

Sun starts to set on single hulls as phase-out comes into force

Mosts analysts do not expect major changes in market but fears raised for future tonnage availability, writes Martyn Wingrove — Tuesday April 05 2005

TODAY sees the start of a new dawn for the shipping industry, with the mandatory phase-out of single-hull tankers and the introduction of new regulations limiting the carriage of heavy grade oil to certain ship types.

Most analysts are not expecting any major changes in the market from the phase-out in the next few years, but some showed concerns for the availability of tonnage in 2009-2010.

Other analysts said there were several issues that cloud the situation, such as who will enforce the regulations, as not all countries are signatories, which could mean some tankers will escape the ban.

Impact

Intertanko expects only a limited impact on tanker markets as many single-hulled tankers have already been taken out of service.

It estimates 169 ships with a combined dry weight of 6.9m tonnes will be taken out of service this year, of which 142 tankers are below 60,000 dwt.

"This leaves 27 ships of panamax, aframax, suezmax or higher, which is pretty negligible," an Intertanko spokesman said.

"Next year this will be even smaller, about a third of this year, but in 2007 it will be back to 2005 figures."

Tanker owners have been preparing for phase-out of single hulled tankers, with huge orders for double-hulled vessels to upgrade their fleets.

According to Intertanko, at the end of 2004, 67% of the global fleet was double hulled and by the end of this year 71% will not be single hulled.

Accelerate

The International Maritime Organisation revised the regulation 13G of Annex I of the Marpol convention in December 2003 to accelerate a phase-out of single-hulled tankers, beginning today with category 1 vessels most affected.

Those category 1 ships delivered before April 5, 1982, will not be able to trade in hydrocarbons under the Marpol regulations, and all of these types of vessels delivered after April 5, 1982, should be taken out of service by the end of the year.

Category 1 tankers are 20,000 dwt or greater, able to carry crude oil, heavy oil, diesel or lubricating oil and without protectively located segregated ballast tanks.

Under the regulations 13G, amended after the Erika and Prestige tanker incidents off Europe, category 2 tankers will also be

phased out starting today, according to their age, until 2010.

Category 2 tankers delivered on or before April 5, 1977, will be taken out of service, while those delivered by the start of 1978 will be forced out by the end of this year.

Regulation 13H of Marpol Annex I, also coming into force today, bans the carriage of heavy grade oil in single-hulled tankers of more than 5,000 dwt.

IMO provides a framework for phase out of category 2 and 3 single-hulled tankers with all of these ships to be taken out of service by the end of 2010.

Exemptions

But there are exemptions under regulations 13G that allow flag states to permit category 2 tankers to operate beyond 2010 to 2015 or to the age of 25 years. Port authorities have the right to ban these tankers if required.

Under regulation 13G all single hulled tankers 15 years or older will be required to undertake extra survey work under the condition assessment scheme. This means these tankers will come under more stringent and transparent verifications, reporting structural conditions of ships. CAS can be done at the tanker's next intermediate or special survey.

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

Vessel	Type	Flag	Class	GT	DWT	Bit	Casualty
ADELE J.	general	ATG	GL	2,481	3,269	1991	While entering Solvesborg on Mar 26 had machinery failure, struck a quay and grounded on a sandbank in the port. Holed ballast tank. Sailed Mar 27. To be docked in April. Arrived Immingham Mar 29.
EURO SEA	general	VCT	—	682	813	1965	Grounded in lat 56 5N, long 11 56.1E, Mar 25. No pollution or damage. Tug on scene. Refloated Mar 26 under own power and proceeded after diver investigation.
FLEET TRADER I	bulker	HKG	NK	12,908	21,355	1982	Had fire on board in lat 10 35N, long 17 07W. Dakar RCC co-ordinating rescue. Nineteen crew rescued. One dead. Fire later extinguished. Tow to Lagos commenced Mar 28.
MARY CHRISTINA	general	ANT	BV	2,224	3,155	1998	Had main engine problems and diverted into Brest Mar 25 to effect repairs. ETC Apr 3.
OVERSEAS CHICAGO	crude oil tanker	USA	AB ABS	46,100	90,638	1977	Detained in Prince William Sound, Mar 26, after small crack found in the deck. Proceeded Mar 29 after repairs.
POLSKA WALCZACA	bulker	VUT	NV	41,220	73,505	1992	Vessel grounded at the Hook of Holland Mar 24. Refloated same day, assisted by Smit Salvage under LOF 2000. Vessel anchored in Rotterdam roads. Sailed same day after inspection.
SABRATA STAR	general	CYM	BV	5,755	7,443	1987	Hit Scheldekaai 9 while leaving berth at Antwerp Mar 24 and returned to berth. Four/ five metre crack above waterline, leaking oil via ballast tank. Effecting repairs. ETA Rotterdam Apr 5.
SEA CLOUD	container	ATG	GL	8,633	3,200	1996	Reported Mar 26 grounded on reefs a few miles east-south-east of Puerto Rico. Salvage companies mobilised. Refloated Mar 29. Safely moored undergoing inspection.
SUDE 1	general	TUR	—	578	1,075	1964	In collision with general cargo Aras-I, Mar 29. Had water ingress and was grounded by the master at Bozcada Island to prevent sinking.
SUN RISE I	general	KHM	—	5,405	8,084	1975	Had fire in accommodation in lat 42 11N, long 28 55E, Mar 31.
TAKASAGO 2	lpg	JPN	NK	999	1,248	1994	Grounded on rocks in Higashiizu, Shizuoka Prefecture, Mar 29. Starboard hull dented extensively and flooding in the hold and engine-room.
X-PRESS KAVERI	container	SGP	NK	6,973	8,377	1980	Engine-room and accommodation areas extensively damage by fire, Mar 26, which started about 33 miles off Tuticorin. Extinguished by crew. Towed into Tuticorin Mar 27.
YUE HAI TIE 1	ro-ro	CHN	CS	14,381	5,600	2002	Grounded near a dock in Xuwen County, Guangdong Province, Mar 27. Docked later same day. Slightly damaged. Investigation under way. Sailed Mar 28.

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The following reports are reprinted from Lloyd's List



ADELE J. (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Mar 27 -- Following received from Gothenburg MRCC, timed 1129, UTC: At 0715, Mar 26, general cargo Adele J. (2481 gt, built 1991) experienced a machinery failure, when arriving at Solvesborg. As a result the vessel struck a quay and then went aground on a sandbank, inside the port. The vessel has been holed in its ballast tank. Vessel had a pilot onboard at the time of the incident.

Malmö, Mar 30 -- General cargo Adele J. entered Solvesborg harbour at 0700, local time, Mar 26 with pilot onboard. When the vessel approached the quay, pilot ordered a back-maneuvre and nothing happened. The manoeuvre was made from the port bridge control. The master subsequently made an emergency stop of the engine. The vessel hit the quay and drifted slowly to a sand ground. The pilot vessel pulled the vessel from the ground. Divers inspected the vessel's bottom and no leakage was noted. A hole of about 1.5 m was found on the port side just under the anchor. Some damages to the quay was also noted and a new inspection will be made when there is a better visibility in the water. Vessel's class society GL boarded after repairs and gave permission for the vessel to sail until the next docking in Apr 2005. Vessel left Solvesborg at 0800, local time, Mar 27. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Mar 30 -- General cargo Adele J. arrived Immingham at 1409, Mar 29.

ALEXIA M. (Cyprus)

London, Mar 23 -- Following received from Aarhus MRCC, timed 2000, UTC: Bulk Alexia M. is still aground. No cargo has been removed from the vessel (not as before reported). The plan is to remove 5,000 tons of coal and salvors are searching for a suitable vessel for this purpose. There has been no pollution.

Ymuiden, Mar 24 -- Wijsmuller Salvage BV was yesterday instructed to take charge of salvage operations to refloat bulk Alexia M., which ran aground around noon on Tuesday (Mar 22) in Denmark's Great Belt. Wijsmuller salvage experts from The Netherlands and Sweden were immediately moved in and arrived on site the same afternoon. The salvage team proceeded to the vessel yesterday morning on board tug Skuld and were allowed to board the casualty for further inspection. Following the award of the contract, a 9,600-ton-dwt self geared lighterage vessel was instructed to proceed to the grounding site, making an intermediate stop in Ymuiden to the necessary salvage gear from Wijsmuller Salvage BV's headquarters/main warehouses.

Salvage personnel will join the vessel to further prepare it for the intended lighterage operations while en-route to the site. Mobilisation of additional salvage staff, including a naval architect, the necessary tugs and equipment has been set in motion with an intended start of lighterage operations of a to-be-confirmed quantity of cargo this weekend (Mar 26-27). -- Wijsmuller Salvage BV.

London, Mar 27 -- Following received from Aarhus MRCC, timed 1150, UTC: Bulk Alexia M. is still aground. Cargo lighterage operations are in progress and are expected to be completed by tomorrow evening.

London, Mar 28 -- Following received from Aarhus RCC, timed 1000, UTC: Bulk Alexia M.: Vessel is still aground. Lightering of the vessel is almost finished and a refloating attempt should be made later today.

Ymuiden, Mar 28 -- Wijsmuller Salvage B.V. successfully refloated bulk Alexia M. at 1430, MET, today, which has been aground in the Danish Great Belt. Wijsmuller Salvage B.V. was able to do so utilising its fast Scandinavian resources, part of its worldwide network. After the lighterage operation of 5,050 tons of cargo was completed this morning, three Svitzer/Wijsmuller tugs, Sigyn, Skuld and Svitzer Marken executed the controlled refloating operation under command of the Wijsmuller Salvage B.V. salvage master and his team. Alexia M. is being moved to Kalundborg Fjord for further inspections and possible back-loading of cargo. -- Wijsmuller Salvage B.V.

Ymuiden, Mar 30 -- Wijsmuller Salvage BV completed salvage operations on bulk Alexia M. early this morning, when the vessel departed from Kalundborg fjord after completing reloading operations late yesterday evening. Operations ended for the Wijsmuller Salvage team at around 0300, MET, this morning, with the departure of the vessel for its original destination, Amsterdam. Wijsmuller equipment and personnel are being demobilised. -- Wijsmuller Salvage BV

ALIDA GORTHON (Sweden)

Montreal, Mar 30 -- Understand general cargo Alida Gorthon could complete repairs and sail around Apr 4. -- Lloyd's Agents.

ANGLIAN EARL (Barbados)

Falmouth, Mar 24 -- Anchor handling tug/supply Anglian Earl completed repairs and sailed Falmouth at 0900, Mar 24, for Lowestoft. -- Lloyd's Agents.

ANIARA (Singapore)

London, Mar 31 -- Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 1025, UTC, today: Vehicle Aniara (45037 gt, built 1978) 24 persons on board, is on fire in lat 37 39N, long 23 47E. Crew are preparing to abandon vessel. Vessel is awaiting tug assistance. (Note -- Aniara sailed Chennai Mar 16 and subsequently passed Port Said Mar 28.)

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

Rotterdam, Mar 31 -- Owners and underwriters of vehicle Aniaya have engaged SMIT Salvage BV, basis LOF 2000, to render salvage services to the vessel, currently on fire off Piraeus, Greece. -- SMIT Salvage BV.

London, Mar 31 -- Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: At around noon today, fire broke out in the engine-room of vehicle Aniaya while sailing seven nautical miles south of Fleves island. Immediately two patrol boats and a salvage craft of the Coast Guard proceeded to the area along with a Naval vessel. Additionally fire fighting vessels of the Fire Brigade, and Air Search and Rescue means were placed on standby. According to information from the master of the vessel, the 24 crew members are all well. The vessel was carrying cars and had departed from Alexandria bound for Piraeus. After request of the master, Search & Rescue helicopters reached the vessel and collected the 24 crew members. At site remain two craft, patrol boat and rescue boat of the Coast Guard, one fire fighting craft and two tugs.

ARAS-I (Georgia)

See Sude 1.

ASIAN NOVA (Panama)

Sydney, Mar 30 -- Poor watch handover practices and poor lookout were pinpointed as major causes in the collision between bulk Asian Nova and fishing Sassenach off Townsville on May 29, 2003, that cost a fisherman's life, the Australian Transport Safety Bureau has found. Sassenach capsized and sank immediately after the collision and the skipper's body was recovered from the wheelhouse of the sunken vessel several days later, the safety bureau reported. The trawler's deckhand leapt clear of Sassenach as it capsized and he was rescued five hours later. The report said that about half an hour before the collision, at 2330 hrs, Asian Nova's third mate made an alteration to starboard to pass astern of a group of fishing boats. About the same time Sassenach's deckhand noticed on the radar a large ship approaching but was not concerned as he thought Sassenach had all the required lights showing. He later called the skipper to the wheelhouse to see the approaching bulker but the skipper made the assessment that Asian Nova would pass closely on the trawler's port side. About 2350 hrs the second mate took over the watch but most of the handover discussion with the third mate was about completing the voyage documentation for the ship's arrival in Townsville, the bureau found. "There is some dispute about what navigational and traffic information the third mate passed to the second mate," the report said. "The third mate contended that the heading and the reason for it was passed, but the second mate denies this was the case." Shortly after taking over the watch, Asian Nova's second mate saw that the course being steered was different from that planned and made an

immediate alteration to the course after a " cursory visual assessment", the report found. When the second mate noticed Sassenach crossing from starboard to port and very close, he ordered hard-a-starboard. At 0001 hrs the bow of Asian Nova caught the warps near the stern of Sassenach and pulled the trawler in toward the shoulder of the ship. "The fishing vessel was now beam on to and in the bow wave created by the loaded bulk carrier," the bureau stated. "Sassenach was rolled onto its starboard side and then sank." ATSB concluded that the third mate's 2330 hrs "relatively small" course alteration was insufficient and was not in keeping with company instructions or good watchkeeping practice. It also found that the proximity of the fishing vessel meant the change of watch should not have occurred until the bulker was clear of the fishing vessel. Neither of the mates had followed recommended practice, company requirement nor ship's standing orders in handing over the watch. The second mate had resumed the course marked on the chart before making a proper assessment of whether it was safe to do so and he had not kept a proper lookout. "Interpersonal relations" between the two mates were "possibly a factor in the deficient handover", the bureau found. Investigators also concluded that Sassenach crew's assessment that Asian Nova was passing clear "was made on scanty information". -- "Lloyd's List Daily Commercial News."

ASR (Malta)

Maassluis, Mar 28 -- Bulk/c.c. Asr arrived Rotterdam at 1655, Mar 26. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents.

ATHOS I (Cyprus)

London, Mar 23 -- A Delaware River Oil Spill Joint Information Centre press release, dated today, states: Crude oil tanker Athos I, latest updates: Six hundred and seventeen responders are working in the command centre and along the Delaware River. Some 221,910 gallons of oil and oily liquid has been recovered and 14,136 tons of oily solids (cleanup materials and oil) have been collected. Experts report 385 birds have been released and 185 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 and 116 recreation boats have been decontaminated.

ATLANTIC HERO (Panama)

See "Brittany, France" under "Pollution."

BALTIC PRESS (Sweden)

Falmouth, Mar 29 -- Ro/ro Baltic Press: Repairs have been completed

and vessel sailed Falmouth at 0900, Mar 27 for Ferrol. -- Lloyd's Agents.

BBC SCOTLAND (Gibraltar)

Messina, Mar 25 -- General cargo BBC Scotland sailed Messina Mar 17 as scheduled. -- Lloyd's Agents.

BONGGAYA 91 (Malaysia)

See "Celebes Sea" under "Piracy."

BRUNO SALAMON (Panama)

London, Mar 23 -- Following received from Ankara MSRCC, timed 1515, UTC: Bulk Bruno Salamon refloated and anchored in Ahirkapi (C) anchorage area.

BUGALED BREIZH (France)

London, Mar 25 -- A peress report, dated yesterday, states: Marine accident experts investigating the sinking of fishing Bugaled Breizh off the English coast last year have said the accident was caused by a submarine. Five French trawlermen drowned when the vessel went down off the Lizard peninsula in January 2004. At the time, a Nato exercise was underway involving the Dutch submarine the Dolfijn. The Dutch embassy in Paris says the Dolfijn was at least 15km away at the time of the accident. But marine accident experts, commissioned to investigate by the families of the Bugaled Breizh crew and the Guilvinec fishermen's committee, say the vessel was pulled under by a submarine. At a news conference today, they said a submarine could have caught the trawler cable in its rudder or propeller which could have dragged down the back of the trawler. "The trawler rears up immediately and sinks from the back end very quickly," they said. "The submarine can resume its course without too much damage and furthermore the accident goes unnoticed by most of the crew." This theory has always been denied by the Sea Accident Investigation Office. The French news agency AFP reports that the experts did not have access to the wreck of the Bugaled Breizh. In the meantime, official technical and judicial inquiries are being carried out into the accident. But the Brest-based experts added in their report that other explanations were technically possible, including a collision with a rock or underwater wreck or equipment failure. "While nothing can be formally proved, and nothing in the judicial file implicates any person in particular, I have the intimate conviction that the Bugaled Breizh was pulled down by a submarine," one of the experts said.

CAPRICORNUS LEADER (Panama)

Baltimore, Mar 29 -- Vehicle Capricornus Leader arrived Baltimore Mar 26 from Southampton. -- Lloyd's Agents.

CHRISTY (U.S.A.)

London, Mar 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: A section of the Mobile Ship Channel reopened for commercial vessel traffic yesterday

afternoon, a day after it was closed because of a collision between a coal barge (being towed to tug Christy) and general cargo Star Drivanger, the Coast Guard said. Commercial vessels with a draught of 18 feet or greater must observe some minor restrictions until Star Drivanger can be refloated, said Lt. Mike Adams, the public affairs officer for the U.S. Coast Guard. Until 0400 Monday (Mar 28), traffic can only move one way around the freighter, Adams said. There is no overtaking and vessels are advised to keep a safe speed between buoys 84 and 87, Adams said. Commercial vessels pose a danger to the damaged vessel because they cause a large wake as they pass. Until 1600 yesterday, commercial vessels with 18 feet draughts or larger had to request permission to move around the ship, Adams said. By Monday, the freighter should be moved, the public affairs officer said. The coal barge was unloaded and on its way to a repair facility yesterday, Adams said. Before the freighter can be moved, it must be patched and water pumped out so it can be refloated, Adams said. The cause of the crash is still under investigation, Adams said. No one was injured and no pollutants seeped into the water, he said. It's unclear when the investigation will be completed, he said. While the Coast Guard had not surveyed local shipping companies, Adams said it was "was fairly certain it was an inconvenience" for them. Judy Adams, the Alabama state docks spokeswoman, said the collision caused minor inconvenience for the Docks. Before the section reopened for commercial barges, there were four ships lined up ready to enter the port and two ready to leave, she said. When the restrictions were lifted the ships were allowed to move, the spokeswoman said.

Mobile, Mar 27 -- General cargo Star Drivanger was inbound Mobile at approximately mile 0 when the tug Christy with four open hopper river barges crossed the channel in front of vessel. On Monday, Mar 21, a collision resulted whereupon open hopper river barge ING-1929 was holed 1' x 6' on the forward rake and began taking on water. Vessel was pushed ashore and grounded outside the channel. Cargo was lightened during Mar 21-22, and on Mar 22 the barge was taken to Delta Marine for repairs, and the tug Christy was released by Coast Guard. The Star Drivanger was holed through the outer shell and into the number 1 cargo hold. The cargo hold is now dewatered and a temporary repair is in place. Cargo removal operations will commence today direct to barge. The plan is to lighten holds 1, 2 and 3, hopefully refloating the ship in the process and proceeding to berth to complete discharge. The channel was closed for two and a half days resulting in numerous vessel's demurrage. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Mar 30 -- Following received from Coast Guard New Orleans, timed 2220, UTC: General cargo Star Drivanger was refloated am, Mar 24.

COLD SPRING HARBOR (U.S.A.)

London, Mar 26 -- A press report, dated Mar 25, states: About 13,000 gallons of diesel fuel spilled from tank barge Cold Spring Harbour (1372 gt) that struck an underwater object on a pier in the Woodbridge, NJ's, Sewaren section, of which about 6,000 gallons had been recovered by this evening, the U.S. Coast Guard said. No injured wildlife were reported, and the crews on the barge and a tug tested negative for alcohol use, the agency said. Cold Spring Harbor, laden with nearly a million gallons of No.2 diesel fuel, was leaving a pier at the Motiva Sewaren facility at about 1955 yesterday when it struck an underwater object, puncturing the vessel below the water line, the U.S. Coast Guard said. The ship's crew realized they had hit something, and returned to the pier, where containment and offloading efforts began, Coast Guard Petty Officer Mike Hvozda said. The damaged tank held approximately 99,000 gallons of fuel. Hvozda said most of what did spill was contained by booms placed around the accident site, along the Arthur Kill waterway, which leads to Raritan Bay. Three environmentally sensitive waterways, the Woodbridge, Smith and Mill creeks, were protected by booms designed to keep the fuel from entering them. Coast Guard helicopters flying over the area this morning spotted a four-mile fuel sheen on the water. Because the fuel oil is light and floats easily, it cannot be scooped out of the water like heavier fuel such as crude oil can, he said. It is expected to dissipate and evaporate with tides over the next few days, he said.

London, Mar 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: A tug and tank barge Cold Spring Harbour, carrying 974,000 gallons of oil, hit a pier near the Motiva facility in Sewaren, dumping approximately 13,000 gallons of the liquid into the Arthur Kill waterway. Most of the spill, from a 99,000-gallon tank, was contained shortly after the barge was punctured just before 2000 Thursday, according to a statement from the U.S. Coast Guard. However, U.S. Coast Guard Petty Officer Mike Hvozda, the public information officer, said there was a four-mile sheen outside the containment boom that is unrecoverable and is expected to dissipate or evaporate within a few days or less, depending on weather conditions. Crews on the barge and tug tested negative for alcohol use, the Coast Guard said. Cold Spring Harbor, is owned by Greater New York Marine Transportation LLC. Hvozda said pollution response teams recovered approximately 6,000 gallons of fuel by yesterday afternoon and will continue cleanup efforts throughout the weekend. Absorbent pads, a vacuum truck and skimmers, in addition to 2,500 feet of fuel containment boom, are being used to recover the No.2 grade fuel. Booms were used to keep the spill from floating into nearby Mill Creek, Smith Creek and Woodbridge

Creek, said Hvozda. No. 2 diesel fuel is light and floats on the water, Coast Guard officials said. There were no immediate reports of injured wildlife. The Coast Guard will continue to monitor the impacted area for one to two months after the cleanup is complete. The cleanup is being performed by Miller's Environmental and Atlantic Response.

London, Mar 27 -- A press report, dated Mar 26, states: About 13,000 gallons of fuel spilled into the Arthur Kill off Woodbridge after tank barge Cold Spring Harbour struck a pier and ruptured a storage tank on the vessel, authorities said yesterday. Officials said the barge struck a pier below the waterline, puncturing the tank, at 1955 Thursday, just 10 minutes after leaving a dock at the Motiva Enterprise Terminal, where the barge had been loaded with 996,000 gallons of No.2 diesel fuel, U.S. Coast Guard Petty Officer Michael Hvozda said. The barge, owned by Greater New York Marine Transportation LLC, quickly returned to the Motiva dock and absorbent booms were strung around the vessel, containing most of the spilled fuel, Hvozda said. About 6,000 gallons of fuel had been recovered, however, an estimated 300 gallons of fuel spread into the waterway, creating a four-mile long slick, Hvozda said. That fuel, Hvozda said, was expected to dissipate without further impact on the waterway. Two cleanup companies were called to the scene to remove the fuel, Hvozda said. He said the barge was being assisted by tug Delta Tide, which is also owned by Greater New York Marine Transportation. Coast Guard Petty Officer Michael Lutz said the Coast Guard will examine the path that the barge crew took leaving the dock as well as the pier that the barge struck. The Motiva dock was closed to capture the spilled fuel, but company spokesman Stan Mays said the cleanup could be completed by today.

London, Mar 30 -- A press report, dated Mar 29, states: A barge (tank barge Cold Spring Harbor), owned by Greater New York Marine Transportation, of Sewaren, leaked an estimated 20,000 gallons of home heating oil into the Arthur Kill Mar 24, after it struck an object underwater near the Motiva facility in Sewaren. The No. 2 diesel fuel is a light oil and is easier to clean, US Coast Guard Chief Petty Officer Mike Lutz, a spokesman for the Coast Guard's public affairs office said. No reports of injured wildlife as a result of the spill have been received, Lutz said. Miller's Environmental and Atlantic Response began cleaning the spill Thursday night (Mar 24). Cleanup was expected to be completed Monday evening or Tuesday, Lutz said. Cleanup crews have recovered 14,800 gallons of oil so far, Lutz said. Uncontained fuel burns off into the atmosphere, said Coast Guard officer Jim McGranachan. "The fortunate thing about No. 2 is that it dissipates on its own into the atmosphere," he said.

Because Arthur Kill is tidal, McGranachan said the dissipation would occur at a faster rate.

CORNER BROOK (Bermuda)

London, Mar 23 -- Following received from Coastguard Falmouth MRSC, timed 1545, UTC: General cargo Corner Brook: Tug Fairplay IX arrived on scene at 0833, UTC, today and connected tow at 1008, UTC. Tug and tow are now proceeding towards Falmouth, where they are expected to pick up a surveyor. The vessel's bulkheads are now reportedly cool and it is hoped to carry out an inspection in the affected area soon to check for any signs of fire. (See issue of Mar 22.)

London, Mar 23 -- Following received from Coastguard Falmouth MRSC, timed 2019, UTC: General cargo Corner Brook, Corner Brook for Tilbury, cargo 4,992 tonnes newsprint: Tug Fairplay IX connected tow at 1000, UTC, today and making seven knots with ETA Falmouth 1200, UTC, Mar 27 for inspectors to board prior to onward passage to Tilbury. Engine-room still sealed, but being ventilated, Technical advise being given by Swedish fire experts. Believe at least one metre of water in engine-room. No indication of fire. Communications maintained with Falmouth MRCC.

London, Mar 24 -- Following received from Coastguard Falmouth MRSC, timed 0914, UTC: General cargo Corner Brook is still proceeding to Falmouth in tow of tug Fairplay IX. Current position lat 50 06.8N, long 18 31.2W. The vessel is continuing to vent its engine space.

London, Mar 24 -- Following received from Falmouth MRSC, timed 1747, UTC: General cargo Corner Brook remains under tow and now making direct for Tilbury, where ETA Mar 29. Berthing facilities and pilot arranged. Engine-room opened and fire confirmed extinguished.

London, Mar 28 -- Following received from Coastguard Falmouth MRCC, timed 0733, UTC: General cargo Corner Brook under tow of tug Fairplay IX bound Tilbury, ETA Ne Spit, 1800, UTC, Mar 29. Position lat 49 45.9N, long 04 13.5W at 0712, UTC, today.

London, Mar 29 -- Following received from Coastguard Dover MRCC, timed 1837 UTC: General cargo Corner Brook is proceeding to Tilbury in tow of tug Fairplay IX. The tow intends to pick up the North-east Spit pilot at 0200, UTC, Mar 30.

DION (Marshall Islands)

See "Azores" under "Weather & Navigation."

ELANTA (St. Vincent & Grenadines)

London, Mar 25 -- General cargo Elanta arrived at Tuzla (? in tow of tug Atlas) on Mar 19.

ELLING K. (Canada)

London, Mar 27 -- A press release from the United States Coast Guard, dated yesterday, states: A Coast Guard Jayhawk helicopter and crew from Air

Station Sitka is currently en route to the fishing Elling K. (99 gt, built 1952) which is taking on water in Hecate Strait near the Queen Charlotte Islands in Canadian waters. The Coast Guard received a request for helicopter assistance from Canadian Officials at the Rescue Coordination in Victoria, British Columbia, at about 1445, today. A Canadian helicopter is on scene with the 72-foot seiner but it does not have hoist capability. The three person crew of the vessel may have to abandon ship. They are equipped with a life raft, survival suits and an electronic position indicating radio beacon. The Jayhawk is expected to reach the stricken vessel around 1830 hrs. The helicopter crew will need to stop and refuel the aircraft during the flight to the vessel's location. The distance from Sitka to the vessel's position is about 260 miles.

London, Mar 27 -- Following received from Victoria BC RCC, timed 1755, UTC: Elling K.: Crew managed to reduce size of water ingress. Vessel was safely towed to a port in the Queen Charlotte Islands.

EMC 423 (U.S.A.)

Chicago, Mar 28 -- Tank barge EMC 423 is still lying in the same position, and salvage operations are continuing. About 30% of the barge's cargo has been discharged to barge EMC 506. -- Lloyd's Agents.

ENTERPRISE (Antigua & Barbuda)

Adelaide, Mar 30 -- Bulk Enterprise arrived Port Pirie Mar 23 and sailed Mar 24 for Geelong. -- Lloyd's Agents. (See issue of Mar 21.)

EURO SEA (St. Vincent & Grenadines)

London, Mar 25 -- Following received from Aarhus RCC, timed 1200, UTC: General cargo Euro Sea (682 gt, built 1965), Sweden for Holbaek, cargo rocks, ran aground in lat 56 05N, long 11 56.1E at 0200, UTC, this morning. No pollution or damage to the vessel. Vessel remains aground.

London, Mar 26 -- Following received from Aarhus RCC, timed 1112, UTC: General cargo Euro Sea remains aground. Tug Danasund is in attendance, but awaiting the arrival of a vessel which will be used to lighten the Euro Sea's cargo of rocks, before any refloating attempt is undertaken.

London, Mar 27 -- Following received from Aarhus MRCC, timed 1150, UTC: General cargo Euro Sea successfully refloated, under its own power, yesterday evening. A subsequent diver survey revealed vessel only had scratching damage and the vessel then proceeded for Holbaek.

FARLEY MOWAT (Canada)

London, Mar 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: Research Farley Mowat that belongs to the Washington-based Sea Shepherd Conservation Society may have hit an iceberg and is now in Eastport for repairs. The ship is tied up at the

city's downtown breakwater and is expected to leave Friday. Eastport Port Authority Chairman George "Bud" Finch said yesterday the "vessel came into the port and was taken in as a ship in distress," he said. "They are hiring people to weld up the leakage in the bottom of it. It is not in imminent danger of sinking. It's work that needs to be done to make it seaworthy." Finch said he did not know where the ship was headed once it was repaired. Eastport Port Director John Sullivan said work was being done on the ship. "The divers went down when they got here but found that the hull is made of stainless steel. They can weld stainless steel but they didn't have the proper equipment to do it," he said. He said divers were on-site Monday working on the problem.

FLECHA (Malta)

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

FLEET TRADER 1 (Hong Kong)

London, Mar 25 -- Following received from Larnaca RCC, timed 1100, UTC: Bulk Fleet Trader 1 (12908 gt, built 1982), ex Waglan Light, 20 persons onboard, had a fire on board in lat 10 35N, long 17 07W at 1215, UTC, yesterday. Nineteen crew were safely rescued, one crew member killed. Dakar RCC co-ordinating rescue. (Note -- Fleet Trader 1 sailed Santa Cruz de Tenerife Mar 20 for Apapa-Lagos.)

London, Mar 25 -- Following received from Fleet Management Ltd, managers of bulk Fleet Trader 1, dated today: Vessel has not been abandoned and the fire has been extinguished. All crew are safe on board except for one casualty. Vessel is safely afloat and in no imminent danger.

London, Mar 28 -- Following received from Hong Kong MRCC, timed 0300, UTC: Bulk Fleet Trader 1 was last reported some 12 hours ago adrift awaiting the arrival of a tug.

Lobndon, Mar 28 -- Following received from Fleet Management Ltd, managers of bulk Fleet Trader 1, dated today: Arrangements have been made for the vessel to be towed to its discharge port of Lagos.

London, Mar 29 -- Following received from Hong Kong MRCC, timed 0145, UTC: The owner of bulk Fleet Trader 1 informed that the vessel will be towed pm, Apr 2.

Piraeus, Mar 29 -- Bulk Fleet Trader 1 caught fire about 240 nautical miles south of Dakar Mar 24. Tsavlis salvage tug Leopard sailed on speculation approximately 1700, UTC, same day from its salvage station in Mindello. Tsavlis offered Lloyd's Standard Form. Tug arrived at casualty's position on the afternoon of Mar 27. Fire was extinguished. The casualty, reportedly awaiting tug from elsewhere on daily rate, declined assistance. -- Tsavlis Salvage (International) Ltd.

London, Mar 30 -- Following received from Hong Kong MRCC, timed 0157,

UTC: Bulk Fleet Trader 1: A tug arrived on scene and started towing at 1912, UTC, Mar 28. A second tug, with slow speed, will arrive Apr 2.

GABRIELLE (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Mar 24 -- Part c.c. Gabrielle arrived Palm Beach Mar 19.

Miami, Mar 29 -- Part c.c. Gabrielle has completed repairs and been approved by Class. The vessel returned to service at 1615 today and will sail for St. Maartin on Mar 31. -- Lloyd's Agents.

GANT VISION (Malta)

Cadiz, Mar 29 -- Bulk Gant Vision sailed from Cadiz on Mar 23, heading to Algeciras Port. -- Lloyd's Agents.

GLORY BRIDGE (Liberia)

London, Mar 29 -- It is understood that c.c. Glory Bridge was carrying two containers containing the chemical thiourea dioxide. The vessel's master reported a leakage of the chemical, while approaching the Suez Canal. The vessel was brought to Jeddah port on Mar 14 and it is understood that the Saudi Authorities have given permission for the discharge of these containers and the cleaning of the vessel's hatch. After this cleaning operation the vessel will depart from Jeddah port.

GREAT POLARIS (South Korea)

London, Mar 30 -- Bulk Great Polaris passed Cape Finnisterre Mar 28, Port Said for Gijon.

HARMONIC PROGRESS (Panama)

London, Mar 30 -- A press report, dated today, states: The Australian Transport Safety Bureau has recommended changes to procedures after a shipping incident on the Great Barrier Reef, in far north Queensland, last year. Bulk Harmonic Progress was on its way from Japan to load coal at the Hay Point terminal in April, 2004, when the engine failed and it drifted towards the reef. There was no pollution or damage to the reef. The vessel was towed to Gladstone for repairs. The bureau's report found a leak in the main ballast line caused the engine-room to flood, shorting oil pumps and stopping the engine. The report has recommended improvements to information exchange for new crews, changes to ballast operation procedures, regular testing of ballast lines and procedures to deal with engine-room flooding.

HIGH SPIRIT (Liberia)

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

HOWARD OLSEN (U.S.A.)

See Millicoma.

IBUKI (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Mar 26 -- A press report, dated Mar 25, states: The U.S. Department of Justice fined Schlusell Reederei KG \$750,000 for maintaining irregular records of its discharges. The U.S. Coast Guard, when inspecting Schlusell's c.c. Ibuki at Honolulu port,

was given a false oil record book. The company later admitted that its crew violated federal laws by failing to record all of its unprocessed oily bilge wastes. "This result demonstrates our clear resolve to uphold the laws designed to protect our special environment in Hawaii," said Edward Kubo Jr., U.S. district attorney. One-third of the fine amount will be used for funding projects that preserve and/or restore Hawaii's coastlines. The money will be administered through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Also, Schlusell was asked to hire an independent monitor to develop and implement an environmental management system that would prevent violations in the future.

INDEPENDENCE (U.S.A.)

London, Mar 24 -- Following received from Coast Guard Juneau, timed 1605, UTC: Fish factory Independence is currently in tow of tug Chuhunta bound Cape Spencer, ETA 0600, UTC, Mar 25.

London, Mar 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: A Coast Guard cutter towing disabled fish factory Independence turned the vessel over to a tug yesterday for the rest of the trip to a safe harbour. The tug reached the Independence about 1045, yesterday, and took over towing the vessel to Cape Spencer and Juneau, the Coast Guard said. The vessels are expected to arrive in Cape Spencer tomorrow before continuing about 80 miles east to Juneau, according to the Coast Guard.

London, Mar 26 -- A press report, dated Mar 25, states: An on-board inspection today means fish factory Independence can head home. U.S. Coast Guard officials say they boarded Independence in Hoonah. Officials say they inspected the ship's rudder, but they are not releasing details of the inspection. However, they say the crew of the ship is in good spirits. Independence will be towed back to Everett, Wash, and is expected to leave shortly.

INFINITY (Bahamas)

London, Mar 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: Celebrity Cruises is cancelling one cruise on passenger Infinity (90228 gt, built 2001) to replace the starboard thrust bearing in the ship's propulsion system. The ship must enter dry dock to replace the bearing, which will result in the cancellation of its Mar 27 sailing. The ship is expected to return to its scheduled sailings on Apr 6. The cancelled sailing, scheduled to depart this Sunday, is a 10-night cruise from Ensenada to Honolulu. Infinity is currently sailing a 14-night trans-Canal cruise that will end in San Diego, Sunday, as scheduled. Guests booked on the cancelled sailing will receive a full refund and free Celebrity cruise of 10 nights or less, departing on or before Mar 27, 2006, excluding holiday and Celebrity Xpedition sailings. Travel agents will receive full commissions for the cancelled sailing,

plus a \$50 rebooking fee per stateroom when their clients reschedule their cruise. Dan Hanrahan, president of Celebrity Cruises said: "Although the ship continues to operate safely, this is a matter that must be addressed now. An unscheduled drydock can never happen at a good time and I am sorry about the disruption to our guests' vacations. We will do everything we can to assist them."

London, Mar 30 -- Passenger Infinity arrived San Francisco at 1010, Mar 28 and sailed at 2230, same day.

IRVING JOHNSON (U.S.A.)

London, Mar 23 -- Following received from Coast Guard San Francisco, timed 2200, UTC: Training brigantine Irving Johnson is still aground. An attempt to refloat the vessel today failed and another attempt will be made tomorrow. (See issue of Mar 24.)

London, Mar 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: Salvage crews today were unable to free grounded training brigantine training Irving Johnson after a tug line snapped while trying to haul it from the shallows. The rope broke shortly before 0900 hrs as high tide began receding, increasing drag and tension on the line, said Chris Grisafe, a spokesman for the U.S. Coast Guard. After pumping water from the ship, salvors were to make another attempt to pull it five miles to Ventura Harbor during high tide tomorrow morning, Grisafe said.

London, Mar 25 -- A press report, dated today, states: Salvors yesterday refloated training brigantine Irving Johnson. "The boat is free," said Chris Grisafe, a spokesman for the U.S. Coast Guard. "It's seaworthy for the immediate purposes." Salvage crew members were inspecting the boat to assess the damage, he said. Teams emptied the water and dug a temporary berm on the shore side of the boat so that waves breaking on the beach would instead bounce back and push the boat to sea. Salvors planned to tow the boat five miles to Ventura Harbor, Grisafe said.

London, Mar 29 -- A press report, dated today, states: The preliminary assessment on the damage sustained last week by training Irving Johnson, San Pedro's tall-masted ship that ran aground off the coast of Oxnard is that it could have worse. But the full story won't be known until later this week, after owners do a detailed survey of the classic, wooden brigantine once it's out of the water. "There's a whole lot less damage than we had any right to expect," said Capt. Jim Gladson, president of the Los Angeles Maritime Institute, which operates the 90-foot vessel as part of its TopSail youth program. "The damage to the hull is relatively slight compared to what you would expect." The \$4.5 million ship, built on San Pedro's waterfront from 2000 to 2003, will be hoisted out of the water today or tomorrow, Gladson said. It will then be taken to a shipyard in Ventura Harbour, where a more complete survey of needed repairs can be made. "There's a lot of

cosmetic damage to deck structures and things of that sort, but as far as structural damage is concerned, there's remarkably little damage to the operational parts of the vessel," he said. Depending on the ship's condition, the repairs could be done at the Ventura shipyard or in San Pedro if the ship is sturdy enough to be brought home, Gladson said. The institute will seek bids for the repairs. A major concern is how soon the vessel will be able to rejoin the four-vessel TopSail fleet.

JACKIE MOON (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Mar 28 -- A press report, dated Mar 24, states: General cargo Jackie Moon with six crew on board ran aground near Dunoon pier when the chief officer fell asleep because of alcohol and fatigue, according to a report from the Marine Accident Investigation Branch. Mikola Necheperenko, whose father had just died, was estimated to have drunk half a litre of brandy when Jackie Moon hit the rocks Sep 1, last year. When he was tested almost nine hours after the incident, he was still twice the legal limit. The vessel was on its way from Dundalk to Glasgow to pick up scrap metal when it hit the rocks. The previous morning he had been told in a phone call that his father had died in Ukraine. He and the other five crew followed the tradition of toasting the life of his father with a drink. Necheperenko was fined £500 at Dunoon Sheriff Court and, when he could not pay the fine, was jailed for 14 days.

JM 2 (North Korea)

Alexandria, Mar 24 -- General cargo JM 2 arrived Alexandria Mar 21 from Turkey. -- Lloyd's Agents.

KAIWO MARU (Japan)

See "Typhoon Tokage" under "Weather & Navigation."

KATERINA (Malta)

See under "Pollution".

KYROS (Cook Islands)

Trondheim, Mar 30 -- Kvernhusvik Shipyard, Hitra, inform that general cargo Kyros is scheduled to leave yard this evening. -- Lloyd's Agents.

LIFANA (Netherlands)

London, Mar 31 -- General cargo Lifana arrived Gdansk Mar 28 from Rotterdam.

MAERSK ROSYTH (U.K.)

London, Mar 26 -- Product tanker Maersk Rosyth departed from Rotterdam at 0220 hrs, Mar 25, bound for Antwerp.

London, Mar 28 -- Product tanker Maersk Rosyth arrived Antwerp at 2256, Mar 26 from Rotterdam and sailed at 0148, Mar 28 for Port Jerome.

MANTENHA (Portugal)

London, Mar 26 -- A press report, dated Mar 25, states: The Coast Guard

says the steering failed on the ship (general cargo Mantenha) that ran aground near Newport last month. Lieutenant Josh Pennington blames a lack of maintenance on the vessel's steering equipment. The vessel was fined \$5,000 for the incident, the maximum allowed.

MARITIME ANTALYA (Panama)

London, Mar 24 -- Following received from Japan Coast Guard, timed 1340, UTC, today: Bulk Maritime Antalya in lat 41 39.0N, long 141 16.0E at 1100, UTC, today. Vessel is proceeding to Niigata escorted by a Japanese Coast Guard patrol vessel and tug.

MARITIME WISDOM (Singapore)

Mumbai, Mar 23 -- Bulk Maritime Wisdom and barge Prapati were in collision at Panjim. Extent of oil spill to be estimated. Clean-up operations going on. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Mar 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: India's Coast Guard was today fighting to contain 110 tonnes of fuel that leaked into the sea off Goa after a barge collided with bulk Maritime Wisdom before dawn. Though there were no casualties in the accident that happened at 0100 hrs about four nautical miles off the famed Candolim-Sinquerim beach, officials and experts said the oil slick would badly impact the environment. An official said slick, spread over an area of the 3.3 by 1.5 nautical miles, was breaking into two or three patches. It moved some eight miles south in 16 hours, heading towards Cabo de Rama, one of Goa's southernmost beaches just north of the border with Karnataka state. The slick was caused when the barge Practi (also reported as Prapati), belonging to the family of a local politician, ran into Maritime Wisdom, which had been loading iron ore since Mar 16 to be taken to China. Officials said the accident occurred when the barge was coming alongside the tanker. While manoeuvring, it banged into the side of the tanker where the fuel tanks are located. L.U. Joshi, chairman of Goa Pollution Control Board, said the leaking tanker had been plugged by 0400 hrs. A Coast Guard official said air sorties started four hours later to assess the damage. By 1300 hrs, the Coast Guard was flying sorties to disperse the oil. Over a thousand litres of dispersants had been used so far. Coast Guard Commandant L.H. Sharma said the force had not been able to use booms to trap the oil spill because of the high swell in the seas. Sharma said advanced patrol vessels had been called in to help in specialised skimming operations since Dornier aircraft being used could only operate till sundown. In state capital Panaji, officials held an emergency meeting with the police, fire service and pollution experts to assess the impact.

Mumbai, Mar 24 -- An eight-square-kilometre oil slick caused by an off-shore collision was threatening the coasts of Goa and northern Karnataka yesterday, triggering an alarm among

fishermen and resort owners on the tourist beaches near Panjim. Early in the day Coast Guard Dornier aircraft sprayed chemicals on the spill, created when 110 tons of heavy oil spilled into the sea off the port of Panjim. Officials said the spill, which was beginning to split into three roughly equal patches, was said to be moving southwards and the Coast Guard was hoping to disperse it before it reached inhabited areas. Goa was put on high alert after the spill, which occurred when a local iron ore barge (barge Prapati) collided with bulk Maritime Wisdom off the minor port of Panjim at 0100 yesterday. As the sea was rough the barge, which was to take on product from Maritime Wisdom, hit one of the oil-filled tanks on board. The crew of Maritime Wisdom transferred the oil from the damaged tank to another one on board, but a large amount had spilled into the sea by then. Both vessels were headed from Mumbai to Goa. The slick, about 25 km from the shoreline, had moved nearly 10 km south, past the Margoa Port Trust, officials said. Goa's chief secretary, Kiran Dhingra said an alert would remain in force for at least 40 hours or until the slick was contained or dispersed "We are sharing information and also getting feedback from the different monitoring bodies in Goa on an hourly basis " she said. Apart from the danger to fish and fishermen, who were yesterday ordered to stay clear of the area, the slick could affect plankton, oysters and mussels in the area. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Mumbai, Mar 30 -- A local press report states: Thirty-six hours after it launched intense measures to neutralise the oil spill off the coast of Goa, the Coast Guard said the worst was over and the oil is unlikely to touch the coastline, either in Goa or in Karnataka. The over a mile long oil slick has broken down into small patches. At 1700, local time, on Thursday (Mar 24) it was still within Goa waters, nine miles south of Grande Island and travelling in a southerly direction. "The chances of it touching Karwar are bleak. We expect that it will dissipate completely by late Thursday evening or Friday morning (Mar 25)," Coast Guard Commandant L. H. Sharma told Deccan Herald. Chief Secretary Kiran Dhingra said Goa would continue to be on alert and beach cleaning teams were on standby to pick up operations if the slick hits the tourist beaches here. Over 100 metric tons of oil spilled out of bulk Maritime Wisdom after its tanks were ruptured in a collision with barge Prapati on Wednesday (Mar 23). "A caution issued to the tourist coast on Wednesday has also been withdrawn. Everything is back to normal and we don't expect any pollution to hit the beaches," said Tourism Director Elvis Gomes. The Coast Guard has done a tremendous job of bringing things under control," said Tourism Director Elvis Gomes. Three offshore patrol vessels assisted by aircraft sorties spraying dispersants managed to

break down the major portion of the slick by Thursday afternoon. The Coast Guard chief sees little chance of the tar balls being washed to shore or causing any major environmental concerns. The level of pollution is negligible at this point, and there is virtually no hazard perception," said Goa's Captain of Ports A. P. Mascarenhas. -- Lloyd's Agents.

MARTINA M (St. Vincent & Grenadines)

Tunis, Mar 28 -- General cargo Martina M is still aground in the same position. First attempts for refloating will be held on Apr 2. -- Lloyd's Agents.

MARY CHRISTINA (Netherlands Antilles)

London, Mar 26 -- Following received from Corsen MRCC, timed 1056, UTC: General cargo Mary Christina (2224 gt, built 1998) experienced main engine problems yesterday and diverted into Brest, to effect repairs. (Note -- Mary Christina is on a reported passage of Porsgrunn for Nauplia and passed through Dover Straits, in a westerly direction, on Mar 22.)

Brest, Mar 30 -- Following main engine problems general cargo Mary Christina diverted into Brest, arriving under its own power, on Mar 25. The vessel is still at Brest effecting repairs, completion of which are expected in two to three days. -- Lloyd's Agents.

MATIAS FERAUSQUIN

Buenos Aires, Mar 28 -- Vessel Matias F. Erasquin is still lying sunk in lat 33 45 03.9S, long 59 14 35.5W. An inspection carried out on Mar 24 determined that the vessel can be refloated, but no salvage operations have commenced as yet. -- Lloyd's Agents.

MILLICOMA (U.S.A.)

London, Mar 22 -- A Coast Guard Seaview, Wash, press release, dated today, states: Salvage workers will again be lowered by helicopter onto the deck of the grounded tank barge Millicoma today to complete tasks necessary to refloat the barge and remove diesel fuel remaining onboard. Significant progress was made yesterday as workers from Sause Brothers, owner of the barge, were successfully lowered onto the barge's deck to seal all tank compartments, readying them to be filled with air so the barge can be refloated. No oil sheen was observed on or in the water surrounding the grounded barge. The diesel recovery effort includes lowering several 500-gallon capacity totes onto the deck so the diesel can be off-loaded and removed by helicopter. Access to the North Head Lighthouse is restricted to protect the public and incident responders. The public is advised that responders will be operating in these restricted areas and will need as much space as possible for their equipment. Benson Beach has been reopened to the

public. The parking lot at Beard's Hollow and the North Head Lighthouse area are closed to public access due to ongoing response operations.

London, Mar 23 -- A press report, dated Mar 22, states: Maritime salvage and fuel-tank specialists spent more than two hours on board grounded tank barge Millicoma near the mouth of the Columbia River yesterday, assessing damage and gathering data for a salvage mission officials hope to launch today before the Pacific pounds the vessel to pieces. Sause Bros Inc of Portland, the barge's owners, fear the loss of a big investment if the barge breaks up, and state ecology experts worry that thousands of gallons of diesel fuel could spill in an area known for razor clam beds and other wildlife habitat. The diesel, used to power a generator on board the vessel, is stored in a double-hulled, 5,000-gallon tank. It was unclear yesterday how much fuel was in the barge's tank, but spill experts did not think any had leaked. The fuel barge's massive storage tanks are empty, reducing the ecological danger should the vessel experience a major rupture, said Sam Sacco, a spokesman for Foss Maritime Co of Seattle, which is helping to plan the salvage mission. The barge is used to carry diesel or other refined petroleum products, Sacco said. Surf washed over the stern and waves crashed against the side of the barge yesterday as it lay against the rocks near North Head lighthouse, just north of Cape Disappointment State Park. The barge snapped loose from a towline late Saturday as it was being towed from Coos Bay to Portland for repairs, Sacco said. It was one of two barges being pulled by the Foss-owned tug Howard Olsen, he said. The tug crew searched for the missing barge but was unable to locate it in the dark, Sacco said. Spotters in an aircraft spied the barge on Sunday morning (Mar 20) wedged in a small cove just below the North Head lighthouse. Maritime salvage crews and fuel-spill response teams from Foss, Sause Bros, the Coast Guard and the state Department of Ecology were dispatched to the scene and are ready to try to contain a fuel spill if the barge breaks up, Sacco said. High seas kept salvage crews from approaching the barge by boat on Sunday, and officials devised a plan yesterday to ferry the four-member salvage team to the barge by helicopter. The team flew in during the afternoon's low tide, when the barge was the most stable, and stayed until dark making notes, Sacco said. The first order of business today, or when the weather allows, will be removing the diesel from the generator storage tank, he said. That might entail pumping the fuel into small drums and lifting them off the barge by helicopter, he said. Salvage crews then must decide the best way to refloat the barge and tow it out of the narrow and shallow cove, Sacco said.

London, Mar 23 -- A Coast Guard Seaview, Wash, press release, dated today, states: Salvage crews are making final preparations to refloat and free tank barge Millicoma from its grounded position in a rocky cove below North Head Lighthouse. Tow wires connecting support Salvage Chief to the barge have been rigged. Salvage Chief will begin operating its towing winch as high tide occurs this morning. The tide will reach its highest point at about 1030 hrs. Large air blowers that pump air into the barge's cargo compartments were activated at daybreak and continue pumping air into the barge. Three other vessels, tug Navajo, owned by Sause Bros, and two Foss Maritime tugs, American and tBetsy L. are near Salvage Chief to provide support. Once freed from the rocky cove the barge will be towed across the river to Astoria and temporarily moored at Pier 2. The barge will be inspected by the Coast Guard and repairs will be made over the next several days. Following that Millicoma will be towed to dry dock in Portland. Salvage Chief is anchored in 20-plus foot water, just off the cove from where the barge is grounded. Two tow lines, stretching approximately 2,800 feet, connect the salvage vessel to the bow of the barge. The tow lines consist of a 1 1/2-inch diameter steel wire connected to a 10-inch circumference high strength synthetic rope. Two salvage experts are stationed on the barge running the air blowers. Emergency medical teams and equipment are on-scene as a precaution. Also, spill response teams have pre-staged response equipment and personnel in the event of any leakage from the approximately 5,000 gallons of diesel on-board the barge. The diesel fuel powers the barge's generator, which is being used to operate equipment on-board as part of the salvage operation. The salvage operation underway is being conducted under the auspices of a unified command that includes the U.S. Coast Guard, Washington State Department of Ecology, Sause Bros., and Foss Maritime Company. Also participating are the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, Washington State Park & Recreation Commission, the Pacific County Fire Department, Pacific County Sheriff's Department, Fred Devine Diving & Salvage, and the National Response Corporation.

London, Mar 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: With the help of high tide, a heavy-duty salvage vessel and three tugs, tank barge Millicoma was floated free today. "It's been freed from the cove," said Sam Sacco of Foss Maritime, which had a tug on the scene and also owns the vessel that lost the barge in rough weather Saturday night. There was no sign of any fuel leakage, he said. When the barge gets closer to support Salvage Chief, it will be rigged for towing and taken to nearby Astoria, Ore., for damage assessment by the Coast Guard and owner Sause Brothers Ocean Towing, Sacco said. Whatever

immediate repairs are required will be made there, and then the barge will be hauled to dry dock in Portland, Ore. The cargo holds of the 2.6 million-gallon barge were empty when it ran aground Saturday, but a double-hulled fuel tank contained 3,000 to 5,000 gallons of diesel fuel used to run generators. Plans to remove the diesel were scrapped yesterday because the fuel was needed to power the barge's lights and electrical system during the rescue attempt, Sacco said. The barge was prepared by crews from Coos Bay, Ore.-based Sause Brothers and Portland-based Fred Devine Diving & Salvage, which owns Salvage Chief. Air blowers blasting high-pressure air helped create buoyant "bubbles" in empty fuel tanks damaged when the barge went aground and throughout the vessel, Sacco said. Five of the 15 tanks were damaged, said spokeswoman Sandy Howard with the state Department of Ecology. Millicoma was being towed in tandem with the barge Sitka when its towing cable snapped late Saturday as the tug Howard Olsen moved them across the dangerous Columbia River bar in rough weather. Both barges were empty and headed for dry dock, Sacco said. Sitka was brought safely to Portland, Ore.

London, Mar 23 -- Following received from Coast Guard Seattle, timed 2210, UTC: Tank barge Millicoma has been refloated and is now being towed to Astoria.

Portland, Ore, Mar 24 -- Tank barge Millicoma was refloated yesterday afternoon and safely docked in Astoria at 0704, PST, today. Vessel is currently awaiting a full inspection, it will then be moved up to Portland Ship Repair Yard. There was no oil spill reported. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Portland, Ore, Mar 25 -- Tank barge Millicoma was in rough shape yesterday, but still afloat as crews assessed damage at a protected Astoria dock, following the vessel's unplanned three-day stay, stuck aground in a rocky cove on the southwest Washington coast. Crews inspecting Millicoma said it was listing to port side and there appeared to be several holes beneath the vessel. The barge was towed to Astoria late Wednesday night (Mar 23) and then moved into a protected dock in the Port of Astoria yesterday morning. That is where it was undergoing damage inspection by the U.S. Coast Guard and others. Sause Brothers Ocean Towing of Coos Bay, which owns the barge, had hoped to float it to a dry dock in Portland soon. However, they are now wondering if the barge is even worth repairing, due to the extent of damage. "We have inspectors on board taking a look at her," said Sam Sacco of Foss Maritime, which owns the vessel that lost the barge in rough weather on Saturday night (Mar 19). "They are trying to find all the places where there are potential problems with the barge." He said divers hoped to get a better look at the underside of the vessel yesterday afternoon. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Portland, Ore, Mar 29 -- Tank barge Millicoma is presently scheduled to move from Astoria to Portland. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Mar 29 -- A Coast Guard Astoria press release, dated Mar 28, states: The Coast Guard, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and the Washington State Department of Ecology have approved a Sause Bros, transit plan to move tank barge Millicoma to Portland tomorrow morning. The barge is scheduled to leave its Pier 2 mooring in Astoria at about 0800 hrs, for the 100-mile journey up the Columbia River to Portland, Ore. Tug Navajo will conduct the tow with tug Betsy L., assisting. Both tugs were involved in the salvage operation that freed the barge from a rocky cove near North Head last week. Navajo and its tow will travel at a speed of about three knots. Sause Bros officials expect the trip to take about 30-to-36 hours. Upon arrival in Portland, the barge will be moored at the Fred Devine Diving & Salvage dock. Fred Devine is the company that led the salvage operation that recovered Millicoma. Air blowers, placed on the barge during the salvage, will continue to pump air into cargo tanks below deck during the tow. This will help to ensure barge stability. Three salvage experts will also be onboard the barge, including a barge master from Sause Bros and two other specialists from Fred Devine. Over the weekend, Sause Bros and the salvage company conducted a damage assessment and made temporary repairs to enhance the barge's stability for the trip to Portland. Repairs were made to the No.4 starboard and centre ballast tanks, as well as other portions of Millicoma. Once moored at its Portland dock, Sause Bros will continue to assess Millicoma to determine the next steps needed to fully repair the barge.

MSC AL AMINE (Morocco)

Tunis, Mar 23 -- General cargo MSC Al Amine is still in dry dock CMR (Tunisia) pending final decision regarding repairs. According to our surveyor, repairs will last at least three or four months. -- Lloyd's Agents.

NAN HUA (China)

See "Hong Kong" under "Weather & Navigation."

NEW FERRY LXXXIII (Hong Kong)

See "Hong Kong" under "Weather & Navigation."

OPDR PORTO (Canary Islands)

London, Mar 31 -- General cargo OPDR Porto arrived and sailed Leixoes Mar 23, subsequently arriving Rotterdam Mar 28.

ORIENTAL HIGHWAY (Liberia)

London, Mar 23 -- Following received from Madrid MRCC, timed 1605, UTC: Vehicle Oriental Highway (8060 gt, built 1980) was towed into Gijon today following rudder problems 20 miles

north of Gijon last night. Vessel is currently with pilot, awaiting berth.

Gijon, Mar 29 -- Vehicle Oriental Highway sustained rudder damages while en route from Santander to Setubal and put into Gijon, under tow of tug Sella, for repairs, on Mar 23. The vessel is carrying out repairs and is expected to be able to sail Apr 2-3. About 300 cars, part of the cargo for Setubal, have been discharged at Gijon and are being carried in trucks to Setubal. -- Lloyd's Agents.

OSIRIS (Netherlands)

Maassluis, Mar 25 -- General cargo Osiris is still under arrest at Rotterdam. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents.

OVERSEAS CHICAGO (U.S.A.)

London, Mar 27 -- A press report, dated Mar 26, states: Crude oil tanker Overseas Chicago (46100 gt, built 1977), laden with North Slope crude oil, was detained today in Prince William Sound after a crewman discovered a small crack in the deck, U.S. Coast Guard and company spokesmen said. The tanker, which can carry 600,000 barrels of oil, left the Valdez tanker dock around midday on the final voyage of its career when a crewman doing a routine deck inspection found an oil stain. Crewmen chipped away paint to reveal a crack about an inch and three-quarters long, said Anil Mathur, president of Alaska Tanker Co, a Beaverton, Ore, shipping company that hauls oil for BP. "It is a hairline crack," he said. "I mean, you can't even put a pencil point through it." As a precaution, the ship and its escort tugs diverted to the area of Knowles Head in the Sound and dropped anchor pending an inspection, Mathur said. The company's marine architect, in consultation with the American Bureau of Shipping already has determined that Overseas Chicago is in no danger or breaking up or sinking, Mathur said. A bureau inspector will visit the ship Sunday and the crack will be repaired, then the tanker likely will proceed to a West Coast refinery, he said. The company isn't required to report such cracks to authorities but Alaska Tanker did anyway as a matter of company policy, he said. Coast Guard Lt. Latarsha McQueen said the company notified the Coast Guard about 1400 hrs of the crack near one of the ship's cargo holds. The tanker was already scheduled for retirement after this voyage, Mathur said. Alaska Tanker is in the process of replacing all its ships with new tankers.

London, Mar 29 -- A press report, dated Mar 28, states: Crude oil tanker Overseas Chicago detained in Prince William Sound because of a crack in its deck was repaired and continued on its way tonight, U.S. Coast Guard officials and the ship's operator said. The ship anchored in the Sound and was inspected over the weekend. Workers fixed the crack with a "drill stop" procedure, which involves drilling holes on either end of the

crack to halt its spread, said Anil Mathur, president of Alaska Tanker Co. The tanker, was prescheduled for retirement after this voyage. The ship is headed to a refinery at Long Beach, Calif.

OVERSEAS WASHINGTON (U.S.A.)

London, Mar 25 -- The master of crude oil tanker Overseas Washington (46100 gt, built 1978) is getting credit for using good sense after the vessel lost power near Prince William Sound Mar 13. The empty oil tanker was approaching the sound when it lost power to its radar system. The master made a sharp turn away from land and an oncoming ship carrying 900,000 barrels of crude. The tanker then briefly lost engine power. The vessel regained engine power after about 20 minutes and the tanker travelled under its own steam to a safe place. Tugs, including at least one that was escorting an outbound tanker came to help. However, the tugs were not needed and the Overseas Washington made its way to Knowles Head, a spot inside the Sound where tankers often drop anchor. A variety of engine and electrical specialists went aboard the tanker and concluded the problems were likely due to human error in operating a manual steam throttle valve in the engine-room, said Anil Mathur, president of Alaska Tanker Co., the Beaverton, Ore., firm that operates the vessel and several other tankers on behalf of BP. After tests showed the tanker's systems were operating correctly, the Coast Guard cleared the vessel to resume operations. It took on a load of crude oil Thursday (Mar 17) and headed for a West Coast refinery. (Note -- Overseas Washington sailed Valdez Mar 17, arrived Long Beach Mar 23.)

PACIFIC SKY (U.K.)

Brisbane, Mar 24 -- Passenger Pacific Sky arrived Brisbane Mar 23 from Noumea. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Mar 30 -- A press report, dated today, states: Mechanical problems continue to plague the troubled passenger Pacific Sky, with P&O cancelling five more cruises. The company says the vessel will be out of action until June and has offered some compensation to affected customers. Earlier this month, 800 passengers were flown back to Brisbane when Pacific Sky broke down near Noumea, six days into a 12 day cruise. Another cruise was cancelled mid-journey in November 2004.

London, Mar 31 -- A press report, dated today, states: Two failed gearbox fittings in P&O's Brisbane-based passenger Pacific Sky have scuttled the holiday plans of 6,500 people. The shipping company has been forced to cancel five South Pacific cruises as replacement parts are shipped from the US. The repairs and a scheduled drydocking will keep the ship in Brisbane until Jun 4, when it will be deployed to New Zealand for its regular winter schedule. Travel agents were yesterday scrambling to find alternative holidays for mainly

Queensland passengers. P&O said yesterday it would refund passengers and offered a 20% discount on cruises booked before the end of May next year. The ship 'limped' back into Brisbane from New Caledonia last Wednesday (Mar 23) after offloading passengers in Noumea and flying them home to Australia. P&O was forced to cancel a cruise scheduled to depart last Thursday, while engineers from the US looked for the cause of the breakdown. The technical experts found the problem in the ship's starboard gearbox was more significant than first thought. "Two pinions have failed and will have to be replaced by new ones built in the United States," a P&O spokesman said. "Given the recent technical problems of the vessel, the best way forward is to take Pacific Sky out of service so that a full repair can be made." This was likely to take until May 11, when the ship was due for its Brisbane drydocking as part of routine maintenance carried out every two years. P&O managing director Gavin Smith said the cancellations meant the company could focus on making repairs and "putting the recent technical problems behind us once and for all".

PAN AMBITION (South Korea)

Portland, Oregon, Mar 24 -- Bulk Pan Ambition sailed yesterday for Vancouver, BC, scheduled to load a cargo of grain. -- Lloyd's Agents.

POLARIS (Togo)

London, Mar 25 -- Following received from the BBC, dated today: At least 10 people are feared dead after they were trapped on burning vessel Polaris in Ghana's main port of Tema. The BBC's Kwaku Sakyi-Addo has seen one charred body and said he believes no-one could have survived the intense heat, which destroyed the vessel. The fire on the vessel has been put out, but thick plumes of smoke still waft across the port. Police suspect the fire began when a spark from welding work set fire to oil leaking from a pipe. The Greek-registered Polaris was being repaired in Tema when the fire broke out. At least three are confirmed dead because we have seen the bodies, said Ports Minister Christopher Ameyaw-Akumfi. There were at least seven Ghanaians, one Russian, one Greek and one Guinean on board. Pipelines leading to Ghana's only oil refinery have been damaged, but Mr Ameyaw-Akumfi says there are enough strategic supplies to avoid any short-term problems. Ben Owusu-Mensah, director-general of the Ghana Ports and Harbour Authority, said the Tema oil refinery had shut down its pipeline, but residual oil in it was still burning. "The biggest blow is that the pumping room of the refinery has been completely destroyed by fire," he said. Some 80 firefighters were involved in the operation to contain the blaze. A supply belt leading to an aluminium smelter was also damaged.

London, Mar 25 -- A press report, dated today states: The government is

to set up a committee to investigate the cause of a disastrous fire that broke out on "Greek-registered" ship Polaris, at the Tema PSC Shipyard today that has affected the Tema Oil Refinery, the Minister of Ports, Harbours and Railways said. Professor Christopher Ameyaw-Akumfi said the Committee would comprise officials of the Ministries of Ports, Harbours and Railways, Energy and the Interior, he said. Prof. Ameyaw-Akumfi said the government would make alternative arrangements to import fuel as the main pumping line of TOR has been damaged by the ferocious fire that has been raging out of control. The Minister of Energy, Professor Mike Oquaye today asked the Tema Oil Refinery (TOR), to shut down immediately to prevent the spread of a ferocious fire at the PSC Shipyard at Tema to its premises. The fire that was detected at about 1030 hrs has affected the seawater-pumping house of the refinery, which serves as a coolant while plumes of thick black smoke have filled the air. The vessel has been burnt completely. Prof. Oquaye who was at the disaster scene said that the fire had melted the VALCO conveyor belt in addition to a water pump. He said the disaster had serious insurance implications hence the presence of representatives of the insurers of TOR to assess the situation critically. The fire has been raging out of control and the Minister of Health, Major (RTD) Courage Quashigah, who rushed to the scene has sent SOS message to the public for assistance. Major Quashigah said he was contacting the Ghana Air Force, which has modern fire fighting equipment to assist. So ferocious is the fire that there are fears that other nearby vessels would be engulfed by the flame. At least 17 people, made up of 14 Ghanaians, one Guinean, one Greek and one Russian who were carrying out repair works on the vessel when it caught fire are trapped in the vessel and feared dead. Two workers on the vessel, however, were said to have swum to safety. The vessel has been undergoing maintenance work for the past three months. According to reliable sources, the fire was caused by spillage of oil from the Tema Oil Refinery (TOR) pipeline that had been leaking for the past one week. Mr Stephen Quansah, a mechanic, said that he and his colleagues were working on the vessel since morning when they heard the explosion. The fire was ignited when fire coming from repair works on the vessel caught the oil on the water. Personnel from the Ghana National Fire Service, Ghana Ports and Harbour Authority and TOR are still battling to bring the fire under control.

London, Mar 25 -- A press report, dated today, states: Three charred bodies have been retrieved from "Greek" fishing vessel Polaris, that caught fire at the PSC Tema Ship Yard at about 1030 today. They have been burnt beyond recognition and were put in sacks to be deposited at the

mortuary. Fire fighters, made up of firemen from the Ghana National Fire Service, Ghana Ports and Harbours Authority, Tema Oil Refinery (TOR) and Volta Aluminium Company (VACLO) are still working around the clock to retrieve the remaining 13 bodies including those of expatriates. Meanwhile, the TOR stated that there was no cause for alarm because the Bulk Oil Storage Company (BOST) had stocks of fuel that could last for three weeks while "TOR itself has a quantity that would take us for some time". Mrs Aba Lokko, Public Affairs Manager, said to prevent further disaster TOR had cut lines to the disaster area and would be on the guard. She denied the allegation that TOR contributed to the cause of the fire because it failed to work on its leaking pipelines, which spilled oil onto the surface of the sea that came into contact with naked fire from Polaris that was being repaired. Mrs Lokko said TOR was so security conscious that it would not look on unconcerned for such important incident to go on. The fire, which started around 1030 hrs, destroyed the vessel, Volta Aluminium Company (VALCO) conveyor belt, TOR pumping station and the Volta River Authority (VRA) pumping house. The Kiku Cold Store and Dolphin Shipping Company office close to the conveyor belts were also razed down. The incident drew a number of Ministers, Officials of the Ghana Ports and Harbours Authority and Security Personnel to the scene. Mr Baah Wiredu, Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, said efforts would be made to ensure that the TOR worked expeditiously to restore the situation to normalcy. The fire took about eight hours to control. The Tema Municipal Fire Officer, Mr Paul Tamakloe, who collapsed as a result for inhaling smoke is reported doing well at the Tema General Hospital. Security Personnel made up of the Police, the Navy and Firemen have been place on guard.

London, Mar 25 -- According to Piraeus MRCC they have no record of a Greek flagged vessel named Polaris.

London, Mar 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: Three charred bodies have been retrieved from the Polaris, the Greek fishing vessel that caught fire at the PSC Tema Ship Yard at about 1030 hrs, yesterday. They have been burnt beyond recognition and were put in sacks to be deposited at the mortuary. Fire fighters, made up of firemen from the Ghana National Fire Service, Ghana Ports and Harbours Authority, Tema Oil Refinery (TOR) and Volta Aluminium Company (VACLO) are still working around the clock to retrieve the remaining 13 bodies. Meanwhile, the TOR stated that there was no cause for alarm because the Bulk Oil Storage Company (BOST) had stocks of fuel that could last for three weeks while "TOR itself has a quantity that would take us for some time". Mrs Aba Lokko, Public Affairs Manager, said to prevent further disaster TOR had cut lines to the disaster area and would be

on the guard. She denied the allegation that TOR contributed to the cause of the fire because it failed to work on its leaking pipelines, which spilled oil onto the surface of the sea that came into contact with naked fire from the Polaris that was being repaired. The fire, which started around 1030 hours, destroyed the vessel, Volta Aluminium Company (VALCO) conveyor belt, TOR pumping station and the Volta River Authority (VRA) pumping house. The Kiku Cold Store and Dolphin Shipping Company office close to the conveyor belts also burned down. The fire took about eight hours to control. Security Personnel made up of the Police, the Navy and Firemen have been place on guard.

London, Mar 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: Firefighters today recovered 10 more bodies from fishing vessel Polaris that caught fire in dry dock in Tema harbour, bringing to 13 the number of bodies recovered so far, Ghana News Agency reported. The vessel had been undergoing maintenance work at the dry dock for the past three months. Two companies near the shipyard were also seriously gutted by the fire. Firemen and workers with the Ghana National Fire Service, Tema Oil Refinery, Ghana Ports and Harbours Authority and National Disaster Management Organisation were today still searching for bodies. The fire affected the seawater-pumping house which serves as a coolant for Ghana's only refinery causing an immediate shutdown. Energy minister Mike Ocuquaye said it also melted Valco's conveyor belt, which is owned by US aluminium giant Kaiser, in addition to a water pump. VALCO had been preparing to reopen the smelter in the next few months, and is now counting losses of at least \$3 million. The Managing Director of the state-owned Tema Oil Refinery, Kofi Sarpong, said the refinery would deliver normal supplies and appealed to the public to remain calm. He said the Residual Fluidised Catalytic Cracking plant had been reactivated to ensure uninterrupted supply of fuel.

London, Mar 27 -- A press report, dated today, states: After the retrieval of 10 charred bodies relief personnel have since yesterday been engaged in pumping water out of fishing vessel Polaris with the hope of getting more trapped bodies. Water and debris have settled in the vessel and is making accessibility difficult but efforts by the personnel to get to the bottom of the vessel have not succeeded. However, the personnel from the National Disaster Management Organisation (NADMO), Ghana Ports and Harbours Authority (GPHA) and the National Fire Service have not given up to hope because they would continue today to get to the bottom of the vessel to make sure that all bodies have been retrieved. The 10 bodies have brought the number to 13, remaining four more. Luck was on the side of two survivors who had come from the vessel to drink water. Meanwhile,

officials of the Tema Oil Refinery (TOR) have assured the nation of normal supply of fuel products because they have started operating the Residual Fluidised Catalytic Cracking (RFCC) Unit to produce gasoline and Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG). Flanked by all the management staff, Dr Kofi Kodua Sarpong, Managing Director of TOR told reporters at a Press briefing at TOR that efforts were underway to restore the situation to normalcy.

London, Mar 28 -- A press report, dated Mar 27, states: A dead body floating on the water near the burnt fishing vessel Polaris was retrieved today at PSC Tema Ship Yard at Tema and dispatched to the 37 Military Hospital. It was alleged that he jumped into the water from the vessel on the onset of the fire, apparently to swim to safety. It brings to 14, the number of bodies so far recovered, the other 13 were however, charred beyond recognition Efforts are still underway by firemen to pump water and debris from the vessel in the attempt to recover bodies that may have been trapped under it.

London, Mar 29 -- A press report, dated Mar 28, states: Professor Mike Ocuquaye, Minister of Energy, today stated that the nation needs a Strategic Fuel Reserve that could last for a longer period to serve consumers in time of fuel crisis. A venture of this nature would require enough funds from both government and Ghanaians. He was answering questions from newsmen as to whether the nation has enough fuel in stock, at a news conference held at Tema on the fire outbreak at the PSC Tema Shipyard, which has for now claimed 15 lives and engulfed Togolese registered vessel Polaris and other vital national installations, rendering them unserviceable. The conference, which was addressed by Professor Christopher Ameyaw-Akumfi was to inform the public about the disaster and efforts being made to bring situations to normalcy as well as announce names of the committee formed to look into the cause and find solutions. Prof. Ocuquaye said Officials of Tema Oil Refinery (TOR) have met with experts to inspect the damaged facilities and offer advice as to whether they could be repaired or relocated, adding that work has already started to clear the debris in the area. Installations affected were the TOR pumping station and pipeline, VALCO conveyor belt, VRA pumping house and other adjoining companies--the Kiku Cold Store and Dolphins Shipping Companies. He allayed the fears of the public that the nation could be plunged into fuel crisis because, "we have enough stock to last for about seven weeks, while arrangements are in place to avert crisis." Dr. Kofi Kodua Sarpong, Managing Director of TOR said the Residual Fluidised Catalytic Cracking (RFCC) Unit, has already started producing 240 tonnes of gasoline a day. He said: "we have 109,000 tonnes of crude oil to take care of the

immediate needs, while efforts are underway to take another 30,000 tonnes of gas oil from VITOL Oil Company, a British Oil Trading Company through Togo to serve the Central and Western Regions." Prof. Ameyaw-Akumfi announced that a seven-member committee under the chairmanship of Nana Owusu Nsiah, immediate past Inspector General of Police has been formed to look into circumstances leading to the disaster and find solutions to avert future occurrences. He said the committee, which has two weeks to submit its report is to investigate the cause of the fire incident, assess the extent of damage, examine the implications and make recommendations for action and future guidance.

London, Mar 29 -- A press report, dated today, states: Workers of the PSC Tema Shipyard today said their Malaysian Managing Director (MD), Mr Rahin Bim Jaafa was responsible for the fire that destroyed Togolese registered fishing vessel Polaris and vital national installations. Sparks from the welding of parts of the vessel were believed to have caused the fire when they came into contact with an oil slick leaked from Tema Oil Refinery (TOR) pipeline on Friday. They said maintenance work on vessels, especially welding was prohibited in the slipway area but was done at the Dock Two or alongside of the dry dock, "however for reasons best known to him, the MD allowed welding in the slipway area on a holiday". They criticised the MD for ignoring all technicalities involved and allowing a private contractor to engage the services of novices to undertake the job instead of the workers. Meanwhile, Professor Christopher Ameyaw-Akumfi, Minister of Harbours and Railways, asked the workers to remain calm as a committee was in place to enable them to express their concerns. A seven-member Committee under the chairmanship of Nana Owusu Nsiah, Immediate-Past Inspector General of Police has been announced and it is to be inaugurated tomorrow.

POLSKA WALCZACA (Vanuatu)

Maassluis, Mar 24 -- Bulk Polska Walczaca (41220 gt, built 1992), outbound, grounded Hook of Holland 0620, local time today. Tugs on way. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents.

Rotterdam, Mar 27 -- SMIT Salvage BV and Kotug successfully refloated bulk Polska Walczaca under LOF 2000. A SMIT Salvage team boarded the vessel shortly after it ran aground, several tugs where connected in order to refloat the vessel on a falling tide. The vessel is currently anchored in the roads of Rotterdam awaiting a diving inspection. -- SMIT Salvage B.V.

Maassluis, Mar 29 -- After being refloated by three tugs, bulk Polska Walczaca anchored at anchorage No.5, at 0840, Mar 24. There was a complete check for any damage. After "control" the vessel weighed anchor at 1559, Mar 24, destination unknown. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents. (Note -- Polska Walczaca

was subsequently reported passing Dover Straits Mar 24 in a westerly direction, bound for Puerto Ordaz.)

PORVENIR I (Chile)

Santiago, Mar 30 -- Ro/ro Porvenir I is still at the Asmar shipyard, and repairs are expected to be completed towards the middle of April. -- Lloyd's Agents.

PRAPATI (India)

See Maritime Wisdom.

RED POINT (Italy)

Rio de Janeiro, Mar 31 -- Chemical/oil carrier Red Point arrived at Enavi. Repair Yard on Mar 13. Repairs are still in progress and the vessel currently has an ETD of Apr 6. -- Lloyd's Agents.

RICKMERS GENOA (Marshall Islands)

London, Mar 31 -- Following received from the managers of general cargo Rickmers Genoa, dated today: Cleaning of vessel's No 1 hold is currently under way in Shanghai Roads. When this operation is complete, vessel will be berthed at Shanghai, prior to proceeding to a shipyard for repairs.

RIDER (NIS)

See "Crew of Finland-Germany Ferry Service" under "Labour Disputes."

RMS DUISBURG (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Mar 25 -- General cargo RMS Duisburg sailed Southampton at 0025, Mar 23 for Drogheda.

RUNNER (NIS)

See "Crew of Finland-Germany Ferry Service" under "Labour Disputes."

RYU GYONG (North Korea)

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

SABRATA STAR (Cayman Islands)

Maassluis, Mar 24 -- General cargo Sabrata Star (5755 gt, built 1987) hit Scheldekaai 9 while leaving the berth at Antwerp at 1700, local time, today, and returned to berth. Vessel has crack above the waterline and is leaking oil via ballast tank, the crack is about four-to-five metres long. Trip to Rotterdam cancelled until further notice. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents. (Note -- Sabrata Star arrived Antwerp Mar 21 from Taranto.)

Maassluis, Mar 29 -- General cargo Sabrata Star is currently under repair in Antwerp. After the repairs, the vessel is expected in Rotterdam and currently has an ETA of Apr 5. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents.

SASSENACH (Australia)

See Asian Nova.

SEA CLOUD (Antigua & Barbuda)

Ymuiden, Mar 26 -- Wijsmuller Salvage B.V. and Resolve Marine Group were awarded the salvage contract to refloat the grounded c.c. Sea Cloud (8633 gt, built 1996) off

St. Croix, just east-south-east of Puerto Rico. The vessel grounded reportedly on reefs a few miles off the port. Salvage personnel from Resolve and Wijsmuller are being mobilised in. -- Wijsmuller Salvage B.V.

London, Mar 27 -- Following received from Coast Guard San Juan, timed 1730, UTC: C.c. Sea Cloud ran aground yesterday morning. Vessel is still aground. No pollution. Vessel grounded on a reef but is not holed.

London, Mar 27 -- A press report, dated today, states: C.c. Sea Cloud, carrying dry goods remained grounded yesterday after striking a coral reef off St. Croix's south coast, the U.S. Coast Guard said. The vessel had dozens of cargo containers aboard and 335,000 gallons of diesel fuel in its five gas tanks, said Lt. Eric Willis, a Coast Guard spokesman. No injuries were reported after the vessel careened into the reef near Ruth Cay yesterday evening, Willis said. The Coast Guard was assessing how to remove the vessel without damaging the hull and leaking any fuel, he said. "With that much fuel aboard we want to put together a removal plan that does not put the boat in jeopardy to minimise the risk for any contamination or further damage to the reef," Willis said. The fuel tanks at the back of the vessel remained afloat while the bow was grounded, so it was unlikely any fuel would leak, he said. It was unclear why the vessel struck the reef, but mechanical failure did not appear to be the cause of the accident, Willis said. The man piloting the vessel passed a Breathalyzer test administered by Coast Guard officials, he said. Late yesterday, the master unsuccessfully attempted to shift weight aboard the vessel to free the bow from the reef, officials said. The vessel's destination was St. Croix but its registration and last port of call were not clear.

London, Mar 27 -- A Coast Guard St. Croix press release, dated today, states: Less than a half-mile west of the channel entrance to Krause Lagoon c.c. Sea Cloud remains hard aground in the amidships area after a failed attempt to enter the channel yesterday morning. A Coast Guard team from St. Croix immediately responded to the incident and was assisted by a second team from San Juan, PR. The Coast Guard and local authorities along with the salvage company and environmental response contractor hired by the responsible party are working together to remove the vessel while minimising the risk of pollution and damage to the surrounding environment. Sea Cloud is carrying a cargo of non-hazardous dry-goods loaded in containers; however the ships fuel tanks contain more than 335,000 gallons of various fuel oils posing the greatest potential environmental risks. Divers hired by the responsible party, report no significant damage to the ships hull. The fuel tanks of major concern are located at the rear of the ship. This section is reported to be free floating

and the tanks are currently not in danger of leaking. The entrance to Krause Lagoon is not blocked and commercial traffic continues to transit the channel. The cause of the accident is still under investigation, but mechanical failure does not appear to have contributed to the grounding. Alcohol testing of the bridge crew is standard procedure and was determined to not be a factor in this case. Commander Elmer Emeric, Commanding Officer of Sector San Juan Prevention Operations augmented the Coast Guard Office in St. Croix. The team will provide oversight of the responsible parties plans to safely refloat the ship while minimising the potential environmental impact. "The responsible party is working in full cooperation with the Coast Guard, territorial agencies and natural resource trustees to address the salvage and environmental issues of concern. We have time to ensure that any work performed to remove the vessel is done carefully with maximum consideration given to minimising all risk." said Commander Emeric.

London, Mar 29 -- Following received from Coast Guard San Juan, timed 1505, UTC: C.c. Sea Cloud was refloated this morning. The vessel is currently safely moored, undergoing an inspection.

Ymuiden, Mar 29 -- Wijsmuller Salvage BV and Resolve Marine Group succeeded in refloating grounded c.c. Sea Cloud earlier today. In close cooperation between owners, underwriters and the US Coast Guard, the salvors on-site, with assistance from specialist staff at their head office in The Netherlands and the USA, set up a salvage plan which was accepted by the US Coast Guard on Mar 28. The plan consisted of weight/buoyancy adjustment techniques, the transfer of fuel to less vulnerable locations and the use of tugs and special towage connections in order to prevent damage to the coral around the casualty during salvage operations. The combined Wijsmuller/Resolve teams, flown in from the USA and The Netherlands, had prepared all for one controlled refloating attempt during high water overnight, Mar 28-29. Operations were aimed to be concentrated on refloating close to daylight for better control. The vessel was refloated at 0545, local time, today by tugs Triton, Yaguar and Courageous. The vessel was subsequently moored alongside the berth at 0730, local time, after the necessary safety checks had been carried out and the condition of the vessel was stabilised. -- Wijsmuller Salvage BV.

London, Mar 30 -- Salvage services rendered to c.c. Sea Cloud by Wijsmuller Salvage BV and Resolve Salvage Ltd under LOF 2000. Vessel was successfully refloated yesterday morning.

SELENDANG AYU (Malaysia)

Seattle, Mar 30 -- According to a press report dated today, Captain

Singh, the master of bulk Selendang Ayu, is to plead guilty today in US District Court at Anchorage, to one charge of making a false statement to the NTSB. This charge stems from a two-hour discrepancy in the time stated in which the vessel's engines were shut down prior to the accident. The clean-up costs are reported to exceed \$24 million at this point, with the clean-up unfinished. Discussions are continuing regarding removing the vessel, one half of which is now completely submerged. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Anchorage, Mar 31 -- The captain of bulk Selendang Ayu that broke apart in December and created Alaska's worst oil spill since the 1989 Exxon Valdez disaster pleaded guilty yesterday of lying to federal investigators. Kailash Bhushan Singh entered his plea in US District Court in Anchorage, where Judge Ralph Beistline approved a settlement deal that the captain had reached with federal prosecutors. In exchange for his plea, Singh will serve three years of probation and cooperate with any future probe of the wreck of the Malaysian-flagged Selendang Ayu. Singh admitted to falsifying the ship log and deliberately reporting an inaccurate time for the engine shutdown that eventually led to the vessel's grounding. Some critics say the wreck might have been averted if he had called for help earlier. "I accept the misstatements that were made and I sincerely apologise," Singh, an Indian citizen, told Beistline. Singh's attorney, Michael Chalos, characterized the false statement as an isolated lapse in an otherwise spotless maritime career. "I don't know if it was borne out of the fact that he was in shock, he was hypothermic, he had just seen six of his crew members go down," Chalos said. -- Reuters.

SEVERN FISHER (Gibraltar)

Belfast, Mar 24 -- Product tanker Severn Fisher is still under repair at Belfast. The vessel is expected to complete repairs and sail Mar 26. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Belfast, Mar 30 -- Product tanker Severn Fisher is still in Belfast port. Repairs are now reported to be completed. Understand that the vessel will be undergoing dock trials tomorrow and then sea trials on Friday, Apr 1. Severn Fisher is then scheduled to sail around midday Friday. -- Lloyd's Agents.

SOROKALETIYE POBEDY (Liberia)

See "Guayanilla, Puerto Rico" under "Pollution".

SOUHASTAR (Lebanon)

Istanbul, Mar 28 -- General cargo Souhastar (2352 gt, built 1970), Tripoli for Galatz, sustained engine breakdown while transiting Dardanelles at 0540, local time, today. Vessel anchored off Uzunburun Lighthouse. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Istanbul, Mar 30 -- General cargo Souhastar completed necessary repairs by own means and upon inspection/formalities sailed from Canakkale at 2145, local time, Mar 28. -- Lloyd's Agents.

STA.ELENA (Philippines)

Manila, Mar 28 -- The Philippine Coast Guard reported today that the Philippine-registered passenger Sta.Elena (200 gt) encountered steering problems, 10 nautical miles off Balanacan Pier in Marinduque island in central Philippines at 1330, yesterday. The vessel with 220 passengers had originated from Balanacan Pier in Marinduque and was sailing for Dalahican Port in Lucena City when its steering mechanism failed. The vessel was taken in tow by another passenger ferry Maria Sophia which was in the vicinity when the accident occurred. The Coast Guard said that the Sta. Elena is being towed to Dalahican Port. The Sta.Elena is owned by Manila-based Sta. Elena Shipping Lines. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

STAR DRIVANGER (Singapore)

See Christy.

STEEL QUEEN (Netherlands)

London, Mar 23 -- Following received from Gothenburg MRCC, timed 1105, UTC: General cargo Steel Queen remains aground outside Oxelosund.

London, Mar 24 -- Following received from Gothenburg MRCC, timed 0942, UTC: General cargo Steel Queen is still aground.

London, Mar 28 -- Following received from Gothenburg MRCC, timed 1245, UTC: General cargo Steel Queen was refloated Mar 26 and is alongside at Oxelosund.

Stockholm, Mar 30 -- General cargo Steel Queen is presently discharging at Oxelosund, ETD at 2000, today. Vessel will be towed to Gdynia for repairs. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Mar 31 -- A press report, dated today, states: Multirship Salvage from Terneuzen successfully refloated Dutch general cargo Steel Queen, loaded with 3157 tons of steel coils, grounded on a rocky shoal outside the port of Oxelosund in Sweden on Tuesday (Mar 22). Multirship immediately sent a salvage team to the site, including a salvage master and a diving team and two tugs, amongst which the Multirship tug Barracuda. Also a barge and a crane were mobilised to discharge part of the cargo of steel coils. Upon arrival on the stranding place, the salvage team carried out a diving inspection, after which was found that the vessel had propeller damage, damage to its keel plates in four ballast tanks. 1080 tons of steel coils were discharged in the barge alongside, during which the damaged ballast tanks were kept under air pressure. Here after the vessel was refloated by Barracuda early Saturday morning (Mar 26). Steel Queen was subsequently towed to Oxelosund, where another diving inspection took place. After total

discharging the vessel will be towed by Barracuda to Gdynia where the damage will be repaired.

SUDE 1 (Turkey)

Istanbul, Mar 29 -- General cargo Sude 1 (578 gt, built 1964), Theodosia to Aliaga, cargo clay, was in collision with general cargo Aras-I (2457 gt, built 1973) Nemrut for Rostov, in ballast, in the Dardanelles, at 0330, local time, today. Sude 1 is grounded at Bozcaada Island. Aras-I is presently anchored at Karanik port. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Mar 29 -- A press report, dated today, states: General cargo Sude 1, Ukraine for Aliaga, cargo 1,010 tons of clay, collided with general cargo Aras-I, from Nemrut, in ballast, off Bozcaada island the search and rescue coordination centre of the Maritime Undersecretariat said today. The centre said water leaked into Sude 1 so the master had it run aground 300 metres south of Bozcaada harbour to prevent it from sinking. The centre noted that Aras-I anchored at Karanlik port.

SUN RISE I (Cambodia)

London, Mar 31 -- Following received from MRSCC Ankara, timed 1328, UTC: At 1130, UTC, today, general cargo Sun Rise I (5405 gt, built 1975), XUUS8, proceeding to Nikolayev, reported a fire in its accommodation area, when in lat 42 11N, long 28 55E. Vessel has since reported that no assistance is required. Vessel has 19 persons on board.

SVEAFJELL (Norway)

Trondheim, Mar 30 -- There has been no change in the situation of general cargo Sveafjell. The vessel is still at Kvernhusvik Shipyard. -- Lloyd's Agents.

SVEN OLTSMANN (Antigua & Barbuda)

Hamburg, Mar 27 -- C.c. Believer ex Sven Oltsmann sailed Hamburg Mar 26 for Gdansk. (See issue of Mar 10.)

SWING (Netherlands)

Maassluis, Mar 28 -- General cargo Swing sailed Rotterdam at 2100, Mar 26 for Soderhamn. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents.

TAKASAGO 2 (Japan)

London, Mar 29 -- A press report, dated today, states: Lpg Takasago 2 (999 gt, built 1994), carrying propane gas, ran aground in Higashiizu, Shizuoka Prefecture, early this morning but there are no signs of an oil spill and no one was hurt, Japan Coast Guard officials said. Takasago 2, with nine crew members onboard, had some damage in the bow and flooding in the hold and engine-room, but there is no danger of sinking, they said. The navigator who was on the lookout was quoted as telling the coast guard that he had dozed off when the incident took place at around 0200 hrs.

London, Mar 29 -- Following received from Japan Coast Guard, timed 0410, UTC: Lpg Takasago 2, Yokohama for

Shimizu, is still aground in lat 34 50.7N, long 139 05.1E. It is not known when the vessel will be refloated.

London, Mar 29 -- A press report, dated today, states: Lpg Takasago 2 ran aground off Izu Peninsula in the predawn hours of today after the navigator on duty at the time fell asleep, the local office of the Japan Coast Guard (JCG) said. Captain Takuji Noda and his eight-member crew were not injured in the accident. The 700-ton liquefied petroleum gas the tanker was carrying or its fuel oil did not leak from the vessel. "I had dozed off at the time," the navigator who was on duty was quoted as telling JCG officers during questioning. Moreover, the vessel was cruising off course at the time. The JCG's Shimoda Coast Guard Office is investigating the exact cause of the accident. At around 0200 hrs., the vessel owned by the Matsuyama-based Takasago Kaiun Sangyo Co. ran aground off the beach in the Okawa district of Higashiizu, JCG officers said. The bottom of the front part of the vessel was cracked and seawater leaked into one of its storage spaces. The sea was calm when the tanker ran aground. The vessel was on its way to Shimizu in Shizuoka from Negishi port, Yokohama.

London, Mar 30 -- A press report, dated Mar 29, states: Lpg Takasago 2 ran aground on rocks along the shore of Izu Peninsula in Shizuoka Prefecture before dawn this morning. No injuries have been reported among the vessel's nine crewmembers. The starboard hull is dented extensively with seawater flowing into the vessel. The nine crewmembers are all safe and several have already been rescued with no leakage of oil and other materials reported. The ship, carrying 700 tons of propane gas, left Negishi port, Yokohama, yesterday and was on its way to Shimizu port in Shizuoka. According to the local office of Japan Coast Guard, the navigator on duty has admitted to being asleep at the time of the accident. A study is being conducted to find out whether a tug can pull the tanker from the rocks.

TOM T. (Sao Tome & Principe)

Bucharest, Mar 28 -- General cargo Tom T. sailed Midia Mar 26 for Constantza, and is presently at Constantza Shipyard, reportedly for scrapping. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Bucharest, Mar 29 -- General cargo Tom T. arrived Constantza Mar 26 from Midia. -- Lloyd's Agents.

TRANSFER (Antigua & Barbuda)

Belize City, Mar 27 -- The marine surveyor who has been involved with part c.c. Transfer since its grounding, stated that presently there has been no movement. He reports the situation seems to be a "dead issue". -- Lloyd's Agents.

VICUNA (Chile)

Santos, Mar 24 -- Following received from Sub-agents Paranagua: The last remaining piece of the midship section of chemical/oil carrier Vicuna will be

removed Apr 5, completing the removal of the vessel. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Mar 29 -- An International Tanker Owners Pollution Federation report, dated today, states: Chemical/oil carrier Vicuna had an explosion while discharging a cargo of methanol at Catallini Pier, Paranagua port, Nov 15. Structural damage to the vessel was severe and caused it to sink in shallow water alongside the berth. After the explosion, fuel oil impacted areas of high environmental sensitivity to the north and east of the accident site. It is estimated that up to 400 tonnes of IFO 180 were spilled. Much of the 4,000 tonnes of methanol that was on board the vessel burnt in the fire or evaporated or dissolved in the water upon release. ITOPIF was mobilised by the vessel's insurer and arrived on-site on Nov 17. The oil spill response operation was led by the shipowner with direction and supervision of the activities being provided by local and federal government agencies. To minimise leakage of oil from the wreck site, booms were deployed and maintained around the casualty. Response efforts were hampered by high currents, which made effective containment difficult. Three main types of habitat were affected by oil: sandy beaches, mangroves and associated saltmarshes, and rocky and manmade shores (including concrete quays and jetties). Areas sensitive to damage from active clean-up, such as the mangroves, were largely left to recover naturally. Where clean-up was necessary, the majority of the work was carried out manually with the assistance of local contractors utilising local villagers as an additional source of manpower. At the height of operations some 300 personnel were deployed. Most of the bulk oil had been removed by early January and fine cleaning of rocky shores and beaches is due to complete shortly. Salvors were engaged to recover the bunker oil remaining on board after the explosion and later to remove the wreck from its position alongside the pier. Wreck removal is anticipated to finish by the end of March/early April. A monitoring programme to assess environmental damage and recovery is being undertaken by the Federal University of Parana's Centre for Marine Studies. To date, no signs of stress, such as yellowing or defoliation, have been detected and local experts have confirmed that environmental damage is limited and localised. Initial wildlife casualties from the incident included several marine turtles as well as a number of sea birds. A mobile wildlife rehabilitation centre was set up in a disused port authority building and specialist personnel employed to undertake an assessment of the severity of impact. Field surveys revealed surprisingly few wildlife casualties and operations were wound down by the end of November. As a precautionary measure, a fishing ban was enforced in the entire estuary

following the incident. The ban prohibited the harvesting of molluscs and finfish and also barred all water sport activities in the area. It was lifted after bulk oil had been removed from the water surface and shores and after the authorities were satisfied that no contamination was present in water and harvested marine organisms. A small fishing exclusion zone remains around the accident site while the remainder of the wreck is being removed.

X-PRESS KAVERI (Singapore)

London, Mar 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: A fire on board c.c. X-Press Kaveri (6973 gt, built 1980), a feeder vessel sailing from Colombo to Tuticorin, caused concern today. While the crew escaped unhurt, the engine-room and accommodation areas were damaged extensively. Official sources said that the fire was first noticed at around 0900 hrs, when the ship was 33 nautical miles off Tuticorin port. Though the blaze was put out by the crew immediately, a fire broke out again. Captain De Silva alerted the signal station of the port at 0950 hrs. Two tugs, one equipped with fire fighting equipment, and a Coast Guard vessel rushed to the scene. The ship crew put out the blaze using fire-fighting devices even before the port vessels reached the spot. The feeder vessel, owned by Seacon, Singapore, had 22 crew on board and was loaded with 337 containers with a capacity of 498 Twenty-foot Equivalent Units. No damage was caused to the containers. Later in the evening, the sources said a technical snag caused the fire. A private towing vessel left for Tuticorin from Colombo to tow the vessel back there. Tuticorin port did not have repair facilities.

London, Mar 28 -- C.c. X-Press Kaveri which caught fire in the mid-sea yesterday, was towed to Tuticorin port. A team of surveyors from Kochi conducted a 'classification survey' to assess the damage. The fire was due to an explosion in the turbo-charger, officials said. The 22-member crew were unhurt. Towed to Tuticorin by Tuticorin Port Trust tug Ananya, 45-tonnes, the ship will be taken to Colombo tonight by a tug vessel brought from the Sri Lankan port. Earlier, the TPT Chairman, N.K. Raghupathy, said that on receipt of the distress message, "we sent tugs Ananya and Thiruvalluvar, to the scene, 33 nautical miles from the port." The office of the Director-General of Shipping would conduct an enquiry. On the absence of repair facilities at the port, he said the TPT proposed to establish them through public-private partnership.

Kochi, Mar 28 -- c.c. X-Press Kaveri, Colombo for Tuticorin, cargo containers, had fire break out about 33 nautical miles from Tuticorin at 0900, Mar 26. Fire was extinguished at 1330, same day. The cause of the fire is reportedly due to an explosion in the turbo-charger. Explosion is stated to be restricted to the turbo-charger. The main engine could not be

restarted and stated to be in repairable condition. A rescue operation was carried out at sea using a fire float from Tuticorin port and the vessel was towed to Tuticorin. All the cargo in containers and the crew members are safe. All the containers destined to Tuticorin were discharged there. Vessel is scheduled to be towed back to Colombo today for dry docking/repairs. Extent of damage to vessel will be known after detailed survey to be conducted at Colombo. -- Lloyd's Agents.

YUE HAI TIE 1 (China)

London, Mar 30 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Ferry Yue Hai Tie 1 which ran aground not far from its dock in Xuwen County, Guangdong Province Mar 27, finally docked the same day. After the stranding, Zhanjiang Maritime Affairs Bureau of Guangdong (ZMAB) formed a special accident investigation group. After inspection, they concluded the stranding was caused by poor visibility and errors by the captain, which led the vessel off its route and hitting the bulwark on the east side. According to the ZMAB, the ferry was only slightly damaged. It found 22 defects in the vessel, nine of which are serious enough to bar it from leaving the port. Four defects are required to be solved prior to departure and the rest should be corrected in one month. The crew had failed to report to the closest maritime department after they were stranded. Since last September, they had not completed repair and maintenance and had not filled in monthly examination and maintenance plans. Other problems included failures of the automatic identification system and the navigation recorder. The vessel docked for around 28 hours for examination and repair and left at 2000, Mar 28.

YUE HAI TIE No.1 (China)

London, Mar 29 -- A press report, dated today, states: Ro/ro ferry Yue Hai Tie No.1 (14381 gt, built 2002) on the country's maiden cross-sea railway service ran aground not far from a dock in Xuwen County, Guangdong Province on Sunday (Mar 27). Yue Hai Tie No.1, carrying 241 passengers and 26 crew, was stranded at 0920 hrs on its approach to Beigang Dock, having crossed the Qiongzhou Straits from Haikou's Nangang Dock, Hainan Province. No one was injured in the incident. With the help of the local maritime affairs bureau, the Yuehai Railway Co Ltd, which owns the ferry, took immediate action to rescue all those on board. At the same time all 43 cargo carriages being transported were safely removed. The ferry finally docked on Sunday afternoon. Zhanjiang Maritime Affairs Bureau of Guangdong is conducting an investigation into the cause of the accident. Meanwhile, the bureau extended safety inspections of ferries crossing the Qiongzhou Straits. The Yuehai company must give the

stranded train ferry a thorough overhaul and submit a full investigation of the company's safety management system.

ZHE JIAO 820 (China)

See "Hong Kong" under Weather & Navigation."

ZIM NOVOROSSIYSK (Malta)

London, Mar 25 -- C.c. Zim Novorossiysk sailed Haifa Mar 21, passed Istanbul east Mar 24 bound Constantza.



CELEBES SEA

London, Mar 31 -- A press report, dated today, states: Three Indonesian crewmen of Malaysian-registered tug Bonggaya 91 (192 gt, built 2002) were reportedly kidnapped in Mindanao near the Semporna border, the Malaysian National News Agency reported today. The report identified the victims as Ahmad Rumiya, alleged master of the tug, Yamin Labusu and Erekson Hutagul. The Malaysian National News Agency said five armed men with M16 and AK47 assault rifles caught up with the slow-moving tug when it was to approach the Malaysian maritime border near Pulau Matakang, off Semporna in Sabah. The tug was towing barge Bonggaya 90 (1368 gt, built 2001). The crewmen came from East Kalimantan, Indonesia and were on their way back to Sandakan, Sabah when the incident happened. The bandits fired three warning shots and then stormed into the tug and kidnapped the three of the six crewmen. They also took some communication equipment from the tug. The suspects were reportedly seen "fleeing toward the southern Philippines." The Malaysian news agency also said Semporna police chief Abdul Latif Ibrahim confirmed the incident but declined to reveal further information. There are no further details on the identity of the suspects or which bandit group they belong.

Manila, Mar 31 -- The Philippine Navy has dispatched three patrol vessels to track down pirates which attacked tug Bonggaya 91 and barge Bonggaya 92 and kidnapped three of its crew yesterday. "Three Philippine Navy patrol vessels are monitoring and conducting negation and barrier patrol on the borders of Malaysia and the Philippines," Navy spokesperson Captain Geronimo Malabanan said today. He said that the Philippine Navy's interdiction patrols in the waters surrounding Tawi-Tawi island in Western Mindanao where being coordinated with Malaysian police. According to Malaysian news agency, Bernama, Bonggaya 91, and its barge were on their way back to Sandakan from East Kalimantan, Indonesia, when they were attacked by pirates at

around 1100 hrs near Pulau Matakang, off Semporna, in the east coast of Sabah. The pirates, who were aboard a speedboat, fired on the tugboat with M16 and AK47 assault rifles before storming the vessel and kidnapping three of the tugboat's six crew members. Those taken were the captain Ahmad Rumiati and two others, Yamin Labusu and Ereksun Hutagul. The pirates, believed to be Filipinos, fled in the direction of Tawi-Tawi in southern Philippines. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Port State Control



NIGERIA

London, Mar 24 -- A report, from LaSalle, dated today, states: A press report, dated Mar 22, states: Four merchant vessels have been detained by National Maritime Authority for failing to meet safety standards set for ships sailing on the nation's territorial waters. The vessels, which are currently being held in Port Harcourt, one was carrying premium motor spirit and the other three vessels had perm kernel products as at the time they were arrested by officials of NMA Safety Department. NMA Director-General, Engr. Festus Ugwu, who confirmed the arrest, said that this was deliberate for the purpose of ensuring safety on the nation's waters. He disclosed that the vessels were not seaworthy, as they were described by the Safety Department as "deficient in structure." Ugwu explained that under the International Ship and Port Facility Security, introduced by International Maritime Organisation, Nigeria is expected to ensure that vessels operating in the country were seaworthy. He said the vessels will not be allowed to sail until they have been certified as having met all necessary security and safety standards set by IMO. He explained that the owners of the vessels were currently making efforts to carry out necessary repairs in their ships. However, he could not say when NMA is likely to allow the vessels sail, a situation which the Safety Department of NMA said depends on the owners of vessels. According to him, the detention of the vessels was not targeted to punish the owners of the ships but to safeguard the lives of users of the ships as well as the nation's territorial waters. "The ships will be released as soon as the owners put certain facilities in place," he said. NMA and the Nigerian Navy had last year pledged co-operation in the task of implementing the global maritime security order as it concerns Nigeria in the area implementation of ISPS code. NMA had solicited the assistance of the Navy in core technical areas when the need arises.

Seizures & Arrests



AFRICAN PRIDE (Panama)

London, Mar 24 -- A report from LaSalle, dated today, states: A report, dated Mar 23, states: Trial of the 13 Russians who allegedly used the missing product tanker African Pride for illegal oil bunkering suffered another set back yesterday, following an application for adjournment made by the Federal Government, the complainant in the case. Mrs Pat Ajoku, who is the prosecuting counsel had informed the trial Judge, Justice Gloria Okeke, about government's appeal, which is pending at the Court of Appeal. The prosecution had appealed decision of the trial Judge to refuse government's application to amend the charge preferred against the accused foreigners. The appeal was last week thrown out by the appellate court, which noted that it was not properly filed. Sequel to the refusal, the prosecution filed a fresh appeal against the ruling of the trial court and consequently at yesterday's proceedings, made an oral application for adjournment of the trial, pending the determination of the appeal. Although the defence vehemently opposed the adjournment, describing it as a ploy to delay the trial of the accused who had been in detention since October 2003, the application was granted by the Judge, who adjourned the matter to May 30. The 13 Russians were on Mar 2, last year, arraigned on a two-count charge of conspiracy and unlawful conveying or 11, 300 tonnes of crude oil valued at about N345 million in a vessel. But as their trial was approaching its end, government sought to amend the charge, but the judge refused to grant the request, on ground among others; that it will be injustice, as amending it, will amount to trial de novo. Dissatisfied with the ruling, government headed for Appeal Court and brought before the trial court an application for stay of proceedings which was equally refused on Jan 14. The government has filed two fresh appeal against the said rulings.

ALCOR (Comoros)

Limassol, Mar 23 -- General cargo Alcor is still under arrest at Limassol breakwater. -- Lloyd's Agents.

ALMOUROL (Portugal)

See Pardelhas.

ENDEAVOR II (Greece)

Karachi, Mar 23 -- The Sindh High Court has issued an order confirming the sale of crude oil tanker Endeavor II to Kanika Marine Ltd at a cost of \$7.01 million. However, the delivery of the vessel is subject to a payment of Rs 396,656, which was the shortfall in the final payment by the buyer. As

soon as the buyer pays this amount, the official assignee will hand over the vessel, along with all its documents, to the new owner. The vessel is under arrest at Karachi Port and the funds will remain with the court until the case is resolved. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Karachi, Mar 30 -- Kanika Marine Ltd, is expected to take possession of crude oil tanker Endeavor II today or tomorrow. The new owner bought it at \$7.011 million while the amount is being deposited in Sindh High Court (SHC) until case is resolved. A new date is yet to be fixed by honorable court hearing the case. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

HERKULES II (Poland)

Maassluis, Mar 25 -- Tug Herkules II is still under arrest in the Rotterdam area. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents.

HIGH SPIRIT (Liberia)

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

HIGHLANDER

Cape Town, Mar 29 -- Fishing Highlander is still under arrest at Cape Town. -- Lloyd's Agents.

ILHA BRAVA (Portugal)

London, Mar 31 -- A press report, dated today, states: Fishing Ilha Brava (453 gt, built 1951) which was detained off North Mayo last night is being escorted to port. The vessel was stopped by patrol vessel LE Eithne around 195 miles off the Mayo coast. It is being escorted to Galway, where it is expected to arrive tomorrow. It will then undergo inspections by Department of the Marine officials from the Republic.

JULIETTA (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Mar 24 -- C.c. Julietta (7480 gt, built 2002) was arrested at Hull Mar 11 by the Admiralty Marshal in respect of damage to the vessel's cargo of cocoa beans. The vessel was released Mar 12. (Note -- Julietta sailed Hull Mar 12.)

JUNO TRADER (St. Vincent & Grenadines)

Bissau, Mar 24 -- Ref Juno Trader is still under arrest at Bissau. -- Lloyd's Agents.

OCEAN BOOMER (Panama)

London, Mar 31 -- Admiralty Court sale: Oceanographic research Ocean Boomer lying Gibraltar is to be sold by private treaty "as is, where is" at the time of sale and on the Admiralty Marshal's conditions of sale. All offers must be received by noon Apr 19.

ORIONIS (Hong Kong)

Karachi, Mar 25 -- Mundra Port Authority, on the order of the High Court of Ahmedabad in Gujarat, India, has arrested general cargo Orionis (11978 gt, built 1980) on the admiralty suit filed by a Pakistani company for not paying bunker charges at Karachi Port. According to shipping industry sources, the court accepted the request

of the legal council of the bunker supplier under Section 70 of the Indian Contract Act 1872 and issued order of arrest against the vessel. MPA arrested the ship on last Thursday evening, which arrived for loading of 9,000 tonnes of steel coils and 4,000 tonnes of steel pipes for Philippines and China. Earlier, she arrived at Karachi port on Jan 15 and loaded rice consignment for some African country. On request, Faisal Marine Oil Services (FMOS), Karachi, had supplied about 66.88 tonnes of marine gas oil and 158.5 tonnes of heavy oil at an estimated cost of \$63,000, which were not paid by vessel. The FMOS sent several copies of bunker charges bills to the local representatives of the vessel and also served many letters and reminders to the Singaporean-based vessel owner Prominent Shipping as well as its Korean-based time charterer Daeshing Shipping, but not received any response and the matter for payment remained pending. The FMOS was left with no other option but to opt for the arrest of the vessel. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

OSIRIS (Netherlands)

See under "Marine."

OSTWIND (Antigua & Barbuda)

Maassluis, Mar 25 -- General cargo Ostwind is still under arrest at Vlaardingen. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents.

PARDELHAS (Falkland Islands)

London, Mar 29 -- A press report, dated Mar 28, states: Trawlers Pardelhas and Almourol belonging to the Portuguese company Pardelhas Fishing Company which have been abandoned for years in Punta Arenas will be auctioned Apr 19, following the ruling of a local court. Pardelhas and Almourol will have a starting auction price of approximately US\$146,000 and 212,000, following a Punta Arenas court decision recognizing that the Portuguese company has pending debts with the local maritime agent, Agencia Maritima Ultramar Limitada equivalent to US\$163,000. The maritime agent and the Portuguese company signed a service agreement September 2000. Pardelhas also has pending debts with the crew, mostly Peruvians, who refused to abandon the vessels until they were paid. Finally they gave up in July 2004 after surviving several years in precarious almost inhuman conditions aboard the abandoned vessels. According to Punta Arenas press, both vessels arrived in the year 2000, after having finished fishing in Falklands waters and went into the local Navy yard for repairs and maintenance. Since the fishing company never paid the bill, a local court ordered the vessel to remain docked in Punta Arenas port. They were later ordered to Isabel Island in the bay, where they have remained since, one of the vessels is grounded and half sunk. According to court information, Almourol belongs to the Portuguese company Trz-Peixe and Pardelhas to Murtuosa Fishing.

RIKA (Estonia)

Tallinn, Mar 30 -- General cargo Rika is still in the same position with no crew on board. According to information from the Harbour-master some pipes were burst during the cold period. Therefore there is some water in the engine-room. -- Lloyd's Agents.

VOYAGER (Netherlands Antilles)

Maassluis, Mar 25 -- General cargo Voyager is still under arrest at Rotterdam. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents.



ARUN, INDONESIA

London, Mar 28 -- A press report, dated today, states: Exxon Mobil Corp., the world's largest publicly traded oil company, has resumed full gas production from its field at Arun in Indonesia after a pipeline leakage, said Deva Rachman, a spokeswoman at Exxon in Jakarta. The leakage didn't reduce LNG shipments from Arun in Sumatra, one of Indonesia's two liquefied natural gas export terminals, Rachman said. Exxon said on Mar 24 that the flow of gas in the pipeline, which usually carries 600 million cubic feet of gas a day, may be cut by the leakage. The company evacuated some residents living near the leak. "Most of the villagers that were evacuated earlier have returned to their homes," Rachman said by mobile telephone today. Exxon, which operates the field, supplies gas to PT Arun NGL, Indonesia's oldest liquefied natural gas plant. Declining gas output from the field has resulted in lower LNG sales to customers including Korea Gas Corp. and Japan's Tohoku Electric Power Co.

KIRKUK AREA, IRAQ

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

NORTH SLOPE, ALASKA, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 30 -- A press report, dated today, states: Environmental workers in Alaska were yesterday racing to clean up 111,300 gallons of oily water that spilled from a leaky oil pipeline, officials said. Some 80 workers were battling to clean up the oily water that covers about two acres in what ranks as one of the largest industrial spills ever seen in the oilfields of northern Alaska's North Slope region. The leak of oil-contaminated water was discovered Saturday (Mar 26) in an oilfield operated by ConocoPhillips Alaska, Inc in Kuparuk, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation said. "Around 111,300 gallons of a mixture of seawater and produced water, which is a mixture of water and crude oil, was released to both gravel pad and tundra," said the department's Amanda Leffel. Produced water is

water that has been separated from the mixture of crude oil and liquid natural gas that is produced by oil wells. The oil content of the water amounts to about 50 gallons, Leffel said. The leaky pipeline carries produced water from a separating plant back to the Kuparuk production facility where it is injected back into the ground to help maintain pressure in the oil field to allow better oil yields. "The exact cause of the leak is yet to be determined," the department said in a statement. "A line excavation and inspection may be required before the cause can be determined. A repair plan for the pipeline is being developed," it added.

PYRAMID LAKE, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 24 -- A press report, dated Mar 23, states: A landslide apparently ruptured an oil pipeline today that spilled up to 126,000 gallons of crude oil into a reservoir that provides water to Southern California cities, officials said. Officials said they had cordoned off the affected area of Pyramid Lake and were not concerned about potential contamination of the region's drinking water. "These kinds of spills are usually pretty localised," said Henry Martinez, chief operating officer for the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, which uses water from the reservoir to generate power. The light crude oil spill occurred about a mile east of the lake, about 60 miles northwest of Los Angeles. Firefighters closed several lanes of Interstate 5, a major north-south highway, as they rushed to isolate the area and build a dike to keep more oil from pouring into the lake. The Forest Service and state Department of Fish and Game were working with pipeline owner Pacific Energy Partners to control the oil. Arthur G. Diefenbach, a senior vice president for the company and its subsidiary, Pacific Pipeline Systems, said officials believe the spill was caused by a landslide, but "it's a little early to tell." Diefenbach said officials were concerned about possible harm to local wildlife. "We have a bird and wildlife rescue unit on standby if we should have a problem," he said. The 1,297-acre lake stores water for delivery to Los Angeles and other Southern California coastal cities.

London, Mar 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: At least 75 percent of the oil that spilled from a ruptured pipeline into Pyramid Lake had been removed from the water by yesterday afternoon, officials said. What's left of the estimated five-acre oil slick is scheduled to be removed today before noon, after which crews will begin cleaning the oily shoreline, pipeline company officials said. "Obviously, our first concern has been removing the oil from the surface of the water," said Aubrye Harris, a spokeswoman for Long Beach-based Pacific Energy Partners. "Once that is completed, we will focus on the shoreline. But the whole canyon cleanup and restoration will probably take a few weeks." A

landslide triggered by recent heavy rains likely caused the pipeline to break about 1300, Wednesday (Mar 23), spewing 126,000 gallons of light crude oil down the hillside east of Interstate 5. The oil travelled down a ravine, under the highway and into the lake, a holding reservoir that feeds parts of Los Angeles County. It is too early to determine how much oil made its way into the lake, Harris said. The oil slick was contained to a cove hours after the spill using large, absorbent barriers called booms. Pyramid Lake, part of the State Water Project, normally feeds into Castaic Lake to the south, but water flows were halted following the contamination. Shoreline cleanup is expected to take a few days, Harris said, adding that removing oil from the hillside will require at least two weeks.

TASKOY AREA, TURKEY

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



ARTHUR KILL, UNITED STATES

See Cold Spring Harbor under "Marine."

BOCA AREA, FLORIDA, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 27 -- A press report, dated today, states: Beaches in Boca Raton and Ocean Ridge were reopened late yesterday afternoon after tests showed the water to be safe. They had been closed since Friday (Mar 25) morning, when 250,000 gallons of sewage spilled into the Intracoastal Waterway at Delray Beach. Water tested for bacteria at the Boca Raton and Boynton inlets came back in the "good" range, but people still should avoid coming into contact with water from the Intracoastal, Palm Beach County Health Department spokesman Tim O'Connor said. "People should be aware there may be some contaminants out there," he said. The spill occurred at Veterans Park in Delray Beach, where contractors were to start making improvements to a city pumping station. A hose being used as a bypass broke late Thursday or early Friday, and sewage spilled into the park and the Intracoastal. The Health Department, Florida Department of Environmental Protection and Delray Beach officials will investigate the spill, O'Connor said. If it could have been prevented or if any laws were violated, the city or the contractor, Murray Logan Construction, could be fined, he said. For most of Friday and yesterday, beaches one mile north and one mile south of the inlets were closed to swimmers. Officials also advised people to avoid fishing and using personal watercraft in the areas near the spill.

BRITTANY, FRANCE

London, Mar 30 -- A French court yesterday acquitted the master of Mitsui OSK crude oil tanker Atlantic Hero accused of deliberately causing pollution off the French coast, finding that his denial of the offence was plausible despite the presence of an 11 km slick in his vessel's wake. The master, 41-year-old Croatian, Srdjan Ljustina, admitted at a hearing last month that his vessel was in the process of cleaning its ballast tanks when a French navy aircraft flew over it last September. But he argued that any pollution caused by his ship could only have been caused by organic waste and not by oil-based residues. His explanation was rejected, however, at the hearing by public prosecutor, Francois Nicot, who claimed that he and his crew had taken advantage of the ballast cleaning operation to get rid of other waste. He asked the court to impose a Euro 300,000 fine on the master and the vessel's owners. Giving its judgement yesterday, however, the court found in the master's favour. The environmental protection organisation, Vigipol, indicated that it would be appealing against the acquittal of the master of Atlantic Hero.

GUAYANILLA, PUERTO RICO

London, Mar 24 -- A press release from the United States Coast Guard, dated Mar 22: Coast Guard personnel were on scene at an oil spill in Guayanilla, Puerto Rico that occurred late Sunday (Mar 20) night when an estimated 7,000 barrels or 294,000 gallons of No.6 grade fuel oil leaked from a 24 inch transfer pipe used to move product from the shore side facility to tanker vessels. All but 50 gallons were contained in the facilities secondary containment area and around the clock operations continue to contain and remove the oil. The incident occurred when a transfer pipe burst 5,000 yards inland from shore at the Commonwealth Oil Refining Company CORCO facility in the port of Guayanilla. The oil was being transfer to the crude oil tanker Sorokaletie Pobedy. The National Response center notified the Coast Guard Command Centre of the spill Sunday at 2330 hrs. Coast Guard personnel from inspections office in Ponce, Puerto Rico were on scene by 0100 Monday to ensure the leakage was stopped, containment booms deployed and all means available were being used to minimise impact to the environment. By first light and throughout the day the team of responders grew to include Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Quality Board, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Puerto Rico Environmental Protection Agency, Emergency Management Association and Puerto Rico Police Department. On Monday afternoon a Coast Guard HH-65 Dolphin helicopter from Air Station Borinquen and small boats from DPNR and PRPD were used to survey the impacted area and to locate the estimated 50 gallons that entered a nearby navigable waterway most of

which is center within a dense mangrove area. Cleanup crews continue to work around the clock to remove the liquid product from the containment areas.

HUMBER ESTUARY, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Mar 30 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: The Humber Estuary's delicate wildlife population has been saved from pollution after the Hull tidal barrier was lowered to contain an oil spill. The Environment Agency is yet to track down the source of the leak in the River Hull today. By mid-afternoon the entire length of the river between Stoneferry and the Hull barrier was covered in a sheen of oil, officials said. Spokesman Phil Young said the oil would have been a "nightmare" for wildlife. It is not yet clear whether the spill was deliberate or accidental. Hull City Council raised the alarm this afternoon and an investigation into the source is continuing.

KATERINA (Malta)

London, Mar 26 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: The chief engineer of bulk Katerina was sentenced to eight months in federal prison yesterday after admitting he allowed oily waste to be pumped into the ocean. Edgardo A. Guinto, 49, pleaded guilty in January and was convicted of obstruction of justice charges. He was sentenced yesterday in Los Angeles by United States District Judge Florence-Marie Cooper. According to the district attorney's office, the Philippines resident admitted he told crew members to remove and conceal the bypass pipe when the vessel came into port in Long Beach. The DA's office also said Guinto admitted he made fraudulent entries in the vessel's pollution-prevention records. Captain Ioannis Kallikis, 65, of Athens, Greece, pleaded guilty in February to an obstruction of justice charge. Kallikis admitted his actions meant to impede a Coast Guard investigation into pollution violations. He allegedly advised other crew members they needed to destroy incriminating messages. Kallikis is scheduled to be sentenced on April 4. The vessel's second engineer, Rolan O. Sullesta, 42, pleaded guilty in January to one charge of obstruction of justice for concealing one of two bypass pipes. Sullesta is scheduled to be sentenced April 11. The vessel is operated by DST Shipping Inc. of Thessaloniki, Greece. According to the DA's office, the company pleaded guilty to obstruction of an official proceeding and failing to maintain an accurate Oil Record Book. DST was sentenced to probation, in which it will be subject to special scrutiny. The company also paid a \$1 million fine.

KUPARUK, ALASKA, UNITED STATES

See "North Slope, Alaska, United States" under "Pipeline Accidents."

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

PARANAGUA AREA, BRAZIL

See Vicuna under "Marine."

Weather & Navigation**AUSTRALIA**

London, Mar 23 -- A press report, dated Mar 22, states: Heavy winds are buffeting Sydney and surrounding areas and are expected to strengthen. A severe weather warning is still in place for the New South Wales coast and the southern and central Tablelands. Strong winds are moving towards Newcastle, and Sydney has experienced gusts of up to 80 km an hour tonight. The Manly ferry has been cancelled due to heavy swells in Sydney harbour. Localised flooding in Sydney caused traffic delays in Campsie, Alexandria, Gore Hill and Dee Why. The weather bureau is forecasting a second band of heavy rain and has issued a flood watch for the Georges, Karuah, Paterson and Williams rivers. The New South Wales State Emergency Service advises people to stay indoors away from windows and stay clear of floodwater and fallen powerlines. Emergency services are warning people to stay away from surf-exposed areas.

London, Mar 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: In south-east Queensland, emergency crews are working to repair homes damaged by this afternoon's fierce storms. The storms hit a wide area to the west and north of Brisbane. Five police cars were damaged by large hailstones at Deception Bay on Brisbane's northern outskirts and a house was damaged at nearby Narangba. Further north, two homes were damaged at Hervey Bay and police say they have received reports of a "mini tornado" between Biggenden and Childers. The worst damage was at Glenwood, where 18 homes have been damaged.

AZORES

St. Michael's, Mar 30 -- Bulk Dion (17428 gt, built 1994) arrived and berthed alongside the quay at Ponta Delgada Mar 23 for discharge operations. Due to boisterous weather in the Azores, discharge was constantly stopped. The vessel is reported to have broken some ropes and touched the quay where it is berthed due to the heavy weather. -- Lloyd's Agents.

BANGLADESH

London, Mar 23 -- A press report, dated Mar 22, states: Bangladesh troops pulled out seven more bodies from the rubble of collapsed homes in the country's north today, raising the death toll from a storm in the area to 45, officials said. They said efforts were on to locate more bodies from several villages that were mostly razed by Sunday's storm that also injured at least 700 people. District

administration officials said dozens of people were still missing and some of the injured in hospitals may die, taking the death toll even higher. It would take several more days to assess the full extent of damage, they added. Officials said the storm made 10,000 people homeless and damaged rice and other crops.

Dhaka, Mar 24 -- At least 80 people have been killed and some 1,000 others have been injured after tropical storms swept Bangladesh over the past four days, officials said today. Of the victims, 32 died and 300 were hurt in storms which lashed 21 districts over the last two days. Forty-eight others were killed and 700 were injured in northern Gaibandha and Rangpur areas on Sunday (Mar 20). Most of the victims died under collapsed houses and uprooted trees. Others were killed by lightning, hailstorms and boat sinkings, disaster management officials said today. The recent storms also left more than 15,000 people homeless, they said. Meteorology officials said today that more storms were likely to hit the country until the end of May. -- Reuters.

London, Mar 31 -- A press report, dated today, states: Tropical storms that swept across Bangladesh killed at least seven people, injured hundreds of others and destroyed thousands of homes, officials and news reports said today. The storms pounded dozens of farming villages in central and northern Bangladesh yesterday, damaging rice crops and uprooting trees and electricity poles. Five people were killed and about 500 others were injured in Natore district, 100 miles north of the capital Dhaka, said local government official Aminul Islam. Islam said the victims were killed by collapsing homes, flying debris and lightning. The storms also destroyed about 6,000 straw-hut homes in about 50 farming villages in Natore. The storms also killed two people in neighbouring Sirajganj and Pabna districts, the Janakantha daily newspaper said. About 150 others were injured and some 600 homes destroyed. In Dhaka, central Bangladesh, another sudden storm forced several flights to be diverted from the city's international airport, and stranded many commuters as they headed home from work.

London, Mar 31 -- A press report, dated today, states: A tropical storm sweeping through central Bangladesh has left 11 people dead and about 10,000 homeless, local officials said today. Rescue workers said at least 100 people were also injured in three central districts struck by the overnight storm, which was followed by heavy rain. At least 500 rural homes were blown away while rice crops on thousands of hectares were destroyed by the winds, said Natore district administrator Aminul Islam. Seven people were killed in Natore, the worst hit among the three districts. Two other people were crushed under flattened homes and uprooted trees in Manikganj district,

130 km north of Dhaka. Two other people were killed in Pabna district. The storm also toppled electric poles, disrupted phone links and cut off roads.

HONG KONG

London, Mar 29 -- A press report, dated today, states: Hong Kong marine officials will raise safety issues with mainland counterparts after a spate of sea collisions involving mainland masters this year - including three yesterday. Fog that blanketed Victoria Harbour has been partly blamed for the collisions yesterday morning, but the Marine Department is investigating whether any vessels were in the wrong shipping lane or travelling at an unsafe speed. One of the accidents was between mainland catamaran ferry Nan Hua (509 gt, built 1997) and a Hong Kong barge, which injured 15 people, happened near the scene of a similar crash last month. Ship masters have been warned to exercise extreme caution when travelling in Hong Kong waters. More fog has been forecast for today and humid, rainy weather is expected over the next few days. A Marine Department spokesman said its representatives would raise safety issues with their mainland counterparts at a forthcoming meeting. The department will also try to get the safety message across to mainland crews through local shipping agencies as well as forums and seminars. In the worst of yesterday's accidents Nan Hua, carrying 46 passengers and 11 crew from Tsim Sha Tsui to Hai'an in Guangdong, was in collision with a 40-metre barge southwest of Tsing Yi at about 0900 hrs. Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre duty officer Wong Chan-kwong said a poor-visibility warning was issued at 0030 yesterday. "We were told that crews sighted the barge and stopped the engine before the collision. "Visibility had been reduced to about 100 metres in the vicinity at the time of the crash," Mr Wong said. The crash followed a collision between a Star Ferry vessel and a barge at about 0730 hrs, and another between a fishing boat and a mainland vessel (Zhe Jiao 820) at about 0800 hrs. No one was injured in either accident, although the fishing boat sank. A man who escaped injury in the catamaran accident said the ferry had slowed seconds before the crash, and passengers were injured and bleeding after their heads rammed into the seats in front. Four men and 11 women, aged 21 to 77, including five mainland crew members, were taken to Queen Elizabeth Hospital for treatment and discharged. Six sailors, including two Hong Kong men, were rescued uninjured by marine police after their Hong Kong-registered fishing boat sank following a collision with a mainland vessel off Po Toi Island. The mainland vessel, with a hole ripped in its gunwales, left the scene of the collision but was later found by Marine Police. No injuries or damage were reported in the accident

involving the Star Ferry. It was carrying 10 passengers when it was in collision with a barge off Hunghom. Hong Kong was shrouded in thick fog yesterday as a humid airstream affected the city and the coast of Guangdong, according to the Observatory. The foggy weather is expected to continue today.

London, Mar 30 -- A press report, dated today, states: Two high-speed ferries, including ferry Nan Hua involved in a collision off Tsing Yi, have had their speed restricted after the Marine Department said they failed to travel safely during thick fog on Monday. The department yesterday said it had revoked the speed-restriction-exemption permits of Nan Hua, which collided with a barge on Monday, and double-deck catamaran ferry New Ferry LXXXIII (726 gt, built 2002), operated by New World First Ferry on the Hong Kong-Macau route. This means the two vessels will be restricted to 40 knots in Hong Kong waters. The department also announced last night that it was tightening speed restrictions under foggy conditions to improve safety. Under the new measures, speed-exemption permits on all fast vessels will be revoked when visibility drops below one nautical mile, as it did on Monday. A department spokesman said: "It is important that the masters observe the conditions stated in the speed-restriction-exemption permit granted to the vessels to ensure safety. If the masters violate these conditions, the Marine Department will withdraw the (permit) immediately." The department has also demanded all high-speed craft install an automatic identification system to help it monitor movement. Ship masters will also be told to navigate at a safe speed before they leave the China Ferry Terminal and Macau Ferry Terminal in low visibility.

INDIA

London, Mar 25 -- A press report, dated today, states: Two days of gales and heavy rains have left at least 18 people dead, 50 hurt and 7500 homeless in West Bengal. Eight people died in Burdwan, 200km west of Kolkata, and another 10 died in coastal villages strung along the Bay of Bengal. "We have received reports of the deaths and relief has been sent to the affected places," West Bengal relief minister Hafiz Alem Sairani said. The casualties included 30 children hurt when a school roof collapsed on Wednesday (Mar 23), he said.

MADAGASCAR

Antananarivo, Mar 26 -- At least 900 people were made homeless and four were missing after flood waters caused by days of heavy rain swirled around the southern Madagascan town of Taolagnaro, emergency officials said today. Downpours have pounded the south of the giant Indian Ocean island for the past several days, sparking fresh disaster warnings after floods made tens of thousands of people homeless in various parts of the

country of 17 million in recent months. Emergency officials put the latest figures for the number of people made homeless from flooding in the south since last week at 987 today. -- Reuters.

PAKISTAN

London, Mar 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: At least 12 people were killed in Kohlu and Zhob areas of Balochistan as a fresh spell of heavy rain caused flash floods in different areas. Train service between Sibi and Jacobabad was suspended and a large number of villages in Sibi, Nasirabad, Pishin and Zhob districts are reported to have been inundated. According reports reaching here eight people were swept away by water torrents in the Kahan area of Kohlu and four young girls were killed when the roof of their house collapsed in Killi Machan village of Pishin district. The seasonal Tani Nullah in Suri Dara of Kahan is in high flood. Heavy rain caused havoc in Nasirabad and Sibi with Bolan, Nari and Lehri rivers reported to be in high flood. Several hundred villages have been affected by a breach in the bank of Lehri river. "At least 300 villages have been inundated in Nasirabad district," District Nazim Babu Amin Umrani said, adding that the standing wheat crop in the area has been destroyed. Army troops and Frontier Works Organization personnel have launched a relief operation in the area.

London, Mar 24 -- A press report, dated Mar 23, states: Flash floods triggered by heavy rains hit remote areas of south-western Pakistan today, killing 21 people and forcing thousands of others to flee their flooded homes, officials said. The deaths were reported from some villages near Kolhu, a town about 180 miles east of Quetta after floodwater destroyed many homes there, said Razaq Bugti, a spokesman for the Baluchistan government. He said authorities had started rescue work in the area.

ROMANIA

Bucharest, Mar 29 -- Midia port was closed between 1630 hrs and 1830 hrs, yesterday due to dense fog. Visibility below 0.5 nautical mile. The Sulina Channel was closed at 0615, today, due to bad weather, wind north north-east 6-7 (strong breeze-near gale), sea six feet. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Bucharest, Mar 30 -- The Sulina channel was re-opened at 0600 hrs, today. -- Lloyd's Agents.

RUSSIA

London, Mar 28 -- A press report, dated today, states: A storm warning, issued because of a cyclone hitting the Kamchatka Peninsula Mar 25, has been cancelled as the storm has subsided, sources from the Kamchatka meteorological service said today. Snowdrifts and gale-force winds are losing their power. However, the influence of the cyclone is still felt in the Pacific Ocean off the coast, where the speed of the wind reaches 20

metres per second. The storm warning stays in place for vessels. The cyclone delivered the most powerful blow on the southern regions of the peninsula Mar 26, grounding aircrafts and cutting off settlements. Air and transport communication has been restored. The only settlement remaining cut off from the rest of the peninsula is the district centre of Ust-Kamchatsk.

London, Mar 29 -- A press report, dated today, states: Two cyclones with gale-force winds and snow blizzards hit Sakhalin Island and the Kuriles today. According to Sakhalin-based weathermen, adverse weather will continue for two days, with the cyclones shifting northward to reach the Kamchatka Peninsula two days later. The duty services of power engineers, the personnel of the housing/public utilities sector, and road maintenance men have been alerted by a storm warning. Heavy snowfalls are expected, with air temperature being around zero, Celsius. Wind velocity on the coast has already mounted up to 25-27 metres per second. The cyclones have begun to break ice open around Sakhalin.

London, Mar 30 -- A press report, dated today, states: A powerful winter storm cut off Sakhalin island from the mainland completely, local sources said today. The island's main airport, Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, will remain closed at least till tomorrow morning, the press service of the airport said. The gale prevented the sailing of the Vanino-Kholmsk sea ferry service responsible for delivering most of the island's supplies. The press service of the Sakhalinenergo electric utility said the storm damaged power transmission lines leaving about 12,000 people in a dozen of settlements in the southern part of the island without electricity.

TROPICAL CYCLONE "HENNIE"

London, Mar 24 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office: Tropical cyclone "Hennie" near lat 20.3S, long 58.9E, at 0600, UTC, Mar 24. Movement past six hours 150 deg at nine knots. Position accurate to within 40 nautical miles, based on centre located by satellite. Maximum sustained winds 65 knots with gusts to 80 knots. Radius of 50-knot winds 50 nautical miles east semicircle, 40 nautical miles elsewhere. Radius of 34-knot winds 120 nautical miles east semicircle, 100 nautical miles elsewhere. Forecast for 0500, UTC, Mar 25: Position lat 23.5S, long 58.2E. Maximum sustained winds 65 knots with gusts to 80 knots. Radius of 50-knot winds 35 nautical miles. Radius of 34-knot winds 110 nautical miles south semicircle, 95 nautical miles elsewhere.

Mauritius, Mar 25 -- Tropical cyclone "Hennie" was centred about lat 14.8S, long 60E, Mar 22, about 650 km north-east of Mauritius. The cyclone was situated about 100 km and approaching Mauritius late in the afternoon, Mar 23, a class 3 warning was in force. Yesterday, as Mauritius

was still under warning No. 3, everywhere was closed and it was nearly a public holiday until 1400 hrs when no cyclone was in force. Normal way of life restarted after 1400 hrs. No serious damage was reported. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Mar 25 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: Tropical cyclone "Hennie" near lat 22.6S, long 59.2E at 0600, UTC, today. Movement for the past six hours 120 degrees at four knots. Position accurate to within 60 nautical miles. Maximum sustained winds 55 knots, gusts 70 knots, radius of 50 knot winds 30 nautical miles for all four quadrants. Forecast position lat 23.4S, long 59.4E at 1800, UTC, today. Maximum sustained winds 55 knots, gusts 70 knots. Forecast position lat 24.2S, long 59.5E at 0600, UTC, Mar 26. Maximum sustained winds 50 knots, gusts 65 knots.

London, Mar 26 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0600, UTC, today, the centre of tropical cyclone "Hennie" was located near lat 23.6S, long 61.2E, approximately 300 nautical miles south-east of Mauritius, and has tracked south-eastward, or 125 degs, at three knots over the past six hours. The position is accurate to within 60 nautical miles and is based on the centre located by satellite. Present wind distribution: maximum sustained winds: 45 knots, gusts 55 knots. Radius of 34 knot winds: 100 nautical miles in the north-east and south-east quadrants and 85 nautical miles in the south-west and north-west quadrants. The maximum significant wave is 21 feet. At 0600, UTC, Mar 27, the centre is predicted to be near lat 25.0S, long 62.8E, with maximum sustained winds of 35 knots and gusts to 45 knots.

London, Mar 26 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Tropical cyclone "Hennie" drifted past the Indian Ocean Island of Mauritius yesterday after dumping heavy rains on portions of the country that forced the temporary closure of air and seaports. The ports had been shut and public transportation service suspended as "Hennie", packing gusts of up to 120 kilometres per hour drew to 100 kilometres off the north-east coast of the island earlier in the day. Twenty-two arrivals at and 29 departures from the Port Louis airport had been cancelled because of the storm, officials said. But the storm, which had been elevated from a class two to a class three storm overnight, shifted its south-south westerly course and moved away from the island at a speed of 20 kilometres an hour, according to the meteorological service.

London, Mar 27 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0600, UTC, today, the centre of tropical cyclone "Hennie" was located near lat 25.7, long 62.1E, approximately 430 nautical miles south-east of Mauritius, and has tracked south-eastward, or 145 degs, at five knots over the past six hours.

The position is accurate to within 60 nautical miles and is based on the centre located by satellite. Present wind distribution: maximum sustained winds: 30 knots, gusts 40 knots and dissipating as a significant tropical cyclone over water. The maximum significant wave height is 13 feet.

TYPHOON "TOKAGE"

Yokohama, Mar 23 -- According to the local agents, training Kaiwo Maru is now in Tokyo and remains there until Apr 8. -- Lloyd's Agents.

UNITED STATES

London, Mar 29 -- A press report, dated Mar 28, states: Austin Insurance officials say a Central Texas hailstorm has caused about 50 to 60 million dollars in damage. The Southwestern Insurance Information Service says damage estimates from Friday night's (Mar 25) storm are high because a wide area was affected. A Farmers Insurance spokeswoman says offices in the Austin area received about 900 claims for hail damage to cars and homes. A meteorologist with the Lower Colorado River Authority says hailstones up to 1.75 inches in diameter were reported in Lago Vista.



INDONESIA

London, Mar 25 -- A press report, dated today, states: A strong earthquake struck off the tsunami-ravaged coast of Sumatra in northern Indonesia, Hong Kong seismologists said today. There were no immediate reports of damage or casualties. The 5.9-magnitude quake hit near the coast at 0110, GMT, today, the Hong Kong Observatory said. The tremor was centred about 90 kilometres north-west of Banda Aceh.

London, Mar 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: An earthquake measuring 6.0 on the Richter Scale was recorded in the Banda Sea in eastern Indonesia late today, the Hong Kong Observatory reported. The epicentre of the quake was initially determined to be over the eastern part of the Banda Sea, about 230 kilometres south-east of the city of Ambon, the observatory said in a statement. It struck at 1547, GMT, it said.

London, Mar 27 -- A press report, dated today, states: Two strong earthquakes rocked Indonesia's eastern province of Maluku today, but there were no immediate reports of damage or casualties, the local geological agency said. The first quake of magnitude-6.4 struck just about 40 minutes after midnight; the second, measuring 6.0 magnitude, came at 0740 hrs, said Benny Sipollo of the Meteorology and Geophysics Agency office in Ambon. Both quakes were centred under the Banda Sea, just

over 150 miles north-west of Ambon, about 140 miles beneath the earth's surface.

Jakarta, Mar 28 -- A massive 8.2 magnitude earthquake struck off the coast of Sumatra today, close to where a quake triggered a tsunami that left nearly 300,000 people dead or missing across Asia, residents and officials said. The latest quake had the potential to cause a "widely destructive tsunami" and authorities should take "immediate action," including evacuating coastlines within 600 miles of the epicentre, the Pacific tsunami warning centre said. Malaysia urged residents along parts of its west coast to evacuate to higher areas. Thailand, India and Sri Lanka also immediately issued tsunami warnings in coastal areas. Sirens were ringing in the eastern Sri Lankan town of Trincomalee, residents said. A spokesman for the US Geological Survey said the quake struck 125 miles west-north-west of Sibolga, Sumatra, or 880 miles north-west of the Indonesian capital of Jakarta, at 1609, UTC, today, close to where the 9.0 magnitude quake struck in December. Tens of thousands of people ran out of their homes in many parts of Sumatra, and in Singapore and Malaysia, but there were no immediate reports of casualties. "It was very strong," said a telephone operator in the Sumatran city of Medan, in western Indonesia. "We all ran out of the building." An NGO official in Banda Aceh, the town worst hit by the Dec 26 tsunami, sent out a telephone message saying thousands of people fled their homes and headed for higher ground after feeling what he described as "a very big earthquake". Panic spread in many areas along the west coast of Malaysia, the Bernama news agency said. "It felt stronger than on Dec 26," said Arumugam Gopal, a resident of the town of Penang. US Geological Survey spokesman Don Blakeman said today's quake was considered a "great earthquake" because it was larger than a magnitude 8.0. He said it was an aftershock from December's temblor but was a "very serious earthquake in its own right". However, the Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre said the quake had the "potential to generate a widely destructive tsunami in the ocean or seas near the earthquake". "Authorities can assume the danger has passed if no tsunami waves are observed in the region near the epicentre within three hours of the earthquake," it added. -- Reuters.

London, Mar 29 -- Indonesia's key oil and gas operations on Sumatra Island were not affected by the 8.7-magnitude earthquake that damaged Nias Island late yesterday, a government official said today. "Operations at Exxon Mobil's facilities are running smoothly," said Trijana Kartoatmodjo, a deputy chairman of upstream oil and gas regulator BP Migas. Exxon Mobil Corp. (XOM) operates large gas fields and a natural gas liquefaction plant on the northern tip of Sumatra, while the local unit of

ChevronTexaco Corp. (CVX) operates large oil blocks in central Sumatra's Riau province. Indonesia also has a 120,000-barrel-a-day oil refinery in Dumai, Riau.

London, Mar 29 -- A press report, dated today, states: All major ports in Sumatra - including Padang, Belawan and Dumai - are operating normally and have not been affected by the strong earthquake last night. The quake, which measured 8.7 on the Richter Scale, happened at about 2300, local time, last night in the vicinity of Nias Island, off the west coast of Sumatra. An initial warning of a possible tsunami in a south-westerly direction, towards Mauritius, was rescinded in the early hours of today. According to Government reports, as many as 1-2000 people may have been killed as a result of the collapse of many buildings on Nias.

London, Mar 29 -- A press report, dated today, states: A three-metre wave smashed into the Indonesian island of Simeuleu, off the coast of Sumatra, causing extensive damage shortly after a massive earthquake, a military official said. Up to 2,000 people are believed to have died in the earthquake. The military commander in Aceh, close to the epicentre of the quake, says he has received reports that the wharf at Simeuleu's main port was badly damaged. Endang Suwaraya says waves have also affected the island's airport in the coastal town of Sinabang. An Aceh-based journalist who made contact with the island says the main hospital in Sinabang has been destroyed and cannot be used. He says there are unconfirmed reports of 25 dead on the island. Indonesia's Vice President, Jusuf Kalla, says up to 2,000 people are feared dead in collapsed buildings on the island of Nias, near Sumatra. Witnesses on the island say the ocean surged 30 metres inland. "The water level rose higher than last December, reaching up to 30 metres," said a woman, speaking from Nias. It is reported that there are no buildings left intact in the main town in southern Nias, Teluk Dalam. "Roughly it is expected between 1,000 and 2,000 died," Mr Kalla told El Shinta news radio of the quake. In the Sumatran city of Medan, Erni Ginting, a spokeswoman for the disaster centre for Aceh and North Sumatra, told reporters: "The official death toll stands at 322." She said all the fatalities were on Nias, 220 of them in Gunungsitoli. Information Minister Sofyan Djalil said authorities had designated an airport at Sibolga on the mainland, opposite Nias, as the hub for relief flights as the control tower on the island's airstrip had collapsed.

London, Mar 31 -- A press report, dated today, states: A new earthquake measuring 6.3 on the Richter scale struck the north-west of Sumatra Island overnight. There is no tidal wave danger there. The epicentre was in the sea area 280 kilometres west of the city of Banda Aceh, the Hong Kong seismological centre said. There have been no reports about victims and destruction.

Jakarta, Mar 31 -- Based on Health Ministry Dept up to 1800, Mar 29, the earthquake claimed 431 lives, Gunung Sitoli 200, Teluk Dalam 130, Simeuleu Island-Aceh 100, East Aceh 1. Based on Health Ministry Dept the refugees from all areas reach 2000, mostly in Nias and Nias Selatan excluding Aceh and mainland of Sumatera. Infrastructure damages reported: Gunung Sitoli Port. The wharf was reported totally demolished. Tello Nias Island Port and building were reported demolished. Simeuleu Port was reported demolished. Land Transportation between Gunung Sitoli City - Nias City to some adjacent subdistricts were reported to be halted including connection from Binaka Airport to city of Gunung Sitoli. Binaka Airport itself was reported to have sustained damages in 38 points including apron and control tower, totally demolished. Lasikin Sinabang Airport, Simeuleu Island, was reported damaged, totally halted. Pinang Sori Airport, Sibolga and Silangit Airport, Siborong, Borong, in normal condition. Public facilities such as electricity, phone lines and water supply totally halted. Sirombu Port, Teluk Dalam Port, Barus Port, Lahewa Port dan Sibolga Port were reported not affected by the earthquake, normal condition. -- Lloyd's Agents.

SOUTH-EAST ASIA

London, Mar 31 -- Tanker operator D'Amico Tankers has hit out at the continued detention of its chem.tank High Spirit in Tanzania after the ship damaged pipelines as it was forced off its moorings during the tsunami on Dec 26. High Spirit, which is on long-term time charter to a Total subsidiary, has been under arrest since the accident, which a spokesman for D'Amico described as "a disgrace". The owners say the ship was hit by four tidal surges caused when the tsunami hit Dar es Salaam. The vessel was in the process of discharging feedstock at the Kurasini oil jetty at the time. During the surges, which resulted in the ship running aground, it and one of its anchors passed over pipelines owned by the Tanzanian Harbours Authority (THA) and Tiper, a consortium owned jointly by the Tanzanian government and Geneva-based Oryx-Addax. Tiper arrested the ship in January claiming \$12 million. A further claim has been made by the Tanzanian Harbours Authority for \$2.5 million. In a statement D'Amico said that "although it is difficult to imagine a clearer act of God, Tiper is currently alleging that the owners cannot rely on that defence in this case". The company added the defence might not be available in the THA's case because of legal provisions relating to damage to port authority property. The owners' argue that Tanzania's Merchant Shipping Act 2003 incorporates the 1976 Limitation Convention, which entitles the owner to establish a limitation fund in a competent court in the event of a claim exceeding the limit based on the

ship's tonnage. D'Amico estimates the limitation fund for the ship at \$7.3 million and says that once the fund has been set up, the convention states the court must release the vessel from arrest and grant immunity from arrest by other claimants. "Unfortunately, this being the first limitation case ever to be heard by the Tanzanian High Court, there appear to be no formal procedures for implementing the provisions of the convention," D'Amico said. It claims that Tanzanian claimants are suffering from the delays "just as much as the shipowners".

TURKEY

London, Mar 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: An earthquake measuring 5.5 on the Richter scale rattled an eastern Turkish town overnight, sparking panic among residents and damaging buildings, officials said today. The quake, the third powerful tremor to hit the town of Karliova in Bingol province this month, occurred at 2144, GMT, and was followed by an aftershock that registered 4.7 on the Richter scale, the Istanbul-based Kandilli observatory said. Karliova prefect Erkan Capar said there were no reports of people injured, but added that 20 residents had been treated in hospital for shock. The prefect was earlier quoted as saying that six people were injured as they rushed out from their homes in panic.



SHIVELUCH, RUSSIA

London, Mar 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: An eruption of the Mount Shiveluch volcano has completely destroyed the Baidarnaya seismic station, located eight kilometres from the volcano, said Alexei Ozerov, a senior scientific fellow of the Institute of Vulcanology and Seismology of the Far Eastern branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences. He said that after one-fifth of the volcano's crown caved in, a massive pyroclastic stream of lava more than 20 km long flowed down the side of the mountain. There were no people in the area during the event. Scientists believe that this eruption of Shiveluch was the second largest since a major eruption in 1964.



AFGHANISTAN

Kabul, Mar 23 -- U.S. led forces killed five militants in southeastern Afghanistan after coming under rocket

and small arms fire, the U.S. military said today. The militants had attacked a base in Khost province and checkpoints on the nearby border with Pakistan last night. "Coalition troops returned fire with 155 mm artillery rounds at enemy positions. Coalition aircraft killed five insurgents," the U.S. military said. The U.S. military did not say who the attackers were but a Taliban spokesman said Taliban fighters had fired 20 rockets at U.S. positions near Khost airport. Ten Afghan government soldiers were killed and 15 wounded in the attack, the Taliban spokesman, Abdul Latif Hakimi told the Afghan Islamic Press news agency, but the U.S. said there had been no casualties on the coalition's side. Separately, suspected Taliban members killed two Afghan security officials and wounded another in an ambush in Girishk district of southern Helmand province today, a local official said. Seven police and soldiers were wounded in the same district earlier in the day in what was described as a "mistaken clash" between police and army forces, the official added. Meanwhile, several rockets struck the outskirts of Kandahar city, causing little damage and no casualties. -- Reuters.

Kabul, Mar 26 -- Four U.S. soldiers were killed today when their vehicle struck a landmine in southeast Afghanistan, the U.S. military said. The soldiers had been travelling with Afghan troops in a three-vehicle patrol in Logar province, around 40 km south of Kabul. Mines and unexploded ordnance still litter Afghanistan from two decades of conflict going back to the 1979 Soviet invasion. U.N. security officials issued a warning this month to beware of mines, as the spring thaw and recent heavy rains can cause "mine migration" due to soil movement. -- Reuters.

Kabul, Mar 30 -- One person was killed and one wounded when a car bomb exploded in front of key government buildings in the eastern Afghan city of Jalalabad today, a state agency official said. The blast came as U.S. first lady Laura Bush was to visit the capital Kabul and appeared to be the latest incident in a fresh wave of militant violence in Afghanistan, a country U.S. President George W. Bush sees as a foreign policy success story. The person who died was in the car that exploded in front of the provincial governor's office, a police station and an adjacent state television building in the city centre, the official said. "It was a massive explosion. So far, the only report of a casualty is the driver of the car," Mohammad Zubair Khaksar, the head of Jalalabad television, told Reuters. Khaksar attributed the attack, which happened during the morning rush hour, to "Afghanistan's enemies" a term used by officials to describe Islamic militants from the former Taliban regime and their allies. On Saturday (Mar 26), four American soldiers were killed in a landmine blast in Logar province, 40 km south of Kabul and the U.S. military said

two U.S. soldiers were wounded in an ambush in central province of Uruzgan yesterday. Also yesterday, ten Afghan soldiers were wounded by a roadside explosion in Kunar province, an official there said, although the U.S. military put the number of wounded at six. Overnight, two rockets also hit a section of airport in the western city of Herat occupied by U.S. soldiers, a U.S. military spokesman said, adding there were no casualties or damage. -- Reuters.

BANGLADESH

London, Mar 31 -- Opposition activists today staged marches in parts of Bangladesh as part of a day-long general strike sponsored by Awami League to demand the resignation of the Khaleda Zia government and a "proper" probe into the killing of its MP and former Finance Minister, S A M S Kibria. The Awami League, led by former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed, and 13 Left wing allies have called the strike to demand the resignation of the Bangladeshi government and that Kibria's killers be nabbed at the earliest. Kibria was killed during a grenade attack on an Awami League rally in January. The Opposition parties have kept the port city of Chittagong out of the purview of the strike due to an Islamic conference there.

COLOMBIA

London, Mar 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: Communist rebels in southern Colombia ambushed a military convoy yesterday, killing 10 soldiers in a hail of gunfire and explosions, authorities said. The troops were travelling by truck on a remote jungle road in Putumayo state, one of Colombia's biggest cocaine-producing regions some 300 miles south of Bogota, when they came under attack, said Adm. Mauricio Soto, the Colombian navy commander. Only one Marine in the convoy survived. Soto blamed the attack on guerrillas of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, which has been battling to topple the government here for 40 years. Also yesterday, police said suspected FARC fighters attacked a squadron of U.S.-supplied drug-fumigation aircrafts and two escort helicopters in south-east Colombia, lightly damaging several of the aircrafts and wounding a pilot. The aircrafts were spraying herbicides Tuesday over fields of poppy plants, the raw ingredients of heroin, near Algeciras, 160 miles south-east of Bogota, when they came under fire, a spokesman for Colombia's anti-narcotics police said. At least one of the aircrafts and the two combat helicopters escorting them were struck by gunfire or rockets but managed to fly back to their base safely, said the spokesman, who asked that his name not be used. A helicopter pilot was hit in the leg.

Bogota, Mar 28 -- Colombia said today it was moving toward peace talks with the country's second largest

rebel group and called for international support. The 5,000-strong National Liberation Army, known by its Spanish initials ELN, at the same time asked for the help of Brazil, Venezuela and Spain in ending the group's 40-year war against the state. Since June of last year, the ELN and the government of President Alvaro Uribe have been in contact. Mexico acted as an intermediary. "We are studying initiatives aimed at assessing the success of this exploratory phase and moving toward a peace process," Colombian Peace Commissioner Luis Carlos Restrepo said. "The government and the ELN highlight the effective assistance of Mexico and call for international assistance once this new drive for national peace comes to fruition," said Restrepo's statement. The ELN meanwhile sent a letter to the left-leaning presidents of Brazil, Venezuela and Spain to help the country reach peace and create "a hopeful democracy that will make social justice possible." The three presidents will meet with Uribe for a summit on trade and terrorism in Venezuela tomorrow. A peace deal will not be easy. The ELN wants Uribe to free ELN prisoners held in Colombian jails and negotiate a bilateral ceasefire. Uribe has said the ELN, which funds itself by kidnapping, must unilaterally disarm if talks are to take place. While Colombia's biggest guerrilla force, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, and right-wing paramilitary militias have grown rich on the country's huge cocaine business, the ELN has sworn off drug smuggling. This leaves it at a financial disadvantage that may help prompt it to follow the steps of former rebel group M-19, which in 1989 negotiated a deal to disarm. -- Reuters.

INDIA

London, Mar 28 -- A press report, dated today, states: At least two Indian soldiers have been killed and eight others injured in an attack by suspected militants in Indian-administered Kashmir. Police say the soldiers were part of an Indian Border Security Force patrol which came under attack in a mountainous area of Rajouri district. Indian security forces have launched a search for the attackers but no arrests have been made as yet. It is not clear who carried out the latest attack which took place in a village deep in a forest. "The Border Security Force personnel were attacked when they were on foot patrol in the tiny mountainous village," a police spokesman is quoted as saying.

IRAQ

London, Mar 23 -- A press report, dated Mar 22, states: Militants targeted a US patrol with a roadside bomb today that killed four nearby civilians in the northern city of Mosul, where an assassination attempt against top police officials sparked clashes that left more than two dozen

insurgents dead or captured. Morgue officials in southern Iraq, meanwhile, said they had received half a dozen corpses of Iraqi army soldiers, each with bound hands and bullet-riddled heads and torsos. Iraq also sought to soothe relations with neighboring Jordan, with both nations agreeing to return their respective ambassadors after a weekend diplomatic dispute. Iraq's national security adviser, Mouwafak al-Rubaie, said today that his nation's ambassador to Jordan would return "as soon as practically possible." The announcement came a day after King Abdullah II ordered the return of Jordan's top diplomat in Iraq, the official Jordanian news agency reported. Both countries withdrew their envoys on Sunday (Mar 20) in a dispute over the infiltration of insurgents across the border. Tensions between the two countries boiled over last week, with Iraqi demonstrators angered over the alleged involvement of a Jordanian in a deadly suicide bombing hoisting the Iraqi flag at the Jordanian Embassy in Baghdad. Late yesterday, attackers in Mosul, 225 miles north-west of Baghdad, ambushed a convoy carrying security forces officials, including top police chief Brig Gen Abu Al-Waled, sparking a gunbattle in front of a main mosque. Police killed 17 militants and captured 14, said Col Wathiq Ali, deputy police commander. Ali said no security forces were injured in the clash, which saw guerrillas carrying mortar launchers, rocket-propelled grenades and Kalashnikov rifles. Insurgents have carried out countless attacks on Iraq's army and police -- fledgling security forces the US military says must gain better control of the country before any major US troop drawdown in Iraq, now in its third year of post-invasion conflict. Mosul hospital officials, citing witnesses, said insurgents hit a US patrol with a jerry-rigged bomb in a north-western neighbourhood early today, damaging a Humvee as it crossed a bridge and killing four civilians in a car near the blast. It was not immediately clear whether US troops suffered casualties. Earlier, the US military reported the death of a Marine in a restive western province. The Marine assigned to the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, was killed in action yesterday in Anbar province, which contains the flashpoint cities of Fallujah and Ramadi, the US military said. As of yesterday, at least 1,522 members of the US military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003. Officials at a morgue in the south-eastern city of Kut said the facility yesterday received the bodies of six slain Iraqi army soldiers, five collected together, one separately. Each soldier had his hands tied behind his back and suffered multiple gunshot wounds to the head and chest, said Hadi Al-Itabi, head of the morgue at Al-Zahraa Hospital in Kut, 100 miles south-east of Baghdad. Gunbattles broke out today in the streets of the southern Baghdad neighbourhood of Dora, where

militants riding in three cars opened fire on people shopping along a main thoroughfare, Interior Ministry officials said. Shopkeepers and residents returned fire, killing three assailants. A man, woman and child were injured in the fight and taken to a local hospital. Earlier, gunmen in the same quarter killed a policeman as he drove to work, said police Lt Col Hafidh Al-Gharyri. Mosul residents also said five mortar shells landed in a Kurdish enclave of the ethnically mixed city, injuring one. Three rockets landed overnight on the town of Iskandariyah, south of Baghdad, killing one child, said a local police official. Seeking to seal a political deal after Jan 30 elections, the Shiite-clergy's spiritual leader, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, was expected to meet tomorrow with Jalal Talabani, the Kurdish leader likely to become Iraq's next president. The Kurds want the oil-rich northern city of Kirkuk to be returned to the autonomous Kurdistan region immediately after the government convenes, but an official from al-Sistani's office said the spiritual leader wants the country's new National Assembly to decide that in Iraq's future constitution.

London, Mar 24 -- A press report, dated Mar 23, states: US and Iraqi forces raided a suspected guerrilla training camp and killed 80 fighters, the single biggest one-day death toll for militants in months and the latest in a series of blows to the insurgency, Iraqi officials said today. Politicians helping shape a postelection government expected within days said negotiators are considering a Sunni Arab as defence minister in a move aimed at bringing them into the political process, and perhaps deflate the insurgency they lead. The US military announced late yesterday that its air and ground forces backed Iraqi commandos during a noon raid on the suspected training camp near Lake Tharthar in central Iraq. Seven commandos died in fighting, the US military said. It did not give a death toll for the militants. Iraqi officials said today 80 insurgents died in the clash, the largest number killed in a single battle since the US Marine-led November attack on the former militant stronghold of Fallujah left more than 1,000 dead. On Sunday (Mar 20), US forces killed 26 attackers after an ambush south of Baghdad. Also today, a mortar shell or rocket struck an elementary school in western Baghdad, killing at least one child and injuring three others, according to a police official. Hours later, a policeman trying to defuse a roadside bomb in Baghdad died and another officer was wounded when the device exploded, police Capt Talib Thamir said. On the political front, Abbas Hassan Mousa al-Bayati, a top member of the United Iraqi Alliance, said negotiators from his Shiite-dominated bloc and a Kurdish coalition could tap a Sunni Arab to head the ministry of defence, which oversees the Iraqi army battling the insurgency.

Baghdad, Mar 26 -- A suicide bomber detonated his car beside a U.S. patrol in southwest Baghdad today, killing two American soldiers and wounding two others, the army said. The military said in a statement that the incident was under investigation. Earlier today, the military announced that a U.S. Marine was killed in action yesterday in Iraq's restive Anbar province. -- Reuters.

Dubai, Mar 27 -- Al Qaeda's wing in Iraq said it had shot dead a senior Interior Ministry official kidnapped last month, and posted a video of the apparent killing on the Internet today. The video showed a man, who identified himself as Colonel Riyadh Katei Aliwi, sitting on a chair with his hands bound behind his back in front of a black flag of the al Qaeda Organization for Holy War in Iraq. Two masked militants stood by him with machine guns. "I worked at the Interior Ministry and co-operated with American forces by giving them names and addresses of former army officers," the man said. A ministry card shown on the video identified him as a liaison officer. On the tape, he also said there was widespread torture of prisoners, including women, at the ministry. A militant was later shown shooting the man in the head after reading a statement saying he had been condemned to death by the group's own Islamic court as "an apostate fighting God and his Prophet (Mohammad)." -- Reuters.

London, Mar 27 -- A press report, dated today, states: Saboteurs blew up a pipeline 60 kilometres west of Kirkuk today, just a day after repairs to the route connecting the lucrative oil field to a major refinery in Baiji, the fire service said. "The blast happened just after 0900 hrs on a pipeline transporting crude oil between Kirkuk and Baiji," said Northern Oil Company fireman Abdullah Hamad Ali. "The pipeline was just repaired yesterday, but it has been attacked again." Firemen and police were putting out the blaze, he said. Oil exports from Kirkuk to Turkey have been shut down by an intense campaign of sabotage.

Bucharest, Mar 29 -- Three Romanian journalists kidnapped in Baghdad managed to send desperate messages to relatives and colleagues before disappearing yesterday, the latest foreigners to be abducted in Iraq. "We're kidnapped. This is not a joke," one of the three, Prima TV reporters Marie Jeanne Ion, managed to message her mother from her mobile phone, Magdalena Ion told Realitatea TV. Her cameraman Sorin Miscoci and journalist Ovidiu Ohanesian of the Romania Libera daily newspaper, all on a short reporting trip to Iraq, were also missing, authorities said. Romania set up a crisis center to handle the situation while President Traian Basescu said both local and foreign secret services had been alerted. "I would like to believe that only economic reasons triggered their situation. I don't want to believe that

their kidnapping was politically motivated," said Simona Marinescu, an adviser to the Romanian embassy in Baghdad. More than 150 foreigners have been seized in Iraq over the past year. Most have been freed after negotiations or payment of ransom, but about a third have been killed. Many more Iraqis have been abducted, often for ransom. The news editor of Prima TV, Dan Dumitru, said Ion managed a quick call to her newsroom before disappearing and that he had heard her desperately pleading with her kidnappers. "I heard Arabic, English and Romanian words shouted," he said. "I heard her imploring the attackers not to kidnap them because they come from a poor country which won't be able to pay the ransom." -- Reuters.

London, Mar 29 -- A press report, dated today, states: Iraq's parliament has begun a delayed second session amid continued intercommunal deadlock that has left the legislative process in limbo. The meeting came after two hours of last-ditch talks failed to achieve the modest goal of naming a speaker. Media coverage of the assembly was banned after politicians criticised the delays in forming a government. As MPs haggled in the fortified Green Zone, mortar rounds exploded nearby although no damage has been reported. Parliament is due to reconvene on Sunday (Apr 3) to allow MPs more time to agree on a candidate. Today's session was meant to show that progress was being made, but has instead exposed tensions in the newly-formed 275-seat parliament. Proceedings had been held up for three hours as Shia, Kurdish and Sunni Arab members tried to agree on a Sunni Arab candidate to be speaker, as promised before the session. The Shia are pushing for the appointment of Fawaz Jarba, who is a member of the Shia-dominated United Iraqi Alliance, which won the elections. Kurdish deputies are said to favour another candidate, while Sunni Arab MPs and those not represented in parliament are split over they want. Mr Yawer, has been put forward as a compromise candidate, but he has turned down the position. During the heated debate interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi stormed out of the session, followed by the interim President Ghazi Yawer. A parliament speaker is needed before MPs can begin discussions about the formation of the presidency council which will appoint the key position of prime minister. The appointment of a Sunni Arab is meant as a gesture to that minority which largely boycotted the elections, having held sway over Iraq during Saddam Hussein's regime. Iraq's fragmented political scene has been beset by further divisions over Sunni power, the role of religion and jockeying for Cabinet posts. The Kurds are expected to retain the Foreign Ministry and Sunni Arabs to get the defence ministry. But control of the oil ministry has proved a major sticking point between the Shia - representing

the majority of Iraqis - and the Kurds. As the deadlock continued, insurgents have pursued their campaign of violence to destabilise the new Iraq taking shape under US-led occupation. At least one person was killed and 17 others were wounded in a massive car bombing targeting a Kurdish official in the northern city of Kirkuk today, police said. A top oil official escaped assassination when his convoy was targeted by a car bomb in the southern city of Basra.

Kirkuk, Mar 31 -- A suicide car bomber attacked a military checkpoint in northern Iraq today, killing five Iraqi national guards, a captain in the force said. Several guards were also wounded in the attack near Suleiman Beik, 60 miles south of the city of Kirkuk. -- Reuters.

IVORY COAST

Abidjan, Mar 25 -- Ivory Coast's rebel leader will attend peace talks in South Africa next week at which the government will also be represented, possibly by President Laurent Gbagbo, officials said today. The talks will be hosted by South African President Thabo Mbeki, who has been mandated by the African Union to try to revive a moribund peace process in the war-divided country. Gbagbo's spokesman Desire Tagro said the Ivorian leader may attend the talks in Pretoria, which the South African presidency says will take place on Apr 3. A spokesman for rebels holding the north of the West African country said rebel leader Guillaume Soro would be at the talks. Ivorian newspapers have said opposition leader Alassane Ouattara, whose exclusion from a presidential election in 2000 is seen at the heart of the Ivorian crisis, and former president Henri Konan Bedie had also been invited by Mbeki. The U.N., which has 6,240 troops in the country policing a buffer zone along with 4,000 French soldiers, said this week there was a real risk of a return to war as time runs out for political reforms to allow presidential polls due in October. A parliament member from Gbagbo's ruling Ivorian Popular Front party (FPI) said today the FPI wanted the French troops -- whose mandate expires on Apr 4 -- to leave to make way for a new force willing to disarm the rebels. -- Reuters.

KYRGYZSTAN

Bishkek, Mar 26 -- Kyrgyzstan's new leadership sought to tighten its grip on the ex-Soviet Central Asian state today and expressed confidence that it could end the lawlessness that followed the ousting of President Askar Akayev. "The situation is fully under control. We do not need a curfew," said opposition leader Felix Kulov, put in charge of security, after a night of sporadic gunfire in which one man was killed trying to fight off looters in the capital Bishkek. Today, Bishkek centre was quiet with relatively few people on the streets. But there were fewer signs of the violence and chaos that accompanied widespread looting on Thursday (Mar

24) night. The country's new leaders -- a loosely united opposition that includes many former government officials -- seized power when crowds of protesters clashed with police and marched into Bishkek's White House, the seat of government, Thursday. Kulov has set up mobile police patrols and given orders for police to fire in the air to disperse looters. Talking to reporters today, he said there were reports of Akayev supporters gathering in various parts of the country but he disregarded them as a threat. "The situation is calm and can be controlled," he said. Akayev, who had ruled since 1990, confirmed yesterday he had left the country but did not say where he had gone. He said he was still the legitimate president and would return. The opposition had carried out an "anti-constitutional coup," he said. But acting president Kurmanbek Bakiev said his flight from the country robbed Akayev of any moral right to be head of state and he could expect a harsh reception if he returned. Bakiev, an opposition leader who played a central role in the protests, has appointed key interim ministers. A presidential poll is planned for June. Russian President Vladimir Putin said Moscow was ready to work with the Kyrgyz opposition, and would also provide sanctuary for Akayev if he wanted. The overthrow of Akayev, a relative liberal in a region of mainly autocratic leaders, followed weeks of protest throughout the country that turned violent in two towns in the impoverished south. -- Reuters.

London, Mar 29 -- A press report, dated today, states: The political crisis that threatened to paralyse the central Asian republic of Kyrgyzstan has been resolved. Since protests toppled President Askar Akayev last week, two rival parliaments - the outgoing assembly and the new - have vied for legitimacy. But today, the upper house of the old parliament dissolved, following the example of the lower house yesterday. It said it wanted to ensure stability. The new interim President, Kurmanbek Bakiev, praised the assembly's action. "I hope your decision will bring calm," he said. It was controversy over the polls which saw the new house elected that fuelled last week's popular uprising. In the immediate aftermath of the protests, the Supreme Court annulled the poll results and said the previous parliament had authority. But Kyrgyzstan's electoral body backed the new assembly. Mr Bakiev had initially supported the old parliament, but switched his support to the new as it pronounced him prime minister. He had already been designated interim prime minister, but this move further boosted his legitimacy. Mr Bakiev has said he wants to hold presidential elections in three months' time, but the Speaker of the new parliament says such a vote could only be held after talks had been held with Mr Akayev, because he had not formally resigned. It is not clear where Mr Akayev is. Mr Bakiev has said he

would enjoy all appropriate legal and constitutional guarantees if he returned to Kyrgyzstan.

LEBANON

Beirut, Mar 23 -- Two people have been killed and five wounded after a bomb ripped through a shopping centre in the anti-Syrian Christian heartland north of the Lebanese capital Beirut. The explosion, the second in a commercial Christian area in five days, brought Lebanon closer to chaos in the wake of last month's killing of former Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri. The roof of the centre in the upper class coastal area of Kaslik, 20 km north of Beirut, collapsed and walls were blown out in the powerful explosion early today. Emergency services workers searched through the rubble for other victims. Windows of nearby shops and buildings were shattered and broken glass littered streets lined with boutiques, jewellery stores and nightclubs. Investigators were quickly on the scene. Police sources said the blast was caused by a large explosive charge placed inside the multi-storey centre, which was closed at the time. The sources said the two people killed were Asian workers at the building. The toll would have been much worse if the blast had taken place in daytime in the usually crowded street. Christian opposition figures who rushed to scene said the bombings were aimed at undermining the country's stability and urged supporters to foil any attempts to sow sectarian rifts. "It is clear that those who carried out this attack are targeting the security and stability of the country," opposition member of parliament Faris Bouez told reporters. "It is a political message to the anti-Syrian independence uprising." In the previous incident, a car bomb exploded in a Christian suburb of Beirut early on Saturday (Mar 19), wounding 11 people. Today's explosion at around 0130 hrs (2330, UTC, Mar 22) came amid acute political tension since the Feb 14 killing of Hariri in another bombing. The assassination triggered a wave of anti-Syrian protests. US-led global pressure forced Syria to announce a troop withdrawal from Lebanon. It has already cut the number of its forces in its neighbour and pulled back to eastern Lebanon. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said yesterday he expected Syria to present a credible and precise timetable on a full withdrawal of its troops and security services from Lebanon by early next month. Annan said after talks with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad on the sidelines of an Arab summit in Algiers that he would be sending his special envoy to Lebanon, Terje Roed-Larsen, in the first week of April. The anti-Syrian opposition has refused to sit in a national unity government with pro-Syrian loyalists, almost foiling the task of Damascus-backed Prime Minister Omar Karami to form such a government. The opposition wants a transitional government with the sole

role of supervising general elections in May. Loyalists say the country's crisis is so serious that dialogue between both sides should start immediately and a unity government should lead Lebanon to the elections. Hizbollah, the country's most powerful party, said yesterday the coming days would show whether Karami would be able to form a national unity government. If Karami cannot, a different prime minister will be given the task and consultations will start again, Hizbollah's chief Hassan Nasrallah said, adding that "there is still time". - Reuters.

Beirut, Mar 26 -- A car bomb exploded in an industrial suburb of Christian east Beirut on Easter's eve, causing a large fire and wounding at least five people, security sources said today. A prominent anti-Syrian opposition figure blamed the Damascus-backed Lebanese security authorities for the blast, the third in eight days in the Christian heartland. Earlier in the day, Lebanon's opposition who blame Syria and its allies for the killing of former Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri on Feb. 14 urged the country's security chiefs to resign to make way for an international probe into the death. Security sources said a rigged Buick car exploded in the industrial area in Dikwanah suburb in east Beirut. Fire fighters were trying to contain blazes in two buildings as thick black smoke rose into the night sky. Ambulances and rescue workers rushed to the scene, witnesses said. It was not immediately known if there were people in the buildings, but the area is usually deserted during the night. The area houses factories, printing houses, car repair shops and warehouses. -- Reuters.

Beirut, Mar 30 -- More Syrian troops pulled out of Lebanon today as pro-Syrian Prime Minister Omar Karami prepared to abandon his bid to form a national unity government. Karami was due to meet President Emile Lahoud to inform him of his decision to resign. Karami said yesterday he would quit because he had failed to persuade the anti-Syrian opposition to join a unity cabinet to lead Lebanon to elections due in May. The opposition, which blames former prime minister Rafik al-Hariri's death on Syria and the Lebanese security agencies it backs, has refused to join any government until after elections that it expects will give it a majority in a parliament now largely allied to Damascus. If he accepts Karami's resignation, Lahoud will have to consult deputies again to choose a new prime minister, a process that could delay the election and anger the opposition, which accuses Karami of procrastinating to avoid the polls. Opposition leaders had urged Karami to form a government without them. His old cabinet remains in a caretaker capacity. Syria now says it will complete the withdrawal before the elections. Foreign Minister Farouq al-Shara made the pledge in a letter to U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan,

dated yesterday. Syria's U.N. ambassador said a Syrian-Lebanese committee would meet this week to set a timetable for remaining troops to leave. Syria submitted the letter as the Security Council discussed a resolution drafted by the United States and France that would authorize an international investigation into Hariri's killing. Damascus has completed the first stage of a two-phase withdrawal plan, pulling back to the Bekaa valley and withdrawing nearly half the 14,000 troops it kept in Lebanon. More than 2,000 Syrian troops have left in the past week, inching Syria closer to ending its 29-year military domination. -- Reuters.

Beirut, Mar 31 -- Syrian forces evacuated positions near their main military and intelligence headquarters in Lebanon today after a night of bomb scares in Beirut. "We had a long night in the operations room," a military source said. "We received 130 calls about suspected bombs, but we didn't find any. Most related to badly parked cars." Witnesses said troops had dismantled two military posts near Anjar, the nerve centre of Syria's presence in Lebanon. About 18 trucks loaded with soldiers and equipment from the posts near the village in the Bekaa Valley drove into Syria overnight. Troops in the southern Bekaa were also seen preparing to abandon their posts as the pace of a Syrian pullout from Lebanon that began on Mar 8 appeared to quicken, the witnesses said. Syria promised in a letter to the United Nations this week that it would end its 29-year military presence in Lebanon before parliamentary elections, whose timing is now in doubt. The polls were due to occur before parliament's term expires on May 31, but a political crisis triggered by the assassination of former prime minister Rafik al-Hariri could force a delay. Hariri's successor, Omar Karami, has announced plans to resign after the anti-Syrian opposition spurned his effort to form a national unity government to lead Lebanon to elections. It appears unlikely that a new prime minister can be found, a government formed and an electoral law passed by parliament in time to allow the elections to go ahead on schedule. Opposition leaders, galvanized by Hariri's death into calling for a peaceful uprising for independence from Syrian tutelage, were due to meet to discuss how the government crisis can be resolved to enable the polls to take place. A Syrian-Lebanese committee will meet in the next few days to set a timetable for the withdrawal of remaining Syrian forces. U.N. special envoy Terje Roed-Larsen is due in the region soon after the meeting. -- Reuters.

LIBERIA

Monrovia, Mar 28 -- A first contingent of more than 100 Liberian police trained by the United Nations was deployed on the streets of the capital Monrovia today, a police spokesman said. Colonel Ansumana

Kromah, the deputy director of police operations, said the 123 recruits had completed their nine months of training on Saturday (Mar 26) and had immediately been deployed to various locations within the capital. Further contingents of newly trained recruits would be sent to the interior soon, he added. Kromah told IRIN that 85 of the first batch of officers to join the new-look Liberian National Police were brand new recruits. The remaining 38 were police officers who had served under the government of discredited former president Charles Taylor, who had been screened for human rights abuse and retrained, he added. Kromah said the training programme at the police academy, which is presently run by UN police officers drawn from forces around the globe, included human rights education, riot control, traffic control, community policing, criminal investigation and civic responsibility. The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) aims to train and equip a new 3,500-strong police force by the end of 2006. Its immediate target is to deploy 1,800 officers throughout the country by the time presidential and parliamentary elections are held in October. Since Liberia's 14-year civil war came to an end in 2003, security in the country has been maintained by a 15,000-strong UN peacekeeping force, which includes more than 1,000 civilian police. This has been supplemented until now by a 500-strong interim Liberian police force, comprising former police officers who were rapidly retrained. Police chief Colonel Joseph Kerkura said the United States had agreed to supply some equipment for Liberia's new police force, but he appealed to other international donors to provide more. -- Reuters.

NEPAL

Kathmandu, Mar 28 -- Maoist rebels killed three soldiers in eastern Nepal after kidnapping them while they were on their way home on leave, the army said today. The three men, who were not carrying any weapons, were attacked with stones, knives and then shot dead in the Maoist stronghold of Ramechhap on Saturday (Mar 26), an army statement said. The guerrillas have vowed to step up attacks on government forces and called for a nation-wide general strike later this week to build pressure against King Gyanendra after he fired the government and assumed absolute powers last month. -- Reuters.

London, Mar 31 -- A press report, dated today, states: Streets were largely deserted as residents stayed home for fear of reprisals by the rebels, who often attack people who defy their orders. Local rebel leaders said in a statement that they called the strike to protest King Gyanendra's power grab and his imposition of emergency rule. The king said he was compelled to assume absolute power because successive governments had failed to counter the rebels, who have been fighting since 1996 to abolish the monarchy and establish a communist state. The strike today comes two days

ahead of an 11-day nationwide strike called by the rebels to protest the king's decision. In Biratnagar, an industrial town 310 miles west of Katmandu, factories remained closed and streets deserted today, said officials reached by telephone. Business and schools also remained closed. Police official Sharad Chandra said security forces were escorting some vehicles along local highways but only a few were willing to take the risk.

PAKISTAN

London, Mar 23 -- A press report, dated Mar 22, states: Three bombs in Pakistan's restive south-western province of Baluchistan damaged a power line and a shop but caused no casualties, officials said today. A power pylon was toppled yesterday at Killi Kishungi in Naushki district, 130 km south-west of Quetta, said electricity company spokesman Gibrael Khan. Hundreds of homes in the area were plunged into darkness, he said. Another bomb ripped through the shutters of a steel workshop in Naushki, a local police official said. The third bomb exploded near the regional office of the army-led Anti-Narcotics Force in the town of Turbat, 600 km south-west of Quetta, but caused no damage, said local police official Habibullah. Nobody claimed responsibility for the blasts. Officials have blamed nationalist tribesmen demanding autonomy and greater benefits from the region's natural resources for a string of recent bomb blasts and rocket attacks. Resource-rich but poverty-stricken Baluchistan has seen a rise in violence since January when rebels launched a deadly rocket barrage on a major gas plant in revenge for the rape of a female doctor there. Thousands of troops moved into the province following the attack, which killed eight people.

Karachi, Mar 23 -- A gas pipeline of Sui Southern Gas Company was blown up by some unknown miscreants near Dhadar, about 140km from Quetta last night. As a result, gas supply from Shikarpur to many areas of Balochistan Province of Pakistan was suspended. It is said the miscreants had placed a high explosive device along the pipeline, which went off with a big bang. Fortunately, the pipeline could not catch fire. "The blast destroyed four feet long piece of the pipeline," Levies (Para military force) Director Khair Mohammad Jamali told journalists. He said a bomb was planted under the pipeline that went off at around 2250 hrs. Soon after the explosion, the officials of state owned gas utility company rushed to the blast site and stopped supply from Shikarpur. Quetta would receive gas supply through an alternative pipeline. However, supply to some other areas of the province would be affected. -- Lloyds List Correspondent.

London, Mar 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: Insurgents have blown up a gas pipeline in continuing attacks on government installations and security forces in Pakistan's restive Balochistan province, reports

here said. The Bloch Liberation Army (BLA) claimed responsibility for the Tuesday (Mar 22) attack on the pipeline close to a bridge between Dhadar and Sibi towns, Daily Times reported from the provincial capital Quetta. The local police said the saboteurs had used powerful explosives to blow up the pipeline. The report did not say if gas supplies were affected. The BLA had launched a major attack on the gas field installations in Sui town in early February, disrupting gas supplies to homes and industries in several areas.

Karachi, Mar 24 -- Despite the hectic efforts of Pakistan government at parliament level to resolve the various issues of tribes, the subversive activities are going on in western Province of Pakistan. Some saboteurs have blown up the main railway track near Mach in Balochistan Province of Pakistan yesterday morning. Local media reported that three-foot piece of the track was blown up with three home-made bombs at around 0600 hrs between Mach and Hrik, some 70 km east of Quetta. Soon after the explosion security personnel rushed to the site and informed the railway authorities at the next station that the goods train scheduled to pass the area be stopped. Railways control officials, while confirming the incident, said that the explosion did not affect the train service because all Quetta-bound trains were stopped at Jacobabad railway station owing to heavy rain that had damaged railway track between Dera Murad Jamali and Nutal area. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

PHILIPPINES

London, Mar 28 -- A press report, dated today, states: Officials in the southern Philippines say two communist insurgents have been killed in a fierce firefight with soldiers. The fighting erupted on Saturday (Mar 26) near Davao City when New People's Army (NPA) gunmen ambushed patrolling soldiers, said regional army commander Major General Samuel Bagasin. Two insurgents also surrendered voluntarily over the weekend to the military in Agusan del Sur province, also in the south. The duo are being interrogated at an army base in the province.

SOMALIA

London, Mar 29 -- A press report, dated Mar 28, states: Somali Prime Minister Ali Mohammed Ghedi has appealed for an end to fighting in the town of Baidoa which has left at least 14 people dead. Speaking from Libya, he urged the rival militias to observe a ceasefire following two days of clashes. There are fears the fighting has damaged hopes of an immediate return for the government exiled in Kenya. Yesterday there was a lull in fighting between militias loyal to rival Somali warlords - both of whom are MPs. The clash began over whether the exiled government should be located in Baidoa. Last week, MPs backed a proposal that the government should be based not in the capital, Mogadishu,

but in Baidoa and Jowhar and there were celebrations to mark this decision in Baidoa on Saturday (Mar 26). However, one powerful warlord apparently ordered his troops to attack those who were out on the streets and a fierce gun battle broke out. Baidoa is now in the hands of the militia led by Mohamed Ibrahim Habsadeh. The militia commanded by Hassan Mohamed Nur Shargudud is reported to have left the town. Meanwhile, a group of nine Somali MPs from Nairobi arrived in Mogadishu yesterday to assess the security situation.

THAILAND

London, Mar 27 -- A press report, dated today, states: Suspected Islamic rebels have ambushed a train in southern Thailand, injuring at least 19 people, police say. The armoured railway carriage was on a routine inspection of track in the province of Narathiwat when two bombs exploded at about 0615 hrs, today, near the station of Sungai Kolok, close to the Malaysian border. The explosive devices were reportedly detonated by a mobile phone. A police spokesman said the militants were waiting along the railway tracks and opened fire in the moments after the blast. Police said it returned fire - and the gunfight lasted for at least 10 minutes before the attackers managed to escape. Among the 19 injured were 10 police officers. There have been no reports of casualties among the insurgents. Train operations had been suspended in the area, police said.

TOGO

London, Mar 27 -- A press report, dated Mar 26, states: Opposition supporters have marched through the streets of the Togolese capital demanding the postponement of next month's presidential election. They say the 24 April poll is being held too soon to be fully free. However, supporters of the ruling RPT (Rally of the Togolese People) also held a rally in favour of the polling date. Around 2,000 people attended each demonstration, witnesses said. Opposition leaders say the Apr 24 deadline does not give them enough time to mount a proper campaign. Interior Minister Francois Boko said on Wednesday (Mar 23) that a special 3,500 strong special security force would be deployed to ensure candidates would be able move freely in the run-up to the election. Emmanuel Bob-Akitani, vice president of the Union Forces for Change party, will stand as the main opposition candidate against Faure Gnassingbe.

TURKEY

London, Mar 27 -- A press report, dated Mar 25, states: An explosion blamed on Kurdish rebels occurred today at an oil pipeline in southeastern Turkey, causing material damage, local officials said. The attack targeted a stretch of the pipeline near the village of Taskoy in Mardin province, the local deputy governor Ali

Candan said in a statement. It was perpetrated by members of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), who had planted explosives at the site, he said. "Only a small amount of crude oil leaked out as there was no flow of oil through the pipeline," the statement said. The PKK has been blamed for a series of attacks on security forces and other targets in Turkey's mainly Kurdish southeast since last June when the group ended a five-year unilateral ceasefire with the government.

UGANDA

Kampala, Mar 28 -- Rebels from Uganda's feared Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) abducted at least 12 people from a remote northern village, officials said today. The cult-like group -- which is notorious for kidnapping children and forcing them to become fighters, porters and sex slaves -- has stepped up its attacks on civilians this month. Saturday (Mar 26) night's raid in Adjumani district, near the border with Sudan, hit an area that has suffered in the past at the hands of small rebel groups moving swiftly on foot. "Thirteen people were abducted by the LRA on Saturday from Melijo village, which is about 20 km southeast of Adjumani town," district chairman Nixon Owole told Reuters. A Ugandan army spokesman said 12 people had been abducted of whom, seven were since rescued. "We have a special forces team on the ground in Adjumani to rescue the others," said Lieutenant Tabaro Kiconco. Seven people including a two-year-old girl were shot and hacked to death by LRA rebels earlier this month in Adjumani. The district hosts more than 60,000 refugees fleeing a separate war and LRA banditry in southern Sudan. Last year alone, more than 30,000 Sudanese refugees were uprooted by LRA attacks on their camps in the north. Some 1.6 million northern Ugandans have been forced into squalid, makeshift refugee camps by nearly 19 years of fighting between the government and the LRA. Talks to end the war were dealt a blow last month by the surrender of the rebels' main negotiator, but tentative contacts have continued. So have military operations aimed at hunting down top LRA commanders, including the group's elusive leader Joseph Kony, who is believed to be hiding in mountainous southern Sudan. -- Reuters.

YEMEN

Sanaa, Mar 30 -- Yemeni forces gunned down three Islamic rebels after they had ambushed and killed eight policemen in the second attack in two days, security sources said. Six other policemen were wounded in the clashes yesterday with followers of slain anti-US cleric Hussein al-Houthi in the province of Amrah, 100 km north of the capital Sanaa. The official Saba news agency said security forces also arrested an Islamic rebel. On Monday (Mar 28), supporters of Houthi killed seven policemen and

wounded 20 in an attack on a police station and an ambush in Saada province, 240 km north of Sanaa. Local sources said Yemeni security forces killed 10 rebels on Monday in a large operation in Saada. They said the clashes continued yesterday but gave no further details. Houthi, a Zaidi Shi'ite Muslim sect leader who had founded the Believing Youth group, was killed last September after two months of clashes with security forces in which at least 200 rebels and state troops died. Yemen accused Houthi of forming an armed group which staged violent protests against the United States and Israel. The group is not linked to al Qaeda. Yemeni security sources have blamed Houthi's elderly father, Sheikh Badr el-Deen, for the new round of violence. They said he had shunned a government amnesty, quit Sanaa and returned to his Saada stronghold to foment violence. -- Reuters.



BRAZIL

London, Mar 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: The mother of an international football player has been abducted for ransom in Brazil, the latest in a series of similar kidnappings. It is the fourth time in as many months that mothers of Brazilian football heroes have been targeted. Ines Fidelis Regis, 57, was abducted by three armed men who invaded the family home in Campinas, 100 km from Sao Paulo. She is the mother of Rogerio, who is a member of Brazil's famous national team. Only a week ago the mother of another star, Luis Fabiano, was taken and remains in the hands of kidnappers. The mothers of two other stars were earlier released only after the payment of undisclosed ransoms.

London, Mar 27 -- A press report, dated Mar 25, states: Police in Brazil have freed the mother of football star Rogerio, three days after she was kidnapped by gunmen. Ines Fidelis Regis, 57, was found apparently unharmed in a house in the coastal town of Caraguatatuba, in Sao Paulo state. During the operation to free Mrs Fidelis, whose son plays for Sporting Lisbon in Portugal, a woman was arrested and a machine gun seized. She was the fourth Brazilian player's mother to be abducted in recent months. Police said they found Mrs Fidelis after being tipped off, but did not say by whom. The kidnappers had not contacted the family, and no ransom was paid, they added. Earlier this month, gunmen abducted the mother of Brazilian international Luis Fabiano in Campinas, also in the state of Sao Paulo. She is still being held captive. The wave of kidnappings began last December, when the mother

of Santos striker Robinho was seized at a family gathering. She was released unharmed several weeks later after a ransom was paid. Last month, the mother of Sao Paulo striker Grafite spent a day as a hostage after being abducted near the city of Sao Paulo.

COLOMBIA

London, Mar 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: A 25-member armed group wearing military uniforms kidnapped four people in a rural estate in Antioquia department, northwestern Colombia, the police said yesterday. Three men and a woman were kidnapped Thursday (Mar 23) when having Easter vacation in the village of Los Andes. Their whereabouts are still unknown. The police blamed the kidnapping on guerrillas of Front 35 of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, the largest rebel group in the country.

Labour Disputes



CAMEROON

London, Mar 22 -- There was serious disruption to the port of Douala last week after dock workers in the port went on strike from Mar 17 to Mar 20 to protest against their wages and working terms and conditions. A meeting was due to take place yesterday between the workers and their employers, stevedoring group GPAC (Groupement Professionnel des Acconiers du Cameroun) to discuss the dockers' grievances.

CREW OF FINLAND-GERMANY FERRY SERVICE

London, Mar 30 -- A press report, dated today, states: A strike that had idled ro/ro Runner (20729 gt, built 1990) and ro/ro Rider (20077 gt, built 1984) and stopped rail ferry traffic between Finland and Germany concluded during Easter. The strike was caused over a wage dispute. The two ships were originally owned by the Finnish company Finnlines, which later sold the German-flagged vessels to the Norwegian Barber Shipping, which leases them to Finnlines for service between Germany and Finland. The strike began when the Norwegian owners decided to pay the Polish crew according to Polish pay scales rather than those of Germany. This amounted to a cut in pay of more than 60%. A dispute over the wages had already occurred when the ships were flagged out from Germany to Norway, and attempts were made to get rid of the expensive German crew members. It was agreed at that time that the ships would observe German national contracts, no matter where the crew members were from. Of the 17 members of the crew on board Runner, 14 were from Poland. The

strike had the support of the German Verdi trade union, which felt that as the ships operate between Finland and Germany, the labour contracts for the crew should follow German rules. The issue was resolved by placing the ships under the Finnish flag, and replacing the Polish crews with Finnish seamen. Each ship also got a Finnish ship's master and a Finnish crew. The Finnish Seamen's Union and the Transport Workers' Union (AKT) did not object to out-flagging the vessels to Finland. In Germany, however, local stevedores had given their support to the the Polish crews.

CREW OF MALTESE VESSEL AT WALLAROO, AUSTRALIA

London, Mar 23 -- Bulk Flecha arrived Port Lincoln Mar 20 and sailed Mar 22.

FRANCE

London, Mar 22 -- A press report, dated today, states: Operation Stack has moved up to phase two on the M20 in Kent after industrial action in France seriously affected cross-Channel travel. Riot police used tear gas to disperse striking French seamen from the Channel Tunnel entrance today. The strikers also blockaded berths at the port of Calais, meaning delays for SeaFrance and P&O ferry services. The industrial action is in response to discussions in the French Parliament on changes to shipping laws. Ferry operator SeaFrance had already cancelled its Dover-Calais services because of the strike. All ships will be kept in Calais until Thursday morning (Mar 24) when sailings are due to resume. P&O has also been affected with two ferries returning to Kent because they were unable to berth in Calais. Two more ships were used to carry freight to Zeebrugge in Belgium. A P&O spokesman said they do not know when they will next be able to enter Calais. Reports from France today said protesters were dispersed from the Eurotunnel rail terminal at about 1200, GMT, with only minor disruption to traffic. Kent Police implemented phase one of Operation Stack at about 1400, GMT, today, closing the M20 coastbound between junctions 11 and 12. Phase two came in at around 2000, GMT, between junctions eight and nine. The operation allows lorries to queue on the M20 with other traffic being diverted. Yesterday, rail traffic through the Channel Tunnel was blocked for three hours after a group of about 100 striking workers cut through fences surrounding the terminal near Calais and invaded the tracks. Trains were stopped in both directions with 15 Eurostar services delayed. The seamen are protesting against a plan to reform the French national register for shipping, with sailors' unions saying the changes are a threat to French jobs. SeaFrance said when it stopped its crossings it hoped it would be able to transfer passengers to alternative services.

Customers who had booked crossings for tomorrow are being advised to contact SeaFrance reservations.

INDIA

New Delhi, Mar 30 -- Tradesmen shut up shop today at the start of a three-day protest against a new value-added tax (VAT) due to take effect across 21 states on Apr 1. VAT has been delayed five times in nearly 10 years but is finally set to go ahead on Friday (Apr 1) after the UPA government said last week it would not back down despite the dissent of five opposition-ruled states. Traders across the country were planning a 72-hour strike until the weekend, worried they will have to pay more tax, that they lack the systems to cope with a bigger pile of paperwork and that even tax collectors are ill prepared. The tax levied on the value manufacturers and retailers add to goods at each sale point in the chain, is to replace a web of sales taxes across the state that creates duplicate taxation. It will cover 550 goods, have two basic rates of 4 and 12.5 per cent and a special rate of 1.0 per cent for gold and silver ornaments. -- Reuters.

London, Mar 31 -- A press report, dated today, states: A nationwide strike called to protest the launch of a Value Added Tax (VAT) across India drew a mixed response on the second day, with many stores re-opening for business, traders' associations said. Some markets in the capital New Delhi were back to their usual bustling selves while in others many shops remained shuttered. The tax, agreed at a meeting of state finance ministers in New Delhi in June, is designed to cut multiple layers of levies, boost revenues, reduce inter-state barriers to trade and make accounting more transparent. The much-delayed reform has been put on hold at least five times because of loud opposition from India's 29 states, which fear they will lose revenues and are reluctant to cede the power to set taxes on goods and services. Seven Indian states controlled by the opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have refused to implement VAT, saying they will lose revenue and administrative problems remain in assessing the tax. Despite the widespread protests, Finance Minister Palaniappan Chidambaram has said the new tax regime would come into effect on Apr 1 as scheduled without any "slackening of implementation". Chidambaram found support today from World Bank country director Michael Carter. "A comprehensive VAT widens the tax net, as it makes tax evasion difficult. Going by the experience of other countries, VAT has proved beneficial and leads to revenue buoyancy," Carter told the Press Trust of India (PTI) news agency. "Reforms have to be accelerated, especially tax reforms." Vijay Goel, president of the Confederation of All India Traders and a member of the BJP, said traders would pay more under the new regime. "We are from the very beginning against this tax which will co-exist

with central sales tax and several others. We demand that the extra taxes be abolished before VAT is implemented," Goel said. The strike call drew mixed responses in other Indian states, with PTI news agency saying many shops remained closed in southern Karnataka, eastern Bihar and northern Uttar Pradesh states for a second day running. Many shops were also closed in Indian-controlled Kashmir, it said. In the western economic hub of Bombay (Mumbai), traders continued with their business although some wholesale markets in central parts of city remained closed. In the eastern state of West Bengal, shops and businesses remained shut and traders staged protest marches, and the usually crowded streets and malls of state capital Calcutta were deserted. VAT sets new rates on 500 items, with 250 essential items ranging from farm products to medicines taxed at four percent and the rest at 12.5%.

IRAQ

London, Mar 23 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: There are currently no tugs, pilots or radio officers available at Basrah Oil Terminal, following a reported dispute which arose earlier today. According to SOMO Basrah, loading operations are continuing but berthings and sailings have been cancelled for the meantime. It is anticipated that the crew will return to the terminal tomorrow.

London, Mar 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: Sailing operations at Basrah & Khor Al Amaya Oil Terminals recommenced at 2340, local time, last night. This follows some interruption to operations earlier this week, due to a dispute over the way in which inspections of tugs and their crew are conducted. Inspection was carried out at approximately 1930, local time, yesterday evening, and the tugs reached the terminals at 2100 hrs.

NEPAL

See under "Political & Civil Unrest."

NIGER

London, Mar 22 -- A press report, dated today, states: A nationwide strike over a tax on staple foods closed banks and shops, left streets deserted and disrupted government services in the capital of Niger today. In the second city of Zinder, 900 kilometres east of Niamey, some people tried to protest but were stopped. "Some youths tried to burn tyres on the road but were dispersed by security forces," Zinder Governor Abba Malam Boukar said on national radio. It was unclear how they were dispersed, or if any were arrested. Public protests have been banned since Mar 15, when thousands of demonstrators took to the streets, stoned government cars and broke traffic lights. Forty-six people were detained but since have been freed. Protesters want legislators to reverse a Jan 4 law imposing a 19 percent tax on staples including rice, sugar and milk. In Niamey, anti-riot

police armed with batons deployed around the parliament building where lawmakers took part in an ordinary session. Police also guarded closed banks and the central market, which was deserted. Buses and taxis stayed off the roads, forcing many civil servants to stay home.

PAKISTAN

Karachi, Mar 27 -- The transportation of goods across Pakistan has suffered for the last three days on account of a strike called by All Pakistan Goods Transport Association (APGTA) against an increase in petroleum prices, toll taxes, motorway police and the arrest of the Secretary General of the Punjab Goods Association. Members have observed a three days "wheel jam" strike involving trucks and trailers, from March 25, which has caused the suspension of the supply of fresh fruits, vegetables and exportables etc. They have warned the government that the strike will continue and, if needed, will go on for an indefinite period, in the case of non-acceptance of their demands. The strike has caused considerable problems to traders and manufacturers of various items, as the transporters are refusing to transport their goods. Owing to the strike, the supply of fruits and vegetables to markets also faced a cut, and the markets fell short of edibles. As a result, the prices of vegetables and fruits has increased. An official of association has asked the government to immediately decrease POL prices, reduce number of toll plazas and direct motorway police not to harass truck drivers. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Karachi, Mar 29 -- Pakistan Goods Transport Truck Owners Association has called off their countrywide wheel-jam strike that was completely observed during last four days across the northern area of country. The association made the announcement following holding a meeting with the NWFP Governor Khalilur Rehman yesterday. The delegation headed by its president Malik Khawaja Muhammad Khan comprising Rajwali Khattak, Haji Atta Muhammad, Noor Muhammad, Muhammad Tariq and dozens of leaders met with the Governor Khalilur Rehman and appraised him about their demands, says a press release. The delegation expressed reservations over the fortnightly increase in the petroleum prices, increase in the toll taxes, dilapidated conditions of the roads and some other issues. They informed the governor that they had brought the matter into the notice of the high ups for so many times, but there was no option left for them but to launch an agitation move. The governor assured the transporters that he would take up the matter with the Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, on which, the transporters announced the ending of their strike, the press release added. Separately, the Supreme Council of All Pakistan Transporters have

announced a countrywide strike tomorrow while the Karachi Transport Ittehad (KTI) yesterday announced to go on strike against hike of fuel price on Apr 6 in Karachi. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Karachi, Mar 30 -- Transportation of goods in Pakistan today was partially hampered due to a strike called by Supreme Council of All Pakistan Transporters (SCAPT) in Sindh Province. Reportedly, hundreds of oil tankers are parked at Shirin Jinnah Colony in Karachi at oil terminal depots and suspending supply of refined petroleum products to upcountry. SCAPT with the support of other transporters went on strike over the issue of revision of prices of diesel, out of business of 10,000 oil tankers due to start of new oil pipeline from Karachi to Multan and other problems being faced by them. Passengers suffered as long-route buses remained off from roads in Karachi city. During the strike oil tankers, trucks and trailers remained off the roads to press for their owners' demands. Separately, reports from northern area of Pakistan also indicates a large numbers of tankers and trucks remained off the roads particularly disturbing supply of goods to Afghanistan. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Karachi, Mar 31 -- The Supreme Council of All Pakistan Transporters (SCAPT) has extended the strike for today and warned the government that if their demands were not met the strike could be observed for an indefinite period. The transporters had called the strike in protest against frequent hikes in prices of petrol and diesel and harassment to drivers on highways and in support of their various demands. Yesterday, oil tankers and inter-city buses went on strike across the country, suspending supply of petroleum products and leaving passengers stranded. The council's chairman, Yusuf Shahwani, in a statement said the strike was not meant to serve any political cause, but only to press for fulfilment of transporters' demands. According to Shahwani, about 42,000 oil tankers, 60,000 trucks and trailers and 8,000 long-route buses took part in the strike across the country. A delegation led by him met Sindh Governor Dr Ishratul Ibad and appraised him of their grievances. The delegation was informed that the provincial government had nothing to do with the prices of petroleum products. Federal Minister of Communications Shamim Siddiqui is reported to have assured the delegation that the increase in toll tax would not be collected on highways and the decision about the increase had been suspended till Jun 30. After the meeting, the transporters' body decided to extend the strike for another day. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

SOUTH AFRICA

London, Mar 24 -- Workers at Harmony Gold mines in Free State,

South Africa, have started a strike after talks on job cuts failed. About 21,000 miners - or 90% of the workforce at its Harmony and Freegold sites - failed to turn up for last night's shift. The two sites make up about 40% of Harmony's overall output but it said the action would have little initial impact because of the Easter holidays. The firm plans to restructure its operations, cutting up to 5,000 jobs. Industry observers fear the strike could be a protracted one. The company obtained a court order banning workers at its recently-purchased Target mine in Free State from taking part in the strikes. The world's sixth-largest gold producer has been hit hard by the rise in the value of the rand as many of its sites are based in South Africa. National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) officials said the strike took place after last-ditch talks broke down.

London, Mar 29 -- A press report, dated today, states: Over 20,000 workers continued their strike at Harmony Gold's Free State mines today while management and the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) met for talks. "There were misunderstandings in negotiations last week. We agreed to follow up with talks this week," said NUM spokesperson Moferefere Lekorotsoana. The strike, which started last Wednesday (Mar 23), is said to be costing Harmony R1m a day. Yesterday, Harmony spokesperson Ferdi Dippenaar said he hoped there would be a speedy resolution to the impasse. Harmony has said the strike is not related to recent retrenchment notices served on the union by the mining company.

London, Mar 31 -- A press report, dated today, states: Strikes at two of South Africa's largest gold producers are to expand to include all mines across both companies, a miners' union has said. Workers at two Harmony Gold and one Gold Fields mine have walked out in a dispute over pay and planned redundancies. The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) said the dispute was being extended because of the behaviour of both firms. Gold Fields said the strike was illegal and it was going to halt it in court. The NUM said nearly 30,000 workers at all mines of Gold Fields would walkout at 1800, yesterday, which the company confirmed. Currently 20,000 Harmony staff are out on strike at two facilities in the Free State. The union said this would increase within seven days to cover all Harmony sites, which employ a total of 50,000 people. In addition to opposing job cuts at the two firms, the union wants monthly living allowances to be raised to 1,200 rand (\$189.80; £100) from the current 706 rand.

UNITED KINGDOM

London, Mar 25 -- A press report, dated today, states: Rail services in Merseyside were suffering disruption today as guards in the RMT union went on strike. Drivers at Birkenhead

also refused to work, causing services on the Wirral line to be suspended. Replacement bus services are being put on. Managers at Merseyrail say on all other routes, a Sunday service was in operation, with trains every half-hour. A strike planned for the Grand National weekend will go ahead unless agreement is reached on new hours and conditions.



ASBESTOS-RELATED ILLNESS, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 26 -- A press report, dated Mar 25, states: Federal-Mogul Corp. said it will pay \$29 million to resolve more than \$183 million in asbestos injury claims. The auto parts company, in a motion filed Wednesday (Mar 23), asked the U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Wilmington, Del., to approve a settlement of litigation between the company and the Centre for Claims Resolution, an entity set up by a consortium of companies to administer and resolve asbestos claims against them. Following Federal-Mogul unit's pullout from the claims centre in 2000 and 2001, various lawsuits were filed among the claims centre, the company, asbestos claimants and the insurers who issued \$250 million in bonds to cover the settlement contributions of Federal-Mogul and its affiliates. Federal-Mogul agreed to a settlement Monday (Mar 21) to end the litigation and settle all claims in exchange for the \$29 million payment to the claims centre. The settlement will initially be paid by the sureties that issued the bonds -- Safeco Insurance Co. of America, Travelers Casualty and Surety Co. of America, National Fire Insurance Co. of Hartford and Continental Casualty Co. -- and Federal-Mogul will repay that amount over time. Southfield, Mich.-based Federal-Mogul's separate settlement with the insurers was approved by the bankruptcy court Mar 16. The claims centre settlement payment is expected to be made May 2, with 30 percent coming from Safeco, 40 percent from Travelers and 30 percent from National Fire and Continental Casualty together. The settlement with the claims centre will resolve the dispute without Federal-Mogul having to spend more money on litigation and remove the risk of adverse court rulings that "could have disastrous effects upon the prospects for reorganization of certain debtors," the motion said. Federal-Mogul sought Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in 2001 because of hundreds of millions of dollars in asbestos claims.

CHARGING OF EXCESSIVE MANAGEMENT FEES, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 29 -- A press report, dated Mar 28, states: Northern Trust

Bank of California has agreed to pay \$21 million to settle a lawsuit alleging that it charged excessive management fees to 1,300 individuals, charities and others with trust accounts. The bank's parent, Northern Trust Corp. of Chicago, didn't admit wrongdoing, saying it had acted in good faith and settled to avoid costly litigation. The settlement was approved late Friday (Mar 25) by Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge Anthony J. Mohr. As a trustee, the bank held and managed investments on behalf of beneficiaries. It collected fees based on a percentage of the assets under management in the 300 trusts at issue in the lawsuit. Derek G. Howard of Oakland, an attorney for the beneficiaries, said today that the trusts generally were supposed to be charged annual fees of less than 1% of trust assets. Instead, he said, the fees were gradually increased to the going rate for the industry, currently about 1.4% a year. The amount of alleged overcharges varied, but trust beneficiaries are expected to receive settlements averaging about \$12,300 each. Northern Trust acquired nearly all of the 300 trust accounts in 1992 from Trust Services of America Inc., a subsidiary of California Federal Bank. The overcharges on these accounts began in 1981 and continued until 2003, according to the lawsuit, which said Northern Trust knew about Trust Services' overcharges but neglected to rectify them. Northern Trust previously had offered to refund extra fees charged to the trust customers beginning in 1994 or an offer accepted by the beneficiaries of 79 of the trusts, according to the settlement documents. In its final settlement, the bank agreed that those beneficiaries, like the others, also would receive refunds all the way back to 1981. The plaintiff attorneys will receive \$5 million of the settlement and the trust beneficiaries \$16 million, the judge decided. Niall J. McCarthy of Burlingame, Calif., another attorney for the plaintiffs, said the banks failed to spell out clearly to their customers that under the original terms of the trusts, the fee caps could only be lifted by obtaining a court order. When Northern Trust became aware that the trusts it obtained from TSA had been charged too much, it sent out letters to clients that "didn't state that the increases clearly violated the terms of the trust," he said.

MEDICAL MALPRACTICE, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Mar 22 -- A press report, dated today, states: A court has awarded £950,000 in compensation to the family of a man who died in hospital from septic shock after a routine bowel operation. Imtiaz Shah, 35, from Birmingham, died in the City Hospital in January 2001 after medics and nursing staff failed to treat his deteriorating condition. In July 2002, Birmingham Coroner Aidan Cotter recorded a verdict of neglect. Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust accepted liability in November

2002. The settlement was approved at a High Court hearing in Birmingham today. The father-of-three, who suffered from the digestive disorder Crohn's disease, had bowel surgery after being admitted on Jan 9, 2001. Irwin Mitchell, the law firm representing his family, said three days later he started complaining of "unbearable" abdominal pain, nausea, chest pain and dehydration. The pharmacist, from Moseley, had also become delirious. But despite coughing up blood, vomiting and his family's continued pleas for assistance, staff did nothing, solicitors said. A GP's intervention led to action being taken. A second operation revealed Mr Shah's bowel had not been properly closed and his abdominal cavity was filled with two litres of poisonous bodily fluids. This was drained and Mr Shah was prescribed antibiotics, but they failed to work and he died from septic shock on Jan 23, 2001. The family's lawyer, Sara Burns, said: "Mr Shah was failed by both the medical and nursing staff who took almost four days to intervene, even though he was clearly in the most appalling distress. Today's financial settlement takes account of the fact Mr Shah had a successful, well-paid career as a pharmacist ahead of him. It will help provide for his dependants including his wife, three children and elderly parents." The coroner had called on the hospital to carry out an inquiry into the circumstances of his death. The NHS trust said in a statement: "We have apologised unreservedly to Mrs Shah and her family for the care her husband received during his treatment. We would like to assure her that lessons have been learned by the trust and new procedures put in place to try and ensure that a similar incident never happens again."

PATENT INFRINGEMENT, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 28 -- A press report dated today, states: Sony has been told to pay \$90.7m (£48m) in damages and stop selling PlayStation consoles in the United States after losing a patent infringement lawsuit. Sony said it would appeal the decision, stemming from a 2002 case brought by US firm Immersion, and would continue to sell its products pending the hearing. A California court found that Sony had infringed sensory technology developed by the small tech business. This allows a controller to vibrate in time with the game's actions. A federal district court in Oakland upheld a decision by a US court last year which ordered Sony Computer Entertainment, Sony's gaming unit, to pay \$82m in damages. However, the order to suspend sales of PlayStation and PlayStation 2 consoles - the best selling games platforms in the world - more than 40 individual games does not hold while an appeal is being heard. Immersion Corporation claimed that Sony's Dual Shock controller for its two PlayStation consoles violated

its patent rights, a claim which Sony has denied. The \$90m award is more than three times Immersion's total revenues last year, which amounted to \$23.8m. The California based company develops and licenses digital technology.

PERSONAL INJURY, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 23 -- A press report, dated Mar 22, states: An apprentice technician who suffered burns to 60% of his body after an electrical explosion, settled a lawsuit this week against engineering contract firm Fluor Corp and technology powerhouse IBM Corp. Fluor's insurance companies will pay \$9.5 million in damages, and Fluor's workers' compensation carrier paid \$5.9 million in medical bills for David McNabb, 37, McNabb's attorney said today. McNabb was hospitalised for 20 months after an accident at an IBM facility in San Jose in January, 2002. An IBM supervisory engineer asked McNabb and another Fluor contractor to scavenge replacement parts from shutdown electrical equipment in a building where the electrical unit was allegedly labeled with a yellow "out of service" tag. When McNabb applied his wrench to a piece of equipment, he suffered a 12,400-volt shock, said his attorney Richard Alexander. IBM spokesman Edward Barbini emphasised that Fluor's insurance company, not IBM, paid the settlement. Alexander had argued that Fluor and IBM were at fault. IBM, Fluor and the IBM supervisory engineer were named as defendants in the lawsuit. "IBM was negligent because its own regulations prohibit anyone working on or near exposed energised electrical conductors," Alexander said today. "He never should have been sent there."

POOR POSTAL SERVICE, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Mar 22 -- A press report, dated today, states: Royal Mail has paid £43m in compensation to postal customers for late deliveries in the year to March 2004, the postal regulator has said. Postcomm said the money was paid directly to private and business users. Royal Mail must also pass on £17m in savings to consumers in the new financial year, which starts on Apr 6. Postcomm said Royal Mail had made "extensive" improvements since the end of March 2004. Postcomm said the compensation was a result of poor service in 2003/2004 when Royal Mail missed its main service quality targets. The Royal Mail said service had been disrupted as a result of industrial action at the end of 2003 and a serious fire at a mail centre. Chief executive Adam Crozier said it had "transformed" the quality of service over the past year and its recent performance was the best in a decade. Postcomm chairman Nigel Stapleton said Royal Mail had made improvements. "The commissioners are pleased that the company has

acknowledged that there were lessons to be learned in terms of how future change programmes are handled, and that it recognises its obligations to make amends to customers," Mr Stapleton said.

PREDATORY PRICING & ANTITRUST VIOLATIONS, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 23 -- A press report, dated Mar 22, states: IBM, the world's largest computer maker, and Compuware Corp. today said they agreed to settle a lawsuit in which Compuware accused IBM of predatory pricing and antitrust violations. The agreement calls for International Business Machines Corp. to licence \$140 million of Compuware software over the next four years, and offer to buy \$260 million of Compuware services over the same period. Shares of Compuware stock jumped 6.2%, and IBM stock rose less than 1%. Compuware sued IBM in March 2002 alleging that IBM had copied some of its software programs and was selling them at below-market cost, using its dominance in mainframe hardware and software to compete unfairly in the market for software tools used to run mainframes, where Compuware has been strong. The settlement halted a trial that had been running for several weeks in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan. Early today, the parties met with the judge, who accepted the settlement, which includes a patent cross-licensing deal between the two companies, IBM said. One source familiar with the terms said that the settlement amounts to a series of business dealings in which both Compuware and IBM stand to make money. Otherwise, the deal leaves IBM free to compete vigorously in the tools market. IBM is likely to offer low-margin desktop support services to Compuware customers through which IBM stands to make back the \$260 million, the source said. "It sounds more like a business arrangement than a settlement," said Judith Hurwitz, the president of technology consulting firm Hurwitz & Associates. Lisa Elkin, a spokeswoman for Detroit-based Compuware, was not immediately available to comment. "IBM is free to distribute our products at the prices we choose to sell them, which will benefit our customers," Tim Breuer, a spokesman for IBM's software business. He declined to comment on the details of the agreement. Shares of Compuware rose 43 cents to \$7.40 in late morning trade on the Nasdaq, while IBM shares gained 74 cents to \$90.25 on the New York Stock Exchange. The dispute reflects growing competition in the mainframe software market over the past five years. Compuware saw demand for its products peak in the late 1990s as customers rushed to fix potential "Y2K" software bugs, but has struggled since then, Hurwitz said. Its revenue slid to \$1.26 billion last year, down from \$2.23 billion in

2000. Wall Street analysts expect revenue to remain flat in 2005 and edge up slightly next year, according to Reuters Estimates. Meanwhile, IBM has become more aggressive in the market, introducing its z-Series mainframe machines, Linux software and new tools to manage mainframes, Hurwitz said. "It is not just a legacy IBM has to drag around like a ball and chain. It's a market that has legs for the future for them," she said. IBM said the agreement would not have a material affect on its first-quarter 2005 earnings. Compuware and IBM will have to bear all their own fees and expenses in the case, the source said.

RECORD LABEL LAWSUIT, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 31 -- A press report, dated today, states: Rap music mogul Marion Suge Knight has been ordered to pay \$107 million to a woman who claims she helped start his Death Row Records label. Los Angeles County Superior Judge Ronald Sohigian ordered Knight and his companies, Death Row Records and Tha Row Inc., to pay Lydia Harris \$45 million in economic damages, \$2 million in non-economic damages and \$60 million in punitive damages. In her lawsuit, Harris said in 1989 she and Knight became equal founding partners of the music label and that he pushed her out without her knowledge when he recognized its money-making potential. Sohigian made the judgment after ruling Knight and his attorneys violated court rules requiring them to answer questions and provide information to opposing counsel during the discovery process in 2002.

SEXUAL ABUSE, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 27 -- A press report, dated Mar 26, states: The Roman Catholic Diocese of Stockton has agreed to pay \$3.6 million to settle claims by two victims molested by a Lodi priest who was later deported to Ireland. The two unidentified victims are now in their 40s. They were elementary school students ages 11 and 12 at St. Anne's Catholic Church in Lodi when they were molested by the Rev. Oliver O'Grady. O'Grady was convicted in 1993 of molesting the boys and served seven years before he was deported. The victims' attorneys, Gregory Davenport and Jeffrey Silvia, said yesterday each victim will get \$1.8 million.

STOLEN TRADE SECRETS, UNITED STATES

San Jose, Calif., Mar 24 -- A California jury awarded memory chip maker Lexar Corp. \$84 million in punitive damages from Japan's Toshiba Corp. today in trial over Lexar's claims Toshiba stole its trade secrets. The San Jose jury yesterday had awarded Lexar more than \$380 million in damages and considered the punitive award separately today. -- Reuters.

TOBACCO-RELATED ILLNESS, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 22 -- A press report, dated today, states: A woman with lung cancer is to be awarded the highest court-ordered payment yet to an ex-smoker after a last-ditch appeal was rejected. Patricia Henley, of California, will receive the \$10.5m award, which has grown to more than \$16m with interest, from Philip Morris, the world's largest cigarette maker. The jury found the company had lied about the risks and addictive nature of smoking and was responsible for her cancer. The payout was reduced from \$51.5m after an appeals court concluded the jury had considered improper factors in awarding punitive damages. But Philip Morris argued that a new trial should have been ordered, rather than a simple reduction of the award. It claimed the lower courts also failed to consider the legal impact of a 2001 court ruling concerning tobacco advertising. But the appeal was rejected, setting the stage for the company to pay up, six years after it began fighting to overturn the judgment. Ms Henley, 58, began smoking Philip Morris' Marlboro cigarettes aged 15. For the next 28 years she smoked up to two packs a day. She was diagnosed with cancer in 1998. William Ohlemeyer, a lawyer for the company, said: "We're disappointed that the court didn't take the case, but it won't prevent us from successfully defending other cases." It is the fourth time the industry has been ordered to pay damages to an individual smoker, and the second time for Philip Morris. Ms Henley plans to give most of the money to a foundation to warn children about the dangers of smoking and treat youngsters with breathing problems and cancer.

London, Mar 29 -- A press report, dated Mar 28, states: A New York jury today awarded punitive damages of \$17.1 million against Philip Morris USA in a case in which a 72-year-old woman said her lung cancer and neurological disorder were caused by smoking. The punitive damage award is one of the largest such awards against the embattled tobacco industry. The 72-year-old plaintiff, Norma Rose, suffers from lung cancer and a neurological disorder she claimed were caused by her smoking, a habit she picked up in her teens. She quit in 1993. She alleged that cigarettes were a defective product design. In the case, *Rose v. American Tobacco et al.*, the jury returned on Mar 18 a \$3.4 million award for compensatory damages against Philip Morris and American Tobacco Co., split evenly. But the jurors assessed nothing against American Tobacco, instead assessing all punitive damages against Philip Morris. The tobacco firm vowed to appeal. Last week, the U.S. Supreme Court denied an appeal by Philip Morris in another case, in which a jury awarded a San Francisco woman \$16 million in punitive damages.

Railway Accidents



KIRKLAND, ILLINOIS, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 29 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: A train went off the tracks near Route 72 in Kirkland, yesterday. Police say a grain train on the I-C-E train system derailed around 2000 hrs. Four of the train's six cars went off the track. No one was injured in the derailment, but danger continued even after the cars jumped the tracks. "Some of the cars are a little unstable as far as teetering on the tracks. That's virtually the only thing we're worried about right now," says Kirkland Police Chief Stan Smith. Police zoned off the mess until the investigation is complete. The cause of the derailment is not known.

LOCKHART AREA, TEXAS, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 30 -- A press report, dated Mar 29, states: A Union Pacific freight train carrying grain and soda ash derailed in Caldwell County early today, causing 13 cars to leave the tracks, officials said. Three people were taken to Central Texas Medical Centre in San Marcos as a precaution, but there were no serious injuries, said Tela Mange, spokeswoman for the Texas Department of Public Safety. All three, who had been on the train, were treated and released from an area hospital. "Everybody's OK," Mange said. Mange said there was no hazardous substance on the train. There were no evacuations of homes near the accident site. The derailment occurred east of Lockhart.

M'FOUMBOU AREA, CONGO REPUBLIC

London, Mar 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: Six stowaways perched on top of a carriage carrying bananas were killed when their train derailed in Congo Republic, railway officials in the central African country said today. "The accident happened on an old stretch of track where trees fall on to the line every time there's bad weather," Jacky Trimardeau, managing director of railway company Chemin de Fer Congo Ocean, told Reuters. The train, which had both freight and passenger cars, came off the tracks near M'Foumbou, 90km east of the deepwater port of Pointe Noire, as it travelled towards the capital Brazzaville, Trimardeau said.

REGINA, CANADA

London, Mar 23 -- A press report, dated Mar 22, states: A preliminary investigation shows a semi-trailer truck slammed into the side of a CP freight train that was trying to make an emergency stop east of Regina today. The accident happened at a

level crossing on the CP main line just north of Balgonie late this morning. CP spokesman Ed Greenberg says the train was trying to come to a halt when the truck hit the second locomotive in the freight. Greenberg says 24 empty hopper cars then derailed along with a locomotive. RCMP say the intersection is a marked crossing with lights but add that a heavy overnight snowfall had created poor driving conditions at the time. Greenberg says cleanup crews are trying to get the line reopened by tomorrow.

Robberies & Thefts



CASH, BANK, INNER MONGOLIA, CHINA

London, Mar 27 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Three Chinese bank branches have been robbed by employees of Rmb115m (\$13.9m) in the latest of a string of large-scale insider thefts that underline concerns about mainland banks' ability to manage and track their funds. News of the theft at three branches in Inner-Mongolia follows the resignation last week of Zhang Enzhao as head of China Construction Bank, the country's second largest lender, following accusations that he took a \$1m bribe.

DIAMONDS, NEW YORK, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: Two gunmen posing as deliverymen slipped into a Diamond District wholesale business at 55 W. 47th St., New York, just before 1 p.m. and walked out with an estimated \$5 million in diamonds, police said. The bandits, dressed in black, their faces covered by ski masks, appeared to have carefully planned the robbery, taking advantage of the reduced security in place for Good Friday.

Computer Systems



CASH MACHINE FAILURE, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Mar 28 -- A press report, dated today, states: Millions of Barclays Bank customers were left cashless yesterday after a computer meltdown paralysed half of the bank's ATMs across southern England. The bank is investigating whether the change over to British Summer Time caused the technical glitch. A spokeswoman said the clock change theory was "something fairly high on the list" of possible causes. Customers

remained able to use cards in shop transactions, or to gain access to their funds through cashback services. Around 1,500 cash machines were affected by the breakdown. Customers were unable to withdraw money from hole-in-the-wall machines and Link ATMs, or to use telephone and internet banking. A spokeswoman for the bank would not confirm whether the clocks going forward was responsible for the IT problem. "Given the timing of this its obviously something fairly high on the list (of possible causes), but it would be wrong to speculate until the investigation has been completed." She added that there was no impact on security - only on "accessibility for people to their own accounts". The problem of the ATMs was solved by 1600 BST, yesterday, although internet banking still remained affected.

Miscellaneous



CARGO DISPUTE, CHITTAGONG, BANGLADESH

Karachi, Mar 29 -- General cargo Ryu Gyeong has informed the Chittagong Port Authority that it will sail on Mar 30. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

DAM BURST, GHAZNI PROVINCE, AFGHANISTAN

Kabul, Mar 29 -- A dam burst in Afghanistan's Ghazni province today, prompting U.S.-led forces to launch an evacuation effort using helicopters to clear downstream areas. The Ghazni river rose by one metre within half an hour of the Bande-Sultan dam bursting at around 0900 hrs (0430, UTC) and within two hours some streets in Ghazni town were flooded, residents said. Relief workers said military helicopters had helped evacuate stricken communities, who had been warned over the radio. Concern had mounted over the past few weeks as heavy rains and melt waters built up pressure on the dam's wall. -- Reuters.

OUTBREAK OF "BIRD FLU"

Phnom Penh, Mar 24 -- Bird flu has killed a 28-year-old Cambodian man, officials said today as authorities in neighbouring Vietnam tested dozens of people in a village where a five-year-old boy has been infected with the virus. Keo Saran is Asia's 48th bird flu victim and Cambodia's second after a 25-year-old woman, who lived in the same southern province of Kamptot, died in a Vietnamese hospital in late January. "The bird flu virus killed him," said Dr. Heng Taykry, the director of the Calmette hospital where the man died on Tuesday (Mar 22). Keo Saran appeared to have been infected after eating dead chickens, the doctor said today. Tests on seven relatives of the dead man have so far proved negative for the virus. The

virus, which produces a high fever, coughing and acute pneumonia, has killed about 70% of the people known to have been infected, but it does not pass easily from birds to humans. However, experts fear it will eventually combine with a variety of human flu to become a highly contagious virus capable of killing millions of people worldwide. In hardest-hit Vietnam, where 34 people have died, health inspectors found 37 people with fever in Chau Hoa commune in the central province of Quang Binh, where the five-year-old boy tested positive for bird flu nearly two weeks ago. "We don't see anyone in serious condition and nobody shows clinical symptoms that need medical intervention," said senior provincial health official Truong Dinh Dinh, disputing state media reports that up to 200 people had flu-like symptoms. He said samples taken from residents, chickens, flies and the water supply would be tested for bird flu. Officials have been on alert in the province since the boy tested positive. He is now in stable condition in hospital. His 13-year-old sister died on Mar 9 after eating chicken, but doctors did not take tissue samples to test for bird flu. Dinh said a 16-month-old boy from Chau Hoa was in hospital with suspected bird flu, while five other villagers were under supervision, including the aunt of the 13-year-old girl who died. The woman had a slight fever after tending to her niece, Dinh said, but she appeared to be getting better. Authorities were also searching for a 41-year-old man from Chau Hoa who walked out of a hospital yesterday where he and other suspected bird flu cases were held for observation. "The patient is in the group of bird flu suspects so we have informed local authorities to monitor his case," Bui Duc Phu, deputy director of the Hue Central Hospital said. Hong Kong Health Minister York Chow said yesterday that he was concerned about the reports from central Vietnam and the city may issue a travel warning if the cases turned out to be bird flu. The virus made the first known jump from bird to human in Hong Kong in 1997, where it killed six people. It has shown no signs of waning since late 2003, recurring across large parts of Asia several times and killing 34 Vietnamese, 12 Thais and two Cambodians despite the slaughter of millions of poultry. However, the World Health Organisation says it has seen no evidence so far to suggest the virus is changing into a form that could be transmitted easily from one human to another. -- Reuters.

Seoul, Mar 27 -- North Korea today confirmed a bird flu outbreak at a couple of chicken farms in Pyongyang and said the farms slaughtered and buried hundreds of thousands of chickens infected by the disease. But no people working at the farms were found infected, the North's official KCNA news agency said. -- Reuters.

London, Mar 29 -- A press report, dated today, states: Five members of a family in northern Vietnam have

tested positive for the H5N1 strain of bird flu, a health official said today. Initial test results at the National Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology in Hanoi showed that the family in Hai Phong, 100 kilometres east of Hanoi, was infected with the deadly strain of the virus. Institute Director Nguyen Tran Hien said.

OUTBREAK OF MARBURG VIRUS, ANGOLA

London, Mar 24 -- A press report, dated Mar 23, states: An outbreak of haemorrhagic fever in northern Angola has killed 95 people, mainly children under five, the UN health agency said today. The World Health Organisation confirmed yesterday that the illness was Marburg, a disease similar to Ebola. Analysis had identified 102 cases of the virus since October, 2004, 95 of which had proved fatal. Angolan officials put the death toll at 98. "Since the start of the outbreak, the monthly number of cases has progressively increased, but this increase could be the result of intensified surveillance," WHO said in a statement. About three-quarters of cases have occurred in children under five and a small number of health care workers are among those adults infected, WHO said. The outbreak occurred along Angola's border with Congo, in Uige province. Authorities initially feared the deaths were caused by Ebola, which still exists in nature in Congo. "Marburg virus disease has no vaccine or curative treatment and can be rapidly fatal," WHO said. "In the present outbreak, most deaths have occurred between three to seven days following the onset of symptoms." Previous outbreaks have indicated that the risk of infection is increased by close contact with bodily fluids of infected people, as may occur during treatment or burial practices, WHO said. The health agency added that it was supporting efforts by Angola's Ministry of Health to improve infection control in hospitals and to intensify efforts to detect cases, as well as to improve public understanding of the disease and how it is transmitted. "Marburg virus disease occurs very rarely and appears to be geographically confined to a small number of countries in the southern part of the African continent," WHO said. "When cases do occur, the disease has epidemic potential, as it can spread from person to person, most often during the care of patients."

London, Mar 30 -- A press report, dated Mar 29, states: Angola's vice minister for health, Jose Van Dunem, warned today that it was premature to claim the outbreak of the deadly Marburg virus in the northern province of Uige was under control, as the latest death toll from the hemorrhagic fever rose to 117 out of 124 cases. He told IRIN the situation in Uige was slowly improving, with experts from the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the international medical NGO, Medecins Sans Frontieres, supporting teams

from the ministry in both Uige and the capital, Luanda. The government was prohibiting anyone who had visited Uige from leaving the country for 21 days, the incubation period of the disease, to prevent the bug from spreading beyond Angola's borders. Most of the deaths so far have been among children under five, confined mainly to the city of Uige, the capital of Uige province. More recently, however, the disease has spread to adults: two people, including an Italian paediatrician, died in Luanda, and one in the northern enclave province of Cabinda. Weekend media reports that the virus had appeared elsewhere spread panic in the capital, but turned out to be misleading because all three deaths had originated in Uige and were therefore not classed as primary cases. But Van Dunem warned that the risk of the disease spreading, particularly to the capital and neighbouring provinces of Bengo, Zaire, Kwanza Norte and Malanje, was still very real.

VIOLATION OF FISHING LAWS GOVERNING THE EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE

Karachi, Mar 28 -- Pakistan's Maritime Security Agency (MSA) has arrested 75 foreign fishermen, from India, Philippines, Indonesia and confiscated their two trawlers for violating fishing laws by entering the demarcated waters "Exclusive Economic Zone" (EEZ) belonging to Pakistan, about 110 nautical miles south-east of Karachi late Saturday (Mar 26). A spokesman of maritime authority told journalists that trawlers were fishing in the exclusive economic zone. The two trawlers loaded with some 70 tonnes of tuna fish, were seized 225 kilometres south-east of Karachi, he said, adding that the trawlers were registered in Visakhapatnam city in the southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Fires & Explosions



APARTMENT COMPLEX, SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 29 -- A press report, dated Mar 28, states: A six-alarm fire that tore through a San Jose apartment complex Wednesday (Mar 23) has left the building owners with more than \$4 million in damages, according to Greenspan Co Vice President Greg Clifford. There are many questions that remain unanswered about the fire that occurred at the Glen Willow Apartments and left as many as 243 people homeless. Clifford, who is a public adjuster representing the building's owners, said more than half of the 84-unit complex is being

considered uninhabitable. A total of 11 units were engulfed by the towering flames, according to fire officials. Approximately 15 other units sustained damage from a high concentration of heat and smoke while about 40 other apartments sustained heavy water damage. Residents were allowed into the complex today to remove their belongings, but Clifford said it remains unclear whether any of the former residents would be able to return to their apartments. Although a number of units on the first and second floor on the south wing of the complex may not have been heavily damaged, accessibility is an issue. The elevator doesn't work and there is only one staircase, posing a potential hazard in the event of another fire. Fire officials have not released a cause for the fire but have said it appears accidental, according to Clifford.

COAL MINES, SHUOZHOU, SHANXI PROVINCE, CHINA

London, Mar 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: Chinese authorities ordered illegal mines closed as rescuers ended a search for survivors of an explosion at a coal mine in northern China, confirming that all 69 miners trapped by the blast were killed, state media reported today. Eight people, including the mine's director, were detained in connection with Saturday's (Mar 19) explosion at the Xishui colliery in Shuozhou, a city in north-central China, Xinhua reported. The mine was operating illegally. China's state-run television reported that rescue operations ended yesterday after 65 bodies were recovered and four other miners trapped in the shaft were confirmed dead. A safety inspector sent to the mine was also found to be "seriously negligent," the state-run newspaper China Daily quoted Zhao Tiechui, director of the State Administration of Coal Mine Safety, as saying.

ELECTRICITY SUB-STATION, SAN FRANCISCO, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 27 -- A press report, dated today, states: Parts of San Francisco went dark last night after a fire at a major Pacific Gas and Electric Co. substation knocked out power to at least 25, 000 customers, sent Market Street between Third and Eighth streets into chaos and caused a huge and unnerving explosion. The outage hit Chinatown, Civic Center, the Western Addition, North Beach, the Tenderloin, downtown and South of Market. The single-alarm fire in the substation at Eighth and Mission streets was reported about 1915 hrs and contained at 2058 hrs. About 50 firefighters in 15 trucks first used 25 pounds of carbon dioxide in bottles until a truck arrived with 500 pounds of the chemical. About three-quarters of it got used, said Audry Lee, assistant battalion chief with the San Francisco Fire Department. The substation, a plain, windowless three-story building filled with

transformers, serves as a kind of mother ship to other substations that serve the city. The fire started in a circuit-breaker panel on the second floor. Firefighters did not want to use water until PG&E officials assured them it was safe. After some insulation dropped to the bottom of the panel, Lee said PG&E said it was safe to use water. Firefighters sprayed the insulation -- resulting in a huge explosion that made the whole building shake and go dark. Shortly after the outage occurred, police placed flares in the dark streets and stopped traffic entirely on five blocks of Market Street, except for some Municipal Railway vehicles. Theatres, restaurants, shops and hotels were all affected to varying degrees. Some buses came to standstill. Huge traffic jams resulted later in the evening as people attempted to get into the city.

FACTORY, TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA

London, Mar 31 -- A press report, dated today, states: A massive blaze ravaged a plastics factory in Toronto's west-end yesterday, closing a section of a major highway and keeping firefighters on the scene for hours as they struggled to contain the six-alarm blaze. All five of the plant's employees escaped after they were alerted by someone at an arena next-door who had spotted flames at the rear of the building. Adjacent businesses were evacuated in the industrial area, as a precaution, as about 150 firefighters struggled to contain the blaze throughout the night. The building housed a manufacturing plant that recycled material into decking and officials said they were keeping a close eye on potentially explosive tanks of ink stored on the site. There were no immediate reports of any injuries.

MILL, ABBEVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 29 -- A press report, dated Mar 28, states: A fire at an Abbeville towel mill Saturday (Mar 26) has caused an estimated \$3 million in damage according to Abbeville County Fire Marshal Dan Evatt. Investigators say the accidental electrical fire destroyed two of four buildings at the company's headquarters just outside Abbeville. The company makes towels for advertisements and promotions. Business offices and the knitting mill were not damaged. General Manager Jerry Mitchell said management is telling workers not to report to work today. He did not know whether the company would be forced to temporarily lay off 85 workers whose jobs were in the destroyed buildings.

MILL, RHODE ISLAND, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 31 -- A press report, dated today, states: The Phenix Mill was reduced to rubble last night after a fire quickly ripped through the five-storey landmark. Flames illuminated the dark windows of the mill along

Main Street just before 1900 hrs (yesterday). Fire trucks shot water onto the roof and through the windows. The intensity of the heat could be felt across the street and on top of the hill near Saints Peter and Paul Church on Highland Street. At 1920 hrs, Warwick fire trucks arrived and hooked an additional hose to the fire hydrant at the corner of Main and Highland streets. About 10 minutes later, the Cranston Tower Truck drove through and positioned itself on Main Street in front of the mill. Firefighters began hosing down two houses directly across the street from the mill. The extreme heat began to melt the vinyl siding at several homes on Highland. Blue sparks and snapping noises shot from wires as a utility pole in front of the mill caught fire. The flames that were inside the building climbed through the roof and shot out of the windows as the firefighters continued to pour water through the windows and at the tower section of the mill. At 1945 hrs a rumble erupted from the building and the left end collapsed. An eruption of orange flames shot more than 10 storeys into the sky above the structure. West Warwick Police Capt. Catherine Ochs said the fire was under investigation. West Warwick Fire Battalion Chief Denis LaRoche said that the mill developer had some of the debris removed from the building but it was not totally clear from debris. LaRoche said the mill is difficult to secure because the back windows are at ground level. Two hoses poured water onto the belfry area of the mill. Fire traveled up the inside support walls of the belfry. At 1950 hrs the top section of the tower collapsed. Ten minutes later the wall to the left of the tower began to fall inward. At 2007 hrs another burst of flames erupted into the sky as another collapse took place to the right of the belfry. Twelve windows to the left of the tower and three windows to the right on the fifth floor were all that remained of the front wall of the mill. The left quarter corner section fully collapsed inward leaving the stone corners standing in the white smoke that rose from the area as firefighters continued to douse the burning wood. The intensity of the fire began to diminish around 2030 hrs. The dark smoke was replaced with white clouds rising from the areas of the mill that continued to burn. West Warwick Police Capt. Catherine Ochs said the fire was under investigation.

NATURE RESERVE, HEILONGJIANG, CHINA

London, Mar 28 -- A press report, dated today, states: Fire scorching wetland reeds of Zha Lung Nature Reserve in north-east China's Heilongjiang Province for one week is now under control with the help of sudden snow, according to local sources. The snowfall, which began last night and became heavier gradually, has helped firefighters' efforts in putting off the fire, said the headquarters. The headquarters said that the cause of the fire, the acreage

affected and economic losses are still under investigation. Set up in 1979, Zha Lung Nature Reserve covering an area of 210, 000 hectares is a state-level nature reserve for the endangered red-crested crane.

PETROCHEMICAL PLANT, TEXAS CITY, TEXAS, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: An explosion rocked a BP plant this afternoon, killing at least four people and critically injuring others. UTMB Galveston reported it's admitted three people to the hospital in critical condition and another in serious condition. Other patients are still being evaluated by the hospital's trauma doctors. Texas City's Mainland Medical Center reported receiving 15 plant workers as well as 10 nearby residents who walked in for treatment. Clear Lake Regional Medical Center was also treating walk-in patients. The explosion, reported about 1320 hrs, shook nearby buildings and sent huge plumes of black smoke into the air that could be seen from Galveston to Clear Lake. Debris was strewn across the plant site, which is being searched for survivors. Texas City residents were initially told to stay indoors, but emergency management officials lifted the order at 1410 hrs when the fire was brought under control. Nearby roads have been closed, including those at the plant entrances on Texas 146 and FM 1765. The Gulf Freeway, I-45 South, remains open, although it's slow as drivers scan the sky for smoke. The Houston Ship Channel was briefly closed but has reopened. BP's Texas City complex includes 30 refinery units spread over 1,200 acres. With 460,000 barrels of crude oil processed every day, the plant provides 3% of the U.S. gasoline supply. It employs 1,800 people. A population of 31,413 people resides within a three-mile radius of the refinery.

Texas City, Mar 24 -- A powerful explosion at a BP oil refinery in Texas has turned the complex into a raging inferno where at least 14 people have died and another 100 have been injured. The blast yesterday at the giant 470,000-barrel-per-day facility, the third-largest in the United States, was isolated to a unit used to upgrade the quality of gasoline, with the rest of the refinery operating normally, BP said. US gasoline prices spiked to an all-time high above \$1.60 a gallon as dealers feared a cut in supplies from the plant, which produces about 3% of the nation's gasoline. The explosion, whose cause was unknown, was so strong it rattled buildings and broke windows for miles around. BP did not suspect a terrorist attack had caused the blast at the sprawling 1,200-acre facility. "We have no reason to believe this was anything caused by an outside agent," said company spokesman Hugh Depland. Flames shot out from the twisted metal of the badly damaged facility and a huge cloud of black smoke rose high into the sky before firefighters doused the

blaze. Rescue teams combed through piles of rubble and the remains of shattered buildings in the plant to search for the dead and injured while ambulances took the injured to hospitals. "We believe 14 people lost their lives as a result of the fire," BP site director Don Parus said. BP officials and area health officials said at least 100 people were injured and that some were in critical condition. Plant spokesman Bill Stephens said more than 70 of the injured had been working in the refinery. The others were outside the complex and hurt by flying glass and falling ceiling tiles. The blast occurred in an isomerisation unit used to produce octane for gasoline, which had been running normally before the explosion, company officials said. Several nearby secondary refining units were already idle for scheduled maintenance. -- Reuters.

London, Mar 24 -- A report, dated today, states: Yesterday's explosion at a Texas City refinery has not caused any closures or delays for traffic within the ports of Texas City or Houston. The massive explosion and fire erupted at the BP Amoco petrochemical plant at 1320, local time, resulting in the death of at least 14 people and more than 100 injuries.

London, Mar 26 -- A press report dated today, states: BP Plc said it doesn't have external insurance to cover losses related to the explosion at its Texas City, Texas refinery that killed 15 people this past week. "We self insure, which is standard industry practice," Toby Odone, a spokesman for London-based BP said in a telephone interview today. "The premiums to insure externally are huge." BP may face losses for damage to the refinery and workers compensation costs of more than \$1 billion, according to analysts. That estimate is "entirely speculative," said Odone. The explosion on March 23 injured 70 people and pushed gasoline futures in New York to a record high. U.S. refineries may need to run flat out this spring to meet fuel demand, which peaks between May and September as vacationers take to the roads. The Texas City plant, with a capacity to process 460,000 barrels of crude oil a day, accounts for about 3 percent of the fuel consumed in the U.S., London-based BP said.

Houston, Mar 31 -- Workers at the BP refinery in Texas City, Texas, saw "hydrocarbon liquid and vapour" pouring out of a 100-foot-tall vent stack and falling to the ground seconds before a thunderous explosion rocked the plant a week ago and killed 15 people, investigators said today. Witnesses said the falling chemicals apparently ignited when they reached the ground, causing the blast at the nation's third-largest refinery, according to the U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board. "Witness evidence points to possible ignition sources on the ground near the vent stack. At this time, the exact ignition source remains unknown,"

said chemical board investigation manager Bill Hoyle in a statement. Local news reports said the ignition source may have been a nearby vehicle that someone started, but that was not confirmed. The liquid and vapour pouring out of the stack came from a part of the so-called "isomerization unit," where octane is added to gasoline and which was being restarted after a routine maintenance operation, the chemical board said. They are focusing their probe on a piece of equipment known as a "raffinate splitter" which prepares highly flammable chemicals hexane and pentane for the isomerization process. A day before the explosion, a small fire broke out near the unit due to a valve leak, but it is not known if the two incidents were connected, officials at BP said. Chemical board investigators stressed that their findings are preliminary because they have not yet entered the blast site due to benzene vapors leaking from a damaged storage tank 300 yards away. BP is attempting to stop the leak, which makes the air toxic, so probes can get a closer look. Besides the 15 dead, more than 100 people were injured by the Mar 23 blast that rocked buildings and shattered windows miles away. BP said nine workers were still in the hospital. -- Reuters.

London, Mar 31 -- A press report, dated Mar 30, states: Investigators said today it appears likely some sort of spark combined with hydrocarbon liquid and vapor to set off the fiery refinery explosion that killed 15 people and injured more than 100 others last week. Investigators are considering the possibility a car's ignition caused the blast in the plant's isomerization unit, which boosts octane levels in gasoline, U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board spokesman Daniel Horowitz said. "Witness evidence points to possible ignition sources on the ground," CSB manager Bill Hoyle said in a statement. "At this time, the exact ignition source remains unknown." Investigators have not been able to enter the isomerization unit because the dome of a benzene storage tank at an adjoining refinery tank farm was damaged and may be leaking hazardous vapors. Once they can get in they will be better able to determine how the explosion started, Horowitz said. Witnesses have told investigators there was a hydrocarbon liquid and vapor release that fell to the ground moments before the powerful explosion, which shot flames, ash and blackened metal into the sky and was felt miles away. BP PLC spokesman Hugh Depland said the benzene vapors from the damaged tank were only detected in a "very small area within the facility" and workers plan to seal the tank with a temporary foam cap. Horowitz said investigators hope to enter the area that houses the isomerization unit tomorrow, "but we have been hopeful for a while."

REFINERY, PEMBROKE, WALES, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Mar 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: A fire at a major oil refinery in west Wales has been brought under control by around 50 firefighters. The fire broke out just before 2100, GMT at the Texaco oil refinery in Pembroke and was brought under control by 2200, GMT. A Texaco spokesman said the cause of the fire was under investigation and a full survey would be carried out today. The blaze, at a tank storing crude oil, began during a thunderstorm. More than a dozen auxiliary firefighters who work at the site began tackling the blaze before fire officers from the Mid and West Wales Fire Service arrived at the scene. Specialist equipment was brought in to help tackle the blaze. Peter Brennan, of Mid and West Wales Fire Service, said today: "It would appear that during the storm last evening, one of the crude oil tanks was struck by lightning and ignited. "It took approximately 40 minutes to get it under control. "The first impression was flames coming over the top of the tank with very little smoke at that time. "(It was) a straightforward incident that we practise for all the time with the refinery staff and it worked this time." The final all clear was eventually given at 2330, GMT. There were no injuries. A Texaco spokesman said: "Texaco can confirm that a fire at Pembroke refinery has been brought under control and extinguished. "The fire broke out at 2055 GMT tonight at one of the refinery's crude oil storage tanks during an electrical storm. "Appliances from the Pembrokeshire fire brigade and the refinery's own auxiliary plant fire team attended the scene. "There are no reported injuries and the cause of the fire is currently being investigated."

SHOPPING CENTRE, RIALTO, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 27 -- A press report, dated Mar 26, states: A 16-year-old boy was arrested on suspicion of burglary and arson after a fire at the Foothill Village shopping centre destroyed several businesses and caused at least \$1 million in damage yesterday morning. The blaze was so intense that it caused sections of the roofs to collapse, leaving a huge gaping hole in the structure. Rialto firefighters were called at 2345 hrs, Thursday (Mar 24) to the 900 block of West Foothill Boulevard. The fire grew almost immediately to three alarms. It took crews about an hour to put out the blaze. An investigation determined that the juvenile had been burglarising one of the businesses when he started the fire to conceal evidence of his crime, Rialto police said. Investigators are looking into the possibility that others were involved in the burglary and arson. Later yesterday, a demolition crew was working to bring down the facade of the building and to make the area

safer for the businesses that remain. Several of the businesses that did not suffer fire damage, suffered water damage.

SUPERMARKET, KIEV, UKRAINE

London, Mar 25 -- A press report, dated today, states: A fire broke out in a Furshet supermarket in Kiev overnight. More than 10 percent of the total area of the supermarket occupying 3,000 square metres was burnt, the Ukrainian Emergencies Ministry's press service reported. Nobody was hurt. Sixteen teams of firemen fought the blaze that swept the inside premises and the roof. The fire was extinguished two hours after it broke out. The cause of the fire is being investigated and the damage is being estimated now. Investigators work at the site.

WAREHOUSE, MOUNT PEARL, NEWFOUNDLAND, CANADA

London, Mar 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: A major fire at an industrial supply warehouse has forced the evacuation of homes and businesses and the closure of three schools in Mount Pearl, a bedroom community west of St. John's. As firefighters worked to contain the blaze, huge clouds of black and white smoke poured from the plant, thought to be owned by Emco Corp. A spokesperson for the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary said there were no reports of injuries. The flames moved so quickly that the company's 35 employees were forced to flee the building without coats or purses. "All those who were inside the building escaped safely as soon as the fire was discovered," said Staff Sgt. June Layden. Company officials say the two-storey building housed \$1.8-million worth of building supplies.

WILDFIRE, CHILE

London, Mar 29 -- A press report, dated today, states: Chilean authorities are suing a Czech citizen for unspecified damages after he accidentally started a fire, causing extensive damage to a national park. Jiri Smitak, 31, had been camping in the Torres del Paine park when a gas stove he was illegally using overturned, sparking the blaze. The devastating fire destroyed 16,000 hectares and took a month to put out. The sum sought was not specified in the suit, but Chile's government has said previously it would be at least \$5m. Mr Smitak says he feels great remorse, but stresses he does not have much money, and may never be able to pay the compensation demanded by Chile. Experts say it will take more than 10 years for the park to recover. The Czech government has apologised to Chile and sent a delegation of forest experts to the area. It also pledged some money for reforestation, although it has not specified how much. The tourist himself left Chile after paying a \$200 fine. After returning to his country he then donated an extra \$1,000 (£524) to

Chile's national parks. But Chilean authorities said that was not enough. Chile's State Defence Council yesterday filed a suit against the tourist at the Santiago Court of Appeals, seeking reparations for the "serious damage" caused to the park. The legal action against Mr Smitak will rely on the co-operation of the Czech courts.

WILDFIRES, MALAYSIA

London, Mar 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: Forest fires in Malaysia enveloped the capital in a smoky haze as visibility at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport dropped to two kilometres, officials said today. Some 160 firemen were working to control peat fires which have been raging since earlier this month, covering 57 hectares (140.8 acres) in central Selangor state which surrounds the capital, a district Fire and Rescue Department spokesman said. Fires in the wake of prolonged hot, dry weather have also caused pollution and reduced visibility in several other states, officials said. Visibility was down to three kilometres in southern Malacca state, the Meteorological Service Department's official website said. Alor Setar, the capital of northern Kedah state, recorded visibility of just 0.3 kilometres earlier today before it improved to more than 10 kilometres. The air quality deteriorated to "unhealthy" in four areas -- Bukit Rambai located in southern Malacca state, Seremban and Nilai in Negeri Sembilan state, and in Shah Alam, Selangor, according to a statement from the Department of Environment.



9G-IRL

London, Mar 22 -- Boeing 707, 9G-IRL, operated by Ethiopian Airlines and leased from Cargo Plus Aviation, departed Addis Ababa on a cargo flight to Lome with a scheduled refueling stop at Entebbe. It was raining as the Boeing approached Entebbe. At 1052, Mar 19 the aircraft made a first attempt to land on Runway 17 but the approach was abandoned. On the second attempt to land it came in too low, struck a rock. It broke up and crashed into Lake Victoria. All five crew members who are employees of Cargo Plus Aviation survived the accident and were taken to the nearest hospital for check-up.

London, Mar 24 -- A report from LaSalle, dated Mar 24, states: A report, dated Mar 21, states: Human error is suspected to be the most probable cause of the crash of a Boeing 707-300, 9G-IRL, aircraft as it approached Entebbe airport on Saturday (Mar 19). The aircraft, owned by Brussels-based CargoPlus Aviation and leased by Ethiopian

Airlines, crashed in shallow waters about 300 m short of Entebbe's Runway 35 during a heavy downpour at about 1052, local time. According to the Uganda Civil Aviation Authority, the aircraft, en route from Addis Ababa to Lome, Togo, was making a refuelling stop at Entebbe when the crew experienced trouble landing on Runway 17 at 1026 hrs. It was during their second attempt at landing that the right wing of the craft is suspected to have hit a rocky outcrop in Lake Victoria just short of the runway. Works and Transport Minister John Nasasira visited the scene of the crash and said human error was the most probable cause of the crash but that a conclusive report will only come after a proper investigation.

ABORTED TAKE-OFF, CARACAS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, VENEZUELA

Caracas, Mar 28 -- Thirteen people aboard a Cuban airliner were injured today when the aircraft came off the runway at Caracas' international airport after aborting its takeoff, airport and rescue officials said. "It was going to take off but couldn't and swerved off the runway," an air traffic control officer told Reuters. The Russian-made Cubana airlines Il-18 turboprop was preparing to fly to Havana from Simon Bolivar international airport at Maiquetia, which serves the Venezuelan capital. Venezuela's Civil Defence Service chief Antonio Rivero told state television 13 of the 87 passengers on board were injured and were taken to hospital. "The information I have is that most of the injuries are light," he said. Rivero said the airliner was thought to have aborted its takeoff because of a mechanical failure. -- Reuters.

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

See N656UA.

ACCIDENT, CHRISTCHURCH AIRPORT, NEW ZEALAND

London, Mar 29 -- A press report, dated today, states: Mt Cook Airlines is investigating why one of its planes lost a front wheel as it was moving on the runway at Christchurch Airport yesterday. The plane, carrying 66 passengers bound for Palmerston North, was on the runway when a nose landing gear axle broke and one of the two front wheels fell off, Mt Cook general manager Peter O'Regan told NZPA. The passengers aboard the ATR plane were removed and had to wait two hours before they took off on another flight. The incident happened shortly after the plane had left its bay. It was moving down the runway but was not trying to take off at the time of the incident, Mr O'Regan said. The wheel was relatively easy to replace and the plane was back in service today, he said. The airline and the plane's manufacturer would investigate the incident, and the Civil Aviation Authority had been notified, he said.

ACCIDENT, DADE COLLIER JET PORT, FLORIDA, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 31 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: A small aircraft crashed into a deer on the runway of an isolated Miami-Dade County airport this morning. The twin-propeller aircraft sustained serious damage, with destroyed propeller pieces penetrating the fuselage. A pilot and copilot on board were not injured. The deer died. The Dade Collier Jet Port, which is just a stretch of tarmac in the Florida Everglades, serves as a touch-and-go landing pad for training pilots. It is about 36 miles west of Krome Avenue and just north of Tamiami Trail.

AIRCRAFT HIT BY TURBULENCE ON A FLIGHT FROM TAIPEI TO NARITA, JAPAN

London, Mar 28 -- A press report, dated today, states: Thirty-six people were injured including some with broken bones when an Eva Air aircraft hit air turbulence while approaching Tokyo's Narita airport on a flight from Taipei, an airport official said. The Taiwanese carrier's Airbus A300-200, with 267 passengers and crew aboard, alerted the airport of an emergency when it was flying over the Pacific some 100 kilometres south of Narita, the official said. 'It landed without incident at 0929, GMT,' said Itsuo Komori, deputy head of the transport ministry's Narita airport office. He said 24 people were slightly injured and 12 others sustained injuries of 'medium or higher degrees' including broken bones.

AIRCRAFT PUT BACK TO JORGE CHAVEZ INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, PERU

See OB-1778-P.

C-GQRQ

London, Mar 22 -- Airborne Energy Solutions Bell 206B, C-GQRQ, was landing at a well site at Ring Border, Alberta, when the pilot lost visual reference in snow raised by the rotor wash at 0910, MST, today. The helicopter rolled onto its side and was substantially damaged. There were no injuries to the pilot and the two passengers.

CRASH INTO SEA NEAR ORCAS ISLAND, WASHINGTON, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 30 -- A press report, dated Mar 29, states: A single-engine aircraft crashed east of Orcas Island today, killing one man and injuring another, a Coast Guard official said. The aircraft went down in water south of Lawrence Point, the easternmost point of the island in the San Juan chain. The San Juan County sheriff's office was the first to have a boat at the scene after the crash was reported by residents at 1224. The sheriff's boat pulled both men from the water, said Coast Guard Petty Officer Adam Eggers in Seattle. One of the victims, believed to be the pilot, was recovered unconscious and taken to shore. Medics performed cardiopulmonary

resuscitation but he was later declared dead, Eggers said. The second man was flown to St. Joseph Hospital in Bellingham for treatment of hypothermia and injuries. Neither man was immediately identified. There was no sign of the aircraft's fuselage this evening. "It's in very deep water. The estimated depth there is probably around 260 feet," said Sheriff Bill Cumming. Investigators had little information on the type of aircraft, although the Coast Guard said the flight was believed to have originated on Blakely Island. The Coast Guard responded with two helicopters and boats from Port Angeles and Bellingham. A helicopter from Naval Air Station Whidbey Island also assisted.

CRASH, BOLOGNA, ITALY

See D-IMMA.

CRASH, ENTEBBE, UGANDA

See 9G-IRL.

CRASH, HOF, GERMANY

London, Mar 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: Three people were killed in an aircraft crash near the city of Hof in Germany. Hof police reported that two men and one woman travelling in the single engine private aircraft were killed and another severely injured girl was taken to a nearby hospital. It is reported that the aircraft crashed near a small airport in Helmbrechts region. The cause of the crash is not yet known.

CRASH, JANDAKOT AIRPORT AREA, PERTH, AUSTRALIA

London, Mar 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: An investigation into a fatal aircraft crash in Perth that killed two people and left four others with serious burns has found the accident was caused by engine failure. The Australian Transport Safety Bureau has found the twin engine Cessna 404 was taking off from Jandakot Airport in August, 2003, when one of its engines failed. The bureau said the pilot attempted to avoid flying toward power lines by turning the aircraft back to the airport for an emergency landing but during the turn the aircraft clipped trees and crashed into scrub. The aircraft caught fire on impact, killing one of the passengers and leaving the pilot and four others with serious burns. A second passenger died several months later from injuries.

CRASH, KEMBLE AIRFIELD AREA, GLOUCESTER, UNITED KINGDOM

Londo, Mar 25 -- A press report, dated today, states: Two people have been killed in an airplane crash in Gloucestershire. The small private aircraft came down shortly after take-off, in a field half a mile from Kemble Airfield and burst into flames this afternoon. The emergency services were called to the scene near the village of Culkerton and a large area has been sealed off. Air accident investigators have been brought in. No details have been released yet about

the identity of the two people who died. Gloucestershire Police said all three emergency services were called to the scene after people saw a light aircraft coming down. Glen Moreman, events co-ordinator at Kemble Airfield, said the two-seater aircraft took off just after 1430 UTC. About half-a-mile from the end of the runway the aircraft was seen to suddenly lose height. It crashed into a field, burst into flames and a dense pall of smoke was seen to rise in the air.

London, Mar 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: The wreckage of a plane which crashed yesterday, killing two people, is to be removed and examined by investigators. The small private aircraft came down and burst into flames in a field half a mile from Kemble Airfield in Gloucestershire soon after take-off. The two people who died were thought to be a 55-year-old man and his daughter, who was 24, both from the Bristol area. Glen Moreman, events co-ordinator at Kemble Airfield, said the two-seater aircraft took off just after 1430, UTC. "About half a mile from the end of the runway the aircraft was seen to suddenly lose height. It crashed into a field, burst into flames and a dense pall of smoke was seen to rise in the air," he said.

CRASH, SAHARANPUR, HARYANA STATE, INDIA

London, Mar 31 -- A press report, dated today, states: Two ministers in the government of the Indian state of Haryana have died in a helicopter crash that also killed the pilot, police say. They named the dead politicians as power minister OP Jindal, who is also a well-known industrialist, and agriculture minister Surinder Singh. The helicopter crashed in Uttar Pradesh state at about 1330, local time, in the district of Saharanpur. According to police, two other passengers were injured in the crash.

CRASH, SURPRISE AREA, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 23 -- A press report, dated Mar 22, states: Two men apparently are OK after their small helicopter apparently crashed today in the desert west of Surprise. When rescue crews arrived on the scene near 195th Avenue and Bell Road, they found the two occupants of the helicopter walking around. Initial reports indicated that both men refused to be taken to a hospital to be checked out. News helicopter shots showed that the small helicopter was destroyed.

D-IMMA

London, Mar 22 -- Cessna 340, D-IMMA, was destroyed after crashing shortly after take-off from Bologna at approximately 1430, UTC, Mar 3. The pilot and all five passengers onboard were killed.

EMERGENCY LANDING, EAST MIDLANDS AIRPORT, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Mar 29 -- A press report, dated today, states: An aircraft was

forced to make an emergency landing at East Midlands Airport after fears that it was leaking fuel. A total of 13 fire engines from across the county responded to the alert at around 0215, this morning. However, once the Boeing 757 Euro transit aircraft was inspected there was no sign of a leak. According to the fire service there were no passengers onboard the aeroplane and no-one was injured during the incident.

EMERGENCY LANDING, MALPENSA AIRPORT, MILAN, ITALY

London, Mar 30 -- A press report, dated today, states: A private jet was involved in an emergency landing at the city's Malpensa airport, airport authorities said, adding that those aboard were unhurt. Firefighters sprayed foam on a runway as the jet skidded to an emergency landing yesterday after its undercarriage failed to deploy. Airport officials said the eight passengers, including two children, and three crew were unhurt. The incident forced the closure of Italy's biggest airport for around an hour, the ANSA news agency said.

EMERGENCY LANDING, MURTALA MUHAMMED INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, LAGOS, NIGERIA

London, Mar 31 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: A cargo aircraft yesterday made an emergency landing at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport in Lagos after sustaining an engine problem, according to local media reports. The reports quoted officials of the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) as saying the pilot of the DC-10 aircraft, the destination of which was not known, requested for landing at the airport due to an engine problem. No one was injured in the incident.

EMERGENCY LANDING, RECIFE, BRAZIL

London, Mar 23 -- A press report, dated Mar 21, states: A HollandExel Boeing 767 with 273 persons on board was forced to return to a Brazilian airport after one of its engines stopped working 45 minutes after take-off this morning. Flying with just one engine the Boeing 767 landed safely at the airport in Recife, where it had originated. All passengers have been given emergency accommodation at city hotels. A HollandExel spokesman said the plane was en route to Amsterdam when the port engine cut out. The pilot decided to return to Recife, informed passengers and landed the plane with just one engine. The spokesman said no signs of a fire in the engine have been detected, despite the fact that sparks were seen. Airport firefighters also cooled the plane's brakes after the emergency landing. The plane is 10 to 12 years old and was on lease from Swedish airline SAS.

EMERGENCY LANDING, WINNIPEG, CANADA

London, Mar 27 -- A press report, dated today, states: An Air Canada aircraft with a cracked windshield made an emergency landing yesterday at Winnipeg International Airport. The A-320 Airbus carrying 98 passengers and six crew members from Toronto to Calgary landed safely about 0955 hrs. City fire and paramedic crews rushed to the airport as a precaution. There were no injuries.

ER-IBR

Dar Es Salaam, Mar 24 -- Eight people were missing and feared dead after a Russian cargo aircraft plunged into the Tanzanian section of Lake Victoria late yesterday, provincial authorities said today. "We are launching an operation to pull out the wreckage. We don't see any sign of life," Daniel Ole Njoolay, a regional commissioner, told Reuters by phone from the lakeside town of Mwanza. -- Reuters.

London, Mar 26 -- Ilyushin 76TD, ER-IBR, operator Airline Transport crashed into Lake Victoria soon after take-off from Mwanza Airport, Tanzania, at 2307, Mar 23. There were eight crew on board who were all killed. The aircraft was carrying a load of fish to Croatia.

Dar es Salaam, Mar 26 -- A Russian built Ilyushin 76 aircraft crashed into Lake Victoria two minutes after take off from Mwanza Airport (on Mar 23). Eight crew members are reported to have died. The aircraft belongs to Air Transport Incorporation of Kishinen and is registered in Moldova. Four bodies have been recovered and four more are reported to be trapped in the fuselage. Rescue efforts continue by the Marine Police and by Gieta Gold Mine company staff. The plane was reported to be loaded with 50 tonnes of fish fillet and was travelling to Osijek, Croatia. -- Lloyd's Agents.

FLIGHTS DELAYED DUE TO FOG, KALININGRAD, RUSSIA

London, Mar 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: Heavy fog paralysed the work of Kaliningrad airport today. Three flights from Kaliningrad and three flights from other Russian regions to the city were cancelled in the morning because of poor visibility. Visibility is within 300 metres, while 800 metres is required for landing. The fog may remain for several hours, airport sources said. On aircrafts from Moscow, St. Petersburg, Minsk and Krasnodar arrived in the Russian westernmost region later than scheduled also because of fog.

HK-4146

London, Mar 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: A small West Caribbean Airways aircraft crashed today during takeoff from the Colombian island of Old Providence, killing the pilot and co-pilot and injuring all 12 passengers, authorities said. "It had just taken flight when some type of technical problem

apparently happened, and it crashed at the edge of the runway," said Martin Gonzalez, spokesman for Aerocivil, the civil aviation agency. The Czech-built Let-410, was carrying tourists from the Caribbean island of Old Providence to another Colombian island, San Andres, off the coast of Nicaragua, the official said. Of those injured, four were in serious condition, Gonzalez said.

London, Mar 28 -- Let 410UVP-E, HK-4146, operator West Caribbean Airways, climbed insufficiently after take-off from Providencia-El Embrujado Airport and flew into the side of a small hill at approximately 0940, Mar 26. The two crew on board were both killed and of the 12 passengers on board six were killed.

INCIDENT AT BERINGIN AIRPORT, KALIMANTAN, INDONESIA

London, Mar 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: A Cassa aircraft operated by airline company Dirgantara Air Service (DAS) skidded off the runway upon taking off at Beringin airport today, but there were not reports of casualties. The airplane was taking off at about 1330 hrs, but skidded off at the end of the runway. None of the 19 passengers on the plane, which was flying to Tjilik Riwtu Airport in the Central Kalimantan capital of Palangka Raya, were hurt. The plane, from which smoke was seen billowing from the wing on the right side of the aircraft, stopped just short of a ravine.

INCIDENT AT MWANZA AIRPORT, TANZANIA

London, Mar 26 -- A press report, dated today, states: Seventy-six air passengers have escaped unhurt from a landing mishap as all the rear tyres burst while arriving at the Mwanza airport in northern Tanzania. All of the four rear tyres on the Boeing 737, operated by the Air Tanzania Company Ltd., burst as the plane arrived in Mwanza from Dar es Salaam yesterday, according to reports. Air Tanzania Company Ltd. CEO and Managing Director Dumisani Sangweni said in a statement that a team of technicians had been dispatched to Mwanza on a chartered flight to replace the damaged tyres and assess any further secondary damage to the plane. Sources at the Mwanza airport attributed the mishap to the plane "running over" "foreign objects" washed onto the runway by a downpour of rain.

INCIDENT AT SYDNEY AIRPORT, AUSTRALIA

London, Mar 25 -- A press report, dated today, states: A Fijian airliner was stranded on a runway at Sydney Airport after landing with brake problems this morning. "After landing it experienced some hydraulic line issues and we had one fire truck attend because they had hydraulic fluid dripping onto hot brakes," an Aircservices Australia spokesman said. "The issues have prevented the

aircraft from moving up to the ... air bridges, and people are apparently now being taken off." There were 247 passengers and 16 crew onboard the Air Pacific 747-400, which landed at Sydney from Nadi in Fiji just after 1140 hrs.

INSPECTION OF CESSNA 402-C AIRCRAFT, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 22 -- A press report, dated today, states: The Federal Aviation Administration is ordering the immediate inspection of all Cessna 402-C aircraft because of a possible wing defect. Officials say the problem could result in the wing breaking off from the aircraft. The Cessna 402-C makes up the majority of Hyannis-based Cape Air and Island Airlines' fleets. The potential problem can arise when spar straps begin to fail on the aircraft's wing. Those spar straps hold the wing on the plane's body. An official with Cape Air tells the Cape Cod Times that their company began installing supports for the spar straps several years ago. Twenty of the airline's Cessna's have the modification. The emergency order from the FAA requires repetitive visual inspection of the wings for every 110 hours of flight time. Federal officials say extensive cracks have been found on three aircraft.

N222YT

London, Mar 29 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Hair stylist and salon owner Peter D'Ambrosio and wife Karen of Symmes Township were flying in their Cessna 210 when they were killed during landing Saturday night (Mar 26). The crash happened on Johns Island, off the South Carolina coast. The couple - the only people on the aircraft - were pronounced dead at the scene, said Charleston County Coroner Susan Chewning. "It was a crash on the final approach," Chewning said. "It was raining before the crash, but it wasn't raining at the time of the crash." The single-engine, six-seater aircraft crashed and caught fire short of a Charleston Executive Airport runway about 2135, Saturday, said Federal Aviation Administration spokeswoman Kathleen Bergen.

London, Mar 29 -- Cessna T206H, N222YT, crashed near Charleston, South Carolina, at 2015, Mar 26, while on a flight from Blue Ash Airport, Ohio, to Charleston. The aircraft was destroyed. The two persons on board were killed.

N6092Q

London, Mar 29 -- A press report, dated Mar 28, states: Investigators from the Federal Aviation Administration are investigating a fatal plane crash near Bloomfield. It happened around 1000 hrs, today, just south of Bloomfield's Municipal Airport. Emergency medical teams airlifted the plane's pilot to Iowa City for treatment, but the pilot's wife did not survive the crash. "We know the plane had just taken off from the airport and was attempting to return to the airport when it crashed," Davis

County Sheriff Monte Harsch said. The plane was mostly intact. Its wings are still attached, and only a few pieces of debris littered the area, but the front of the single-engine plane is crushed.

London, Mar 29 -- Mooney M-20E (Super 21), N6092Q, crashed near Bloomfield, Iowa, at 1530, Mar 28. One of the two persons on board was killed and the other was seriously injured.

N656UA

London, Mar 22 -- United Airlines flight 846, Boeing B767, N656UA, experienced a port engine surge during take-off at Ezeiza International Airport, Buenos Aires, on Mar 14. The flight crew aborted the take-off and the 10 crew and 168 passengers performed an emergency evacuation. The incident is being investigated by the Junta de Investigaciones de Accidentes de Aviacion Civil, Argentina.

N770G

London, Mar 27 -- A press report, dated today, states: Six Rhode Islanders were killed yesterday when a Pilatus PT6A-67 (N770G) crashed yesterday near a construction site where a new county prison is being built, authorities said. The turboprop aircraft went down around 1400 hrs in Benner Township just outside Bellefonte, the Centre County seat, officials said. Rhode Island attorney Carl Freedman said pilot Jeffrey Jacober, 51, of Providence, and Gregg Weingeroff, 49, were killed, along with four family members. Also killed were Jacober's wife, Karen, 49, and their 15-year-old son, Eric, and Weingeroff's wife, Dawn, and their 10-year-old son, Leland, Freedman said. The aircraft was headed from Naples, Fla., to State College, which is near Bellefonte, Federal Aviation Administration spokesman Les Dorr said. The pilot was attempting an instrument landing approach to the airport, he said. An instrument landing is typically attempted during poor weather, but Dorr said he did not know the weather conditions at the time. The aircraft was manufactured by Pilatus Aircraft Ltd. and registered to J2W Aviation LLC in Providence.

N8966W

London, Mar 29 -- A press report, dated Mar 28, states: Three members of an extended family died in a plane crash just after takeoff at about 1430 hrs, yesterday, at the West Union Municipal Airport. A fourth passenger was injured. The plane burst into a ball of flames on contact with the ground.

London, Mar 29 -- Piper PA-28-235 (Cherokee), N8966W, crashed near West Union, Iowa, at 2025, Mar 27, while on a flight from West Union. The aircraft was destroyed. Three of the four persons on board were killed and the fourth was seriously injured.

N999SK

London, Mar 29 -- Piper PA-28-200R (Arrow II), N999SK, crashed near

Lafayette, Indiana, at 1100, Mar 26. The aircraft was destroyed. The two persons on board were killed.

OB-1778-P

London, Mar 22 -- Antonov 26B-100, OB-1778-P, operator Aero Transporte SA (ATSA), on a cargo flight, landed wheels-up on runway 33 at Lima-Jorge Chavez International Airport and skidded for about 300 metres before coming to rest, at 0726, Mar 15. The aircraft sustained substantial damage. There were four persons on board, there were no fatalities.

VH-VQB

London, Mar 27 -- Jetstar Airways Boeing 717-200, VH-VQB, experienced a starboard engine failure during cruise 145 kms north-northwest of Launceston, Tasmania, Australia, on Mar 18. The flight landed without further incident. The investigation is being conducted by the Australian Transportation Safety Board.

Product Recalls



ALL TERRAIN VEHICLES, WORLDWIDE

London, Mar 31 -- A press report, dated Mar 29, states: Bombardier Recreational Products Inc. and its U.S. affiliate BRP US Inc. are recalling about 3,430 all-terrain vehicles over concerns that some of their axle bearings may break. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission said today that the rear axle bearings on the Bombardier DS650 ATVs were not greased properly and may break under use, making the ATVs unstable. Operators may lose control of the vehicle, threatening injury to the operator. The company received one report of breakage resulting in loss of control, but the incident did not result in injury. BRP spokesman Pierre Pichette said the recall cost to the company, based in Valcourt, Que., "is not material." Pichette said in most cases, the recall just requires the dealer to add some grease. The ATVs were sold in North America as well as abroad from March 2004 to now for between \$6,000 US and \$7,000 US each.

CHILDRENS SCOOTERS, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 31 -- The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in co-operation with MGA Entertainment Inc., of Van Nuys, Calif., announced the voluntary recall of about 297,000 Bratz Stylin Scooters. Consumers should stop using recalled product immediately unless otherwise instructed. Manufacturer Jurong Dumar Bicycle, Inc. of China. This recall does not include Bratz Stylin Scooters manufactured for MGA by any manufacturer other than Jurong Dumar Bicycle, Inc. The wheels of the

scooter can break or become damaged, and users of the scooters can fall and suffer injuries. MGA has received six reports of cracked wheels on the recalled scooters. All six incidents resulted in cuts, scrapes, and bruises. In one case, a 9 year old suffered a broken arm. The product is a non-motorised two-wheeled scooter with a folding hinge and an adjustable handlebar. The scooter platform is purple with a bright pink Bratz logo on the top surface. Scooters containing information identifying the product as Item No. 266563, with a date of manufacture prior to July 2004, and manufactured by Jurong Dumar Bicycle, Inc. are included in this recall. This identification information can be located either in the area directly beneath the scooter platform or at the bottom of the scooter near the rear wheel. Sold at toy and discount chain stores nation-wide from September 2003 through November 2004 for about \$30. Manufactured in China. Consumers should stop using the scooter immediately and contact MGA for a refund or a replacement scooter. -- Consumer Product Safety Commission.

CHOCOLATE BARS, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 31 -- A Vermont company is recalling a batch of chocolate bars shipped to 23 states after discovering the wrong wrapper was used on bars that contain peanuts. The peanuts pose health risks to people with peanut allergies. Lake Champlain Chocolates of Burlington said its peanut bars were mistakenly labeled Five Star Fruit and Nut Bars, which contain hazelnuts, pecans, cherries and dark chocolate. Three consumer complaints prompted the recall of the two-ounce bars, which were shipped in early March to retailers in Wisconsin, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, Washington and the District of Columbia. The side of the wrapper bears lot number 05056. Consumers can return the product to the store for a refund.

GEL CANDLES, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 29 -- A press report, dated today, states: A severe fire hazard prompted a voluntary recall of about 727,000 gel candles made by a Marble Falls company, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission said yesterday. The candles, produced by Nature's Finest Candle Co., were sold by drugstores and grocery stores nationwide from June 2001 though this February for \$8 and \$11 each, according to the commission. Consumers should stop using these candles immediately and contact Nature's Finest to receive a full refund, the commission says. The gel used in these candles can catch fire,

creating a high flame, the commission says. That can result in nearby combustible materials catching fire. Nature's Finest has received four reports of the surface layer of the gel burning and creating high flames, the commission says. Two consumers reported burns on their hands that required medical treatment, according to the commission.

HONDA MOTOR VEHICLES, JAPAN

London, Mar 27 -- A press report, dated today, states: Honda Motor Co. said Thursday (Mar 24) it will recall for free repairs a total of 45,859 HR-V passenger cars to prevent their rear doors from opening while the cars are in motion. In a report filed with the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport, Honda said the HR-Vs in question were manufactured between July 1999 and March 2005.

MITSUBISHI MOTOR VEHICLES, JAPAN

London, Mar 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: Mitsubishi Fuso Truck & Bus Corp. said today it will recall about 9,800 trucks and buses in total in connection with seven types of defects, including one associated with its steering system. In a report filed with the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport, the manufacturer said, those vehicles, made between 1982 and 2002, include the Aero Star bus and Super Great truck. In February, the company pledged to file recall reports concerning a total of 37 defects, including those found as a result of an in-house probe into its old records. With today's filing to the ministry, the company has lived up to its promise on 28 items among the 37 problems. The company said the Aero Star problem concerns a metal component for fixing a steering-system gear to the bus body.

PORTABLE DVD PLAYER BATTERIES, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 31 -- The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission announces the recall of about 47,000 portable DVD player batteries in voluntary co-operation with Thomson Inc., of Indianapolis, Ind. Consumers should stop using recalled products immediately unless otherwise instructed. The battery can overheat and explode while recharging, posing a burn and fire hazard to consumers. Thomson Inc. has received 11 reports of batteries overheating and five reports of batteries exploding. There are two reports of consumers suffering burned fingers from picking up a battery after it overheated. Only batteries used with the RCA portable DVD players with model number DRC600N are being recalled. The DRC600N model DVD player with the battery attached is about 7Ω-inches wide, 5Ω-inches deep, and 2-inches high. The cabinet housing is plastic, except for a metal "skin" on the top of the player. The metal "skin" is silver colored, and the rest of the DVD player is tan or dark gray. The logo

"RCA LiFE," along with the words "DVD VIDEO" are printed on the top of the DVD Player. The battery attaches to the bottom of the DVD player. Manufactured in China. Sold at electronic and department stores nation-wide from September 2002 through July 2003 for between \$340 and \$490. Consumers should stop using and stop recharging the battery immediately and contact Thomson Inc. for a free replacement battery. The portable DVD player is not being recalled, and consumers can continue to use it without the battery until they receive a replacement battery. The player can be used with the AC Power Adapter by simply unplugging the battery from the unit and plugging the AC Power Adapter into the 9-volt jack on the unit. -- Consumer Product Safety Commission.

SCOOTERS, UNITED STATES

London, Mar 25 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: A Chinese manufacturer of Bratz Stylin' Scooters is recalling about 297,000 scooters because the wheels can break or become damaged, which can lead users to fall or suffer injuries, the Consumer Product Safety Commission said today. The distributor, MGA Entertainment Inc., of Van Nuys, Calif., has received six reports of cracked wheels. All the incidents resulted in cuts, scrapes and bruises. In one case, a child suffered a broken arm. The recall includes scooters manufactured by Jurong Dumar Bicycle Inc. of China. The recall does not include Bratz Stylin' Scooters manufactured for MGA by any manufacturer other than Jurong. The non-motorized, two-wheeled scooters have a folding hinge and an adjustable handlebar. The scooter platform is purple with a bright pink Bratz logo on the top surface. Included in this recall are scooters containing information identifying the product as Item No. 266563, with a date of manufacture before July 2004, and manufactured by Jurong. This identification information can be located either in the area directly beneath the scooter platform or at the bottom of the scooter near the rear wheel. The scooters were sold at toy and discount chain stores nationwide from September 2003 through November 2004 for about \$30.

SUZUKI MOTOR VEHICLES, JAPAN

London, Mar 30 -- A press report, dated today, states: Suzuki Motor Corp said yesterday it will recall a total of 3,214 vehicles in three models for free repairs due to fears about problems with shifting gears or moving the car. Subject to the action are the Alto minivehicle, Wagon R and Carol cars manufactured between December 1998 and June 2001, Suzuki said in a report submitted to the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport.

TODDLER BEDS, UNITED STATES

Washington, DC, Mar 22 -- The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

announces the recall of about 1.2 million Graco Toddler Beds in voluntary co-operation with Graco Children's Products Inc. of Exton, Pa. Consumers should stop using recalled products immediately unless otherwise instructed. A child's arm, leg or foot can become entrapped between the slats in the guard rails or footboard. This can result in broken bones, sprains and other injuries to young children. Graco has received reports of 77 entrapments. This resulted in 13 broken arms and legs, 1 broken foot, a sprained ankle, and 54 other injuries including bruised, scratched, and swollen limbs. The recalled Graco toddler beds are white plastic and steel with openings between the slats in the guard rails and footboard. The beds were sold under the names "Cozy Toddler Bed," "Glow-in-the-Dark Toddler Bed," and "Classic Toddler Bed." There is a label on the guard rail or leg containing one of the following model numbers: "8801, 8801WR, 8821, 8824, 8828, 8833, 30066, 34434 and 11030," a serial number, and the manufacturer's address. Model 8828's headboard has a blue sky with a yellow moon and stars. Model 8801WR has red legs. "Graco" is printed on all of the beds' footboards. Sold at discount, department and juvenile product stores nation-wide from February 1994 through March 2001 for between \$50 and \$70. Manufactured in United States. Consumers should remove the guard rails from the recalled Graco toddler beds immediately and call the firm to receive a free retrofit kit. The kit includes custom designed mesh coverings that must be attached to the guard rails and footboard to prevent entrapment. The mesh coverings will be available in 6 to 8 weeks. -- Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Bloodstock



EARTH SUMMIT

London, Mar 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: The 1998 Grand National winner Earth Summit has been put down after being diagnosed with cancer. The 17-year-old was trained by Nigel Twiston-Davies and ridden to success at Aintree by Carl Llewellyn. He is the only chaser ever to have completed the treble of the Aintree, Scottish and Welsh Nationals. "We will miss him greatly but know that he had a great life doing what he loved," said Nigel Payne on behalf of the horse's owners the Summit Partnership. Earth Summit underwent scans two weeks ago and was discovered to have cancer in both his liver and spleen. He was put to sleep to avoid any suffering. Since his retirement in 2000, he was stabled by Marcella Bayliss, who had looked after him since he joined the Twiston-Davies yard in 1992. The trainer brought Earth Summit back to health after a career-threatening injury at Haydock to win the Grand National just 16 months later. As well as his National wins, he won the Peter Marsh Chase at Haydock and a Steel Plate and Sections Final at Cheltenham. He had been due to go to the Parade of Champions at Aintree on Grand National day next month.

Port Conditions



AUSTRALIA

London, Mar 26 -- A press report, dated Mar 24, states: The

Queensland coal industry concedes the number of ships queuing to get Bowen Basin coal may not go below 50 for at least 12 months. Representing industry chief executive officers, except Anglo Coal, Ken Talbot says the \$500 million in penalties ship operators are paying owners each year for running late could well increase. He says new infrastructure will not be completed for a year and if decisions are not made soon, industry expansion will be threatened. "If you look at the increased demand that we're forecasting over the next five years, it's important that we make those decisions now so that we're not playing catch-up for the next five years. Operator Prime Infrastructure says it has an expansion plan for Dalrymple Bay, but maintains no firm commitment will be made until next month's ruling by the Queensland Competition Authority.

ITALY

London, Mar 30 -- Port situation Mar 30: Genoa: Two container vessels and one tanker awaiting berth. Average delays in berthing 24 - 48 hrs. La Spezia: No vessels awaiting berths. Savona: No vessels awaiting normal berth. No vessels awaiting special berth. -- Lloyd's Agents.

PANAMA CANAL

London, Mar 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: Due to a combination of locomotive track rehabilitation, heavy arrivals and fog, some vessels waiting to transit the Panama Canal have experienced delays of up to four days. This is now being reduced to two-three days. The track work for this session is understood to be completed and it is hoped that normal service will resume soon.

Port Delays

Country/Port	Date of report	No.of vessels waiting and/or days delay
Australia		
Abbott Point	29-Mar-2005	Coal: 1 vessel berthed; 12 vessels due by 26/4; up to 1 day's delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Brisbane	29-Mar-2005	Coal: Fisherman Island coal berth: 1 vessel berthed; 3 vessels due by 12/4; up to 2 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Dalrymple Bay	29-Mar-2005	Coal: 3 vessels berthed, 51 anchored; 31 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	29-Mar-2005	Iron ore: Parker Point: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 7 anchored; 8 vessels due by 8/4; up to 11 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; a 2 day maintenance shutdown is expected to start ca. 30/3; East Intercourse Island: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 3 anchored; 10 vessels due by 7/4; up to 9 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	29-Mar-2005	Coal: R.G. Tanna coal terminal: 3 vessels berthed, 6 anchored; 37 vessels due by 7/5; up to 7 days berthing delay expected subject to port congestion and cargo availability; Barney Point: 1 vessel berthed; 8 vessels due by 23/4; 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	29-Mar-2005	Coal: 2 vessels berthed, 10 anchored; 5 vessels due by 1/4. up to 10 days berthing delay expected subject to cargo availability and berth congestion; vessels berthing in order of cargo availability.
Newcastle	29-Mar-2005	Coal: Kooragang 4, 5 and 6: 2 vessels berthed, 17 anchored; 20 vessels due by 14/4; Dykes 4+5: 1 vessel berthed, 6 anchored; 14 vessels due by 13/4; 1 unallocated vessel due 13/4; 6-9 days delay expected prior to berthing due to planned maintenance at Kooragang terminal, coal product problems with some shippers and cargo receipt.
Port Hedland	29-Mar-2005	Iron ore: BHP Iron Ore Pty. Ltd., Mt. Newman (Nelson Point), "A" berth: 4 vessels anchored; 4 vessels due by 7/4; up to 3 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; "B" berth: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 4 anchored; 4 vessels due by 8/4; 1-4 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; BHP Iron Ore Pty. Ltd., Goldsworthy (Finucane Island) "C" berth: 1 vessel berthed and loading; 4 vessels due by 31/3; no delays expected; "D" berth: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 2 anchored; 7 vessels due by 5/4; 1-4 days delay expected due to berth congestion, maintenance shutdowns and cargo availability.
Port Kembla	29-Mar-2005	Coal: 19 vessels due by 1/5; CB-1: 3 vessels due by 8/4; up to 4 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Port Walcott	29-Mar-2005	Iron ore: 2 vessels berthed and loading, 1 anchored; 17 vessels due by 18/4; up to 6 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability. Shippers are experiencing shortages of lump and fine grade ores.
Portland	29-Mar-2005	No vessels; no delays expected.
Brazil		
Paranagua	29-Mar-2005	Eleven vessels berthed of which 2 fertiliser dischargers, 1 reefer loader, 1 pellets loader, 1 soya loader, 1 sugar loader, 1 container discharger, 4 other loaders/dischargers; 6 vessels waiting in roads, all to load, of which 1 soya, 5 other vessel; 40 vessels due over the next 7 days.
Rio Grande	29-Mar-2005	Two vessels berthed of which 1 soya meal loader, 1 wheat discharger; 3 vessels waiting in roads; 12 vessels due over the next 10 days.
Santos	29-Mar-2005	Seventeen vessels berthed of which 1 bulk fuel oil loader, 5 sugar loaders, 1 bulk wheat discharger, 1 bulk salt discharger, 1 Ro/Ro loader, 1 pellets loader, 2 bulk soya loaders, 1 full container loader/discharger, 4 other loaders; 8 vessels waiting in roads; 23 vessels due over the next 7 days;
Sao Sebastiao	29-Mar-2005	Four vessels berthed, 2 waiting in roads; 5 vessels due over the next 10 days.
Vitoria	29-Mar-2005	Two vessels berthed of which 1 iron ore loader, 1 general cargo loader; Terminal Vila Velha: 1 granite loader; Tubarao: 1 potassium chloride discharger, 1 soya loader, 3 other loaders; Praia Mole: 1 coal discharger, 1 steel products loader, 1 other discharger; Portocel: no vessels; Ubu: 1 loader; 16 vessels waiting in roads; 36 vessels due over the next 7 days.

Port Conditions

Bulgaria

Bourgas	29-Mar-2005	Nine vessels in port operating, of which 7 loading (4 coils, 1 scrap, 1 copper concentrate, 1 empty), 2 discharging (1 billets, 1 coal); 3 vessels waiting in roads, all to load, of which 1 cigarettes, 1 unknown cargo, 1 empty vessel; 12 vessels due, of which 7 to load (1 baryte concentrate, 1 coils, 1 profiles, 1 bulk ammonium nitrate, 1 containers, 1 equipment, 1 transformers), 5 to discharge (1 containers, 1 metals, 1 zinc concentrate, 1 LAB, 1 iron ore).
Varna	29-Mar-2005	Varna East, Varna West, Electrical Power Station, Balchik: Conditions 21-27 March: Thirty-one vessels in port operating of which 20 loading (1 bulk maize, 1 scrap, 3 sunflower seeds, 1 TSP, 5 soda, 1 bulk clinker, 1 sulphuric acid, 2 silica sand/other, 1 bulk STTP, 1 kaolin/soda/other, 1 packed hardboard, 1 metal constructions, 1 hydrochloric acid), 6 discharging (3 bulk coal, 2 raw phosphate, 1 equipment), 5 discharging/loading containers.

Chile

Antofagasta	28-Mar-2005	Four vessels berthed, 3 berths vacant; 13 vessels due this week to load/discharge concentrates, bulk copper, containers and general cargo.
Valparaiso	28-Mar-2005	Three vessels berthed, 5 berths vacant; 5 vessels anchored; 12 vessels due this week.

Egypt

Alexandria	28-Mar-2005	Forty-one vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 34 general cargo, 2 bulk carriers, 4 tankers, 1 containers; 15 vessels dry-docked; 12 vessels at inner anchorage, 10 at outer anchorage.
Damietta	28-Mar-2005	Twenty vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 13 general cargo, 3 bulk carriers, 4 containers; 2 vessels at outer anchorage, 10 at inner anchorage.
Suez Canal	28-Mar-2005	Thirty-four vessels transiting Northbound, 10 Southbound.

Israel

Ashdod	29-Mar-2005	No labour problems. Seven vessels loading at berth (3 general cargo, 4 bulkers), 11 vessels discharging at berth (7 general cargo, 4 bulkers), 2 container vessels loading/discharging at berth; 4 vessels waiting at anchorage to load (3 general cargo, 1 bulker), 10 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (6 general cargo, 4 bulkers); 1 vessel awaiting orders; 24 vessels due, with 2-3 days delay expected.
Haifa	29-Mar-2005	No labour problems. One bulker loading at berth, 4 vessels discharging at berth (3 general cargo, 1 bulker), 9 vessels loading/discharging at berth (7 containers, 2 tankers); 1 bulker waiting at anchorage to load, 2 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (1 general cargo, 1 bulker), 3 vessels waiting at anchorage to load/discharge (2 containers, 1 tanker); 3 vessels under repairs/dry-docked, 2 awaiting orders; 14 vessels due, with 2-3 days delay expected.

Mozambique

Maputo	28-Mar-2005	Twenty-four hour berthing/sailing. Some restrictions to berthing at certain badly lit wharves. Vessels have to be geared for general cargo berths as shore cranes are very few and unreliable. The Port is working normally and is expected to remain so, hence vessels should berth on arrival, daylight, draft and weather permitting. No berthing delays envisaged. A shortage of equipment is being experienced (except at the Container terminal). Shed space is currently available. Safe draft for transiting the channel is 9.1 metres plus the tide of the day. Density of water varies from 1.020 to 1.023. Vessels with ramps on starboard side can berth with the ebbing tide. Should ramps be portside, vessels to berth with the flowing tide. Pilot launch is operational. Both tugs are operational. Leading lights are lit. Both container gantries are operational. Matola coal terminal is operational. Ressano Garcia, Goba and Limpopo railway lines are all operational. Eight vessels are currently in port berthed, of which 4 loading (1 bagged sugar, 1 bagged cashew nuts, 1 ferro chrome, 1 aluminium), 3 discharging (1 frozen fish, 2 bagged rice), 1 discharging/loading containers; 2 vessels berthing 28/3, 1 to load/discharge containers, 1 to load ferro chrome; 17 vessels due by 6/4 of which 7 to load (1 aluminium, 1 cashew nuts, 2 coal, 1 clinker, 1 ferro chrome, 1 bagged sugar), 5 to discharge (1 vegetable oil, 1 petcoke, 1 gasoil/mogas, 1 petrol, 1 aluminium), 3 to discharge/load (2 containers, 1 containers/steel rolls/steel sheets), 2 other vessels.
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Pakistan

Karachi	28-Mar-2005	Two vessels loading at berth (1 rice, 1 chemicals), 7 discharging at berth (1 crude oil, 1 palm oil, 1 sugar, 2 jute, 1 phosphate, 1 general cargo); 1 container vessel waiting at anchorage to load, 5 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (1 containers, 1 phosphate, 1 sugar, 1 crude oil, 1 chemicals); no vessels bunkering, none under repairs/dry-docked, none awaiting orders; 6 vessels due (3 containers, 1 general cargo, 1 chemicals, 1 crude oil), with no berthing delays expected.
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A complete online archive covering the last 10 years of Lloyd's Casualty Week. For further information please call +44 (0) 20 7017 4779.

Port Conditions

Port Qasim	28-Mar-2005	One iron ore vessel discharging at berth, 1 container vessel loading/discharging at QICT berth; 1 container vessel waiting at anchorage to load, 1 container vessel waiting at anchorage to discharge.
Russia		
Novorossiysk	28-Mar-2005	Eighteen vessels in port operating, of which 13 loading (1 bulk NPK, 1 scrap, 1 steel billets, 1 steel billets/coils/steel sheets/WRIC, 1 flowers, 1 lead, 1 bulk ammonium nitrate, 1 coils, 1 steel billets/slabs, 1 wheat, 1 aluminium, 1 barley, 1 diesel oil), 4 discharging (1 ore, 3 bulk sugar), 1 discharging/loading containers; 9 vessels waiting in roads, all to load, of which 2 bulk NPK, 1 coils, 1 bulk urea, 1 steel billets, 1 steel sheets, 1 barley, 1 wheat, 1 slabs; 66 vessels due, of which 62 to load (4 pig-iron, 1 HBI, 6 aluminium, 2 pipes, 1 tin plate/steel sheets/coils, 2 paper, 1 steel billets/pipes/vehicles, 1 WRIC/coils, 2 bulk fertiliser, 2 DRI, 5 coils, 4 copper, 2 bulk NPK, 5 bulk ammonium nitrate, 1 equipment, 1 WRIS/steel billets, 1 steel sheets/pipes/coils, 4 steel billets, 2 wheat, 1 cellulose, 1 steel billets/tin plate, 1 steel, 1 UAN solution, 1 oil, 1 zinc, 1 lead, 1 bulk cement, 2 diesel oil, 1 ammonium sulphate, 2 slabs, 2 bulk urea), 3 to discharge (1 bulk NPK, 1 rice, 1 bulk sugar), 1 to discharge/load containers. Oil terminal: 3 tankers berthed, all loading, of which 2 crude oil, 1 fuel oil; 8 tankers in roads, all to load crude oil; 3 tankers due, all to load, of which 1 crude oil, 1 fuel oil, 1 diesel oil.
Spain		
Sagunto	29-Mar-2005	Twenty vessels in port operating of which 13 discharging (12 steel products, 1 anhydrous ammonia), 4 loading (3 bulk fertiliser, 1 steel coils), 3 Ro/Ros discharging/loading general cargo; no vessels outside commercial wharf; 6 days berthing delay at present.
Sri Lanka		
Colombo	28-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. Eight container/feeder vessels loading at berth, 17 vessels discharging at berth (10 containers/feeders, 1 bulk clinker, 1 bagged fertiliser, 1 bulk fertiliser, 1 bulk LPG, 1 bulk palm oil, 1 bulk cement, 1 Ro/Ro); 3 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (1 bulk clinker, 1 bulk LPG, 1 bulk palm oil); 5 vessels dry-docked, 1 at dolphin tanker berth; 7 vessels due (6 containers/feeders, 1 bulk cement), with no delays expected.
Ukraine		
Illichevsk	28-Mar-2005	Eight vessels in port operating, of which 5 loading steel products, 1 discharging iron ore, 2 discharging/loading containers; 2 vessels in roads to discharge/load containers; 13 vessels due, of which 12 to load (8 steel products, 1 vegetable oil, 2 sulphur, 1 wheat), 1 to discharge iron ore.
Mariupol	28-Mar-2005	Twelve vessels in port operating, of which 11 loading (3 steel, 5 coal, 1 fire-clay, 2 sulphur), 1 discharging containers/fire-clay; 11 vessels in roads, all to load, of which 5 steel, 1 pig-iron, 2 coal, 2 fire-clay, 1 sulphur; 50 vessels due, of which 48 to load (27 steel, 1 coke, 14 coal, 1 fire-clay, 2 wheat, 1 carbamide, 1 soya beans, 1 equipment), 3 to discharge/load (1 pipes, 1 magnetite/steel plates).
Odessa	28-Mar-2005	Twenty-five vessels in port operating, of which 17 loading (10 metal, 1 oil, 2 corn, 1 corn/wheat, 1 general cargo, 1 oats, 1 paper), 5 discharging (1 luggage, 1 citrus, 1 sugar, 1 oil, 1 building materials), 2 discharging/loading containers, 1 passenger vessel; 5 vessels in roads, of which 2 to load (1 metal, 1 scrap), 3 to discharge/load containers; 63 vessels due, of which 43 to load (33 metal, 2 pig-iron, 1 pipes, 1 general cargo, 1 ore, 1 wheat, 1 corn, 1 oil, 1 building materials, 1 ferro alloy), 6 to discharge (1 citrus, 1 oil, 1 luggage, 1 sugar, 1 bananas, 1 ore), 14 to discharge/load containers.
United States		
Houston	29-Mar-2005	Pilots report normal 39 ft. 3 ins. max. draft in Houston ship channel; foggy weather delaying inbound/outbound traffic; Cargill terminal: 2-3 days delay; LDC Dreyfus terminal: no delays.
Kalama, WA	29-Mar-2005	Kalama export terminal: 6 days delay; United Harvest terminal: no delays.

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Port Conditions

New Orleans	29-Mar-2005	Mississippi River terminal berthing delays: Cenex-Harstates/Myrtle Grove: 2-3 days delay expected; Cargill-Westwego: 3 days delay expected; ADM/Ama: 3-5 days delay expected; Bunge/Destrehan: 1 day's delay expected; ADM/Destrehan: 8-10 days delay expected; ADM/Reserve: 8-10 days delay expected; Cargill/Reserve: 2 days delay expected; Peavey/Paulina: no delays; Zen-Noh/Convent: 1 day's delay expected; Cargill/Baton Rouge: no delays; Mississippi River mid-stream buoys - estimated berthing delays based on new vessel presented as load-ready and weather permitting: Mile 121.5 ADM (Gemini) - Destrehan: no delays; Mile 158.0 Cargill (K2) - Convent: 2 days delay expected; Mile 180.0 Cooper (America) - Darrow: 3 days delay expected. Nine-day forecast for Carrolton Gauge/New Orleans: expected to increase to 6.9 ft. by 7/4. 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	29-Mar-2005	Grain terminal: 2 days delay; CLD Irving terminal: 2 days delay; CLD, O Dock terminals: 2 days delay.
Tacoma	29-Mar-2005	Temco terminal: 4 days delay.

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