQ**

London, Mar 11 -- A press report, dated today, states: An An-12 plane belonging to the Bulgarian cargo charter airline Vega Airlines crashed upon landing at a Baghdad airport Mar 9, the head of the air company announced today. No injuries were reported, but the crash caused considerable damages to the plane's right wing and one its engines. The plane flew had seven crew on board and carried construction materials.

**CRASH, LANGLEY CASTLE, NORTHUMBERLAND, UNITED KINGDOM**

London, Mar 11 -- A press report, dated today, states: A pilot and two passengers had a lucky escape after a helicopter crashed and caught fire. Northumbria Police said the small helicopter was attempting a landing at Langley Castle, near Haydon Bridge, Northumberland, yesterday. Police said for reasons still to be established, the aircraft collided with the landing area and caught fire. The pilot and two passengers escaped before the fire started. The Civil Aviation Authority has been informed. Crews from Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service put out the fire. There was no damage to any surrounding property.

**CRASH, LINATE AIRPORT, MILAN, ITALY**

London, Mar 14 -- A press report, dated today, states: Four Italian air traffic control officials have been found guilty of manslaughter for their roles in Italy's worst air disaster, in which 118 people were killed. Three other officials, all employees of Italian air traffic control authority Enav, were acquitted today. Fabio Marzocca, Enav's director general, was sentenced to four years and four months, while the authority's top official at Linate, Raffaele Perrone, and an employee, Nazareno Patrizi, each received three years and 10 months for their part in the crash. Another employee, Santino Ciarniello was given three years and four months. This verdict comes almost a year after the end of the main court proceedings into the 2001 crash, when the court sentenced four other officials, including the airport's director and Enav's former chief executive, to up to eight years in jail. All 104 passengers and six crew on a Copenhagen-bound SAS aircraft were killed when it collided with a private Cessna jet in thick fog on a runway at Milan's Linate airport. Four airport workers died when the SAS aircraft ploughed into the baggage hangar. Investigators later uncovered a series of shortcomings at Linate, including the lack of a ground radar system. A public prosecutors' report after the crash called the airport a "death trap". Authorities have said the airport's safety has been upgraded since.

**CRASH, TAK PROVINCE, THAILAND**

London, Mar 13 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: A small private aircraft crashed in Thailand's northwestern province of Tak this morning, leaving three dead, the Thai News Agency reported. Local police said that the four-seat TR-28 aircraft, flying from the country's northern resort province of Chiang Mai, crashed in a grove near an airfield of the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT), triggering a flame which killed all the passengers on board instantly and totally destroyed the aircraft. The small passenger aircraft belongs to the Chiang Mai's aviation club.

**CRASH, TAMWORTH AIRPORT AREA, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA**

See VH-FIN.

**CRASH, URUS-MARTAN AREA, CHECHNYA, RUSSIA**

London, Mar 11 -- A press report, dated today, states: A Mi-8 helicopter fell in Chechnya after it touched an electro-transmission line, a member of the investigating team told Itar-Tass today. After the fall, the helicopter slid 200 metres on the ground and exploded. The crash killed 15 people, including seven personnel members of the Federal Security Service's Khabarovsk territorial department. One severely injured in the crash is now in hospital. Legal proceedings have been instituted in connection with the crash under the Criminal Code article on "violation of the flight regulations." The flight recorders have been found. The information recorded by the devices will help to establish the crash cause. The rescue operation has ended at the site 10 kilometres from the regional centre of Urus-Martan at the present time. The investigating team of the military prosecutor's office is continuing working. Work has begun to repair the electro-transmission line. A team of repair workers has arrived at the site. Urus-Martan and neighbouring settlements were left without electricity for all of last night.

**EMERGENCY LANDING, ATYRAU, KAZAKHSTAN**

London, Mar 12 -- A press report, dated today, states: An-24 aircraft, the property of SKAT air company, made an emergency landing at 1110 hrs in Atyrau, Mar 9. According to the director in charge of Atyrau international airport Mukhit Kubayev the crew found oil reducing in the right engine at 1057 hrs. The pilots were instructed to switch the engine off. At 1110 hrs, the aircraft safely landed with 36 passengers and four crew members aboard. Two hours later passengers continued their route aboard SKAT's reserve aircraft.

**EMERGENCY LANDING, PIEDMONT TRIAD INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, UNITED STATES**

See N27R.

**EX-037**

London, Mar 14 -- A press report, dated Mar 13, states: Afghan authorities have completed their search for the bodies of more than 100 people who died last month when an airliner slammed into a mountain during a snowstorm, an official said today. Defence Ministry spokesman Mohammed Zahir Azimi also said the final death toll from the Feb 3 crash could also rise to 106 - two more than originally announced - because one or two small children were also feared among the passengers. "They were only marked by an 'x' on the passenger list," Azimi told a news conference. Afghan troops returned to

their barracks yesterday after weeks of searching for the remains of the up to 98 passengers and eight crew, including more than 20 foreigners, when the Boeing 737 struck a snowy peak 20 miles east of the capital Kabul. Azimi said that authorities believed they had recovered remains of all the victims, but that identifying them was proving very difficult. The bodies of five Afghan victims were handed over to relatives at a hospital in Kabul yesterday, bringing the total released so far to 16. DNA samples from dozens more have been sent to Italy for testing. The first results are expected next week. The foreign passengers included nine Turks, six Americans, three Italians and one Iranian. A Canadian citizen and several Russians were believed to be among the six-strong crew. American investigators have joined the effort to find out why the plane, operated by private Afghan airline Kam Air, crashed in Afghanistan's worst air disaster. The plane went down in a blizzard after the pilot approached Kabul airport on a flight from the western city of Herat. The data recorder has been recovered, but the voice recorder has yet to be located.

**G-BOMG**

London, Mar 15 -- A press report, dated today, states: An air ambulance with two people on board is thought to have crashed into the sea off the Mull of Kintyre. Wreckage has been found around eight miles off the coast from Campbeltown where radar contact was lost. Three lifeboats and a Sea King helicopter are at the scene and HMS Penzance is on its way. The twin-engine plane was flying to Machrihanish airport today and was thought to have been flying out to sea in preparation for its landing. Brett Cunningham, coastguard area operations manager, said: "A coastguard investigation was launched at 1215 hrs after the twin-engine aircraft disappeared from radar. "We are currently investigating wreckage in the area it disappeared." He said weather conditions were reasonable in the area. It is understood there was low cloud at around 400 feet at the time the plane disappeared, although wind and rain were light.

London, Mar 17 -- Pilatus-Britten Norman BN-2B-26 Islander, G-BOMG, operator, Loganair, crashed into sea off Mull of Kintyre around 0015, Mar 15. There was one crewmember and one passenger on board who were both killed. The ambulance aircraft was on a flight from Glasgow International Airport to Campbeltown-Machrihanish Airport.

**INCIDENT AT LOS ANGELES AIRPORT, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES**

London, Mar 14 -- A press report, dated Mar 13, states: An Air China's Boeing-747 passenger plane got stuck in the asphalt of Los Angeles International Airport early this morning, but there were no injuries, authorities said. The pilot of the

jumbo jet apparently turned too sharply while taxiing toward a runway at the airport, said Diana Joubert of the Federal Aviation administration. Joubert said the mishap involving the Beijing-bound Air China Flight 984, scheduled to depart at 0140 hrs, was reported at 0155 hrs. The "right main gear crossed into a non-access area of the intersection, and the gear sank 1.5 feet to 3 feet into asphalt," said Nancy Castles of Los Angeles International Airport. The 313 passengers on board were taken off the aircraft at 0310 hrs and bused to the terminal. As of 0800 hrs, they were still in the terminal. The right main gear of the jet wound up on asphalt that is only 3-4 inches deep and "not meant to hold the weight" of a fully fuelled and loaded Boeing-747, said Castles. "Fuel is currently being emptied out of the aircraft," said Castles. "Airport construction crews are digging trenches to put steel plates under the tyres, so that tractors will be able to pull the plane out of the hole." The runway remained closed, but "there was very light traffic at the airport this morning, and the accident "had little impact to airfield operations," Castles said.

#### **N206SM**

London, Mar 11 -- A press report, dated Mar 10, states: A preliminary report on an aircraft crash near Glacier National Park last autumn found the pilot had limited experience flying in the wilderness in poor weather and strayed from his intended course, the Forest Service said yesterday. The agency said it would review procedures for backcountry flying, including the level of experience required of contract pilots. The Sep 20 crash killed pilot Jim Long and two Forest Service workers. Two other agency workers walked out of the wilderness despite serious injuries. Determining the cause of the crash is up to the National Transportation Safety Board, which expects to issue its final report later this year. The Forest Service is responsible for reviewing administrative procedures leading up to the crash and during the search and rescue operation. The Forest Service chartered the Cessna U206G (N206SM) to take four workers to a back-country airstrip near Glacier to conduct a vegetation survey and work on telecommunications equipment. Weather that day included thunderstorms and intermittent poor visibility. Long, described by the agency as "highly skilled" but "limited in documented experience in this terrain in marginal weather conditions," had delayed the flight once, but eventually took off in the afternoon. He intended to use a highway and river drainage as reference points; the investigation concluded he turned up the wrong canyon, one that was much steeper. When Long radioed he was over the small town of Essex and inbound to the landing strip, he was actually about five miles north, investigators said.

#### **N2512T**

London, Mar 13 -- A press report, dated today, states: Two people survived a aircraft crash that happened just after take-off in Hubbard yesterday. The crash happened around 1100 hrs near Lenhardt Airpark, which is located on Meridian Road. The aircraft's engine reportedly began losing power while the aircraft was 60 feet in the air. The pilot headed toward a nearby Christmas tree farm, where the trees softened the blow of the crash. The two people inside the aircraft, who have not yet been identified, were transported to hospital.

London, Mar 14 -- Navion H (Rangemaster), N2512T, crashed near Hubbard, Oregon, at 1835, Mar 12. The two persons on board suffered minor injuries.

#### **N27R**

London, Mar 10 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Airport authorities said a pilot declared an emergency tonight as a Falcon aircraft (N27R) approached the runway at Piedmont Triad International Airport without its landing gear. The runways were shutdown, allowing the jet to make an emergency landing. Emergency crews report that the five people on the aircraft are safe and were able to be evacuated quickly. FAA records shows the aircraft to be registered to RJ Reynolds Tobacco Company. After emergency crews cleared the scene airport personnel worked to clear the jet off the runway.

London, Mar 11 -- Dassault Aviation Falcon 2000, N27R, operated by R.J.Reynolds Tobacco Company, landed nose gear up at Greensboro, North Carolina, at 0251, local time, Mar 10. Damage was minor.

#### **N480RA**

London, Mar 14 -- A press report, dated today, states: An offshore service helicopter crashed yesterday morning in the Gulf of Mexico, injuring the pilot, the Coast Guard reported. Crews of nearby boats rescued Carl O'Donnell, 35 - the only person aboard - who was in stable condition with shock, cuts on his face, and possible head and spine injuries, said Petty officer Kyle Niemi, a Coast Guard spokesman. He said O'Donnell made an emergency call with his location about 0800 hrs, before he crashed, allowing the Coast Guard to send a helicopter straight to him while making marine broadcasts to ask all vessels in the area to look for the pilot. The crew of the crewboat Mr. Stephen located the pilot, the crew of the supply boat Chauntsie G. pulled him out, and the helicopter crew got him to Terrebonne General Medical Centre, Niemi said.

London, Mar 14 -- Bell 206L-1 LongRanger II, N480RA, crashed into the Gulf of Mexico off Houma, Louisiana, at 1345, Mar 13. The one person on board was not injured.

#### **N6511L**

London, Mar 14 -- A press report, dated Mar 13, states: A small airplane

overshot a runway, crashed into trees and burst into flames today, killing all three people onboard, officials said. The single-engine Grumman AA5 apparently wasn't able to regain altitude and crashed into a wooded area at the end of a runway at Lawrence County Airpark, said Sgt. Michael Gore of the Ohio State Highway Patrol. The aircraft was destroyed, said Tony Molinaro, a spokesman for the Federal Aviation Administration. Lawrence County Airpark is located near the West Virginia and Kentucky state lines. It is an uncontrolled facility, meaning pilots taking off and landing are not required to communicate with people on the ground. Nelson Whitt, a manager at the airport, said he was in a hanger at the time of the crash. He said Young was returning from a recreational flight. The National Transportation Safety Board was investigating.

London, Mar 14 -- Grumman American AA-5, N6511L, crashed at Lawrence County Airpark, Chesapeake, Ohio, at 2006, Mar 13. The aircraft was destroyed. The three persons on board were killed.

#### **N85BH**

London, Mar 11 -- A press report, dated Mar 10, states: A helicopter under contract to the U.S. Forest Service crashed today during prescribed burning operations in a national forest in east Texas, killing three people, officials said. Pilot Jose Victor Gonzales and passengers John Greeno and Charles Edgar were the only occupants of the helicopter and died at the scene, said Heather Crustner, a dispatcher with the Texas Department of Public Safety. The helicopter, a Bell 206B-3, went down about 60 miles north-east of Lufkin, said Gay Ippolito, a public affairs officer with the Forest Service. The helicopter had flown all morning, then refueled and returned to fly in the afternoon over the rural, pine-studded region, said Shelby County Sheriff Newton Johnson. "The helicopter came over the radio, they were saying, 'Mayday, Mayday, we're going down,' and they crashed in the national forest," Johnson said. Lee Andrew, owner of Brainerd Helicopter Service Inc., in Brainerd, Minn., said Gonzales had worked for him about three weeks. He said the two passengers were not his employees. He said his company has done contract work for seven or eight years, and this is its first fatality. The National Transportation Safety Board was investigating, Ippolito said. As a precaution, the Forest Service grounded aviation operations in Texas' national forests and grasslands.

London, Mar 11 -- Bell 206B JetRanger, N85BH, crashed near Lufkin, Texas, Mar 10. The aircraft sustained substantial damage. The two persons on board were killed.

#### **RA-46489**

London, Mar 17 -- A press report, dated today, states: Twenty-eight

people were killed yesterday when a plane crash-landed and burst into flames in Russia's far north, Emergencies Ministry officials said. They said 24 passengers and crew survived the crash but 10 of them were in serious condition in a nearby hospital where they were taken by helicopter. "Our figures put the number of dead at 28 and the injured at 24," a spokesman for the Emergencies Ministry told Reuters. There were 52 people on board the An-24 plane, officials said. Officials had earlier said the numbers of dead were higher, but revised the figures after rescue workers arrived, some by helicopter, at the remote crash site. The plane, carrying mainly oil workers, caught fire after its wing clipped the ground when attempting a forced landing near the town of Varandei in the Nenets autonomous region, said rescue officials. It was not clear why the plane was forced to land. News reports quoted aviation officials as saying the aircraft was in a good condition, although not new, and that the crew was experienced. LUKOIL, Russia's largest oil company, said at least some of the passengers were its employees, but it had no information on casualties. Russian news agencies said crash investigators were on their way to search for the "black box" flight recorders from the aircraft, which came down some five kms short of Varandei's airport and was almost entirely destroyed by flames.

London, Mar 17 -- Antonov 24, RA-46489, operator Kemerovo Air Enterprise, crashed 5 kms from Varandei at 1342, Mar 16. There were 45 passengers and seven crew on board. There were 29 fatalities.

#### **V3-HFW**

London, Mar 17 -- Cessna 208B Grand Caravan, V3-HFW, operator Tropic Air, barely climbed after take-off from Belize City and crashed into the sea and flipped over at around 1730, Mar 9. Reportedly there was a dramatic change of weather conditions at the airport due to an approaching thunderstorm. There were 14 persons on board. There were no fatalities.

#### **VH-FIN**

London, Mar 14 -- Cessna 310R, VH-FIN, being operated by Country Capital Flight Centre, crashed about four nautical miles west of the Tamworth Aerodrome, New South Wales, at 0229, UTC, Mar 7. The pilot, the sole occupant, was killed and the aircraft was destroyed.

## Product Recalls



#### **BALLS OF YARN, CANADA**

Washington, DC, Mar 11 -- The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission announces the recall of about 730,000

1.75-ounce balls of Bernat "fur out" yarn in voluntary co-operation with Spin Rite LP of Ontario, Canada. Consumers should stop using recalled products immediately unless otherwise instructed. "Fur Out" yarn is flammable when used as the sole yarn in a garment. Garments constructed of "Fur Out" yarn are dangerously flammable when exposed to a flame, posing a burn risk to consumers. Bernat has received two reports of garments made of the recalled yarn burning, with one person receiving singed eyebrows. All 17 Bernat "Fur Out" yarn colours are involved in this recall. The recalled yarn can be identified by UPC numbers beginning with "05735527" and ending with one of the following numbers: 1319, 1326, 1333, 1340, 1357, 1364, 1371, 1388, 1395, 1401, 1685, 2583, 2590, 2606, 2613, 2620 and 2637. Sold by yarn and craft stores nation-wide and in Canada since April 2004 for between \$4 and \$6 per ball. Manufactured in Turkey. Consumers should stop using Bernat "Fur Out" yarn and items made with Bernat "Fur Out" yarn immediately and contact the manufacturer for instructions on how to return the products and receive a full refund. -- Consumer Product Safety Commission.

#### **BLACK & DECKER BLENDERS, UNITED STATES**

London, Mar 11 -- A press report, dated today, states: About 500,000 Black & Decker blenders are being recalled because the blades can weaken or break while in use, the government said today. Applia Consumer Products Inc of Miramar, Florida, is aware of at least 18 incidents of blades breaking, though no injuries have been reported, the Consumer Product Safety Commission said. The five-speed, 550-watt ProBlend blenders with 48-ounce glass jars bear model numbers BL5000, BL5900 or BL6000. Manufactured in China, the blenders were sold nationwide by retailers from December, 2003, to January, 2005. Consumers are urged to stop using the product and contact Applia for a free replacement blade.

London, Mar 14 -- A press report, dated Mar 11, states: The 500,000 Black & Decker blenders being recalled across the United States, were sold nationwide by retailers from December 2003 to January 2005 for between \$40 to \$60.

#### **LIGHTS, UNITED STATES**

London, Mar 12 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Lithonia Lighting is recalling about 120,000 lights after receiving several reports of pieces falling from the fixtures, the government said today. The cord of the High Intensity Discharge fixtures -- generally used in places such as stores, warehouses and gymnasiums -- can drip plasticizer fluid that can damage the light's acrylic reflector and cause pieces to crack and fall on people. The Conyers, Ga.-based

company has learned of at least 336 incidents of reflectors cracking, including about two dozen incidents of pieces falling, though no injuries have been reported, the Consumer Product Safety Commission said. The indoor fixtures, manufactured in Mexico and the United States from June 3, 1999, to May 31, 2002, were sold nationwide by lighting and electrical supply distributors for \$100 to \$320.

#### **PORTABLE CRIBS, UNITED STATES**

Washington, DC, Mar 9 -- The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission announces the recall of 10,000 Portable Cribs in voluntary co-operation with Delta Enterprise Corp., of New York, N.Y. Consumers should stop using recalled products immediately unless otherwise instructed. The crib slats can separate from the headboard, posing an entrapment risk to young children. In addition, children can fall through the slat opening. Delta Enterprise Corp. has received eight reports of crib slats separating. No injuries have been reported. The cribs are made of wood sold in three finishes including: natural, cherry and white. Model numbers 4464-1 ,white, 4464-2 ,natural, and 4464-4 ,cherry, and "Taiwan" are printed on the mattress pad support board. Sold at Juvenile furniture stores nation-wide from January 2004 through February 2005 for about \$100. Manufactured in Taiwan. Consumers should stop using the crib immediately and contact Delta Enterprise Corp. to arrange for two free replacement headboards. -- Consumer Product Safety Commission.

#### **REAR-PROJECTION TELEVISIONS, UNITED STATES**

Washington, DC, Mar 9 -- The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission announces the recall of 26,500 Rear-projection televisions in voluntary co-operation with JVC Americas Corp., of Wayne, N.J. Consumers should stop using recalled products immediately unless otherwise instructed. An internal electrical connection can cause electrical arcing, charring or smoking inside the television, which pose a fire risk to consumers. JVC has received two reports of incidents, including one case of melted television parts and one case of a minor television fire. No injuries have been reported. The recalled 52-inch and 61-inch JVC rear projection televisions were manufactured between May 2004 and November 2004. The televisions have the following model and serial numbers: HD-52Z575: 10980014 through 16980772, HD-52Z575: 16986471 through 16989999, HD-52Z585: 10980031 through 16981502, HD-61Z575: 10980031 through 16982712 and HD-61Z585: 10980031 through 16980942. The model and serial numbers can be found on the back of the television in the lower center portion of the unit. The JVC logo appears on the front of the television. Sold at consumer electronic stores nation-wide from July 2004

through January 2005 for between \$3,000 and \$5,500. Manufactured in Mexico. Consumers should immediately contact JVC for further instructions and to schedule a free in-home service. JVC is contacting registered consumers directly via regular mail and e-mail to arrange a free at-home service. -- Consumer Product Safety Commission.



**AUSTRALIA**

London, Mar 15 -- A press report, dated Mar 14, states: Australia's coal miners are paying \$2.4 million a day in charges to overseas shipping firms as the queue of vessels at Dalrymple Bay in north Queensland nears 50. Greg Smith, operations manager for Prime Infrastructure, owner of the Dalrymple Bay coal terminal, said yesterday that 48 ships were moored off the port on the weekend, and the company expects 31 more to arrive by the end of the month. Demurrage charges for ships waiting at Dalrymple Bay are about \$50,000 a day, making the total charge for 48 ships \$2.4 million. "We don't have control over when the ships arrive, because they're ordered by the mining companies," said Mr Smith. "One of the problems is that they over-ordered in July and August last year, when there was a definite spur to the market as coal prices went up and the miners were reluctant to refuse a sale. We got an instant queue then of 20-30 ships, and we just haven't been able to clear that queue since then." Dalrymple Bay is the nation's largest coal export port. The average wait before a ship can load up with coal from the Bowen

Basin has increased to 23 days. The average cost to a mining company of the delay is \$1.75 million for every load of coal they ship out. But another problem is presenting itself for the troubled port as there are only 56 safe places where ships can anchor off the port which adjoins the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. Mr Smith said the port could use anchorages in Mackay Harbour which adjoins the waters off Dalrymple Bay if more ships arrived. Coal prices have increased dramatically in the past few months, mainly on the back of increased demand from China and India. While the bottlenecks at Dalrymple Bay and Australia's other main coal-loading port at Newcastle mean that the country is losing export income from coal sales, the head of Australia's peak infrastructure body said that a long-term plan that involved the private and public sector was necessary to overcome the delays. Dalrymple Bay is undergoing an expansion to take its capacity from 54 million tonnes annually to 60 million tonnes, but the company has still not committed to an expansion past that because it is waiting for a ruling from the Queensland Competition Authority on what price it can charge.

**IRAQ**

See "Berth, Umm Qasr, Iraq" under "Fires & Explosions" also "Iraq" under "Weather & Navigation."

**ITALY**

Genoa, Mar 14 -- Port situation Mar 14: Genoa: Four bulk carriers, four tankers and one container vessel awaiting berth. Average delays in berthing 24 - 48 hrs. La Spezia: No vessels awaiting berths. Savona: One vessel awaiting normal berth. One vessel awaiting special berth. Average delays in berthing 12 hrs. -- Lloyd's Agents.

**PANAMA CANAL**

London, Mar 11 -- A press report, dated today, states: Additional locomotive track work started at Gatun Locks yesterday and will continue for 14 days through to Mar 24. According to Panama Canal Authorities, this work will not affect Canal traffic. Meanwhile, delays of 24-48 hours are being experienced due to heavy arrivals. It is not known, however, what impact the current track work will have on traffic.

Balboa, Mar 13 -- Due to combination of heavy traffic, slight reduction in capacity as a result of track work at Gatun locks, and intermittent presence of fog in late hours of the evening/early mornings, delays at the Panama Canal for non-booked vessels are presently running as follows: Panamax southbound approximately 3-4 days; Panamax northbound approximately 3 days; Small vessels southbound (less than 91 feet beam) approximately 2-3 days; Small vessels northbound (less than 91 feet beam) approximately 2 days. With present level of arrivals, the existing conditions are not likely to improve, at least not significantly, until after Mar 24 when the canal restores full capacity. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Mar 15 -- A press report, dated today, states: Delays continue to increase in the Panama Canal due to a combination of heavy arrivals, fog and repair works to locomotive tracks at Gatun Locks. While the Panama Canal Authority is doing its utmost to maximise the number of vessels that can be scheduled for transit daily, the number of arrivals exceed this. Fog and/or lost time at locks is exacerbating the situation further. Delays are currently estimated as follows: Panamax vessels: two-three days - Regular vessels under 91 feet: one-two days.

**Port Delays**

Country/Port	Date of report	No.of vessels waiting and/or days delay
<b>Australia</b>		
Abbott Point	14-Mar-2005	Coal: 11 vessels due by 5/4; up to 1 day's delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Brisbane	14-Mar-2005	Coal: Fisherman Island coal berth: 1 vessel berthed; 4 vessels due by 12/4; no delays expected.
Dalrymple Bay	14-Mar-2005	Coal: 3 vessels berthed, 48 anchored; 44 vessels due by 29/4. 20-30 days berthing delay subject to cargo availability and berth congestion; waiting times vary greatly due to different stem supply issues.
Dampier	14-Mar-2005	Iron ore: Parker Point: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 3 anchored; 10 vessels due by 22/3; 2-8 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; East Intercourse Island: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 3 anchored; 9 vessels due by 28/3; 2-12 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.
Gladstone	14-Mar-2005	Coal: R.G. Tanna coal terminal: 2 vessels berthed, 4 anchored; 36 vessels due by 13/4; up to 7 days berthing delay expected subject to port congestion and cargo availability; Shiploader No. 2 will be shut down for maintenance until 06.00 hrs. 18/3. Barney Point: 1 vessel anchored; 6 vessels due by 23/3; up to 2 days delay expected due to cargo availability and berth congestion; shiploading activities will cease from 06.00 hrs. 16/5 until 06.00 hrs. 26/5 to enable repairs to be carried out to wharf deck.
Hay Point	14-Mar-2005	Coal: 2 vessels berthed, 7 anchored; 10 vessels due by 23/4. 1-4 days berthing delay expected subject to cargo availability and berth congestion; vessels berthing in order of cargo availability.

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## Port Conditions

Newcastle	14-Mar-2005	Coal: Kooragang 4, 5 and 6: 2 vessels berthed, 15 anchored; 34 vessels due by 29/3; Dykes 4+5: 1 vessel berthed, 6 anchored; 16 vessels due by 29/3; 2 unallocated vessels due by 28/3; 8-10 days delay expected prior to berthing due to planned maintenance at Kooragang terminal, coal product problems with some shippers and cargo receipt.
Port Hedland	14-Mar-2005	Iron ore: BHP Iron Ore Pty. Ltd., Mt. Newman (Nelson Point), "A" berth: 1 vessel berthed and loading; 7 vessels due by 22/3; up to 1 day's delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; "B" berth: 6 vessels due by 22/3; 1-2 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; BHP Iron Ore Pty. Ltd., Goldsworthy (Finucane Island) "C" berth: 3 vessels due by 25/3; up to 1 day's delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; "D" berth: 7 vessels due by 24/3; up to 2 days delay expected due to berth congestion, maintenance shutdowns and cargo availability.
Port Kembla	14-Mar-2005	Coal: 1 vessel anchored; 13 vessels due by 21/4; CB-1: 2 vessels due by 7/4; up to 1 day's delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Port Walcott	14-Mar-2005	Iron ore: 2 vessels berthed and loading, 2 anchored; 15 vessels due by 26/3; 2-4 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability. Shippers line-up is subject to change at short notice; cargo grade shortages and stockpile problems may result in ships berthing out of turn. 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.

### Brazil

Paranagua	15-Mar-2005	Thirteen vessels berthed of which 2 fertiliser dischargers, 2 container dischargers, 2 soya loaders, 1 reefer loader, 1 pellets loader, 5 other loaders; 10 vessels waiting in roads, all to load, of which 2 pellets, 3 soya, 5 others; 31 vessels due over the next 7 days.
Rio Grande	15-Mar-2005	One soya meal loader berthed; 3 vessels waiting in roads; 40 vessels due over the next 10 days.
Santos	15-Mar-2005	Thirteen vessels berthed of which 1 bulk fuel oil loader, 1 chemical products discharger, 4 sugar loaders, 1 bulk wheat discharger, 2 pellets loaders, 1 bulk salt discharger, 1 bulk soya loader, 2 full container loaders/dischargers; 13 vessels waiting in roads; 101 vessels due over the next 7 days
Sao Sebastiao	15-Mar-2005	Four vessels berthed, 3 waiting in roads; 6 vessels due over the next 10 days.
Vitoria	15-Mar-2005	No vessels berthed; Terminal Vila Velha: 2 container loaders/dischargers, 1 other vessel; Tubarao: 3 iron ore loaders, 1 fertiliser discharger; Praia Mole: 1 coal discharger, 2 steel products loaders; Portocel: 2 cellulose loader; Ubu: 1 iron ore loader; 23 vessels waiting in roads; 17 vessels due over the next 7 days.

### Bulgaria

Bourgas	14-Mar-2005	Nine vessels in port operating, of which 6 loading (1 bulk ammonium nitrate, 1 zinc, 2 coils, 1 concrete/iron, 1 empty), 3 discharging (1 billets, 1 coal, 1 iron ore); 2 vessels waiting in roads, of which 1 to load cigarettes, 1 to discharge iron ore; 10 vessels due, of which 6 to load (2 containers, 1 scrap, 1 metals, 1 coils, 1 bulk ammonium nitrate), 4 to discharge (1 containers, 1 metal constructions, 1 coal).
Varna	14-Mar-2005	Varna East, Varna West, Electrical Power Station, Balchik: Conditions 7-13 March: Thirty-seven vessels in port operating of which 26 loading (3 bulk maize, 2 scrap, 4 sunflower seeds, 1 bran, 8 soda, 1 manganese ore, 3 sulphuric acid, 1 silica sand, 1 NP compound fertiliser, 1 containers, 1 bulk cement), 7 discharging (1 bulk coal, 1 bulk gypsum, 2 copper concentrate, 3 raw phosphate), 4 discharging/loading containers.

### Chile

Antofagasta	14-Mar-2005	Four vessels berthed, 3 berths vacant; 13 vessels due this week to load/discharge concentrates, bulk copper, containers and general cargo.
Valparaiso	14-Mar-2005	Three vessels berthed, 5 berths vacant; 3 vessels anchored; 14 vessels due this week.

### Colombia

Buenaventura	15-Mar-2005	Shore cranes operational. Six vessels berthed (3 general cargo, 3 bulkers), no vessels anchored; 35 vessels due (26 containers, 3 general cargo, 4 bulkers, 2 tankers), with 1 day's delay expected for containers and bulkers, 3 days delay for general cargo vessels.
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### Egypt

Alexandria	14-Mar-2005	Forty-one vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 35 general cargo, 1 bulk carrier, 3 tankers, 2 containers; 12 vessels dry-docked; 23 vessels at inner anchorage, 7 at outer anchorage.
Damietta	14-Mar-2005	Nineteen vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 12 general cargo, 1 bulk carrier, 3 tankers, 3 containers; 6 vessels at inner anchorage.
Suez Canal	14-Mar-2005	Twenty-one vessels transiting Northbound, 18 Southbound.

### Israel

Ashdod	16-Mar-2005	No labour problems. Two general cargo vessels loading at berth, 13 vessels discharging at berth (7 general cargo, 6 bulkers), 3 vessels loading/discharging at berth (2 containers, 1 tanker); 1 general cargo vessel waiting at anchorage to discharge, 5 container vessels waiting at anchorage to load/discharge; 1 vessel awaiting orders; 20 vessels due, with 2-3 days delay expected.
Haifa	16-Mar-2005	No labour problems. Two general cargo vessels discharging at berth, 5 vessels loading/discharging at berth (3 containers, 1 car carrier, 1 tanker); 2 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (1 general cargo, 1 bulk), 2 vessels waiting at anchorage to load/discharge (1 containers, 1 tanker); 2 vessels under repairs/dry-docked, 1 awaiting orders; 24 vessels due, with 2-3 days delay expected.

## Port Conditions

### Pakistan

Karachi	15-Mar-2005	Five vessels loading at berth (1 MOL, 2 rice, 1 general cargo, 1 cement), 5 discharging at berth (1 palm oil, 1 jute, 1 DAP, 1 sugar 1 rapeseed), 3 container vessels loading/discharging at berth; 1 container vessel waiting at anchorage to load, 3 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (1 containers, 1 coal, 1 general cargo); no vessels bunkering, 1 under repairs/dry-docked, 1 awaiting orders; 8 vessels due (4 containers, 1 naphtha, 1 cement, 1 general cargo, 1 scrap), with no berthing delays expected.
Port Qasim	15-Mar-2005	Six vessels discharging at berth (1 palm oil, 1 wheat, 1 canola seeds, 1 phosphoric acid, 1 iron ore, 1 fuel oil), 1 container vessel loading/discharging at QICT berth; 2 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (1 wheat, 1 palm oil).

### Poland

Gdansk	14-Mar-2005	Five vessels loading at berth (1 coal, 3 bulkers, 1 tanker), 1 bulker discharging at berth; 8 vessels under repairs/dry-docked; no vessels waiting at anchorage, 1 tanker waiting in roads; 19 vessels due.
Gdynia	14-Mar-2005	Five vessels loading at berth (3 general cargo, 1 bulker, 1 tanker), 2 discharging at berth (1 general cargo, 1 grain); 2 vessels awaiting orders; 17 vessels under repairs/dry-docked; no vessels waiting at anchorage, none waiting in roads; 41 vessels due.

### Russia

Novorossiysk	14-Mar-2005	Twenty vessels in port operating, of which 16 loading (1 WRIC/coils, 1 bulk cement, 1 WRIC/pipes/steel billets/tin plate/coils, 1 DRI, 1 scrap, 1 coils/pipes, 1 paper, 1 bulk urea, 2 coils, 1 bulk ammonium nitrate/bulk urea, 1 coils/steel sheets, 1 aluminium, 1 barley, 1 UAN solution, 1 diesel oil), 4 discharging (1 ore, 1 miscellaneous, 2 bulk sugar); 16 vessels waiting in roads, of which 13 to load (2 pig-iron, 1 coils/pipes, 1 DRI, 3 coils, 1 steel billets, 1 slabs, 1 diesel oil, 1 aluminium, 1 cartons, 1 wheat), 3 to discharge (2 bulk sugar, 1 citrus); 78 vessels due, of which 72 to load (8 aluminium, 3 scrap, 1 slabs/steel billets, 7 steel billets, 2 steel sheets, 3 bulk ammonium nitrate, 3 bulk NPK, 8 pig-iron, 2 DRI, 2 pipes, 2 HBI, 7 copper, 1 pipes/steel sheets, 1 steel sheets/coils, 2 lead, 2 paper, 2 bulk cement, 1 slabs, 1 wheat, 1 tin plate/steel sheets/coils, 2 diesel oil, 2 bulk urea, 1 steel billets/coils/steel sheets, 2 coils, 1 flowers, 1 zinc, 1 WRIC, 1 cellulose, 2 bulk fertiliser), 3 to discharge (1 ore, 1 bulk NPK, 1 bulk sugar), 3 to load/discharge containers. Oil terminal: 1 tanker berthed loading crude oil; 12 tankers in roads, all to load, of which 11 crude oil, 1 fuel oil; 7 tankers due, all to load crude oil.
Tuapse	14-Mar-2005	Oil products: 3 vessels berthed, all loading, of which 1 crude oil, 1 gasoil, 1 naphtha; 3 vessels in roads, all to load gasoil; 6 vessels due by 17/3, of which 2 naphtha, 3 gasoil, 1 crude oil.

### Spain

Cadiz	15-Mar-2005	Fifteen vessels in port of which 5 operating (3 Ro/Ros, 1 containers, 1 passenger vessel), 10 vessels under repair; no delays.
Sagunto	15-Mar-2005	Twenty-five vessels in port operating of which 18 discharging (17 steel products, 1 logs), 4 loading (2 bulk fertiliser, 1 baled scrap, 1 cement), 3 Ro/Ros discharging/loading general cargo; no vessels outside commercial wharf; no berthing delay at present.

### Sri Lanka

Colombo	14-Mar-2005	Berthing/unberthing (pilotage) delays being experienced on breakbulk/conventional vessels. Delays to conventional vessels are due to the fact that container/feeder vessels are given priority at breakbulk berths if there is container congestion. Conventional cargo vessels at BQ 1 and 2 are facing navigation delays. Four container/feeder vessels loading at berth, 13 vessels discharging at berth (8 containers/feeders, 1 bagged cement, 2 general cargo, 1 bagged fertiliser, 1 bulk cement); no vessels waiting at anchorage; 4 vessels dry-docked; 5 container/feeder vessels due, with no delays expected.
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### Ukraine

Illichevsk	14-Mar-2005	Thirteen vessels in port operating, of which 8 loading (1 diesel oil, 1 wheat, 6 steel products), 3 discharging iron ore, 2 discharging/loading containers; 1 vessel in roads to discharge/load containers; 17 vessels due, of which 10 to load (8 steel products, 1 vegetable oil, 1 sulphur), 7 to discharge/load containers.
Mariupol	14-Mar-2005	Seven vessels in port operating, of which 6 loading (3 steel, 1 coal, 2 sulphur), 1 discharging citrus; 2 vessels in roads, both to load, of which 1 steel, 1 sulphur; 48 vessels due, of which 44 to load (20 steel, 1 coke, 13 coal, 4 fire-clay, 2 sulphur, 1 wheat, 1 containers, 1 pitch, 1 soya beans), 4 to discharge (1 equipment, 1 containers, 1 citrus, 1 other).
Odessa	14-Mar-2005	Twenty vessels in port operating, of which 13 loading (8 metal, 1 scrap, 2 corn, 1 ferro alloy, 1 pig-iron), 5 discharging (1 general cargo, 3 citrus, 1 meat), 1 discharging/loading containers, 1 passenger vessel; 6 vessels in roads, of which 5 to load (4 metal, 1 corn/barley), 1 to load/discharge containers; 73 vessels due, of which 42 to load (33 metal, 2 pig-iron, 1 scrap, 3 wood, 1 general cargo, 2 wheat), 4 to discharge (1 citrus, 3 oil), 27 to discharge/load containers.



**Port Conditions**

**United States**

Houston	15-Mar-2005	Pilots report normal 39 ft. 3 ins. max. draft in Houston ship channel; foggy weather delaying inbound/out bound traffic; Cargill terminal: 1-2 days delay; LDC Dreyfus terminal: 1-2 days delay.
Kalama, WA	15-Mar-2005	Kalama export terminal: 1 day's delay; United Harvest terminal: 1 day's delay.
New Orleans	15-Mar-2005	Mississippi River terminal berthing delays: Cenex-Harstates/Myrtle Grove: 1-2 days delay expected; Cargill-Westwego: 1 day's delay expected; ADM/Ama: 5-7 days delay expected; Bunge/Destrehan: no delays; ADM/Destrehan: 5-7 days delay expected; ADM/Reserve: 5-7 days delay expected; Cargill/Reserve: no delays; Peavey/Paulina: 1 day's delay expected; Zen-Noh/Convent: 2-3 days delay expected; Cargill/Baton Rouge: no delays; Mississippi River mid-stream buoys - estimated berthing delays based on new vessel presented as load-ready and weather permitting: Mile 121.5 ADM (Gemini) - Destrehan: no delays; Mile 158.0 Cargill (K2) - Convent: 5 days delay expected; Mile 180.0 Cooper (America) - Darrow: 7 days delay expected. Nine-day forecast for Carrolton Gauge/New Orleans: expected to decrease to 8.8 ft. by 24/3. Mississippi River recommended draft restrictions: SW Pass to New Orleans (Mile 090.0) - 47 ft. for all vessels; New Orleans (Mile 090) to Baton Rouge (Mile 233.5) - 45 ft. for all vessels; vessels with drafts up to 47 ft. have been handled up to Mile 180 in the past, but are approved by pilots on a case by case basis, based on current river conditions; Motiva Convent dock No. 1 is restricted to a max. draft of 38 ft. until dredging can be completed; dock No. 2 is restricted to 30 ft.; it is anticipated that dredging will take place some time during the first half of 2005; Mississippi River Gulf outlet: 31 ft. bw.
Portland, OR	15-Mar-2005	Grain terminal: 2 days delay; CLD Irving terminal: 2 days delay; CLD, O Dock terminals: no delays.
Tacoma	15-Mar-2005	Temco terminal: 2 days delay.

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