

Spate of explosions sparks early report by Intertanko

Chemical tanker review expected by the autumn, writes Nigel Lowry in Athens

— Thursday April 14 2005

Anxiety about recent chemical tanker explosions was underlined yesterday when the International Association of Independent Tanker Owners (Intertanko) said an industry working group probing the spate of accidents was expected to report as early as the autumn.

The investigation, which began work only in January, appears to have been fast-tracked by industry participants.

"There have been a fair few incidents in the last two or three years and unfortunately fatalities in chemical tanker accidents," admitted the association's managing director Peter Swift.

He said the study group was "making good progress" under conditions that the association describes as near-ideal.

"Luckily there is no rush by others to push for legislation without considering the causes," said Mr Swift.

The industry group, which sees Intertanko co-operating with Ocimf, the International Chamber of Shipping, class societies and others, was examining each of the accidents to try to identify any common elements or other lessons.

But Mr Swift said it was premature to speculate on the nature of any problems afflicting the chemical tanker fleet and the association was "keeping an open mind".

The group is searching for a link between existing operating practices and accidents but design factors were not excluded, he said.

There was "nothing secretive" about the group's work and the International Maritime Organization has been informed.

However, Mr Swift claimed that ongoing work was benefiting from confidential information sharing between tanker owners and others involved in the process. Chemical tankers to have suffered fatal explosions in the last few years include the Sun Venus and Chassiron in 2003, and the Bow Mariner, NCC Mekka, Vicuna and Sunny Jewel, all in 2004.

A number of explosions took place during tank cleaning operations, and the issue of whether inert gas systems should be fitted on all chemical tankers seems sure to be prominent in the deliberations.

The spate of serious accidents has hit a sector — and individual companies — that previously had a good safety record.

The worst of the recent incidents, the Bow Mariner tragedy, has prompted the ongoing transfer of management of a large fleet of chemical tankers from manager Ceres to controlling owner Odffjell.

It is said that Ceres came to the conclusion that such tankers would require safety modifications, although each of the companies has said the handover was its initiative.

The chemical tanker initiative is shaping up as a major test of industry initiative in setting the safety agenda before outside regulators seize the initiative.

Mr Swift linked the project to current industry dismay over the European Union's criminal sanctions directive that may extend criminal punishment to cases of accidental pollution.

"This is happening under ideal conditions," he said, implicitly contrasting

the work with official probes where there were "numerous deterrents to open discussion of accidents".

Intertanko yesterday released a statement emphasising it supports the investigation and prosecution of illegal discharges but "strongly objects" to criminalising accidental pollution and treating seafarers as criminals.

It also called for coastal states to comply with their treaty obligations to ensure adequate, affordable waste reception facilities.

Association chairman Stephen Van Dyck warned that criminalisation threatened "a downward spiral away from safe operations".

As an example, the former Maritrans chairman said that "some of the best officers" at his company had retired early.

"Although they do not think there is a high chance of ending up incarcerated, it is because they do not want all the hassle that goes with it," he said.

Mr Van Dyck also referred to a case where a watch officer acted on legal advice and refused to talk to his company's operations team after a grounding and small spill.

Intertanko will now be pushing to "draw clearer lines of demarcation between what is accidental and what is criminal", he stated.

The association's officials were speaking as the Intertanko Athens Tanker Event, which drew a record 530 delegates, came to an end yesterday.

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

Vessel	Type	Flag	Class	GT	DWT	Bit	Casualty
<i>AEGEAN WIND</i>	bulker	GRC	GL	23,646	38,915	1983	In collision with c.c. <i>MSC Roberta</i> in lat 40 24.8N, long 26 41.9E, Apr 3. Significant damage to bow. Lost starboard anchor. Anchored at Cape Cankaya.
<i>BIG LEAP</i>	fishing	USA	—	67	—	1967	Sank while tied up at Rockland, Maine, Apr 3. Efforts to raise vessel under way.
<i>CHINOOK</i>	ro-ro	CHL	—	1,595	—	—	Grounded in Potter Cove, in lat 62 14S, long 58 41W, Antarctica, Mar 28. Refloated by icebreaker <i>Almirante Oscar Viel</i> same day. No apparent damage.
<i>KONEMU</i>	product tanker	NCL	BV	746	1000	1990	Grounded on Wadra Reef, Isle of Pine, Apr 1. Engine-room flooded; pumped out. Refloated Apr 5 and being towed for Noumea.
<i>MARGARET ANN</i>	tug	USA	—	120	—	1954	Rolled over and sank by cable connected to barges it was towing in Calumet Harbour, Chicago, Mar 31. Completely submerged except for pilot house. Crew rescued. In same position Apr 4, salvage plan being drawn up.
<i>MSC ROBERTA</i>	container	PAN	NV	39,892	43,567	1986	In collision with bulk <i>Aegean Wind</i> in lat 40 24.8N, long 26 41.9E, Apr 3. Gash of 15-20 metres in starboard mid-section. Damage in way of accommodation, some oil leakage.
<i>RIVER DUCHESS</i>	passenger	CHE	—	—	—	2003	Had technical failure, leading to engine only being able to go forwards, and ran into restaurant at water's edge at Amsterdam Apr 3. Damage sustained. Moored nearby. Sailed away from scene same day.
<i>ROCHELLE</i>	fishing	—	—	—	—	—	Grounded on rocky outcrop off Morris Point, in lat 34 23S, long 21 26E, Apr 5. Crew evacuated. Wreck broken into three sections by Apr 6.
<i>SUNSHINE STATE</i>	tug	USA	—	33	—	1973	Capsized and sank in channel/entrance to port of Oakland, Calif, Apr 5. Entrance to harbour closed. Tug raised Apr 6 and towed to nearby port.
<i>TEHORO III</i>	fishing	PYF	BV	154	—	1996	Had engine breakdown and stranded on Wadra Reef, Isle of Pine, New Caledonia, Apr 1. Freed with assistance of tug <i>Sora</i> and mv <i>Laura II</i> Apr 3.
<i>TSUBASA</i>	chem tanker	JPN	—	198	—	1990	Capsized off Izu-Oshima Island, about 120 km south of Tokyo, Apr 4. Crew rescued.
<i>VIKING MULL</i>	standby safety	GBR	AB ABS	891	950	1981	Firefighters tackled a major blaze on board Apr 6 at Leith Docks. Severe damage to starboard main engine.
<i>WIN LIEN SHENG 3</i>	fishing	TWN	—	919	—	1997	Set on fire by crew off Patagonia after being pursued by Argentine Coast Guard Apr 2. Subsequently sunk in lat 42 28S, long 55 50.1W.

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The following reports are reprinted from Lloyd's List



AEGEAN WIND (Greece)

See MSC Roberta.

AL MOUNIR (Morocco)

London, Apr 6 -- Following received from Den Helder RCC, timed 0915, UTC: General cargo Al Mounir (4317 gt, built 1982) is not under command with engine trouble in lat 52 21.7N, long 03 08.5E, at 0808, UTC. (Note -- Al Mounir sailed Hamburg 0720, Apr 5, for Le Havre.)

London, Apr 6 -- Following received from Den Helder RCC, timed 1655, UTC: General cargo Al Mounir was still drifting in lat 52 40.5N, long 03 08.5E, at 1525, UTC.

London, Apr 6 -- Following received from Den Helder RCC, timed 2110, UTC: General cargo Al Mounir was reported back under way at 1839, UTC, continuing voyage for Le Havre.

ALIDA GORTHON (Sweden)

Montreal, Apr 7 -- Repairs to general cargo Alida Gorthon are still in hand. The ship could possibly undock and depart on Apr 11. -- Lloyd's Agents.

ANIARA (Singapore)

London, Mar 31 -- Following press release received, dated today: Vehicle Aniara had an engine-room fire, while some 20 nautical miles off Piraeus. The crew attempted to extinguish the fire using onboard carbon dioxide suppression systems, but were unable to do so. At 1045, UTC, the decision was taken by the master to remove the crew from the vessel, in order to ensure the safety of those onboard. This operation has now been completed and the crew have left the vessel by helicopter. There were no injuries amongst the 24 crewmembers who are all now safely ashore. Tug assistance was contracted and a tug is now on site. As well as providing precautionary anti-pollution measures, the tug will attempt to secure a line to the vessel to prevent any drift.

London, Mar 31 -- Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: The engine-room fire on board vehicle Aniara is reported by the Navtex to have broken out at 1020, UTC, today. Attending vessels reported at 1530, UTC, that flames were still seen to be exiting the funnel from time to time and the weather was too rough to place a line on board.

London, Mar 31 -- Following received from the operators of vehicle Aniara, dated today: Salvors have succeeded in attaching a line to Aniara, which earlier experienced an engine-room fire. Three salvors boarded the vessel in order to connect the line and to carry out a preliminary inspection. The vessel is said to be in a stable condition, with the fire having substantially died down. Two tugs

have towed the vessel to a sheltered location, away from traffic and navigation lanes. Experts and specialised equipment are due to arrive from the salvors tonight, as well as technical experts from the vessel's managers.

London, Apr 1 -- Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 0440, UTC: Vehicle Aniara is now anchored in lat 37 28.15N, long 23 53.81E, with tugs in attendance. According to tugs fire should be out but there is still a little smoke. Weather on scene force 8 (gale). The vessel has 4,365 vehicles on board.

London, Apr 1 -- Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: Vehicle Aniara was taken in tow by a tug yesterday afternoon, proceeded one nautical miles west of the Ag. Georgios where vessel remains still anchored today. Smoke continues from the funnel of the vessel and tugs remain nearby. In the area are winds of Beaufort 8 (gale). Investigation into the incident is being performed by the coast guard of Palaia Fokaias.

London, Apr 1 -- Lloyd's Casualty Representatives in Piraeus report: An LOF was signed yesterday by Smit Tak BV and their local salvage master is currently on board vehicle Aniara. Tug Aegean Pelagos and salvage tug Matsas Star are holding the vessel in the same position off Fleves Island, Greek Saronic Gulf, where the fire started. The fire has been extinguished and they are currently waiting for the various experts to board this morning in order to decide what course of action to take. The weather in the Saronikos is presently northeast, near gale force seven. Salvors advise that the vessel has 4,365 vehicles on board.

London, Apr 1 -- Salvors Smit succeeded yesterday evening in attaching a line to vehicle Aniara, which had earlier sustained an engine-room fire. Three salvors boarded the vessel in order to connect the line and to carry out a preliminary inspection. Two tugs, later towed Aniara to a sheltered location about 35 nautical miles south-east of Piraeus, away from traffic and navigation lanes. The vessel will be held there while salvors carry out a more detailed inspection today. The vessel is in a stable condition and is in no danger of sinking. While the engine compartment remains sealed, the fire is now effectively extinguished, although salvors on board will continue to monitor the situation closely. Emergency generators on board have been successfully started, providing light and on board fire fighting equipment should it be needed. A full investigation into the cause of the fire will be held, and the operators will co-operate closely with all parties in this.

London, Apr 1 -- Lloyd's Casualty Representatives in Piraeus report: Vehicle Aniara remains anchored in the approximate area of the fire, with two tugs alongside and salvors on board, pending a decision on its future.

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

The weather forecast for the Saronikos is north north-east near Beaufort 7 (near gale).

London, Apr 4 -- Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 1100, UTC: Vehicle Aniara was safely towed to Eleusis at 1830 yesterday.

APOSTOLOVO (Malta)

London, Apr 5 -- Following received from Dartmouth, NB, dated today: Bulk Apostolovo (31661 gt, built 1984) arrived Halifax, Can from Port Alfred, Quebec, on Apr 2, to effect inwater temporary repairs to damaged propeller blades. Expected completion of repairs is Apr 5.

ARTEAGA (Madeira)

London, Apr 5 -- A press report, dated today, states: Crude oil tanker Arteaga (77399 gt, built 1990), which ran aground Sunday morning (Apr 3) near Dalian, was reported out of danger yesterday afternoon after 28 hours of rescue efforts. The local maritime bureau said the vessel, carrying 119,574 tons of crude oil, ran aground around 1100 hrs near the new port of Dalian. The provincial maritime rescue centre organised rescue operations, successfully helping unstrand the tanker at 1450 yesterday after unloading nearly 10,000 tons of crude oil from it. The tanker docked at Dalian Port at 1700 same day. (Note -- Arteaga sailed Ras Isa Term. Mar 12 for Dalian.)

Dalian, Apr 6 -- Crude oil tanker Arteaga grounded about 1100, Apr 3, when it was proceeding to berth at Xingang, Dalian. The tanker was allegedly leaking some oil from Nos 2S, 3S and 4S due to water level increasing from those tanks as a result of suspected damage to the hull. At 1450, Apr 4, the tanker was successfully refloated and salvaged with the assistance of tugs. At 1700 hrs it berthed alongside at No 1 pier, Xingang, Dalian. -- Lloyd's Agents.

ATHOS I (Cyprus)

London, Apr 7 -- A Delaware River Oil Spill Joint Information Centre press release, dated Apr 6, states: Crude oil tanker Athos I, latest updates: Six hundred and sixty-two responders are working in the command centre and along the Delaware River and 31 vessels are deployed in the response effort. Some 221,910 gallons of oil and oily liquid has been recovered and 14,704 tons of oily solids (cleanup materials and oil) have been collected. Experts report 388 birds have been released and 186 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-nine facilities have been grossly decontaminated with six currently being decontaminated. Out of 21 marina's needing decontamination, 15 have been fully decontaminated. One hundred and thirty-one recreation boats have been decontaminated.

BIG LEAP (U.S.A.)

London, Apr 4 -- A press report, dated Apr 3, states: Fishing Big Leap (67 gt, built 1967) sank this morning while tied up to the Rockland Municipal Fish Pier, after a night of heavy rainfall. Owner Ed Spencer of Matinicus said Big Leap was rigged for shrimping and dragging, but is now a total loss. The vessel's steel rigging crunched into the side of the wharf as it sank and broke several pilings, leaving scraps and splinters on the pier. Plans to raise Big Leap tomorrow morning were being made this afternoon. A slick of oil or gasoline from the sunken vessel was visible along the wharf at low tide, around 1330 today. Harbour-master Ed Glaser said Big Leap had been at the pier since last fall, after Spencer bought it in Gloucester, Mass. The boat has been under a US Coast Guard "Captain of the Port" order to stay docked until repairs are made. Several city officials surveyed the scene early this morning.

London, Apr 7 -- A press report, dated Apr 6, states: Fishing Big Leap, that sank Sunday morning at the Rockland Municipal Fish Pier, was raised and moved into a nearby cove today. Workers from Prock Marine and Charlie's Dive Service of Rockland toiled most of this morning to secure sunken Big Leap. The US Coast Guard and Maine Department of Environmental Protection were on hand to monitor the proceedings, as were the Rockland Fire Department and Harbour-master's Office. The vessel was under a US. Coast Guard order to stay in port until several repairs were made. Spencer said he may salvage usable parts from the boat rather than try to make repairs.

BONGGAYA 91 (Malaysia)

See "Celebes Sea" under "Piracy."

BROTHER JOY (South Korea)

Busan, Apr 4 -- General cargo Brother Joy: Permanent repairs were completed Apr 1 and the vessel sailed from Busan for Huangpu about 0200, Apr 3, for cargo operations. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents.

BUE MULL (U.K.)

London, Apr 6 -- A press report, dated today, states: Firefighters tackled a major blaze on standby safety vessel Bue Mull (891 gt, built 1981) in Leith Docks this morning. Six fire engines were called to the scene in the harbour just before 0730 hrs. The blaze broke out in the engine-room of the vessel. It was reported to the emergency services at 0726 hrs, and fire crews were on the scene within minutes.

CAPTAIN BILL (U.S.A.)

London, Apr 7 -- A press report, dated Apr 6, states: Officials were working to save two barges that sank after tug Captain Bill (452 gt, built 1956), owned by Western Rivers Boat Management of Ash Flat, Ark, struck an approach wall at Smithland Locks

and Dam. The 15-barge tow hit a lock approach wall and broke apart early yesterday, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers said. No one was injured and river traffic was not closed. Rick Morgan, operations manager the corps' locks and dams project office in Louisville, said the barge company would probably do the salvage work, but that a timeline had not been discussed. Heartland Barge Management of Columbia, Ill., owns the barges, which were carrying gravel. Captain Bill was moving downstream when, for unknown reasons, one engine failed, corps spokesman John Fleshman said.

CATALYST (Panama)

See "Gibraltar" under "Port State Control."

CHARLOTTE-C. (U.K.)

Dover, Apr 6 -- General cargo Charlotte-C. (2999 gt, built 2001) arrived Folkestone harbour to load second-hand plant machinery. On its piloted entrance into the port it made contact with the quay and sustained damage to the port side of its bow. Classification society surveyor has been in attendance. The damage has not compromised the vessel's seaworthiness, so it will sail on completion of loading on Apr 8. -- Lloyd's Agents. (Note -- Charlotte-C. sailed Tees Apr 4 for Eemshaven.)

CHEMBULK NEW ORLEANS (Singapore)

London, Apr 5 -- Chem.tank Chembulk New Orleans arrived Boothville Mar 21, sailed Mar 26 and arrived Port Arthur Mar 27.

CHENG LU 8 (Mongolia)

London, Apr 7 -- Following navigation warning issued at 1250, JST, today: Engine-troubled general cargo Cheng Lu 8 (1598 gt, built 1993) exists in vicinity of lat 33 49.7N, long 131 29.6E. (Note -- Cheng Lu 8 sailed Yokohama Apr 4 for Xingang.)

London, Apr 7 -- Following received from Coast Guard Japan, timed 1045, UTC: General cargo Cheng Lu 8 was anchored in lat 33 51.9N, long 131 13.0E, near the Ube port at 0920, UTC.

CHINOOK (Chile)

Santiago, Mar 31 -- Chile ro/ro Chinook (1595 gt) grounded in Potter Cove, (lat 62 14S, long 58 41W) Antarctica, 0705, Mar 28. The vessel was refloated by Chile Navy icebreaker Almirante Oscar Viel same day apparently without any major damage and no spillage has been detected. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Apr 1 -- A press report, dated Mar 29 states: Icebreaker Almirante Oscar Viel has refloated ro/ro Chinook which grounded in Potter Cove, Antarctica, at 0705 yesterday. Almirante Oscar Viel arrived in the area at 0900 hrs, where it found the vessel was beached on the coast. It immediately sent naval personnel on board Chinook with the mission to initiate the procedures and

actions to refloat the ship. To do this a tow rope was used and at 1800 hrs, with the high tide, the icebreaker initiated the refloating manoeuvre. Finally, the icebreaker, after 30 minutes of work, managed to refloat the ship and took it to the centre of Potter Bay.

CHRISTY (U.S.A.)

Mobile, Mar 31 -- General cargo Star Drivanger discharged its cargo and commenced repairs at Mobile today, ETC about two weeks. The barge involved in the incident, barge ING 1929, effected temporary repairs at Mobile and was subsequently taken to the Avondale Shipyard for permanent repairs. Tug Christy is back in normal service. -- Lloyd's Agents.

CONCEPTION (U.S.A.)

London, Mar 31 -- A press report, dated today, states: Pushed off the rocky coast near Vandenberg Air Force Base on Monday (Mar 28) commercial dive boat Conception (97 gt, built 1981), a million-dollar boat stolen last week, made it to the Ventura Harbour to begin a six-month repair job. The 75-foot commercial dive boat's leaking hull needs to be replaced, and the bow was ripped off by the tug that pulled it down the coast, however owner Glen Fritzler says that insurance should cover the costs, and that the boat will return to the Santa Barbara harbour following its repairs. In addition, Fritzler says a burglar alarm will be installed on Conception. Investigators say Conception was stolen last week and was later found beached near Point Arguello. On the way out of the harbour, Conception sank fishing Slick Chick." Waterfront officials say they hope to lift the boat out of the water and bring it to West Beach, where it will be demolished. Fellow fishermen are raising funds to help out the owner of Slick Chick.

CORNER BROOK (Bermuda)

London, Mar 31 -- General cargo Corner Brook arrived Tilbury Dock 1238, Mar 30, from Canada. -- Port of London Authority.

CTMA VACANCIER (Canada)

London, Apr 6 -- Understood passenger ro/ro CTMA Vacancier sustained considerable damage when it was navigating through heavy ice in Gulf of St. Lawrence on Mar 18.

DAVID C.DEVALL (U.S.A.)

Houston, Apr 5 -- Tug David C.Devall (98 gt, built 1978) overturned between Kemah and Redfish Island in the Houston Ship Channel on Monday (Apr 4). As of noon today, the third crewman had not been found. A portion of the Ship Channel is still closed while the search continues. The vessel is owned by Devall Towing from Hackberry, La, who informed that the vessel is currently on charter. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Apr 6 -- A press report, dated today, states: The Coast Guard called off its search yesterday for a member of the crew of tug David

C.Devall that overturned near the Houston Ship Channel. The search was called off at 1640 yesterday. The move means that the crewman, Carlton Guidry, 38, is likely dead, said Petty Officer 3rd Class Andrew Kendrick. At 1500 Monday, oyster boat Franco reported to the Coast Guard that the 58-foot David C.Devall had capsized between Kemah and Redfish Island. Crewman on board the oyster boat rescued two people from the water, but could not find Guidry. The other two crewmen were taken to the University of Texas Medical Branch. The search was called off after more than 25 hours. A three-mile section of the Houston Ship Channel was closed at 1609 Monday from light 50 to light 60, between Kemah and Redfish Island. The ship channel was reopened at 1700 yesterday for inland barge traffic only. The Coast Guard reported that the closure disrupted traffic to the upper ship channel. According to information provided by the Coast Guard, 58 ships were affected. More than 39 barges were waiting in Bayport, Pelican Cut and Port Bolivar, the Coast Guard reported. In a prepared statement, the Coast Guard said crews performed 10 flyovers with a helicopter from Air Station Houston and maintained a continuous search with rescue boat crews from Station Galveston.

London, Apr 6 -- The Houston Ship Channel between Lights 50 and 60 has been reopened for tow vessel traffic only, but remains closed to all deep draught traffic (following the incident involving tug David C.Devall). Tow traffic is restricted to the barge lane on the green side of the channel between Lights 52 and 56. Minimum safe speed is mandatory with no meeting or overtaking permitted in the area.

DION (Marshall Islands)

See "Azores" under "Weather & Navigation."

DMITROV (Russia)

Istanbul, Apr 5 -- General cargo Dmitrov (1652 gt, built 1964), Rostov for Nemrut, experienced engine breakdown while transitting the Dardanelles at 1115 hrs, today. Vessel is anchored near Karanlik Liman. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Istanbul, Apr 5 -- General cargo Dmitrov completed necessary repairs by own means and upon inspection/formalities sailed from Canakkale 1635, local time, today. -- Lloyd's Agents.

EL SAFA (Panama)

London, Apr 3 -- Following received from Coastguard Falmouth MRCC, timed 0948, BST: Passenger ro/ro El Safa (10341 gt, built 1972), 20 people on board, in lat 15 04.3N, long 42 47.4E, 20 miles from Yemen coast, with complete engine failure, requesting tug assistance.

London, Apr 4 -- Following received from Coastguard Falmouth MRCC, timed 1540, UTC: Passenger ro/ro El Safa is understood to have made

contact with Yemeni rescue authorities, who promised to send some assistance.

EMC 423 (U.S.A.)

London, Apr 5 -- A press report, dated Apr 4, states: The US Coast Guard hearing into the explosion and sinking of tank barge EMC 423 on the Chicago Sanitary & Ship Canal, began today. Dennis Egan, owner of Egan Marine Corp. in Lemont, told the hearing officer his company was experienced in towing combustible cargo. Asked if the company had an operations manual, Egan said: "I assume we have one. I'm sure it's made available to our employees, but I don't think it is required reading." Under questioning from Coast Guard Cmdr. Mark Hamilton, Egan said he hires an outside firm to conduct training and safety drills. "I know (the safety manual) exists, I'm just not real familiar with it," he said. Egan said he didn't know the name of the outside firm that drafts the company's safety guidelines. "I don't have time to do all that," he said of drafting company safety procedures. "I'm sure the company puts a safety manual together or we wouldn't pay them." Egan said employees who don't follow company policy are dismissed. Egan was questioned for several hours today as Coast Guard officials try to determine the cause of the explosion. The hearing could last up to two weeks and might involve questioning as many as 25 people. Emergency management crews hired by Egan Marine have been working to clean up and remove the oil from the four cargo holds and raise the barge out of the water. About 6,000 of the 14,000 barrels of oil have been removed, and the barge is about half-way out of the water. The cost of the recovery effort could reach \$2 million. Egan Marine's insurance company is expected to cover the cost. The canal, which was closed immediately after the explosion, is open on a limited basis to allow the narrower dry-cargo barges.

FARLEY MOWAT (Canada)

London, Apr 4 -- A press report, dated today, states: Research Farley Mowat, which left Bermuda's waters three months ago to thwart the seal-hunters off Prince Edward Island, may be returning to the Island after experiencing alleged assaults on its crew and arrests on the ice. Farley Mowat left Bermuda in December, 2004, with Bermuda resident Laura Dakin on board to film a documentary about the seal cull. On Thursday (Mar 31), Ms Dakin and other Farley Mowat crew members were arrested following an angry and allegedly violent confrontation on the ice with seal hunters. The vessel's master Paul Watson said that Ms Dakin and 18 other crew members had crossed a mile of ice to witness and photograph sealers from vessel Brady Mariner at work. According to Capt Watson, his crew were then assaulted by the sealers with the clubs they use to kill seals. Ms Dakin was understood to be

uninjured but she was reportedly arrested along with 10 others following the incident. Capt. Watson said the 11 crew members arrested were taken on board Canadian Coast Guard icebreaker Amundsen while seven others made it back to Farley Mowat. According to the Sea Shepherd website, Dakin and the others appeared in court in Charlottetown, PEI, on Friday and were released without bail. The report on the group's website said a Canadian prosecutor had asked for \$1,000 bail for each of the crew but they protested and threatened to remain in jail and to begin a hunger strike. Reports in the Canadian media, however, said that only three crew members were arrested for being too close to the sealing vessels, although more arrests were possible. Some of the crew members arrested have since returned to their homes but it is understood that Ms Dakin and six others returned to the vessel on Saturday. Capt Watson is now pondering the eco-group's next move. Farley Mowat may have no option but to return to Bermuda. "The vessel is not welcome in a Canadian port nor can it return to a port in the United States," Capt. Watson said.

FLEET TRADER 1 (Hong Kong)

London, Apr 5 -- Following received from Hong Kong MRCC, timed 0215, UTC: Bulk Fleet Trader 1 is under tow to an unknown port, the situation is under control.

GEM OF TUTICORIN (India)

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

GEORG ESSBERGER (Madeira)

London, Apr 1 -- Following received from Turku MRCC, timed 1200, UTC: Chem.tank Georg Essberger (3790 gt, built 2004), bound Uusikaupunki, in ballast, with 14 crewmen and a pilot on board, grounded in lat 60 47.6N, long 21 17.1E, at 2300, UTC, Mar 31. Vessel managed to free itself after about an hour and a half and continued its voyage to Uusikaupunki, where inspections have been carried out to satisfy maritime authorities. (Note -- Georg Essberger sailed Mantyluoto Mar 31.)

Turku, Apr 1 -- Chem.tank Georg Essberger, Pori for Uusikaupunki, grounded outside Uusikapunki at 0200 hrs, today. The vessel had 14 crew and one pilot onboard and at the time of incident was empty. The vessel refloated at 0330 hrs, under its own power and continued its voyage to Uusikaupunki. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Apr 5 -- Chem.tank Georg Essberger arrived at Uusikaupunki Apr 1 and sailed Apr 2, bound for Koping.

GOOD LUCKY (Cambodia)

London, Apr 7 -- Following navigation warning issued today: Generator-troubled general cargo Good Lucky (1200 gt, built 1978) anchoring in lat 33 57.0N, long 131 02.3E. (Note -- Good Lucky sailed Shikama Apr 6 for Haimen.)

GREAT POLARIS (South Korea)

London, Apr 1 -- Bulk Great Polaris arrived Gijon Mar 29.

HAM LUONG 05 (Vietnam)

London, Apr 7 -- A press report, dated today, states: Fully loaded 558-tonne tanker Ham Luong 05, of Vinaco joint stock Oil Transport Company, collided with freighter Tay Ho 1, of An Lai company, on Long Tau river in Can Gio district, Ho Chi Minh City, at 0430, Apr 6. The accident left a large hole at the bow of the oil tanker and a slick of 40 cubic metres of diesel oil on the river. Until 1730 hrs, the rescue forces were still busy pumping oil from the damaged oil tanker to another ship.

HANYANG GAS (South Korea)

Busan, Apr 7 -- Lpg Hanyang Gas sailed Busan in tow Apr 4, bound "Ziangyin", China, for demolition. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents.

HARMONIC PROGRESS (Panama)

London, Apr 4 -- Lack of familiarity with the ballast system of bulker Harmonic Progress contributed to the vessel being disabled and drifting to within 30 nautical miles of the Great Barrier Reef, the Australian Transport Safety Bureau has found, reports Lloyd's List DCN in Australia. A leak in the main water ballast line flooded the engine-room of the vessel on Apr 16, 2004, and this led to an electrical short in both main engine lubricating pumps, disabling the engine. The entire crew, with the exception of the chief engineer, joined the vessel when new owners and managers took over the 1986-built vessel, about two weeks before the flooding incident, the safety bureau reported. Harmonic Progress was adrift in the Coral Sea about 90 nautical miles north of Hydrographers Passage. During the 43 hours before the arrival of the first salvage tug, Harmonic Progress drifted 104 miles westward to within 30 miles of the Great Barrier Reef. The crew were unfamiliar with the ballast system and did not use a systematic approach to find the source of water leaking from the ballast line," the bureau concluded. "In addition, the pre-delivery inspection of the ship prior to the change of ownership is suspected of being inadequate." The crew first became aware of the problem at 0200 on Apr 16, when a duty engineer discovered that main ballast line was leaking and the engine-room bilge was filling with water. He alerted the chief engineer and they put a temporary repair in place to stem the water flow and started the engine-room bilge pump to clear the water. "Neither officer made any attempt to isolate the leak and no valves on the ballast line either side of the leak were closed or even checked," the bureau found. "The bilge pump was left running and both engineers returned to their cabins about 0245." At 0830 the chief engineer returned to the engine-room with other crew members to make a more substantial repair. "A wooden wedge was inserted into the hole but

this was unsuccessful "the hole actually increased in size and more water flowed into the bilge," investigators said. As the leak worsened the crew introduced a portable air-operated pump to the engine-room, but by 1200 the water had risen to the bottom of the propeller shaft, a depth of 1.5 metres. "With the bilge water at this depth, the main engine's flywheel was throwing a large amount of water around at the after end of the engine-room and over critical operating machinery," the bureau stated. The main engine lubricating oil pump motor short circuited and then the standby lubricating oil pump followed suit shortly after. Without the pumps, Harmonic Progress could not use main engine power and was unable to continue the voyage without assistance. The vessel's position in waters with a depth of 1,000 metres meant it could not anchor and tug assistance was called for. Investigators found that a combination of corrosion and erosion had caused wastage in the main ballast line, which directly led to the leak. They also found that leaking butterfly valves in two topside water ballast tanks led to two tanks draining into the engine-room via the leak and that a crossover valve on the main ballast line in the engine-room had not been closed after ballast operations.

INDEPENDENCE (U.S.A.)

London, Apr 4 -- A press report, dated Apr 3, states: Fish factory Independence was involved in a drama at sea two weeks ago when one rudder on the ship failed, causing a cascade effect on the remaining two. Although the engines still hummed, the ship rolled in the trough while the storm raged. Without the rudders, Captain Mark DeMaria said, he could not turn the ship back into the wind. He credited his crew, the Coast Guard and a Juneau, Alaska-based tugboat with ensuring the ship's safe return with no major injuries or further damage. While DeMaria said the crew were never in danger, some of the 204 crew members said being at the mercy of rough seas was one experience they won't soon forget. The Independence left in January to process cod and crab in the Akutan Harbor in the Aleutian Islands. The ship returned to Tacoma port yesterday afternoon, towed by the tug Chahunta, with about 200,000 pounds of products in its hold. Trouble started on Mar 21 when a port rudder failed about 0745 hrs. Somehow, four 1.5 inch bolts that held the steering quadrant became severed, company officials said. The ship was about 90 miles south of Cape St. Elias on Kayak Island. Back in Seattle, owners Trident Seafoods Corp. sent two other Trident ships from the Bering Sea to assist the Independence. The Coast Guard also was informed of the problem and deployed two cutters. At 1030 hrs, that day, DeMaria called Trident to say his crew had disconnected the ship's port rudder and used the centre and starboard

rudders to get under way. But by noon, those rudders failed since they were designed to operate in unison. Weather prevented the cutter Storis from getting to the Independence before noon the next day. The ship passed Coast Guard inspections, but the company is investigating the cause of the rudder failure. It is confident the ship will be ready to go Jun 7 in time for its salmon run.

ING 1929

See Christy.

JAMUNA (Bangladesh)

See Trishna-1.

JOYCE HALE (U.S.A.)

London, Apr 4 -- Following received from Coast Guard Portsmouth (Va), timed 1545, UTC: Tug Joyce Hale (760 gt, built 1980), towing 15 barges, grounded at Mile 88.5, River Mississippi, on Apr 2. Vessel is since believed to have refloated.

KAREN DANIELSEN (Bahamas)

Aarhus, Apr 4 -- General cargo Karen Danielsen is still in Nyborg. Its owners have stated that they expect to announce the sale of the vessel tomorrow. -- Lloyd's Agents.

KATERINA (Malta)

See under "Pollution."

KCL BANSHEE (Marshall Islands)

London, Apr 1 -- Cement KCL Banshee arrived Copenhagen Mar 30.

KONEMU (New Caledonia)

New Caledonia, Apr 4 -- General cargo Tehoro III (154 gt, built 1996), an ex-fishing vessel converted into cargo, following engine breakdown stranded on the reef Wadra of Isle of Pine on Apr 1. Product tanker Konemu (746 gt, built 1990), in ballast, trying to rescue Tehoro III, ran aground on the same reef. Despite the bad weather conditions, Tehoro III was then rescued with assistance from tug Sora and general cargo Laura (? Laura II) on Apr 3. Konemu, with its engine-room flooded, is still aground on the reef. At the end of this afternoon, the engine-room will be pumped and one tug will try to tow it. -- Lloyd's Agents.

New Caledonia, Apr 5 -- Product tanker Konemu was refloated off the reef this morning and is now under tow by tug Tamanou, en route for Noumea. We did not know at that time if this salvage was done under LOF contract. -- Lloyd's Agents.

MAARTEN JACOB (Netherlands)

London, Apr 6 -- Following received from Den Helder RCC, timed 1650, UTC: Fishing Maarten Jacob (495 gt, built 2001) had explosion on deck, possibly caused by an old piece of ammunition which was caught in its nets, in lat 52 26.5N, long 03 00E, at 1318, UTC, today. Three persons were killed. Vessel remains in the same position. There was no fire on board as a result and damage at present is unknown; we do not know if vessel

will be able to proceed under its own power. Explosion was reported by another fishing vessel which observed the incident.

London, Apr 6 -- A press report, dated today, states: Fishing Maarten Jacob was about 100 km off Ymuiden when it hauled a bomb on board in its nets today, causing an explosion which resulted in deaths and injuries, according to Dutch maritime authorities. Some crew were thrown overboard by the blast. A KNRM rescue squad vessel, a naval vessel and fisheries inspectorate vessel Barend Biesheuve put to sea in a bid to reach the stricken Maarten Jacob. A rescue helicopter and a Lynx helicopter were also sent to the area. Another fishing boat was already reported to be at the scene by late afternoon to lend assistance.

London, Apr 6 -- A total of three crewmen died as a result of the explosion on fishing Maarten Jacob. Two of the three were blown overboard and their bodies subsequently picked up from the sea by other vessels, while the third died on deck. The vessel is still seaworthy and will sail under its own power to harbour.

London, Apr 6 -- Following received from Den Helder RCC, timed 2110, UTC: Fishing Maarten Jacob, escorted by other fishing vessels, is presently entering the port of Ymuiden.

MARGARET ANN (U.S.A.)

London, Apr 1 -- Following received from Coast Guard Cleveland, timed 1245, UTC: Tug Margaret Ann (120 gt, built 1954), four persons on board, sank in Calumet Harbour, Chicago, Mar 31 when it was overtaken by the barges it was towing and rolled over by the towing cable. Vessel is now completely submerged except for the pilot house. The crewmen were all safely rescued. Two inspectors are en route to the scene and a helicopter overflight is to be utilised to assess pollution -- vessel had hydraulic fluid and lubricating oil on board.

London, Apr 4 -- Following received from Coast Guard Cleveland, timed 1330, UTC: Tug Margaret Ann remains in partially sunken condition in Calumet Harbour, with just the top of the pilothouse above the water. A salvage plan is presently being drawn up.

MARITIME ANTALYA (Panama)

Yokohama, Apr 4 -- Bulk Maritime Antalya arrived at Niigata on Mar 26. No repairs were carried out at Niigata. After completion of discharge, the vessel sailed from Niigata on Mar 31, arriving at Nagoya, on Apr 3, for discharge. According to the local agents, repair operations are now scheduled to be carried out at Ishinomaki, the final discharge port. -- Lloyd's Agents.

MARY CHRISTINA (Netherlands Antilles)

Brest, Apr 4 -- General cargo Mary Christina sailed Brest Apr 3 for Nauplia. -- Lloyd's Agents.

MAYFLOWER (U.S.A.)

London, Apr 1 -- Following received from Coast Guard Boston, timed 1235, UTC: Fishing Mayflower (119 gt, built 1979), official number 609985, four persons on board, reported disabled about 115 miles east of Nantucket, in lat 40 44N, long 67 28W, about 1700, EST, Mar 31. A Coast Guard cutter is due to proceed around 0800, EST, today to assist.

London, Apr 4 -- Following received from Coast Guard Boston, timed 1335, UTC: Fishing Mayflower was towed into New Bedford at 0530, UTC, Apr 3.

MSC CHRISTINA (Cyprus)

London, Apr 4 -- Following received from Larnaca RCC, timed 0845, UTC: C.c. MSC Christina is currently at Shanghai, undergoing repairs.

MSC ROBERTA (Panama)

London, Apr 3 -- Information received, dated today, states: C.c. MSC Roberta (39892 gt, built 1986) was in collision with bulk Aegean Wind (23646 gt, built 1983) Takoradi for Ilichevsk, in lat 40 24.8N, long 26 41.9E. MSC Roberta has sustained a 15-20 metre long gash to the mid section of its starboard side about two metres above the water level. Three people were killed onboard MSC Roberta. Aegean Wind lost its starboard side anchor as a result of the collision. No reported injuries to the 22 crew on board Aegean Wind. (Note -- MSC Roberta sailed Constantza Mar 30 for Gemlik and subsequently passed Istanbul Mar 31. Aegean Wind sailed Takoradi Mar 19 for Ilichevsk and subsequently passed Gibraltar Mar 28.)

London, Apr 4 -- A press report, dated Apr 3, states: Three Indian sailors were crushed to death when their container ship collided with a bulk carrier in the Dardanelles straits in western Turkey early today, maritime officials said. The victims were among the crew of Panamanian-registered c.c. MSC Roberta, which collided with Greek-registered bulk Aegean Wind, off the town of Gelibolu near the northern entrance to the straits, the officials said. MSC Roberta was on passage to Greece from Turkey and the Greek vessel was travelling from Ghana to Ukraine. The cause of the accident was not immediately clear. Both vessels were damaged and barriers would be erected to contain a small leak from the fuel tank of MSC Roberta, officials said, adding that the straits had been closed to traffic until the Panamanian vessel had been towed to a safe area.

Istanbul, Apr 4 -- At 0530, Apr 3, while transiting the Dardanelles, Greek flagged bulk Aegean Wind, Takoradi for Ilichevsk, in ballast, came into contact with laden c.c. MSC Roberta, Gemlik for Piraeus, near Gelibolu lighthouse. Three members of MSC Roberta's crew were killed and some injured. Damages occurred in way of the accommodation area and some oil leakage was noted. Barriers were placed to contain the leakage by Turkish Salvage Association. Aegean

Wind is presently waiting, anchored at Cankaya Cape and MSC Roberta is anchored at Gelibolu. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Apr 4 -- Following press release received from Atlantic Bulk Carriers Management Ltd, managers of bulk Aegean Wind, dated today: The managers of bulk Aegean Wind report that the vessel was in collision with c.c. MSC Roberta at approximatley 0535, Apr 3, in the Dardanelles Strait, Turkey. The vessel is fully laden with manganese ore loaded in Takoradi, Ghana. About 15 minutes before the incident, which occurred in darkness, Aegean Wind had disembarked the Dardanelles pilot and it is understood that the container ship was southbound. Most regretfully, it is understood that three crew members lost their lives on board MSC Roberta. No injuries are reported on board Aegean Wind and no pollution is reported from the vessel. Both vessels have safely anchored close to the Port of Gelibolu, under instructions from the local authorities. Three senior personnel from the managers office are attending the vessel and co-operating fully with the authorities and the investigation into the incident, as are the officers and seafarers onboard Aegean Wind. Aegean Wind is classed by the American Bureau of Shipping and entered with the West of England P+I Club.

London, Apr 5 -- Three Indian seafarers were reported killed on board a containership in the Dardanelles after a collision with a bulk carrier in the early hours of Sunday morning (Apr 3.). The unidentified crew men appear to have died on impact when the bow of Greek-registered bulk Aegean Wind collided with the side of c.c. MSC Roberta, headed for Greece from Turkey. Initial reports indicated that the collision, at the northern entrance to the straits near the town of Gelibolu, took place in darkness at about 0530. The bulk carrier, operated by Piraeus-based Atlantic Bulk Carriers Management, had just dropped off a pilot, while unconfirmed reports suggested that the Panamanian flagged containership was also manoeuvring in order to take on a pilot. Officials said the straits were closed for a few hours to traffic because of the accident. Both vessels remained moored close to the scene and were undergoing inspections yesterday. A spokesman for Atlantic Bulk Carriers described the damage to the bulker's bow as "significant", but could not say how long the vessel would be out of action, nor where it is likely to undergo repairs. There were no injuries to crew on board Aegean Wind, he told Lloyd's List. Reports stated that a small quantity of fuel oil had leaked from MSC Roberta during the incident.

NO.12 DECHENG (Taiwan)

London, Apr 5 -- A press report, dated today, states: A Chinese coastguard helicopter and two rescue ships from the Chinese mainland

yesterday went to the aid of a Taiwan fishing boat which caught fire off China's south coast. All the seven crew members of fishing No.12 Decheng which caught fire yesterday morning in Beibu Gulf, located in South China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, were rescued yesterday afternoon. The South China Sea Rescue Bureau of the Chinese Ministry of Communications dispatched the helicopter and ships to the accident site, west of Weizhou Isle in the Beibu Gulf and 60 nautical miles from Beihai, a mainland city on the Beibu Gulf. There were no fatalities reported. According to an official from the Guangzhou-based bureau, the ship involved, named No.12 Decheng, had seven crew aboard, four from the Chinese mainland and the three from Taiwan. "The captain who is from Taiwan is injured, as well as several other crew members," said the official. "But all of them are safe." he said they received the report of the accident at about 0905 hrs, yesterday. As the boat is from Taiwan, the SOS was first signalled to Taiwan, and then, through Hong Kong Marine Department, to rescue centres in Guangxi and Guangzhou. This delayed the crew's rescue by several minutes, he said. The helicopter flew from Zhanjiang. The two rescue ships are from Haikou and Beihai.

NORWAY (Bahamas)

London, Apr 6 -- A press report, dated today, states: Passenger Norway is not headed for the scrap heap, at least for now. Norwegian Cruise Line said yesterday the vessel will be sent to Malaysia for use in an undisclosed new venture. The move will also give custody of the ship to NCL's parent company, Hong Kong-based Star Cruises Group. Crippled by a boiler explosion in May 2003 in Miami Norway has been docked in Germany for the past 18 months awaiting a decision on its fate. NCL said it has spent \$10 million on upkeep in Germany but cannot continue to do so. The line is trying to clear its balance sheet of Norway in preparation for a possible public offering of stock later this year. In a statement, NCL said Star Cruises is making arrangements to have Norway towed to Port Klang for use in a new venture, "details of which will remain undisclosed for the time being." The National Transportation Safety Board has yet to release its final report on the accident or pinpoint a cause for the fatal boiler explosion.

OCEAN BRIDGE (Panama)

See "Malacca Strait" under "Piracy."

ONEIDA (Malta)

Buenos Aires, Mar 31 -- Bulk Oneida is now anchored in Rosario Roads. -- Lloyd's Agents.

ORADEA

Bucharest, Apr 5 -- Pusher tug Oradea is still laid up at Giurgiu, in

the same position. The prospects of it being sold/scrapped presently unknown. -- Lloyd's Agents.

ORIENTAL HIGHWAY (Liberia)

London, Apr 5 -- Vehicle Oriental Highway arrived Setubal Apr 3 from Gijon.

PACIFIC SKY (U.K.)

Sydney, Apr 1 -- Passenger Pacific Sky is to be repaired at Forgacs Cairncross Dockyard in Brisbane, where it was already scheduled to undergo its 24-month drydocking period during May. The problem has been identified as damaged pinions in its starboard gearbox. P&O Cruises Australia said that the period is too short to reposition another ship with the northern cruise season approaching, and has opted to drop five voyages over the period instead. -- Lloyd's List Daily Commercial News.

RED POINT (Italy)

Salvador, Mar 31 -- Chemical/oil carrier Red Point arrived in Itacoatiara Feb 11 and proceeded to Manaus same day for discharge. It subsequently sailed from Manaus Mar 1, arrived Fazendinha Mar 3 and went straight to Rio de Janeiro for repairs. - - Lloyd's Agents.

RIVER DUCHESS (Switzerland)

London, Apr 3 -- Swiss inland luxury passenger vessel River Duchess (built 2003), 110 metres long, 11,40 metres width, owned by River Duchess GmbH in Basel, left the terminal on the IJ in Amsterdam. While turning opposite the Central Station in Amsterdam, there was a failure in its manoeuvring system and the vessel's engine could only go forward at about 1300, local time, today. While it was heading straight for the Italian restaurant "Wilhemina Dok" on the water edge the captain could only blow the vessel's horn to warn them. The vessel hit the terrace so hard that it ran into the concrete for about one and a half metres. Also hitting the restaurant as well with its overhanging bow. One woman on the terrace was hit by the vessel and had to go to hospital with headwounds. The tourist vessel then pulled back and moored on the other side of the water with two passengers who also had to go to a hospital. According to the river police, who investigated this case, no alcohol was found with the crew and they think the accident has been caused by a technical failure. The restaurant has been closed while the danger of part of the building collapsing exists.

London, Apr 5 -- A press report, dated Apr 4, states: Passenger River Duchess crashed into a dockside restaurant in Amsterdam yesterday, damaging the premises and leaving three people injured, police said. Police said the vessel, which is owned by US firm Uniworld, went off course due to technical reasons. They said it could not go into reverse and smashed into a dock, destroying a terrace and part of the restaurant. About 20 people were seated on the terrace

when the accident occurred. A young girl was treated in the AMC hospital with head wounds after she fell trying to escape. Two people on the vessel were injured. Work was needed to be done to strengthen the restaurant's foundations due to the danger of collapse and it will remain temporarily closed. The 110-metre vessel was also severely damaged in the incident. River Duchess eventually sailed away from the scene of the accident about 1630 hrs. The passengers, mainly US nationals, were making a trip through the Netherlands and Belgium. The restaurant on the Wilhelmina-Dok on the IJ River is situated opposite the passenger terminal, newspaper "Het Parool" reported.

RIVER PRINCESS

London, Apr 3 -- A press report, dated Apr 2, states: A delegation of people of Candolim led by state Congress president, Mr Luizinho Faleiro, and Calangute legislator, Mr Agnelo Fernandes, today met the Governor, Mr S C Jamir and urged him to expedite the work on removal of grounded ore River Princess. The delegation brought to the notice of the Governor the statement of the representative of contracting firm Cross Chem, Mr Raju Bhaiya, to them as regards to the petition pending before the Bombay High Court regarding the title of the vessel. Mr Fernandes told The Navhind Times that the Governor assured the delegation that he was doing everything to see that the vessel was removed. The secretary tourism, Mr R Raghuraman, Director of tourism, Mr Elvis Gomes, and the managing director of Goa Tourism Development Corporation were present during the meeting. These officials informed the delegation that the work was going on as per schedule, said Mr Fernandes.

ROCHELLE

London, Apr 7 -- The crew of six from fishing Rochelle, owner Sea Vuna Fishing of Mossel Bay, which went aground on a rocky outcrop off Morris Point (lat 34 23S, long 21 26E) in the early hours of Apr 5, were all safely evacuated by the NSRI, according to the South African Maritime Safety Authority (SAMSA). The vessel had on board about 6,000 litres of marine diesel oil and 300 litres of lube oils and has been opened to the sea after being pounded on the rocks. By late afternoon same day it was declared a total constructive loss. At first light Apr 6 the wreck was revealed to have broken into three sections. The owner contracted the Aquatic Protection Group of Mossel Bay and Smit South Africa to remove whatever oils remained on the ship and to conduct cleanup operations along the beach. SAMSA reports that an inspection undertaken at low water has revealed little oil remaining on board. During yesterday the owners together with a local entrepreneur managed to remove most of the loose items of wreckage ashore including all nets. Cutting of

the hull has commenced. Samsa reports that the oil has dispersed except for small quantities of diesel oil trapped in rock pools. The K8 coastal surveillance aircraft surveyed the grounding and reports a light slick some four km offshore, which is four km long and seven km wide but is dispersing.

ROSEBANK (U.K.)

Maassluis, Mar 31 -- General cargo Rosebank is still under repair at Dockside, Ridderkerk. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents.

ROSTOK (Russia)

Bucharest, Apr 4 -- General cargo Rostok: The wreck removal has not been completed. The companies involved in this operation are now in the process of capsizing the wreck in order to empty the vessel and to facilitate its lifting. Wreck capsizing is estimated to last about one week. It is now reported that the operations to completely remove the wreck and clear the Sulina channel will not be completed before the end of April, 2005. -- Lloyd's Agents.

RYU GYONG (North Korea)

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

SABRATA STAR (Cayman Islands)

London, Apr 5 -- General cargo Sabrata Star sailed Antwerp 2010, Apr 3, arrived Rotterdam 0435, Apr 4, and sailed 2115 same day for Bremen.

SCHIEBORG (Netherlands)

Bremen, Apr 6 -- Ro/ro Schieborg: According to Bremerhavener Dock Betriebe, they expect the vessel will remain on their premises until at least the middle of this month. -- Lloyd's Agents.

SEA CLOUD (Antigua & Barbuda)

Ymuiden, Apr 2 -- Wijsmuller Salvage BV and Resolve Marine Group redelivered c.c. Sea Cloud back to their owners/operators having completed additional services after the successful refloating operation. After being refloated the vessel was moved alongside closely for further stabilisation work. The vessel thereafter was moved to Frederiksted for executing diving surveys. Following this, redelivery took place yesterday at 1051 local time. The operations were executed by Wijsmuller Salvage BV and Resolve Marine Group in full co-ordination and agreement with the US Coast Guard. The specialist worldwide available resources of Wijsmuller, as well as the excellent contacts with the US Coast Guard enabled operations to start immediately upon being contracted late in the afternoon on Mar 27, resulting in a controlled refloating about 40 hours later. -- Wijsmuller Salvage BV.

SEA EAGLE S. (St. Vincent & Grenadines)

Piraeus, Apr 4 -- General cargo Sea Eagle S. has completed temporary

underwater repairs and remains refloated, off the Salamis area. -- Lloyd's Agents.

SEVERN FISHER (Gibraltar)

Belfast, Apr 4 -- Product tanker Severn Fisher is still in Belfast port. Repairs are reported to be in the process of being completed and vessel is scheduled to sail within the next couple of days. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Belfast, Apr 7 -- Product tanker Severn Fisher sailed from Belfast at 1736, Apr 6, for Milford Haven. -- Lloyd's Agents.

SHINEI MARU NO.85 (Japan)

London, Apr 6 -- A press report, dated Apr 5, states: The master of Japanese fishing Shinei Maru No.85 had been drinking before his ship ran aground near Halifax two years ago, according to a new report. The Transportation Safety Board of Canada released its final report into the May 3, 2003, incident with Shinei Maru No.85 today. Investigators found: Safe bridge operating practices, procedures not followed, communication problems due to language barriers, acting master lacked proper certification, also drank alcohol before leaving port. As a result of the investigation, the safety board says Transport Canada will address the issue of crew certification under an International Maritime Organization convention. As well, the Atlantic Pilotage Authority is making sure piloting rules are clear. The board's role is to make recommendations to improve transportation safety, not assign blame.

SILVA (Cambodia)

Esbjerg, Apr 4 -- General cargo Silva is still in port at Esbjerg. -- Lloyd's Agents.

STA.ELENA (Philippines)

Manila, Mar 31 -- The Philippine Coast Guard reported that passenger Sta.Elena arrived at Dalahican port in Lucena City in the central Philippines at 1830, Mar 27, under tow of ferry Maria Sophia. Harbour tug Julian assisted in docking Sta. Elena, which could not manoeuvre because of a faulty steering mechanism. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

STAR DRIVANGER (Singapore)

See Christy.

STEEL QUEEN (Netherlands)

Stockholm, Apr 4 -- General cargo Steel Queen is presently discharging at Oxelosund. The vessel is due to depart at 2000 hrs, today and will be towed to Gdynia for repairs. -- Lloyd's Agents.

SUISKO-12

See "Chittagong, Bangladesh" under "Piracy."

SUN RISE I (Cambodia)

London, Apr 1 -- Following received from Ankara MSRCC, timed 1210, UTC: General cargo Sun Rise I: Fire was extinguished yesterday afternoon and it proceeded at 1700, yesterday to Constantza.

London, Apr 6 --- General cargo Sun Rise I arrived at Constantza Apr 4.

SUNRISE JEWEL (Liberia)

See "Dubai, United Arab Emirates" under "Pollution."

SUNSHINE STATE (U.S.A.)

Oakland, Calif, Apr 6 -- Tug Sunshine State (33 gt, built 1973) capsized and sank in the channel/entrance of the port of Oakland, San Francisco Bay, late yesterday afternoon. The tug master is reported to be missing; no other casualties. Entrance into Oakland harbour was temporarily closed. Vessels transiting the area have to report in to the Coast Guard vessel stationed at the accident site. -- Nauticus Surveyors.

London, Apr 7 -- A press report, dated Apr 6, states: Coast Guard officials called off a search today for a man who went missing after a tugboat capsized in the San Francisco Bay. The 45-foot tug Sunshine State capsized yesterday at approximately 2000 hrs, near the Oakland estuary entrance. Crewmember Albert Apazaza was rescued by the dredge barge Florida shortly after the tug overturned, but the search for a second crewmember was called off yesterday afternoon because the man was not wearing a lifejacket, officials said. A Coast Guard helicopter and an 87-foot patrol boat unsuccessfully searched for the missing man before being called off shortly after 1600 hrs. The tug was raised today and towed to a nearby port.

TAKASAGO 2 (Japan)

Yokohama, Apr 4 -- Lpg Takasago 2 grounded on rocks on Mar 29. Shell plates were torn, resulting in a considerable quantity of sea water entering into the engine-room. Cargo lightening operations are now being carried out at the position of grounding. The vessel remains aground on rocks. -- Lloyd's Agents.

TAMAR F.I. (Falkland Islands)

Stanley, Falklands Islands, Apr 5 -- Reported that general cargo Tamar F.I. (591 gt, built 1979) lost use of its main engine last night at Port Edgar, West Falklands. Understand vessel St. Brandon is being sent to provide assistance. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Port Stanley, Apr 7 -- General cargo Tamar F.I. is being towed into FIPASS, the floating port in Port Stanley, by ro/ro Saint Brandon. It should be alongside about 0930 hrs. -- Lloyd's Agents.

TAY HO 1 (Vietnam)

See Ham Luong 05.

TEHORU III (French Polynesia)

See Konemu.

TRISHNA-1

Karachi, Apr 5 -- Gabkhan channel in Jhalkathi of Southern Bangladesh has been re-opened to all kinds of water vessels after 24 days. The steamer service between Dhaka and

Khulna was re-launched Monday (Apr 4). However, vessel Trishna-1 could not be rescued. It was carrying 1,000 metric tons of cement and sank when in collision with product tanker Jamuna Mar 10. The Bangladesh authorities experimentally opened the channel for medium and large water vessels Sunday. Passenger laden steamer PS Lepcha coming from Jhalkathi ghat crossed the Gabkhan channel successfully Monday. The other water vessels have been crossing the channel without any difficulty.-- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

TSUBASA (Japan)

London, Apr 5 -- A press report, dated today, states: Chem.tank Tsubasa (198 gt, built 1990) capsized yesterday off Izu-Oshima Island in the Pacific, and its four crew members were rescued after being thrown into the sea but one of them was later pronounced dead at a hospital, the Japan Coast Guard said. The Coast Guard said Tsubasa capsized at around 1230, local time, about 14 kilometres north-west of the island, which is located some 120 km south of Tokyo.

VICUNA (Chile)

Santos, Apr 4 -- Following received from Lloyd's Sub-agents, Paranagua, dated Apr 2: Chemical/oil carrier Vicuna, which had explosions on board alongside Cattalini terminal, Paranagua, Nov 15, 2004, has finally been removed from the berth. The removal of the main section, which was seated in the bottom alongside the Cattalini's jetty, took place Mar 31. However, it has been reported that the bottom area is not totally clear. Apparently there still remains small but significant parts/debris which must all be collected and removed. The salvage company in charge of the removal operations is using special sounding devices to check the bottom to find out if there is any small debris which might be submerged and covered by soft mud. This firm expects to have the surroundings fully cleaned up shortly. Furthermore it has been advised that the Cattalini's jetty operation section must all be demolished and rebuilt accordingly. This will include the catwalks, pipelines connections and shore manifolds. The Cattalini terminal is expected to be fully operative again in around two months. -- Lloyd's Agents.

VIKING MULL (U.K.)

London, Apr 6 -- A press report, dated today, states: Forty firefighters battled a blaze in the engine-room of standby safety vessel Viking Mull at Leith docks today. The fire broke out at about 0730 hrs, after an explosion on board the vessel moored at the docks. Six pumps were sent to tackle the fire, and firefighters using breathing apparatus spent almost two hours working to cool down the area outside the engine-room, where the explosion occurred. There were no reported casualties or injuries. Crew members remained on Viking Mull

assisting firefighters with details of the vessel's layout. Graham Stevenson, assistant division officer with Lothian and Borders Fire Brigade, said: "The firefighters used breathing apparatus and water to cool the area around the engine-room. It was a dangerous situation because that area had to be cooled so the fire doesn't spread. And the crews also had to make sure there wasn't too much water on the boat, because that would affect its stability." Mr Stevenson said 40 firefighters had been dispatched from fire stations all over Edinburgh, forcing outlying crews to be called in to man the city stations.

Glasgow, Apr 6 -- Standby safety vessel Viking Mull sustained severe damage to starboard main engine at Leith today. The damage is presently being assessed and the vessel may remain under repair at Leith for two months. -- Lloyd's Agents.

VOLCAN DE TACANDE (Canary Islands)

Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Apr 6 -- Informed that ro/ro Volcan de Tacande was dry-docked and has undergone basic repairs to the hull, had the engine-room cleaned up and all the water taken out. The vessel is back in the water at Las Palmas waiting for final decisions to be taken whether they declare the incident as a Constructive Total Loss. -- Lloyd's Agents.

WIN LIEN SHENG 3 (Taiwan)

London, Apr 6 -- A press report, dated Apr 3, states: An Argentine naval vessel yesterday fired warning shots at Taiwan fishing Win Lien Sheng 3 (919 gt, built 1997) allegedly illegally fishing in Argentine Patagonian waters. However after several hours persecution the crew set Win Lien Sheng 3 on fire and jumped overboard before it went down. The Taiwan vessel was sighted 0430 hrs catching squid by the Argentine corvette Drummond during a routine fisheries protection patrolling mission east of Viedma, Chubut province, apparently seven miles inside Argentina's EEZ. On being sighted Win Lien Sheng 3, rapidly steamed towards international waters taking advantage of fog banks in the area. However after four hours persecution the Taiwan jigger was still closely followed by Drummond which continually, and in different languages, radioed stop engines messages. Mid morning air surveillance began and after consulting the Argentine Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence, the corvette fired several warning shots over the bow of the jigger. Apparently only one shot against the vessel damaged the rudder system. But unexpectedly the vessel was set on fire, and probably scuttled, by the crew which then jumped overboard and was rescued by other jiggers legally operating in the area and Drummond. By 1020 hrs the jigger had sunk and the Argentine corvette

headed for Mar del Plata where the rescued crew members were turned over to a Federal court.

London, Apr 6 -- Following navigation warning issued Apr 2: Fishing Win Lien Sheng 3 sunk in lat 42 28S, long 55 50.1W.

Buenos Aires, Apr 6 -- Fishing Win Lien Sheng 3 was found illegally fishing seven nautical miles inside the Exclusive Economic Argentine Zone, east of the city of Viedma, Province of Rio Negro, about 0430, Apr 1. Win Lien Sheng 3 did not heed a Navy vessel's orders and sped away out of the Economic Zone. For four hours the Navy vessel chased the Taiwanese vessel and sent several radio messages in different languages, which were not responded to by the crew. In view of the above, the Navy vessel fired some warning shots near the fishing vessel's bow in accordance with Argentine law. Pertinent instructions were requested from the Argentine Security Secretary and the Chancery, who authorised the Argentine vessel to shoot at the vessel in order to prevent its escape. One shot hit the fishing vessel's rudder stock in an effort to leave the vessel without steering. The Taiwanese crew started a fire on their vessel and jumped into the water in order to be rescued by other vessels fishing legally in the area. The crew was rescued by some fishing vessels and by corvette Drummond. They sailed to the port of Mar del Plata, where the crew were handed over to local authorities. The fishing vessel sank at 1020, Apr 2. -- Lloyd's Agents.

X-PRESS KAVERI (Singapore)

Kochi, Apr 1 -- C.c. X-Press Kaveri was taken in tow to Colombo Mar 29. Repairs not attempted at Tuticorin. Vessel undergoing dry docking at Colombo. -- Lloyd's Agents.

ZHEN HUA 1 (St. Vincent & Grenadines)

See "United States" under "Port State Control."

ZIM HOUSTON III (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Apr 6 -- Understand upon entering the container harbour at Oranjestad, Aruba, c.c. Zim Houston III (10742 gt, built 1993) rammed the wharf with such a force that the quay was severely damaged and a nearby building damaged by the shock effect. In the process the harbour pilot boat, which was moored there, was hit with such a force that the boat was impaled on the bulb bow. The first estimates of the damage is over US\$ 500,000. It was necessary to mobilise heavy equipment from the Valero refinery in order to hoist the pilot boat from the bulb and place it on the wharf. The ship had been waiting the whole night outside the port in order to discharge containers. (Note -- Zim Houston III sailed Kingston, Jam, Mar 27 for Curacao and at 1007, UTC, today, was moored in Oranjestad.)



CELEBES SEA

Manila, Apr 1 -- The Philippine Navy has intensified efforts to rescue three crewmen abducted from tug Bonggaya 91. Philippine Navy spokesperson Captain Geronimo Malabanan reported today that a cyclone-class patrol vessel from Naval Task Force Stingray has been added to the three patrol vessels currently scouring the waters surrounding the waters of Tawi-Tawi islands. Task Force Stingray is a 200-man Navy anti-terrorist unit based in Cebu equipped with naval and air assets for operations against terrorists in the central and southern Philippines area. Philippine authorities have deployed a joint Navy and Marine team to the area to search for the abducted crew members. "They are inspecting all boats in the vicinity." Capt Malabanan said. Bonggaya 91 and its barge Bonggaya 92, were on their way back to Sandakan from East Kalimantan, Indonesia, when they were attacked by pirates on Wednesday (Mar 30) near Pulau Matakang, off Semporna, in the east coast of Sabah. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

CHITTAGONG, BANGLADESH

Karachi, Apr 4 -- The Bangladesh government has arranged security guards on Indonesian vessel Suisko-12 off Chittagong coast following it coming under pirate attack last Friday (Apr 1.). The vessel is laying submarine cables as an assigned by the telecommunication ministry for implementation of the submarine cable project. Besides the armed guards on board, the Coast Guards have been asked to also provide necessary security cover to ensure smooth operation of the ship. According to a local media report, the ship carrying cables for linking Bangladesh with the submarine optical cable line came under attack of pirates at the outer anchorage on Friday night, leaving one of the crew injured. The Navy and Coast Guard rushed in and flushed out the pirates numbering 10 or 12 from the ship within 30 minutes. It is said the ship is due to start laying the 22.24-km long cable down the sea from Apr 5. It is due to be completed on Apr 10. Some 30 engineers from USA, Japan, Africa, Korea and Singapore are engaged for the work. Bangladesh will be linked with the submarine optical cable line at Zilonga landing station that came from Chennai, India. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

MALACCA STRAIT

London, Apr 1 -- A press report, dated today, states: Bulk Ocean Bridge (26014 gt, built 1998) was boarded in a pirate attack in the Malacca Strait,

officials said, as Malaysia announced plans to place armed police on ships using the vital trading route. It was attacked before dawn today by pirates who robbed the ship's safe of its cash before fleeing by boat, maritime officials told AFP. The attack took place at One Fathom Bank, a narrow area of the Strait just north of Port Klang at 0300 hrs, 1900, GMT, yesterday, said Noel Choong, head of the Piracy Reporting Centre of the International Maritime Bureau. Choong said the IMB was particularly concerned over the latest attack because "it is very rare for pirates to hit ships there. Being a narrow part of the Strait, it could pose a navigational threat to other ships, especially if the pirates remove the crew and leave no one on the bridge," he said. With the recent increase in attacks, Malaysia has announced that it will also place armed and uniformed police officers on board tugs and barges plying the waterway. This is in addition to an escort service launched last month for tugs and barges carrying valuable cargo, the New Straits Times reported.

SINGAPORE STRAIT

Singapore, Apr 6 -- The crew of a Japanese oil tanker have used powerful fire hoses to fend off an attack by pirates in the Singapore Strait. The International Maritime Bureau said pirates in seven fishing boats accosted the east-bound tanker near Indonesia's Karimun Islands yesterday afternoon, the third attack on a Japanese vessel in three weeks in the busy shipping lane which carries more than a quarter of world trade. Jayant Abhyankar, deputy director of the IMB said pirates from one of the boats steered close to the Japanese vessel and attempted to board the tanker while the remaining six hovered around it. But the small craft was beaten off by strong water jets from fire hoses used by the crew. The tanker then increased speed and fled. The centre could not confirm the total number of pirates or if they were armed, but said all twenty-five crew members of the vessel were safe. The Singapore and Indonesian coast guards have been alerted, said Abhyankar. -- Reuters.



GIBRALTAR

Gibraltar, Apr 4 -- Chem.tank Catalyst was released from detention by port surveyors at 1400 today for one direct voyage from Gibraltar to a repair yard in Dakar, in ballast condition, and with conditions imposed from the previous port state inspection in Canada -- from which vessel was released Feb 8 -- to be observed. Vessel will be departing Gibraltar this afternoon. -- Lloyd's Agents.

UNITED STATES

London, Apr 1 -- Following received from Coast Guard Seattle, timed 1649, UTC: Semi-sub HL vessel Zhen Hua 1 (29330 gt, built 1976) was detained in Puget Sound Mar 21 by a Captain of the Port Order, in respect of numerous SOLAS violations. The vessel is still anchored in Elliot Bay, under detention. (Note -- Zhen Hua 1 arrived Seattle Mar 21.)



ATLANTICA (Honduras)

London, Apr 5 -- The unpaid Ukrainian crew of crude oil tanker Atlantica who had the vessel arrested in Florida last September, finally received their cash last week, three months after the vessel was sold for \$540,000 in a judicial auction. The Honduras-flagged vessel was sold in December, after shipowner Maurice Denis, a Miami businessman, failed to post a \$225,000 bond under an earlier court order. Magistrate Theodore Klein of the US District Court for the Southern District of Florida granted an ore tenus motion brought by the crew members to assign their wage claims priority over the monetary amounts claimed by intervening plaintiffs in the original suit. The sale proceeds remained in escrow with the clerk of the court pending determination of the distribution priority. Under Magistrate Klein's order, the 17 crewmembers including the master, Gennadiy Garbanyov, received \$135,992 representing wage arrears through to the vessel's arrest in September. These months included a period when the men claimed to have sailed with few supplies, often being reduced to eating barracudas fished off the vessel's side as it plied the Caribbean trade. A further sum of \$37,239 was awarded to Mykola Kovalenko, a crew member who suffered from lip cancer. He had filed a claim for maintenance and cure alleging common law negligence and Jones Act negligence. Ross Toyne, attorney for the plaintiff crew, said a subsequent lawsuit claiming up to \$250,000 in penalty wages on behalf of the crew was under consideration. Magistrate Klein's order allots the first priority expenses to substitute custodian National Maritime Services, a unit of National Liquidators of Fort Lauderdale, which was out of pocket by \$220,000 towards maintaining the vessel and the crew during its arrest.

B&E TRES (Philippines)

Manila, Apr 6 -- General cargo B&E Tres has been released by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) after a month under detention for allegedly carrying illegally cut lumber. "The lumber being carried by B&E Tres was found to have originated from a

private, commercial tree farm which is not covered by the current log ban," Forester Sonny Danganan, the case officer in charge of B&E Tres said. "The vessel carried all the necessary permits necessary for the carriage of the cargo, so we let it go", he added. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

CONDOR (Philippines)

Manila, Apr 6 -- Philippine-registered vessel Condor remains under detention at the Philippine Navy, Naval Forces Central Visayas Headquarters at Lapu-Lapu City, in central Philippines. Condor was allegedly carrying 200,000 board feet of illegally cut lumber from Davao City to Cebu when it was intercepted by a Philippine Navy patrol boat on Jan 24. Charges have been filed against the ship's master, 18 crew and ship owner for being accessories to the smuggling of illegal cut lumber. It's crew is out on bail. Cebu-based Goodwill Lighterage Corp., owner of the vessel, recently filed a petition before a court in Mandaue city, Cebu province asking for the release of the vessel. The Department of Natural Resources and Environment, which filed charges against the vessel owner and crew, said it would ask the court to reject the ship owner's petition. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

ELENI (Romania)

Chennai, Apr 5 -- General cargo Eleni is currently still in Chennai Port premises, pending court cases. -- Lloyd's Agents.

ELQUI (Uruguay)

Stanley, Apr 7 -- Fishing Elqui is still moored alongside the pier at Stanley. The master is due in court on Apr 18, having pleaded not guilty to illegally fishing for toothfish in South Georgia waters. -- Lloyd's Agents.

ENDEAVOR II (Greece)

Karachi, Apr 1 -- Kanika Marine Ltd. have taken the possession of crude oil tanker Endeavor II II and are waiting for port clearance from the Port Authority, to leave the port immediately. The new owner paid \$7.19 million (Rupees 428 million) for the vessel and has deposited the money with the Sindh High Court (SHC) until the case is resolved. It is expected that new owner would sell the vessel in either the Bangladesh or Indian shipbreaking markets. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Karachi, Apr 7 -- Crude oil tanker Endeavor II sailed Pakistan Apr 2. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

FISHING VESSELS SEIZED BY PAKISTAN

Karachi, Apr 5 -- As a goodwill gesture on the visit of Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao, who is arriving on a three-day official visit to Pakistan beginning today, the Pakistan government has announced the releasing of all Taiwan-origin Chinese fishermen, arrested by Pakistan's Maritime Security Agency (MSA). Their two trawlers were also

confiscated 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). The Chinese government had requested their release, local media reported. The government has also ordered the return of their trawlers as well. The two trawlers loaded with some 70 tonnes of tuna fish, were registered in Visakhapatnam city in the southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

KEMPO (Norway)

London, Apr 7 -- Understood fishing Kempo (676 gt, built 1970) is under arrest at Las Palmas. (Note -- Kempo arrived Las Palmas Mar 4.)

MAHDI (Nigeria)

London, Apr 6 -- A press report, dated Apr 4, states: A Federal High Court sitting in Lagos has ordered the Nigerian Navy to release forthwith, chem.tank Mahdi, belonging to Al-Dawood Shipping Lines Limited, allegedly unlawfully detained at the Defence jetty in Marina, Lagos. The order, issued by Justice Dan Abutu, was contained among two reliefs sought by the applicant over the vessel's detention. Respondents included the Nigerian Navy; Chief of Naval Staff; Rear Admiral Antonio Bob-Manuel, Flag Officer Commanding Western Naval Command; Captain Peter Duke, Commanding Officer NNS Beecroft and the Attorney-General of the Federation. Abutu had earlier ordered the release of Mahdi on Feb 18 and declared that continued detention of the vessel when the report of the analyst in Exhibit NN1 was received without notifying the first applicant (Al-Dawood) of the grounds for the action and without arraigning any person in court for the offence in respect of which the vessel was detained, was contrary to section 44(1) of 1999 Constitution and therefore unconstitutional. The presiding judge had then ordered that the vessel be released to the 1st applicant, if within 14 days of the first order, no person is brought before a court of law to be prosecuted in connection with the offence for which the vessel was detained. Al-Dawood, before the latest order on Mar 23, had petitioned President Olusegun Obasanjo, Minister of Defence, and Chief of Defence Staff, on the vessel which was arrested and detained by the Navy since Dec 31, 2003, on the suspicion that said vessel was carrying products suspected to be crude oil. In the letters, the applicant insisted that Mahdi's cargo was fuel oil, which was later confirmed by laboratory tests conducted on samples taken from the ship's hold by the Navy. Their complaint on unjust detention is backed by a letter from the Ministry of Defence, written to the Chief of Naval Staff, wherein the court order was referred to, as well as the results of the tests on the vessel's cargo samples.

PATMOS (Greece)

London, Apr 1 -- A report in "Newsfront" dated today, states: Passenger ro/ro Patmos was again seized end of March by a private creditor in pursuit of a Euro 30,650 claim against the registered owners, Dane Sea Lines.

SANTORINI SKY (Greece)

Piraeus, Apr 5 -- Ro/ro Santorini Sky remains at Perama port, Piraeus. The vessel was not sold (at auction on Mar 16) and a new auction is set for Apr 20. -- Lloyd's Agents.

SENTINEL (Comoros)

Genoa, Apr 1 -- General cargo Sentinel is still under court arrest at Genoa. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Pipeline Accidents

**DADHAR AREA, PAKISTAN**

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

Pollution

**DELAWARE RIVER, UNITED STATES**

See Athos 1 under "Marine."

DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

London, Apr 5 -- A press report, dated Apr 4, states: A leakage in the fuel pipeline of a tanker under maintenance at Dubai Dry Docks caused an oil spill stretching two miles in the open sea, Reda Hassan Salman, Head of the Environment Protection and Safety Section (EPSS) at Dubai Municipality's Environment Department, said yesterday. "The Coast Guard informed the EPSS of the oil spill, following which vessels from the Marine Unit were dispatched to the site for survey. We found that one of the tankers which was inside the dry docks for maintenance at that time, released a quantity of fuel which polluted the waters and also spread over a two-mile area outside the docks," Salman said. He noted that the investigations being carried out by the section were in the final stage and are focused on finding out the reasons behind the polluting discharge. "Our initial findings suggest a fault in one of the internal pipelines connecting the two fuel tanks of the ship. We are looking into the matter, and we will take into consideration the actions that were taken to prevent the spillage, and actions taken, immediately after the oil spill was discovered, to minimise the impact of pollution on the marine environment," Salman said, explaining that the

section is investigating if concerned authorities were notified of the spill "immediately" after it was discovered. He added that keeping this in mind, "the department (in issuing a) violation penalty will take into consideration the act (polluting marine environment) under light of the Federal Law 24 of 1991 for Protection and Development of Environment, for which the civic body's Environment Department is the competent enforcement authority." The civic body will initiate action against the violator as mentioned in specific and relevant articles of Chapter Two of the Federal Law, Salman added. The cleaning operation of the section was co-ordinated with the Coast Guard, Dubai Police Marine section, and Dubai Police air wing.

Dubai, Apr 5 -- The vessel involved in the spillage incident at Dubai was crude oil tanker Sunrise Jewel (156408 gt, built 1992).

KATERINA (Malta)

London, Apr 6 -- A chief engineer has been given an eight-month jail sentence in the US after being found guilty of obstructing justice in relation to pollution offences. The master and second engineer of bulk Katerina could also face prison terms, while shipowner DST Shipping has been fined \$1m. Los Angeles Judge Florence-Marie Cooper argued that the violations were "planned and ordered by a despicable corporation" and that the engineer did "intentionally participate in these crimes." But DST vice-president Stavros Tsolakis yesterday disputed some of the claims made in a US Department of Justice press release. He added that the chief engineer, Edgardo Guinto, may be free in a matter of weeks. The 49-year-old Filipino national has already spent more than six months confined to a Los Angeles hotel room while fitted with an electronic tag. The other two seafarers should also find that their time on remand will be deducted from their sentences. According to the US Department of Justice, Mr Guinto pleaded guilty to the obstruction charge in January, admitting that he allowed the bypassing of the vessel's oil-water separator. He is also said to have instructed ratings to remove and conceal the bypass pipe when the ship came into Long Beach, and to have made fraudulent entries in the vessel's oil record book. The master, Ioannis Kallikis, 65, a Greek national, pleaded guilty in February to an obstruction of justice charge. The US Department of Justice maintains that Capt Kallikis admitted acting corruptly and with the intent to impede a US Coast Guard investigation. Capt Kallikis was due to be sentenced yesterday. Second engineer Rolan Sullesta, 42, pleaded guilty in January to one charge of obstruction of justice for concealing one of two bypass pipes used from US Coast Guard inspectors. Mr Sullesta is scheduled to be sentenced next Monday (Apr 11). DST, which is based in Thessaloniki,

Greece, allegedly pleaded guilty to two felony charges related to this water pollution case and was fined \$1m. The US Department of Justice claims that DST acknowledges that "on numerous occasions" during an approximately six-month period in 2004, Katerina discharged oil-contaminated bilge water and oil sludge into the ocean. "Furthermore, the shipping company acknowledges that it directed the Katerina crew to conceal the bypass pipe from US authorities," it adds. But Mr Tsolakis countered that DST was not "despicable", but a quality operator with a 100-year history. All shore-based managers have a masters' degree, while two have PhDs. In particular, Mr Tsolakis said, claims that the company sought to destroy evidence are "completely untrue and baseless." Any liability arose from the actions of shipboard employees, not management. DST had not committed felonies itself, he insisted.

POOR KNIGHTS ISLANDS, NEW ZEALAND

London, Apr 4 -- Following received from Wellington MRCC, timed 2320, UTC: There are currently about 100 canisters containing chemicals used to clean the holds of vessels in the sea near the Poor Knights Islands Marine Reserve, north of Auckland. The canisters are believed to have come from a vessel, name unknown at present. Efforts are under way to recover the canisters.

London, Apr 5 -- A press report, dated Apr 4, states: The navy dive tender HMNZS Manawanui has cleared an area on its stern deck to take on potentially lethal cargo from the sea off the Northland coast. The vessel was due today to pick up the first of about 40 orange packages of poison used to fumigate holds in ships, particularly logging ship where pests and animals could be hidden among the log cargoes. However, the magnesium phosphide chemical can release a dangerous toxic fumes when mixed with water which could be lethal to people. They were found floating off the Northland coast over the weekend (Apr 2-3) and sparked a maritime crisis involving emergency authorities, the police, firefighters and the Maritime Safety Authority. The public was warned to stay well clear of any packages and immediately call the 111 emergency line and take a GPS position so they could be tracked and recovered. Manawanui left the Devonport naval base in Auckland about midnight. When it reached Marsden Point at the entrance to Whangarei Harbour about 0800, today, it took on chemical experts, firefighters, an MSA representative and specialised equipment to pick up the packages from the sea. It was due about six nautical miles north east of the Poor Knights about 1330, today, where it would collect the packages from the sea. "They would be lifted onto the Manawanui in a controlled manner and would be placed in a designated safe area aboard it. That should allow any gases to vent into the

air safely," said MSA spokesman, Matt Johnson. "The recovered ones will be taken to a secure land-based hazardous chemical storage area at Marsden Point. That will allow that venting process to continue. That could take several days. "After that, it is likely the stuff will be buried. It basically becomes inert," he said. The packages are between 1.5m and 2m long, 45cm wide and 15cm thick. The packages may be spread over a 400 sq km area near the world renowned dive spot at the Poor Knights Islands off the Northland coast and boats have been urged to call on VHF channel 16 if they spot any of the packages. Mr Johnson said none was yet thought to have washed up on the Northland coast. A helicopter was also expected to co-ordinate the salvage by the Manawanui. The first of the packages was found by recreational fishermen east of the Poor Knights on Saturday (Apr 2) and there were other possible sightings of the packages as far north as Cape Brett. They were thought to have come from one of the numerous vessels which passed through the area and the MSA was trying to identify which vessel may have lost the potentially lethal cargo.

London, Apr 5 -- A press report, dated today, states: Hazard specialists have retrieved 13 dangerous packages from the sea near the Poor Knights Islands off Northland's east coast. The packages, consisting of 2m orange cardboard tubes which can give off toxic gas, should not be handled and the Fire Service should be called if any are found.

London, Apr 6 -- A press report, dated today, states: The maritime crisis involving hazardous material dumped off the Northland coast is over. A navy vessel has recovered 23 of the estimated 40 packages of potentially lethal chemical used to fumigate ships' holds and authorities believe the risk from the rest is very low. They may have sunk. The crisis team set up in Whangarei during the weekend to co-ordinate the search and recovery of the packages, has been disbanded and the navy's dive tender, HMNZS Manawanui, has been stood down. The packages contained magnesium phosphide and may have been floating in the water north east of the Poor Knights Islands, off the coast of Northland, for several days, possibly longer than a week. When mixed with water the chemical produces a toxic gas which kills pests, bugs and animals which may be in ships' holds, particularly log carriers. However, authorities believe seawater may have penetrated the wax wrapping on the packages and activated the chemicals at sea. The 23 packages recovered by the navy in the last two days were still giving off traces of gas but at very low levels. Maritime Safety Authority (MSA) spokesman, Matt Johnson, said authorities were confident there was now little or no danger from the packages but warned that in the unlikely event a package washed ashore, people should treat it with

extreme caution. He said there was also little likelihood the chemicals posed an environmental threat to the sea and sea life because they had been diluted by seawater. The MSA said it was continuing the search for the ship which dumped or lost the packages. Even if they had been lost overboard accidentally, an offence had been committed by not reporting the loss, the MSA said. A maximum fine of \$200,000 could be imposed. The crisis team was due to hold a post-incident briefing today to evaluate the response to an incident believed to be the first of its type in New Zealand. The recovered packages were likely to be buried.



AUSTRALIA

London, Apr 2 -- A press report, dated today, states: The State Emergency Service has been inundated with calls for help across the south-west of Western Australia as heavy rain has caused rivers to burst their banks, flooding homes and causing widespread damage to roads. The town of Broomehill has received more than 150 mm, or half its annual rainfall, in the past 24 hours. Residents had to be evacuated from their homes in Tambellup last night as the local river burst its banks, flooding homes. There has also been damage to property in Narrogin, Katanning and Denmark. SES spokeswoman Linda Elms says there have been 150 call outs for help in Albany. "Most of the major damage has been for flooding, with some minor roof damage from blocked gutters," she said. "Retaining walls and fences have fallen down and there is some minor damage with trees down across the road. Parts of Albany have actually been flooded out - Elleker in particular - that's where I live and I'm surrounded by water now."

AZORES

St. Michael's, Apr 1 -- Bulk Dion experienced very bad weather while moored alongside the quay on discharge operations thus causing some starboard hull scratches as a consequence of the vessel rolling/bumping against the piers fender chains. After completion of the discharge the vessel left Ponta Delgada Mar 31 bound for Setubal. No repairs have been carried out at Ponta Delgada. -- Lloyd's Agents.

INDONESIA

London, Apr 7 -- A press report, dated today, states: Flooding over the past week has swept away hundreds of hectares of paddy fields in Jambi province, an official said on Tuesday (Apr 5). Djunaidi Ilyas, the head of the agricultural office at the Jambi provincial administration, said

flooding swept over the paddy fields just days after the farmers had planted their seeds. Flooding affected several regencies, including Batanghari, Sarolangun and Muarojambi. Djunaidi said the government was distributing five tons of rice seeds to farmers whose fields were affected by the flooding.

IRAQ

London, Apr 4 -- A press report, dated today, states: Navigation and operations at Basrah and Khor Al Amaya Oil Terminals were halted at 2000, Apr 3, due to rough weather.

London, Apr 5 -- A press report, dated today, states: Sailing and berthing at the Basrah and Khor Al Amaya oil terminals resumed at 1600 hrs, today, following an improvement in the rough weather which had disrupted operations.

NEW ZEALAND

London, Apr 6 -- A press report, dated today, states: One South Wairarapa station is reported to have lost an estimated 30% of its topsoil on grazing blocks and 16 culverts in last week's severe rainstorm. Authorities are still assessing how much devastation the storm caused as reports of damage continue to trickle in, especially from coastal areas of South Wairarapa. A huge sweep of the coast was battered in the storm, which brought down hundreds of slips, wiped out bridges and fences, tore away culverts and stripped topsoil. At Ngawihi, near the North Island's southern tip, tonnes of soil and boulders came hurtling down, burying trailers and bulldozers used to tow fishing vessels out to sea. Further towards Cape Palliser a bridge was swept away, isolating those living nearby, and even though water levels have dropped, access is still restricted to vehicles capable of fording the stream. The large coastal stations along the stretch are estimated to have sustained millions of dollars of damage with chains of fencing flattened, farm tracks obliterated by slips and trees undermined and toppled. South Wairarapa District councillor Dianne Phelps, who lives on the coast, said the damage was worse than that caused by floods in February and August last year. The storm had come in from the east bringing "18 inches of rain or more." Mrs Phelps said strangely the storm had hit some areas and virtually missed others at intervals along the coast. The only positive had been that houses had not been damaged, she said.

TROPICAL CYCLONE "ADELINE"

London, Apr 5 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: Tropical cyclone "Adeline" located near lat 13.4S, long 91E, at 0600, UTC, today. Movement past six hours 270 deg at nine knots. Position accurate to within 40 nautical miles, based on centre located by satellite. Present wind distribution: Maximum sustained winds 65 knots with gusts to 80 knots. Radius of 50-knot winds 30

nautical miles. Radius of 34-knot winds 70 nautical miles north-east and north-west and 60 nautical miles elsewhere. Forecast for 0600, UTC, Apr 6: Position lat 13.6S, long 87E. Maximum sustained winds 75 knots with gusts to 90 knots.

London, Apr 7 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office: Tropical cyclone "Adeline" near lat 14.5S, long 82.4E, at 0600, UTC, Apr 7. Movement past six hours 250 deg at 15 knots. Position accurate to within 60 nautical miles, based on centre located by satellite. Maximum sustained winds 100 knots with gusts to 125 knots. Radius of 64-knot winds 25 nautical miles north-west quadrant, 20 nautical miles elsewhere. Radius of 50-knot winds 40 nautical miles north-west quadrant, 30 nautical miles elsewhere. Radius of 34-knot winds 80 nautical miles north-west quadrant, 70 nautical miles elsewhere. Forecast for 0600, UTC, Apr 8: Position lat 16.6S, long 76.1E. Maximum sustained winds 90 knots with gusts to 110 knots. Radius of 64-knot winds 20 nautical miles. Radius of 50-knot winds 30 nautical miles. Radius of 34-knot winds 65 nautical miles.

TROPICAL CYCLONE "ISANG"

London, Apr 5 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: Tropical cyclone "Isang" located near lat 19.7S, long 66E, at 0600, UTC, today. Movement past six hours 225 deg at eight knots. Position accurate to within 40 nautical miles, based on centre located by satellite. Present wind distribution: Maximum sustained winds 35 knots with gusts to 45 knots. Forecast for 0600, UTC, Apr 6: Position lat 23.3S, long 64.9E. Maximum sustained winds 35 knots with gusts to 45 knots.

London, Apr 6 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0600, UTC, today, the centre of tropical cyclone "Isang" was located near lat 24.6S, long 66.6E, approximately 575 nautical miles east-south-east of Mauritius, has tracked south-southeast, or 160 degs, at 17 knots over the past six hours. The position is accurate to within 40 nautical miles and is based on the centre located by satellite. Present wind distribution: maximum sustained winds: 55 knots, gusts 70 knots. Radius of 50 knot winds: 15 nautical miles in all four quadrants. Radius of 34 knot winds: 50 nautical miles in the north-east, south-west and north-west quadrants and 60 nautical miles in the south-east quadrant. Maximum significant wave height is 16 feet. At 0600, UTC, Apr 7, the centre is predicted to be near lat 30.1S, long 68.4E, with maximum sustained winds of 45 knots and gusts of 55 knots and dissipating as a significant tropical cyclone over water.

UNITED STATES

London, Apr 4 -- A press report, dated today, states: A slow-moving spring storm dumped up to 19 inches of snow on north-western

Pennsylvania, stranding motorists for hours yesterday on a 22-mile stretch of highway and knocking out power to tens of thousands of homes. Interstate 90 was closed from the New York state line to Erie as emergency officials tried to clear roads and reach stranded motorists with snowmobiles and four-wheel drive vehicles. "In some places, we've heard people have been stranded for four to six hours with children," Nick Sleptzoff, Erie County's director of emergency management, said yesterday evening. There were no immediate reports of serious injuries or accidents, authorities said. Dozens of cars were stranded on the highway. Sleptzoff said hundreds more were stranded across the rest of the county. Erie received 12.5 inches of snow over the weekend (Apr 2-3). Waterford got 19 inches and about 14 inches fell in Corry, according to the National Weather Service. The storm also knocked out power to 25,000 customers, officials said. Temperatures near 50 were predicted for today, raising fears of flooding. Heavy rains drenched parts of New Jersey over the weekend, flooding low-lying areas and causing thousands of people to evacuate homes threatened by the rising water. The heavy rains began Saturday and persisted until midday yesterday, prompting acting Gov. Richard J. Codey to declare a state of emergency. Authorities urged hundreds of residents in each of six counties to leave low-lying areas and closed some state offices today near the Delaware River. Trenton Mayor Douglas H. Palmer ordered the evacuation of a neighbourhood known as "The Island" late Saturday. Gas and electric service was shut off to homes, while displaced residents were offered space at a high school shelter. Palmer said residents would not be allowed to return until at least Wednesday, and further evacuations may be needed. In northern New Jersey, moderate to major flooding was expected in seven rivers. All the rivers had crested by early yesterday, and most were expected to reach at least 2 feet above flood levels before slowly receding today. Some larger rivers, such as the Delaware, were expected to continue rising through at least this afternoon. Trenton city spokesman Kent Ashworth said officials expected the Delaware to crest higher than it did last September, when the remnants of Hurricane "Ivan" forced thousands of residents to flee their homes for several days. In Pennsylvania, several people had to be rescued by boat yesterday after rising floodwaters forced the evacuation of about 200 homes in Northampton County. The water reached nearly the level of traffic lights in the community of Easton, flooding many downtown buildings.

London, Apr 5 -- A press report, dated today, states: Floodwaters that chased thousands of New Jersey residents from homes began receding yesterday but many people will not be able to return to their homes for days.

Two-thirds of the 3,500 New Jersey evacuees live along the Delaware River, while the remainder were in the Passaic River basin in the north-east. No deaths or serious injuries were reported but Gov Richard J. Codey estimated that property damage would approach \$30 million, about the same amount caused by remnants of hurricane "Ivan" in September. Parts of the state have seen as much as seven inches of rain in the past 30 days, much of that since a Mar 23 rain and snowstorm. That was followed by a heavy Easter rainstorm and then the downpour Saturday (Apr 2). "In the last two weeks, we've had more than a month and a half of rainfall, with some snowmelt in there," said David Robinson, state climatologist.

London, Apr 6 -- A press report, dated today, states: Thousands of people packed into shelters, hotels or friends' houses yesterday, forced from their homes by flooding that caused millions of dollars in damage in New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania. Nearly 6,000 New Jersey residents and another 5,715 in Pennsylvania evacuated their homes after the Delaware River surged out of its banks over the weekend, state officials said yesterday. The flooding was blamed for at least one death. Officials searched yesterday for two men missing from a van that was swept into a swollen creek. New Jersey officials asked that the state be declared a federal disaster area, and officials in Pennsylvania and New York sought disaster declarations for affected counties. Some 3,200 homes were damaged in New Jersey, officials said, and hundreds more were damaged in Pennsylvania and New York, including at least 160 homes valued at some \$16 million in the Town of Deerpark, N.Y. Many bridges and roads in Pennsylvania were impassable and dozens of schools and businesses were closed. Many state employees in New Jersey remained off the job in Trenton, where the Delaware River flooded roads and the Statehouse garage. New Jersey's acting Gov. Richard J. Codey estimated that property damage approached \$30 million. In Monroe County, Pa., businesses had already reported \$40 million worth of damage as yesterday afternoon, "and that's conservative," said Harry Robidoux, director of emergency services. At least 300 homes countywide were flooded, he said. Despite the flooding, the National Weather Service estimated New Jersey received a total of only two-to-four inches of rain over the weekend (Apr 2-3). But water levels had already been high from previous storms, and melting snow upstream in New York state contributed heavily to the flooding. While the Delaware River receded below its banks yesterday, the Susquehanna, Chenango and Tioughnioga rivers weren't expected to follow for a day or two, and more rain was expected later in the week, the National Weather Service said.

London, Apr 6 -- A press report, dated today, states: High winds and heavy rains caused damage and injuries today in central Mississippi as lines of violent thunderstorms rolled across the southern states. No deaths were reported but Lea Stokes of the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency said there were people hurt south-west of Brandon. "We have emergency rescue teams in the area," she said. Tornado touchdowns were reported in Scott County near Osyka and in Pike County, Stokes said. "We don't have a lot more right now; everything is still coming in." Pike County Civil Defence volunteer Kevin McKenzie said there were reports of minor injuries, numerous homes were damaged and there was extensive damage to timber and utility lines. "The south-east part of the county has been hit hard," McKenzie said. Storm watches and warnings were posted for sections of Mississippi, Louisiana and Tennessee. The National Weather Service posted a flood watch for north-western Alabama. There were numerous reports of mobile home damage in Mississippi's Rankin County, along with damaged roofs and downed trees and power lines. Some roads were blocked by fallen trees. Also damaged was a new school under construction at Brandon. Construction trailers were overturned and there appeared to be extensive roof damage, said Truman Johns, a superintendent for the company building the school.

London, Apr 7 -- A press report, dated Apr 6, states: Sullivan County (in New York State) officials yesterday estimated that countywide infrastructure damage to local municipalities is some \$16.5 million with another \$2.5 million in damage to individual property. Those figures are expected to increase once state and federal emergency inspectors arrive on the scene to assess the damage. County Legislature Public Service Committee Chairwoman Leni Binder, who toured the stricken areas, said the hardest hit were Hasbrouck and Loch Sheldrake. Foxcroft, the home for senior citizens, was also devastated, she said. The Neversink Campgrounds is "virtually gone." The Orange/Sullivan Office of the American Red Cross is continuing to staff service centers in Port Jervis and Monticello to assist families who are in distress as a result of the storm damage. In two days so far, the Port Jervis office had seen more than 160 families, most of which are without shelter. The Meyers Grove section of the Town of Deerpark was essentially wiped out and officials are not letting residents return to their homes until they are inspected for structural integrity. Clean up efforts are also continuing in Ulster County, where floods tore up roads and flooded houses.



INDONESIA

London, Apr 1 -- A press report, dated today, states: Bad weather is hampering relief efforts on the Indonesian island of Nias, the area worst hit by Monday's earthquake. Rescue workers have abandoned the search for survivors in the main town, Gunung Sitoli, and will now concentrate their efforts on Nias' remote villages. The UN has confirmed that more than 500 people were killed in Monday's earthquake off Indonesia. However, up to 1,000 are feared dead in total. Today, international rescuers said they had abandoned their search for survivors in Nias' main town of Gunung Sitoli. "We found one person alive yesterday morning, that was the last person. It's been 24 hours since then and there's been nothing," UN search and rescue official Olaf Lingjerde said. "After three days the survivor rate goes down, especially when you have this weather," he said, referring to the heavy rains which have hit the island in recent days. Mr Lingjerde added that rescuers were moving on to other parts of the island. Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono - who visited Nias on Thursday - urged quake survivors to be patient, amid reports that aid was coming too slowly. Aid is reported to have become bottle-necked at mainland ports and airports, and broken bridges and roads are making travel away from Gunung Sitoli impossible for anything but motorbikes. High seas have forced two boats loaded with aid back from the neighbouring island of Simeulue. The UN remains hopeful that a landing craft stocked with food and other essentials will arrive in Nias from neighbouring Aceh within a day, our correspondent says. The Australian military also expects a floating hospital to arrive off Nias early tomorrow. A police officer on the island, Colonel Zainuri Lubis, estimated that 1,936 houses were damaged or had collapsed, along with 122 shops, 11 mosques, 83 churches, one Buddhist temple, 30 government buildings and 78 schools. Gunung Sitoli remains without electricity and the water purification system is down. On the neighbouring Banyak islands, the extent of the damage is still not clear. Earlier in the week, an Indonesian disaster official said an estimated 200-300 people had died on the island chain, but today a village chief said the islanders had suffered no casualties, although they were desperate for food and water. And on Simeulue casualties are reported to be low, because the flimsy buildings lacked impact when they collapsed, but devastation is said to be high. "In

some villages, there is something like 100% destruction," said UN spokeswoman Imogen Wall.

London, Apr 2 -- A press report, dated today, states: An aftershock measuring 5.8 on the Richter scale jolted the Indonesian island of Nias today as it was still reeling from a massive earthquake six days ago, meteorologists said. The aftershock hit at 0332, local time, the Indonesian meteorology office said. Its centre was 15 km under the seabed and about 195 km south of the island's main town of Gunungsitoli. The office did not say whether the aftershock, which was felt in several town and cities in West Sumatra province, caused any fresh damage or casualties.

London, Apr 4 -- A press report, dated today, states: Two strong earthquakes hit near the Indonesian island of Sumatra yesterday, Hong Kong seismologists said, likely aftershocks of the powerful 8.7-magnitude quake that hit the region last week. A magnitude-6.1 quake centred 280 kilometres west-northwest of Padang was recorded at 0805, local time, the Hong Kong Observatory said. A second quake registering 6.3 hit 190 kilometres south-southwest of Medan at 1016, local time, it said. It wasn't immediately clear whether the quakes caused any casualties or damage.

London, Apr 5 -- A press report, dated today, states: Indonesian authorities say more than 2,500 people were killed in last week's earthquake on the Indonesian island of Nias. More than 500 bodies have been recovered, while a further 2,017 people are missing and now presumed dead. The assessment was made after a village-by-village survey by the Indonesian armed forces. Heavy-lifting equipment is still being brought to the island to lift rubble and debris from the scene of collapsed buildings, mainly around the island's capital, Gunungsitoli. The town's hospital has partly re-opened and begun treating injured locals. Two medical teams working for AusAid have treated more than 300 people around the island, while other locals are being treated on board the Navy vessel Kanimbla. Most of the patients have fractures and crush injuries.

London, Apr 6 -- A press report, dated today, states: The death toll from the 8.2-magnitude earthquake that hit Indonesia's western islands on Mar 28 has risen by nearly 100 to 653 today, according to a report released by the Ministry of Social Affairs. The majority of the death toll was on Nias island, where 619 people have been confirmed dead in the disaster. The other fatalities were reported from nearby Simeuleu island and six regencies in the provinces of North Sumatra and Aceh, it said.

JAPAN

London, Apr 4 -- A press report, dated today, states: An earthquake registering a preliminary magnitude of 5.4 shook Fukushima, Ibaraki and other prefectures in northeastern and eastern Japan early today, the Japan

Meteorological Agency said. There were no immediate reports of casualties or damage from the 0257 quake. The quake registered intensity 4 on the Japanese seismic scale of 7 in Futaba in Fukushima and Daigo in Ibaraki. Its focus was in the Pacific off Fukushima, about 40 kilometres below the surface of the sea, the agency said.

SOUTH-EAST ASIA

London, Apr 5 -- Bulk Gem of Tuticorin sailed Shanghai Mar 25.

Volcanic Activity



MOUNT ANATAHAN, MARIANA ISLANDS

Honolulu, Apr 6 -- The Anatahan Volcano erupted at 0330, local time, today. It is reported the ash plume reached 50,000 ft (upper level) and is blowing east to south-east while low level ash (15,000 ft) is blowing south-west. The cloud is expanded and expected to move over Tinian and Saipan. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Political & Civil Unrest



COLOMBIA

London, Apr 5 -- A press report, dated Apr 4, states: Colombia's second largest guerrilla group has refused to stop carrying out kidnappings - rejecting a condition set by the government for peace talks. A leader of the ELN, known as Antonio Garcia, said the practice was needed for financial reasons. He also accused President Alvaro Uribe of breaking the confidentiality of preliminary talks by discussing them in front of the media last week. But Mr Garcia said ELN does want to work towards peace in the country. Last week, Mr Uribe's chief negotiator, Luis Carlos Restrepo, indicated that the preliminary talks in Bogota were going well, but Mr Garcia dismissed a government proposal to end kidnappings as one of the conditions for holding peace talks. "Since the ELN has refused, and will continue refusing, to get involved in drug-trafficking, it cannot halt kidnappings at this time," he said. He also attacked President Uribe for his comments on the talks, broadcast live, at summit with Venezuelan, Spanish and Brazilian leaders in Venezuela last week. "President Uribe did not have the decency to respect the confidentiality that had been agreed on, and began talking 'privately' at a meeting of over 200 people, which was being transmitted on television." Before his comments were made, Mr Restrepo had said the two sides were

on the right track and a study was being made to "assess the exploratory phase and lend continuity to a peace process." Mr Garcia said the doors to dialogue were not now closed, according to El Colombiano newspaper, but he stressed that the president's comments have made it "very difficult for us on both sides to be able to move". (See issue of Mar 30.)

Bogota, Apr 6 -- Marxist rebels killed at least 17 Colombian soldiers in an ambush today when they blasted patrol vehicles with mines and then finished off survivors with shots to the head, the army said. The attack on a patrol driving between the towns of Fortul and Tame in the eastern province of Arauca was one of the bloodiest since the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) emerged from a period of relative inactivity earlier this year. -- Reuters.

INDIA

London, Apr 1 -- A press report, dated today, states: Indian security forces have launched a large operation against separatist rebels in a national park in the north-eastern state of Assam. Nearly 2,000 soldiers and armed policemen have moved into the park that borders the neighbouring state of Arunachal Pradesh. An Indian army spokesman says it is targeting rebels of the United Liberation Front of Assam (Ulfa). Ulfa has been fighting for a separate Assamese homeland for two decades. The soldiers began moving into the Dibru-Saikhowa national park around midnight. The spokesman, Lt-Col Narendra Singh, said security forces had established operational bases inside the forest and the rebels would be attacked soon. But he said the troops and policemen were yet to trace the guerrillas, although a deserted rebel base had been found with some weapons, ammunition and explosives. Col Singh said the massive operation had been launched on the basis of intelligence reports that an Ulfa mobile battalion had set up a base inside the park. From there the rebels would carry out hit-and-run raids and bombings in Assam's northern districts where much of the state's tea estates, oil and gas fields are located. "This Ulfa battalion is the most dangerous, they specialise in sabotage," said a recently retired army officer, Lt-Gen Gaganjit Singh. Chances of Ulfa opening a peace dialogue with Delhi faded after the rebel leaders made it clear they would only talk if India agreed to discuss Assam's sovereignty. The Indian government has rejected the demand, saying the rebels must talk without conditions as other separatist groups in the country have done.

London, Apr 5 -- A press report, dated today, states: A bomb blast on the route of a landmark bus service in Kashmir has wounded at least seven people, according to police. The explosion, at Hanjivira on India's side of the Line of Control, came two days before the first buses are due to link the divided territory. Two other landmines on the route were defused,

police said. A dummy run for the bus is planned for today. Militants opposing Indian rule have told people not to use the bus and authorities have tightened security. The service is seen as an important signal of improving ties between India and Pakistan, who began peace talks more than a year ago.

IRAQ

London, Apr 1 -- A press report, dated today, states: Iraqi police say gunmen have killed a local chief of police in an ambush in Balad Ruz, north of Baghdad. Hatem Rashid Mohammad was killed along with another police officer as they visited a police station. Balad Ruz, 50 km north-east of the capital, is in Diyala province, where insurgents have frequently attacked the Iraqi police and military. Reports say a third policeman died today when police stormed a house they believed contained insurgents. Elsewhere, a roadside bomb explosion intended for a military convoy killed three civilians and wounded eight in the northern city of Kirkuk today, police and hospitals officials said.

London, Apr 2 -- A press report, dated today, states: A car bomb exploded today in central Iraq, killing five people, including four police officers on patrol, while gunmen killed an education official in Baghdad. A US Marine was killed in Ramadi, the military said today. The car bomb in Khan Bani Saad, near the troubled city of Baqouba in central Iraq, also injured two police officers and three civilians, provincial police Col. Mudafar al-Jubori said. In Baghdad, gunmen opened fire from a car, killing Hassib Zamil outside of the Education Ministry offices in the Sadr City neighbourhood, education official Ibrahim Abid Wali said. A marine was killed yesterday while conducting security operations in Ramadi, the US military said. In the capital yesterday, insurgents fired a rocket propelled grenade and shot at an armoured vehicle used to transport US troops on a road leading to the dangerous airport highway, injuring two American soldiers.

Baghdad, Apr 3 -- Iraqi politicians chose a Sunni Arab to be the speaker of parliament today, ending a political impasse and taking a decisive step toward forming a government nine weeks after historic elections. In a ballot, the members of the 275-seat National Assembly voted overwhelmingly to elect Hajem al-Hassani, the industry minister, as speaker. Hassani, a religious Sunni, is an ally of interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi. "We passed the first hurdle," Hassani told reporters. "The Iraqi people have proven that they can overcome the political crisis that has plagued the country for the last two months." Shi'ite politician Hussain Shahrastani and Kurdish lawmaker Arif Tayfor were named deputy speakers. The Shi'ites and Kurds, who came first and second in the elections, agreed that a member of the once-

dominant Sunni Arab minority should be speaker. The naming of a speaker is one step toward ending Iraq's political deadlock, but a more important step will be the naming of a president, two vice-presidents and prime minister. Those appointments are expected at parliament's next meeting on Wednesday (Apr 6), Shahrastani told reporters. The president is expected to be Jalal Talabani, a Kurd, and one of the vice presidents will be Adel Abdul Mahdi, from Iraq's Shi'ite majority. The Sunnis need more time to decide who their candidate for the other vice-president position will be. The Shi'ite Ibrahim Jaafari will be prime minister. Iraqi officials have raised concerns that the longer it takes to form a government, the more it will fuel the insurgency by making elected authorities appear weak and indecisive. There is also anger among ordinary Iraqis, more than eight million of whom braved the threat of violence to vote in January only to see politics descend into squabbling. Elsewhere, dozens of insurgents mounted a brazen attack on the Abu Ghraib jail near Baghdad, battling U.S. forces for an hour. Al Qaeda's wing in Iraq claimed responsibility for the attack, in which the U.S. military said 44 troops were wounded. It said one insurgent was confirmed killed. While parliament's meeting was going on, a mortar round struck near Baghdad's fortified Green Zone, where the assembly gathered, causing a blast but little damage, officials said. -- Reuters.

Baghdad, Apr 5 -- Inmates at the largest US-run prison in Iraq hurled rocks and set tents on fire earlier this month, and four guards and 12 prisoners were wounded before the riot was brought under control, the US army said today. It said prisoners in one compound protested about the transfer of unruly detainees to another compound at Camp Bucca in southern Iraq on Apr 1. "During the disturbance, the detainees chanted, threw rocks and set several of their tents on fire," an army statement said. "The disturbance was brought under control with only minor injuries to four guards and 12 detainees." -- Reuters.

Baghdad, Apr 5 -- U.S. and Iraqi forces battled dozens of insurgents in a remote area east of Baghdad and three soldiers, two American and one Iraqi, were killed in the fighting, the U.S. military said today. The battle erupted yesterday afternoon when two Iraqi army battalions were carrying out a "cordon and search operation" in eastern Diyala province, it said in a statement. "The mission to search for weapons cache sites in the area uncovered dozens of terrorists and a firefight ensued." U.S. troops moved in to back the Iraqi forces, and called in air support. The American military said the area was still being searched today. A U.S. Marine was killed in a blast in western Iraq yesterday, the military said. Today, one U.S. soldier was killed and four were wounded by a roadside bomb in Baghdad, taking the American military and Pentagon death

toll in Iraq to at least 1,539 since the start of the war in March 2003. Also today, a roadside bomb in Salman Pak killed four civilians and a roadside bomb in the southern city of Basra killed two policemen, police said. A car bomb in southwestern Baghdad killed one Iraqi civilian and wounded two. Late yesterday, Brigadier General Jalal Mohammed Saleh, the commander of a special armoured unit of the Iraqi army, was kidnapped in Baghdad, police said. -- Reuters.

London, Apr 5 -- A press report, dated Apr 4, states: An explosion hit an oil pipeline in northern Iraq today as sabotage kept exports to Turkey idle, witnesses said. A bomb was detonated next to one of the pipelines running through the Riyadh area near the refining centre of Baiji, security officials said. It was not known whether the blast targeted the Iraq-Turkey export pipeline or one of several domestic crude and refined oil products pipelines in the area. The export pipeline to Turkey's Ceyhan port, which has been idle for most of the past two years, was hit in Riyadh last week, further delaying repairs. Iraq's exports have been restricted to the south with 1.4 million bpd flowing from two terminals offshore in the Gulf. Bad weather prevented loadings today.

Baghdad, Apr 6 -- Iraq's parliament elected Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani as the country's new president today, breaking a political impasse and paving the way for a new government more than nine weeks after historic elections. He is the first Kurd to be Iraq's president. The two vice presidents were named as Adel Abdul Mahdi, a Shi'ite who was finance minister in the outgoing government, and Sunni Arab tribal leader Ghazi Yawar, the previous president. The president and his deputies must now name a prime minister within two weeks. Shi'ites and Kurds have agreed that Islamist Shi'ite leader Ibrahim Jaafari should be prime minister, taking over from secular Shi'ite Iyad Allawi. Jaafari is expected to be officially appointed tomorrow, and will then name a cabinet. Disagreement remains on some cabinet posts, particularly the oil ministry which is coveted by both the Shi'ites and the Kurds. -- Reuters.

London, Apr 6 -- A press report, dated today, states: Four American soldiers have been killed in Iraq, according to a statement by the American army. A statement issued by one American base in Falluja said yesterday that one soldier was killed in an explosion during a military operation. The American army also announced the killing of one soldier in a booby trapped car explosion that targeted an American military convoy in Baghdad. The explosion resulted in wounding four soldiers who were admitted to the hospital. Two American soldiers were killed in clashes with scores of gunmen to the east of Deyala governorate just one day before the American army sent back up forces to the Iraqi army which

is facing strong resistance as it carries out breaking in operations in search of weapons shelters. Two American soldiers were injured in the attack. Meanwhile gunmen kidnapped a senior army officer in the Iraqi army and members of his escorting guards in the west of Baghdad. The officer is Maj-Gen Jalal Muhammad Saleh, who commands a special armed contingent considered among the best of the Iraqi army. In a video tape shown on the Internet site today, the Ansar al-Sunnah Army In Iraq said "it killed one Iraqi police officer" for "spying" on the gunmen.

ISRAEL

Ramallah, West Bank, Mar 31 -- Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas ordered a crackdown today on Ramallah militants who defied demands that they lay down their arms under peace moves he had agreed with Israel. Abbas took a tougher line after half a dozen gunmen from his own ruling Fatah faction fired at his Ramallah compound on Wednesday night while he was inside and then went on a rampage in the West Bank city, damaging several restaurants and shops. The militants, among 26 fighters holed up at the battered presidential headquarters since Yasser Arafat gave them refuge at the height of a 4.5-year-old uprising, were then barred from the compound, a Palestinian official said. In another sign of lawlessness plaguing the Palestinian territories, an angry crowd burned down tents used as offices by Palestinian police in the West Bank town of Tulkarm early today after police shot and wounded three suspects. "Abbas has issued an order to prevent any security violations and harm to citizens' property," a spokesman said. "Security units have been deployed to prevent further attacks." Abbas is struggling to impose law and order and reform corruption-tainted security forces after reaching a cease-fire deal with Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon last month. Abbas has complained, however, that some senior Palestinian officials are blocking his reform efforts and he has even suggested he might have to postpone an expected meeting with President Bush in April, Fatah officials said. Israel handed over two West Bank cities to Palestinian control earlier this month but then froze the process, saying Abbas had not done enough to disarm hundreds of militants on the Israeli list of wanted men. Yesterday night's flare-up in Ramallah began after security commanders met representatives of 70 wanted men of al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, part of Abbas's mainstream Fatah movement, earlier in the week to press them to put aside their weapons. The 70 include fugitives whom Arafat had given refuge and Abbas had allowed to stay at the West Bank compound despite Israeli criticism. Some of the militants, including security force members, refused to disarm, saying they wanted better job and pay guarantees as well

as assurances of their safety, officials said. Israel has pledged to stop hunting them if they disarm. Six of the militants living at Abbas's compound, who were among those who rejected his demands, vented their anger by carrying out the shooting spree yesterday, officials said. No casualties were reported in the incident. -- Reuters.

IVORY COAST

Abidjan, Mar 31 -- Britain is shutting its embassy in Ivory Coast and advising its citizens to leave the West African country as fears grow of a fresh outbreak of hostilities there, the Foreign Office Web site said today. "This decision is mainly due to the uncertain security situation and our inability to protect staff or British nationals should there be another outbreak of violence," the UK minister for Africa, Chris Mullin, said in a statement posted on the Web site. "It is because of the security situation, which is deteriorating. It is about the rhetoric, which is more virulent, and the attack by the militias in the west who are building up trouble," David Coates, the British ambassador in Abidjan said, referring to an assault on rebel positions by pro-government militiamen at the end of February. United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan warned last week that the situation in Ivory Coast could "spin out of control". Peace talks between the main players in the crisis are due to begin on Sunday (Apr 3) in Pretoria, but few expect a breakthrough. -- Reuters.

London, Apr 5 -- A press report, dated Apr 4, states: The mandate of UN and French peacekeepers in Ivory Coast, due to come to an end at midnight today, has been extended for one month. Ivory Coast has been in crisis since rebels seized the north of the country two-and-a-half years ago, and the UN Security Council voted unanimously for a one-month extension. After Resolution 1594 expires, the Security Council will decide whether to accept Secretary General Kofi Annan's requests for a year-long mandate and the reinforcement of the UN contingent with 1,200 more troops. Today's resolution delays a final decision on whether the French soldiers should stay in Ivory Coast. The French force, known as Licorne, is unpopular with parts of the Ivorian population. Supporters of President Gbagbo, known as the The Young Patriots, have led an active campaign to force the French to leave. Supporters have worn red arm bands and red flags have been tied around lamp posts along main roads in the commercial capital, Abidjan. However, Ivory Coast's armed and unarmed opposition have been just as adamant that the French must stay. All of Ivory Coast's political leaders are currently in Pretoria, South Africa, for a major summit on the country's future. South Africa's President Thabo Mbeki, hosting the summit, says he is optimistic of finding an end to the

Ivorian crisis, as rumours of a return to conflict grow. Mr Mbeki has brought together all the major Ivorian politicians including President Laurent Gbagbo for the first time since July last year. Mr Mbeki, the African Union mediator in the Ivorian crisis, said the leaders meeting at the presidential guesthouse in Pretoria would not leave until they found a solution. President Gbagbo, former head of state Henri Konan Bedie, opposition leader Alassane Ouattara and rebel chief Guillaume Soro have not met since they signed the Accra Three accord nine months ago. The failure of that agreement, along with several previous ones, indicates the size of the task facing Mr Mbeki.

London, Apr 6 -- A press report, dated today, states: Rebels and the Ivory Coast government have agreed to end hostilities after four days of talks in South Africa. Tension has risen in recent weeks, prompting fears of renewed war in the world's biggest cocoa producer. A ceasefire agreed in France two years ago failed to end conflict in the country which remains divided in two. South African host, President Thabo Mbeki, welcomed the decision and praised all sides for being involved in the talks over a long period of time. Some of the key points are as follows: A recommitment that the war is over; a commitment to disarming and disbanding militias as soon as possible; rebels agree to start disarming after a meeting with the army in just over a week's time; Mr Mbeki to consult with the United Nations secretary general and African Union before ruling on eligibility to fight the presidency; and the holding of elections later in 2005. "The Ivorian parties that are signatories to the Pretoria agreement hereby solemnly declare the immediate and final cessation of all hostilities and the end of the war throughout the national territory," they said in a joint statement. The gathering in Pretoria is the first time all the major Ivorian politicians have been together since July last year. Mr Mbeki, who is mediating on behalf of the African Union, had announced that the leaders, including President Laurent Gbagbo, former head of state Henri Konan Bedie, opposition leader Alassane Ouattara and rebel chief Guillaume Soro would not leave until they found a solution. Since the rebels, now called the New Forces, seized the north of Ivory Coast in an uprising in September 2002, peace has proved elusive. A peace deal was signed in January 2003, but last November President Gbagbo's forces attacked the rebel north. Tension has been high since then, with reports that both sides are preparing for renewed conflict. UN peacekeepers patrolling Ivory Coast's buffer zone say they have seen armed men in western government-held towns and a Human Rights Watch report has accused the government of recruiting fighters, including children, from neighbouring Liberia. In the past the rebels have refused to disarm until a

series of reforms are undertaken to allow the main opposition leader to stand as a candidate. Mr Ouattara, a former prime minister, is banned because the government says his parents came from Burkina Faso.

KYRGYZSTAN

Moscow, Apr 4 -- Kyrgyzstan's ousted President Askar Akayev formally resigned today in a ceremony arranged in the Russian capital where he had fled after the Mar 24 coup in his Central Asian state, Interfax news agency reported. It quoted a member of a Kyrgyz delegation dispatched to Moscow to negotiate the resignation as saying that according to the statement signed by the veteran leader, his presidency would formally end tomorrow. A source in the Krygыз embassy confirmed Akayev had resigned but gave no further details. By stepping down, Akayev opens the way to hold a new presidential election scheduled for Jun 26. He has ruled Kyrgyzstan since 1990. Akayev had wanted go to his capital Bishkek to resign to parliament as required by the constitution, but acting President Kurmanbek Bakiyev, one of the leaders of the coup and certain to contest the June election, objected saying he could not guarantee Akayev's safety. -- Reuters.

LEBANON

Damascus, Apr 3 -- Syria has promised to withdraw all its forces from Lebanon by Apr 30 and will let a United Nations team verify the pullout, a U.N. envoy said today. The U.N. envoy, Terje Roed-Larsen, said Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq al-Shara had told him "all Syrian troops, military assets and the intelligence apparatus will have been withdrawn fully and completely by Apr 30, 2005." Roed-Larsen was speaking at a joint news conference with Shara after talks with President Bashar al-Assad in Damascus. U.N. Resolution 1559, sponsored by the United States and France, demanded the departure of all foreign forces, the disbanding of all Lebanese militias and respect for Lebanon's political independence. The declared timetable means all Syrian forces will have left before Lebanon holds parliamentary elections. The polls were due to have taken place in May, but might be pushed back because of political turmoil since the killing of former Lebanese prime minister, Rafik al-Hariri. -- Reuters.

NEPAL

London, Apr 1 -- A press report, dated today, states: Nepal's royal government put its security forces on alert and stepped up highway patrols today ahead of an 11-day nationwide general strike called by communist rebels. The government hoped to foil the strike, due to start tomorrow. We have a heavy presence along the major highways. There is no way they can disrupt the traffic, said Major Bharat Khadka at the Royal Nepalese Army headquarters. Along the Prithvi highway the lifeline for residents of

the capital, Katmandu soldiers lined up trucks and buses so they could escort the vehicles. In an overnight attack along that highway, a truck carrying diesel fuel was set on fire at Narayanghat, 100 miles south of Katmandu. No one was reported hurt. Narayan Sharma, a reporter in Narayanghat, said the communist rebels have been throwing fliers along the highways urging people to obey the strike call. In eastern Nepal, the guerrillas have blocked several mountain highways with trees and rocks. Soldiers were working to clear the debris, police in the area said. The rebels said they called the strike to protest King Gyanendra's takeover of the government and imposition of a state of emergency last month.

London, Apr 3 -- A press report states: Clashes left at least two soldiers and six communist guerrillas dead in Nepal and suspected insurgents bombed a half-dozen targets, injuring 20 people ahead of an 11-day national general strike that began Saturday, officials said. Businesses were closed in most areas of the Himalayan kingdom because of the strike, called by the guerrillas to protest against King Gyanendra's takeover of the government Feb 1 and imposition of a state of emergency. Sporadic fighting across the country Friday killed at least six guerrillas and two soldiers, police and army officials said on condition of anonymity. Guerrillas were blamed for a series of blasts at government buildings and a marketplace that left at least 20 people injured Friday in Nepalgunj, a town with a large guerrilla presence about 500 kilometres west of Kathmandu, police official Kumar Gautam said. Many of Nepal's roads and highways were deserted because of the strike.

Kathmandu, Apr 4 -- Maoist guerrillas set off a bomb in a Nepali tourist town killing a university student, as a nationwide strike called by the insurgents pushed up prices of foodstuffs, officials and traders said today. The bomb went off late yesterday in Pokhara in western Nepal, where the strike call had been largely ignored. Three people were also wounded in the explosion and the town shut down after the attack, police and a witness said. "It is quiet but tense," Jay Lal Lamsal, who works for a private company in Pokhara, said. Although authorities assured people that there were sufficient reserves of food and fuel around the country, and freight trucks were moving under armed escorts, traders said the rebel-sponsored strike had disrupted supplies. "Of course, it is biting. Prices of consumer goods have increased steeply," said Harendra Bahadur Shrestha, chief of the Nepal Consumers' Forum. Shrestha said prices of tomatoes had increased six-fold to 60 Nepali rupees (80 U.S. cents) per kg in capital Kathmandu. "Traders have started hoarding and the government has failed to check this," he said. The strike has crippled

life in Nepalgunj and in the eastern commercial centre of Biratnagar. -- Reuters.

PAKISTAN

Quetta, Apr 1 -- A bomb damaged a natural gas pipeline in Pakistan's insurgency-hit southwest today, disrupting supplies but causing no casualties, officials said. No one claimed responsibility for the attack on the underground pipe near Dadhar town in Baluchistan province but ethnic minority militants fighting for political and economic autonomy have in the past claimed such attacks. Police official Ali Akbar told Reuters high explosives were used in the blast that left a six-foot crater. Dadhar is 100 km south-east of the provincial capital, Quetta. Amir Mohammad Dotani, an official of the state-run Sui Southern Gas Co. Ltd. distribution firm, said supplies were disrupted to nearby areas. -- Reuters.

PHILIPPINES

London, Apr 1 -- A press report, dated today, states: Eight people were wounded when a hand grenade, lobbed by still unidentified men, exploded in front of a snack shop in Kabacan town in North Cotabato, southern Philippines, last night, a military official said today. Col. Franklin del Prado, spokesman of the Army's 6th Infantry Division, said the victims were inside a snack shop around 2200 hrs when the suspects hurled the M26 grenade. The Army official said military and police authorities were still investigating to determine the motive of the attack and the identities of the perpetrators, who fled after the explosions.

London, Apr 6 -- A press report, dated today, states: Philippine government forces said today they have killed a local commander of the New People's Army (NPA) rebels and recovered a large cache of explosives in two separate operations. Army spokesman Maj. Bartolome Bacarro said government forces are presently scouring the San Mariano and Ilagan towns in Isabela, in central Philippines, for NPA rebels who used to occupy the camp, codenamed Fortunato Gamus Command, which was discovered on Monday (Apr 4) by patrolling soldiers. He said soldiers of the 52nd Reconnaissance Company were conducting "security operations" at the area Monday afternoon when they discovered the camp, which had already been abandoned by the insurgents. However, they discovered anti-personnel mines, hand grenades, blasting caps, TNT explosives and other materials for making bombs. Yesterday, an NPA local commander was killed following a firefight with soldiers of the Army's 24th Infantry Battalion near Abucay town in Bataan, northern Philippines, according to the military. Lt. Col. Emil Hulipas, 24th IB chief, said his troops were conducting a patrol at the time when they caught up with at least 20 fully armed rebels led by one Ka Turi and Ka Dex. "The slain rebel was

identified as Ka Dex, one of the platoon leaders of the NPA rebels operating in Bataan province engaged in rampant extortion activities," said Hulipas. No casualties were reported on the military side.

SAUDI ARABIA

Riyadh, Apr 4 -- Saudi troops have killed eight gunmen and wounded another in a protracted siege in the northern town of Al-Ras, where fierce gunbattles raged for a second day with suspected militants, security sources said today. A local hospital official said 51 security personnel had been treated by midday (0900, UTC) today in one of the longest and bloodiest battles in Saudi Arabia's two-year confrontation with al Qaeda supporters. Interior Ministry spokesman Brigadier-General Mansour al-Turki said he could not verify casualty figures but confirmed the operation in Al-Ras, 180 miles northwest of Riyadh, was continuing more than 24 hours after it broke out. Turki said the suspected militants, holed up in a complex in the town's Jawazat neighborhood, had hurled hand grenades at security forces. The battle erupted early yesterday when security forces tried to raid a house where the suspects were staying. Witnesses said the house was secured by this morning but gunfire had erupted from a nearby building. Officials say at least 90 civilians and 39 members of the security forces have been killed in the past two years, and militant attacks have caused at least one billion riyals (\$270 million) of damage. Police have killed more than 90 militants in the same period. Saudi officials say they have significantly eroded al Qaeda's militant networks over the last year, killing several local leaders and seizing huge arms caches. They have also tried to ease concerns about Saudi oil facilities, saying oil fields and refineries are well protected. -- Reuters.

London, Apr 5 -- A press report, dated today, states: At least nine militants, including two most wanted fugitives, were killed in marathon clashes raging between Saudi security forces and armed militants for the third day running in the north of the oil-rich kingdom. Saud Al-Otaibi, a Saudi national, and Moroccan Abdel Karim Al-Mojati, two top leaders of Saudi Arabia's al-Qaeda cell on the Saudi list of the 26 most-wanted militants, had been killed during the ongoing fierce clashes, the Dubai-based Al-Arabiya television reported today. "The operation is continuing. The security forces have surrounded them. There is still gunfire from the besieged building," Saudi interior ministry spokesman, Brigadier Mansour al-Turki said late yesterday. The fierce clashes erupted early Sunday (Apr 3) when the Saudi security forces deployed in the northern town of Al-Ras to track down a group of suspects who had taken refuge in a residential building before the forces came under fire from automatic weapons. A spokesman for the Saudi interior ministry earlier

said the suspected militants had hurled hand grenades at security forces during its crackdown operation in the area. Saudi officials also said earlier yesterday that the confrontations left seven militants killed and one other rushed to hospital in critical condition. Several members of the Saudi security forces have also been injured in the fighting, the interior ministry said. The fierce confrontations came less than three weeks after Al-Qaeda's local chief, Saleh Al-Oufi, who at one point was reported dead, resurfaced in a TV recording attributed to him on an Islamist web site, pressing for intensifying attacks on "crusader" targets in the Gulf region. Saudi newspaper Al-Jazira speculated that Oufi might be among the militants besieged in the building, citing the "the hail of fire from the house where the terrorists are holed up and the range of weapons being used." A witness in Al-Rass neighborhood told AFP that "shooting and explosions intensified when night fell (yesterday), underlining the ferocity of the clashes." He said the trapped men seemed to be "looking for a way to break the siege that the security forces have tightened around them after their refusal to surrender." Residents in the area said that security forces deployed in large numbers at the site as helicopters hovered overhead and gunfire and loud blasts were heard. Speaking to the Doha-based Al-Jazeera channel over the telephone from the scene of clashes in Al-Qassim, Saudi witness Sulayman Al-Siwayan said there was heavy security presence in Al-Rass neighbourhood. "One or two helicopters can be seen hovering over the area and explosions and sporadic shootouts can be heard from time to time," he said. Roads leading to the area have been closed and the neighbourhood isolated, he added. The clashes also left some 51 security forces personnel injured and had been admitted to hospital for treatment, a medical source at a local hospital told the Doha-based broadcaster. However, an eyewitness put the number of security casualties at around 15. (See issue of Apr 5.)

Riyadh, Apr 5 -- Saudi forces overpowered gunmen today after a fierce three-day battle in which a top militant suspected of masterminding al Qaeda bombings in Casablanca was killed, security sources said. They said Abdulkarim al-Mejjati was one of at least 14 militants killed in the clashes that erupted on Sunday (Apr 3) in Al-Ras, 300 km north-west of Riyadh. "They (security forces) have complete control of the location. There is no resistance anymore," Interior Ministry spokesman Brigadier-General Mansour al-Turki told Reuters. An Interior Ministry statement read out on state television said 14 militants had been killed in the clashes. It said five wounded gunmen were arrested and one had surrendered to police. "This is a monumental breakthrough for Saudi security forces," said Saudi security consultant Nawaf Obaid. "Not

just domestically -- Mejjati was the subject of a major manhunt across Europe." Mejjati, a Moroccan, was killed in Al-Ras alongside Saud Homoud al-Oteibi, they added. Both were on a list of 26 most wanted suspects issued by Saudi Arabia more than a year ago. Mejjati, described by Saudi media as an explosives expert, was the mastermind behind the May 2003 Casablanca bombings, according to Saudi sources. Investigators probing last year's Madrid train bombings linked him to the attacks. The deaths of Mejjati and Oteibi would mean only four of the original 26 fugitives remain at large, including Saleh al-Awfi, believed to have taken over leadership of al Qaeda in Saudi Arabia in June despite being less experienced than the Moroccan. The Interior Ministry said 14 troops were hospitalised, the majority of whom had slight injuries. Medical sources had said about 100 security forces members were treated after the clashes but only 14 remained in hospital. Several men were killed or arrested when they tried to break through a police checkpoint -- in an apparent attempt to reinforce the surrounded militants. Officials say at least 90 civilians -- many of them Westerners -- and 39 troops have been killed in the last two years, and the attacks have caused at least one billion riyals (\$270 million) of damage. Police killed some 100 militants in the same period. -- Reuters.

London, Apr 6 -- A press report, dated today, states: Several significant al-Qaeda members were among the 15 terrorists killed and seven captured in a series of gun battles and raids in and near Riyadh since Sunday (Apr 3), Saudi security officials say. Sources in the Saudi government have said four of those killed or caught were on the list of 26 most-wanted terrorists, leaving just two of those on the list still at large. The Saudi Interior Ministry is expected to announce DNA test results this afternoon to confirm the identities of the suspected al-Qaeda militants killed and captured during a three-day stand-off and gun battle north-west of Riyadh and another gun battle this morning in an industrial area in southern Riyadh. Several Saudi sources said that Abdul-Rahman Mohammed Mohammed Yazji, one of the 26 most-wanted, was killed in this morning's gun battle. The sources would not confirm or deny reports that Saleh Oufi, head of al-Qaeda in the Arab peninsula, was seriously wounded and captured in that battle. He is also on the list of 26. Investigators were also trying to determine whether two senior al-Qaeda figures -- the suspected leader of the Islamic terror group in Saudi Arabia and a man linked to the March 2004 Madrid train bombings -- were among 14 militants killed in a battle that began Sunday and ended yesterday, said Brig Mansour Turki, an Interior Ministry spokesman. Five militants were wounded and captured, and one surrendered, he said. "We

managed to capture really important people," a senior Interior Ministry official said. The siege began Sunday in the Saudi city of al-Ras, about 350 kilometers from the Saudi capital. The city is located in the province of al-Qasim, considered the heartland of the conservative Islamic Wahabi doctrine. DNA tests are being conducted to determine whether two of the bodies are those of Saud Humud al-Utaibi and Abd al-Karim el-Mejjati, two of the most-wanted al-Qaeda suspects in the kingdom. Al-Utaibi is believed to be the leader of al-Qaeda in Saudi Arabia, having laid claim to that role in November 2004. Investigators say el-Mejjati, a Moroccan explosives expert, is suspecting of helping plan the Madrid train bombings that killed 191 people and the May 2003 bombings in Casablanca, Morocco, that left more than 40 dead.

SOMALIA

Mogadishu, Apr 6 -- A bitter rift over which city the fledgling Somali government should initially call home worsened today as about 30 Somali MPs flew to Mogadishu to begin planning to move the government there. The interim Somali government has remained in the Kenyan capital Nairobi, where it was formed at peace talks over the past two years, and is eyeing a return at the urging of foreign governments and donors. But the 275-member parliament has been split over where the government should first go when it returns home, and a still-brewing disagreement over peacekeepers that led to a bloody brawl during a parliamentary session last month. MPs aligned with President Abdullahi Yusuf have said they want to temporarily relocate to the relatively calmer cities of Baidoa and Jowhar, until security is brought back to anarchic Mogadishu. Others, including those who returned today, insist the government return to Mogadishu, which their transitional constitution stipulates must be the capital. Yusuf's supporters say Mogadishu will remain the capital, but may not be the government's home at first. The two sides are so far apart in both disputes that each has rejected parliamentary votes they disagree with as flawed and refused to recognize them, presenting the first serious challenges to the newborn democracy. Nearly 100 other MPs are expected to go to Mogadishu next week to begin efforts to relocate the government, MP Abdall Haji told reporters on arriving in Mogadishu. Some residents said they feared more fighting could break out, since ammunition sales at the city's notorious Bakara arms market have been picking up. Foreign diplomats in Kenya have worked very hard to keep the two sides talking about their differences in an effort to reach a compromise, Somali watchers say. But Yusuf has been travelling outside of Kenya recently and so serious negotiations have not been able to take place. -- Reuters.

SRI LANKA

London, Apr 5 -- A press report, dated today, states: Tamil Tiger rebels have opened fire on a Sri Lankan naval vessel carrying an international cease-fire monitor, a military spokesman said. The monitor sustained minor injuries after diving for cover when the ship was attacked near the eastern port of Trincomalee, reports said. The Tigers have denied any involvement in the attack. A cease-fire between the Tigers and the government, in force since February, 2002, has been under growing strain. Peace talks between the government and the rebels have been suspended since April 2003. The navy patrol boat was on a routine tour when the rebels shot "75 to 100 rounds of small arms fire" at it south-east of the main harbour of Trincomalee, military spokesman Daya Ratnayake said. The ship was flying with the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission flag indicating that monitors are on board when it came under attack, Helen Olafsdottir, spokeswoman for the European-sponsored truce monitoring mission told the Associated Press news agency. "It's a very serious incident, we don't take this lightly," she said. "But we can't confirm that it was the LTTE (rebels) until more investigations are conducted." Military spokesman Daya Ratnayake told the AFP news agency that the attack was a serious breach of truce between the government and rebels. The head of the Tamil Tiger's political wing in Trincomalee has denied that the Tigers were involved in the incident, according to the pro-Tiger Tamilnet website.

THAILAND

London, Apr 4 -- A press report, dated today, states: At least two people died and 52 were injured, many seriously, in three bomb explosions that went off at Hat Yai international airport, a department store and a hotel almost simultaneously last night. The incidents caught authorities off-guard as the ongoing violence involving Muslim militants has mostly taken place in the three border provinces of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat. The first explosion went off about 2025, yesterday, at Carrefour department store on Phetkasem road in Hat Yai town. Police believe it was a home-made bomb planted in a rubbish bin in front of the store and triggered remotely by a mobile phone. The explosion shattered the front glass window panes of the store and wounded at least five people. Many people were at the store for Sunday shopping. Police closed the store before cordoning off the area and scouring the store for a possible second bomb. As a precaution, police teams were also sent to other stores such as Lotus and Big C. Confusion reigned as reports spread that suspicious-looking objects were found at different locations. At Hat Yai airport, a bomb exploded at a chair near the public relations counter of the domestic arrivals lounge. Two people died, and many were wounded.

Athit Piamsuphasap, an interior decorator, said he was in the departure lounge waiting for a aircraft to take him back to Bangkok when he heard a blast near a book store. Mr Athit said he saw a foreign teenager among the seriously injured. Deputy governor Apichart Jungkawet said following the incident two domestic flights bound for Bangkok were cancelled, leaving many passengers stranded at the airport. However, two Hat Yai-bound flights were allowed to land. Bancha Pattanaporn, acting president of Airports of Thailand, said AoT had tightened security measures at all airports under its responsibility, including Don Muang in Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai and Phuket following the Hat Yai airport blast. AoT had requested help from police and security authorities to control all airports and strictly screen passengers, and impose a ban on non-travellers from going inside all premises around the clock, he said. A few minutes after the airport blast, another bomb planted in a motorcycle went off at the parking lot of Green World Palace Hotel in Muang district. Nobody was hurt. Gen Sirichai Tunyasiri, commander of the Southern Border Provinces Peace-building Command, admitted he was worried about the spread of violence from the three troubled provinces into Songkhla, a tourist spot. Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and Defence Minister Thammarak Issarangkura na Ayudhaya have called an urgent meeting of military and security agencies today at Government House.

Bangkok, Apr 5 -- The Thai government urged residents of the capital today to be on the alert for signs of militant attacks following the bombing by suspected Muslim extremists of an airport in the commercial centre of the south. Defence Minister Thammarak Israngura said people should watch out for anything suspicious in Bangkok and inform the authorities immediately. "We can't be complacent, we have to take precautions," Thammarak told a radio station when asked if he was worried that militants, who have confined their attacks largely to the three Muslim-majority far south provinces, would strike in Bangkok. That fear has been expressed many times since the violence, in which more than 600 people have been killed, erupted in the three Malay-speaking southern provinces in January last year. So far there has been no attack in Bangkok, and police said they had no indication that the militants -- who carry out daily killings and frequent bombings in the far south -- planned to strike in the capital. However, police have given extra protection to western embassies, train terminals and department stores and reinforced 256 checkpoints throughout the city, Police Major General Chatchawal Suksojmit said. "Despite no indications or leads that Bangkok is under threat, we have raised our level of security measures

to protect these places," Chatchawal said. The bombings on Sunday (Apr 3) just outside the violence-hit southern provinces of Pattani, Narathiwat and Yala sparked fears that the unrest could be spreading. The militant bombers struck the airport in the southern city of Hat Yai, the commercial centre of southern Thailand. They also hit a hotel in Songkhla, 25 miles away, and a supermarket. The fertiliser and dynamite bombs, triggered by mobile phone, killed two people and wounded 60, officials said. -- Reuters.

TOGO

London, Apr 6 -- A press report, dated today, states: Riot police have fired tear-gas and water cannon at opposition supporters marching in the Togolese capital, Lome. Togo's main opposition party, the Union of Forces for Change, want the Apr 24 presidential elections postponed, saying they are being held too soon. Supporters of the ruling party also held a rival rally in Lome. An eyewitness said opposition supporters fought running battles with riot police as they tried to keep the two rival groups apart. The vote was called after President Gnassingbe Eyadema died in February. His son, Faure Gnassingbe, was originally installed in office by the Togolese Army but he later bowed to international pressure and stepped down, agreeing to contest an election. The opposition say they have not been given enough time to mount a proper campaign. Emmanuel Bob-Akitani, Vice-President of the Union Forces for Change party, will stand as the main opposition candidate against Faure Gnassingbe. However, ruling party supporters say any delay in the poll would be a danger for the country.

TURKEY

London, Apr 5 -- A press report, dated today, states: The Turkish military has killed nine Kurdish rebels in a five-day operation in the south-east of the country, CNN Turk television says. The private channel said yesterday a soldier had also been killed by a mine blast and one rebel had surrendered in a large-scale operation backed by helicopter gunships. Officials said last weekend that there had been fighting between security forces and rebels in Sirnak province near the border with Iraq.

UGANDA

London, Apr 2 -- A press report, dated Mar 31, states: Police in Uganda have used water cannon, tear gas and pepper spray to break up an opposition rally. It was called to protest against efforts to amend the constitution and allow President Yoweri Museveni to stand for re-election next year. Last week there were two demonstrations in the capital, Kampala, but this rally was banned. Party politics has been restricted for years to reduce sectarian violence. Police say 17 people have been arrested for taking part in the

demonstration. The organisers, including the FDC's David Pulkol, were questioned at a police station but the police deny that they too have been arrested. The police granted permission for both last week's demonstrations to take place and many viewed the events as a sign of greater democracy and freedom of speech in Uganda. The violent dispersal of this latest demonstration may change that feeling but it is still likely to play into the hands of the pro-Museveni government. The protestors are liable to be blamed for defying police orders. If further rallies are banned, many people will be deterred from attending and the anti-President Museveni voices will effectively be muted.

YEMEN

London, Apr 1 -- A press report, dated today, states: Nine Yemeni soldiers and six fighters were killed, as clashes continued for the fourth day between the military and followers of a slain cleric. Soldiers were surrounding a mountainous region in the north of the country where followers of slain Shiite Muslim cleric Hussein Badr Eddin al-Hawthi were hiding. The fighting in Sa'dah began Monday (Mar 28), a week after al-Hawthi's supporters ambushed a police patrol and killed seven policemen. Eight rebels and 11 soldiers were killed in Monday's fighting, as army troops used heavy artillery to shell rebel positions concealed in mountains. This brings the troops' casualties to 28 and Al-Hawthi's supporters to 14. However, local sources say dozens from both sides have been killed during the clashes. Tribal sources claim the dead are immediately buried and their families notified later. There are no official numbers on casualties.

London, Apr 3 -- A press report, dated today, states: Yemeni army tanks and helicopters pounded Shi'ite rebel strongholds in the north yesterday, killing at least 36 people. Fighting broke out late in the northern area of Nishour after rebels tried to attack an army camp. Ten soldiers and six rebels died in the battle, an official said. Clashes spread close to Saada province yesterday, killing at least 20 rebels, sources said. It was the latest in a series of clashes between government forces and rebel followers of slain Shi'ite Muslim cleric Hussein Al Houthi. Local sources said the government was using tribal leaders to mediate a rebel surrender. Houthi, a Zaidi Shi'ite Muslim who founded a radical group called Believing Youth, was killed last September after two months of clashes with security forces in which at least 200 rebels and state troops died. Yemeni security sources have blamed Houthi's father, Sheikh Badr el-Deen, for the new round of violence which has killed dozens of government soldiers and rebels since erupting in late March in Saada and surrounding areas of Nishour, Al Shafaah and Al Rizamat.

London, Apr 5 -- A press report, dated today, states: At least 13 people, including three soldiers, were killed in two separate clashes in northern Yemen yesterday as government forces continued to hunt for militants loyal to a slain rebel cleric, tribal sources said. Three soldiers and four suspected members of the outlawed "Believing Youth" movement were killed in the Bani-Muadh suburb of the provincial city of Saada, 250 kilometers north of the Yemeni capital Sanaa, they said. The Believing Youth group was set up by radical cleric Hussein Badruddin Al-Houthi, who was killed by government forces in similar clashes last September. Authorities had accused Al-Houthi, a former member of Parliament of setting up an underground armed group and inciting violence against the United States and Israel. Sources told Arab News six others were killed in a gunbattle between tribesmen belonging to a pro-government clan and others from a clan loyal to Al-Houthi. They said an ongoing vendetta between the two clans was believed to be behind the fighting, east of Saada, although they speculated that the government hunt for Houthi loyalists may have sparked further inter-tribe violence. Government sources said they had captured two militant posts during operations late Sunday (Apr 3) in the Al-Shafiaa and Jabal-Ayoob districts, arresting dozens of armed suspects, and had encircled more rebel positions in the Um-Essa and Al-Ruzamat areas.

ZIMBABWE

London, Apr 4 -- A press report, dated today, states: Southern African observers have endorsed the parliamentary election in Zimbabwe, which was won by President Robert Mugabe's ruling Zanu-PF party. The Southern African Development Community said the vote reflected the will of the people, but other monitors said it was neither free nor fair. The outcome gives Zanu-PF a two-thirds parliamentary majority that enables Mr Mugabe to amend the constitution. The opposition claimed the poll was rigged and called for fresh elections. The US has led international criticism of Thursday's (Mar 31) ballot, but correspondents say President Mugabe will be concerned only with African opinion. SADC observers said the poll was "peaceful, transparent, credible and well managed", although they expressed concern at the opposition's lack of access to state-owned media. African Union observers were cautious. Delegation chief Kwadwo Afari-Gyano said the vote was "technically competent and transparent" but noted serious problems with the electoral roll. Many of the observers which were critical of previous elections were not invited back for this poll. Zanu-PF won 78 of the 120 contested seats and the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) picked up 41 seats. Under Zimbabwean law, Mr Mugabe has the power to appoint another 30

MPs in the 150-seat chamber, giving Zanu-PF a two-thirds majority. He said in an interview that he may now increase the size of parliament from 150 MPs to more than 200. The MDC has dismissed the poll as a fraud, citing evidence of ballot stuffing and highlighting flaws in the electoral system. The party is questioning more than a quarter of the results. MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai called for a new ballot under a new constitutional framework. Mr Tsvangirai's spokesman said the leader would pursue a programme of political alternatives. He said the party would not mount a legal challenge because it had proved futile in the previous poll - but the MDC had not ruled out mass action and protests.



Labour Disputes

AUSTRALIA

London, Apr 5 -- A strike of 350 workers at Wattyl Paint sites across Australia is entering its third day. Staff at six sites in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia voted to walk off the job on Friday (Apr 1) as part of a campaign for better pay and conditions. The Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union (LHMU) is asking for a 15% pay increase over three years and bigger redundancy payments. Wattyl management has offered an 8% rise over two years and no changes to redundancy conditions. LHMU spokeswoman Jo-anne Schofield says the relationship between staff and managers has deteriorated to a point where the union is now calling for Wattyl's board to intervene. "The company is facing a major restructure, people want to get on with that job and we recognise that a worker's future is tied to the success of the company, so we want the board to intervene to restore some respect so that we can conclude an agreement and get on with the job," she said. Meanwhile, Wattyl will appeal to the Federal Court in Sydney today for an injunction against the union picket line at its Blacktown manufacturing plant in New South Wales. Wattyl managing director Ian Jackson says the union is interfering with the day-to-day activities of its clerical and other non-union staff at the Blacktown plant by attempting to block their access to the site.

ISRAEL

London, Apr 1 -- A press report, dated today, states: The Jerusalem District Labour Court ordered National Employment Service workers today to immediately end their four-day strike. The employees announced on Tuesday (Mar 26) they will strike indefinitely to protest the planned privatizing of several of the service's programmes, under the Wisconsin

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Plan. The Wisconsin Plan, expected to be launched in August, is meant to incorporate chronically unemployed individuals in the work force. The workers of the employment service fear that its implementation will cut down their work hours as the plan's operation will be outsourced to four private firms. Workers are also protesting ongoing understaffing and the service's policy of awarding incentive bonuses to only half of the employees. Chairman of the employment service worker's union, Aaron Hotoveli, said that the Wisconsin Plan seeks to privatize the employment service and transfer parts of it to private hands.

KENYA

London, Apr 6 -- A press report, dated Apr 5, states: Operations at some tea factories in Kenya's Gucha and Kisii districts have been paralysed by a workers' strike. The worst affected are Tombe, Kiamokama, Ogembo, Nyamache, Kiamokama and Nyankoba plants. The employees said they had heeded Central Organisation of Trade Unions (Cotu) secretary-general Francis Atwoli's call to "down tools" until their pay demands were met. But the factory managers said they were waiting for a directive from the Agriculture minister on the next course of action. Thousands of kilos of green leaves went to waste in Meru North District yesterday as a pay strike by Kiagoi and Micii Mikuru factories took its toll. Unaware of the strike, the farmers picked the crop, only to find no clerks at various buying centres at around noon. Some farmers threw away the tea, while others remained at the centres hoping that the clerks would come. The 400 employees of Kiagoi factory went on strike demanding salary arrears amounting Sh17 million (£119,000) while employees of Micii Mikuru were demanding Sh30 million (£210,000) being arrears for four years. The employees complained that the Kenya Tea Development Agency board had failed to honour a court ruling awarding workers 24 to 32 per cent salary increments in January this year.

LEBANON

London, Apr 1 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Calls for a nationwide strike to protest the government's failure to provide law and order received a lukewarm response yesterday as thousands of shops shut their doors while many others said they couldn't afford to lose another day of business. Sixty per cent of shops were estimated to be closed in the southern city of Nabatieh, 90 per cent in the Christian region of Antelias north of Beirut, and well over half in the Chouf, an opposition stronghold. Most large companies, banks and stores providing essential services remained open. The majority of shops and stores in North Lebanon and Sidon remained open despite the call for the general strike by merchant associations in Beirut in protest of the

political crisis sweeping the country. Tripoli Chamber of Commerce officials said that the lack of coordination between the merchants associations in Beirut and other parts of the country was one of the reasons behind the failure to comply with the strike. In the southern coastal city of Sidon, most shops also defied the calls for a strike.

NIGER

Niamey, Mar 31 -- Police in Niger clashed with stone-throwing and tyre-burning demonstrators in at least three cities today during a nationwide protest against price rises for basic goods in one of the world's poorest countries. About 40 people were detained in Maradi, to the east of the capital Niamey, after youths tried to block traffic by setting tyres on fire, police sources said. Some 10 demonstrators were also held in Zinder, the country's second-biggest city. In Tahoua, 650 km north of Niamey, police clashed with protesters trying to hold a rally. There were no immediate reports of injuries or arrests. Calm later returned. The protest was the latest in a series aimed at forcing the government to drop a new tax on staples such as flour and milk and utilities like electricity and water. In Niamey, shops and schools were shut and some civil servants did not go to work despite government warnings they would be punished. Hospital staff also went on strike. The price rises have hit hard in a nation where most people live in poverty, many in mud-brick huts in the savannah bordering the Sahara desert. The average annual income is \$200. The government says three million people, a quarter of the population, face food shortages because of a drought and locust invasion last year. But it says it was forced to slap a 19 per cent value added tax on basic goods to boost state coffers. Today's protest was called by a coalition of civil society groups known as "Quality and Fairness Against Costly Life" to demand the lifting of the tax. The coalition staged one of the biggest street protests in Niger's recent history this month, with tens of thousands of people marching through Niamey. This week, five of the coalition's leaders were jailed and accused of plotting against the authority of the state. The five protest organisers were arrested after some of them went on private radio and television channels urging Muslim and Christian leaders to hold collective prayers over the Easter weekend to "save Niger from misery". The government said it viewed the calls as an attempt to undermine its authority and warned television and radio stations not to broadcast such messages in the 80 per cent Muslim nation. The movement has called a general strike for next Tuesday (Apr 5). -- Reuters.

PAKISTAN

London, Apr 3 -- A press report, dated today, states: A general strike

shutdown parts of Pakistan yesterday after a coalition of religious groups, Muttahida Majlise Amal (MMA), called for a protest to demand that the country's military president step down. Shops were closed in parts of the nation's biggest city, Karachi, and in Peshawar. Business activity also slowed in Lahore and Quetta, where police said men from the MMA damaged some shops and vehicles. The strike partially disrupted civic life in major cities of the country yesterday amid conflicting claims by the government and the MMA about public response. The government declared that the MMA failed to induce a wheel jam on roads and shutdown of businesses. "Life remained almost normal, business centres, bazaars, banks, educational institutions and offices remained open," Interior Minister Aftab Sherpao told a news conference in Islamabad yesterday afternoon. In Karachi, an effective and peaceful strike was observed as significant number of commercial centres remained closed and public transport remained off the roads. Most of the roads wore a deserted look. Heavy contingents of police and rangers patrolled the main roads. According to reports, in the morning hardly 20 per cent public transport, including buses, coaches, rickshaws and taxis were on the road. Even in the buses that were in operation, there were less people than normal on board. According to reports, hardly 40 per cent of transport was on roads. The attendance in government offices was thin. Private schools and colleges were closed being the weekly holiday as usual. However, the government schools and colleges were open with very low attendance.

Karachi, Apr 3 -- A partial strike was observed in Karachi on the call of the largest opposition party, Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal's (MMA), for a country-wide strike yesterday in protest against price-hike, poverty and unemployment. Reports from other cities point out partial strikes but the twin city of Islamabad and Rawalpindi remained normal. Heavy contingents of police and Rangers were seen deployed across the city to cope with any eventuality. The police had beefed up security measures and increased patrolling in the city, especially in sensitive areas. Meanwhile, according to a local media report, the Karachi Port Trust (KPT) registered 60% decline in the delivery of all types of cargoes for upcountry destination due to the strike called by the Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal (MMA) yesterday. It is because most of the port users did not come on the strike day to take delivery of their cargoes due to non-availability of transport at various truck stands at Hawkesbay, Kharadar and other places. Activities of cargo discharging from ships at the port remained normal. The port handled 73,020 tonnes of cargo during the last 24 hours ended at 0700 yesterday compared to 67,733 tons a day earlier. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

SOUTH AFRICA

London, Apr 1 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: South African mining giant Gold Fields has won a court order to force 30,000 striking employees back to work. Johannesburg's Labour Court ruled that the industrial action was "unlawful and unprotected," the company said. About 50,000 South African miners have walked out in a dispute over pay, including living allowances, and planned redundancies. The strike started on Wednesday (Mar 30) and includes about 21,000 workers from mining rival Harmony Gold. "This means that all employees participating in the strike at all South African operations are required immediately to discontinue their strike action and return to work," Gold Fields said in a statement. Gold Fields and Harmony Gold account for about half of South Africa's total gold output, and argue that job losses are necessary, while pay increases are not possible. The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) said that it expected its members to adhere to the court ruling. "We will retreat," said NUM spokesman Moferefere Lekorotsoane. "We must comply with the court order."

Johannesburg, Apr 6 -- The world's sixth-biggest gold producer, Harmony Gold, said an eight-day strike at its Free State operations, which cost \$18 million in lost revenue, would be called off later today. Harmony shares initially jumped four percent on the news, but analysts described the rise as a knee-jerk reaction since a deal with unions does not cover restructuring and job cuts at the loss-making company. Although not part of the formal issues behind the strike, a restructuring plan to close some shafts and shed around 5,000 jobs probably led unions to take a hard line, Harmony has said. Harmony, in the midst of a hostile takeover bid for Gold Fields, said the strike cost the group around 45,000 ounces in lost output and about \$18 million in lost revenue. The two sides said they reached agreement on a range of issues in talks that lasted into the early hours of today. Harmony said it expected around 21,000 workers to resume work this evening after the deal was signed in the afternoon, but the National Union of Mineworkers said the deal needed to be ratified by workers. The NUM had threatened to extend the strike to all Harmony operations this week if no resolution emerged. The proposed deal covers issues such as the replacement of deceased employees, short payment, racism, housing, health care, as well as a training centre and the mining charter. NUM spokesman Moferefere Lekorotsoane said restructuring and job losses were not discussed during the negotiations. "They only discussed the issues that led to the strike." Harmony was not immediately available for further comment, but Chief Executive Bernard Swanepoel had said the union called the strike in

an attempt to delay closing and restructuring mines that are losing around 100 million rand per quarter. The analyst said Harmony was likely to close or sharply curtail production at a handful of shafts it had targeted when a legally-mandated consultation period with workers expires. "And they'll have to do more than that, they've got another 10 shafts that are badly loss-making," he said. The Harmony job action and a recent strike at Gold Fields was probably only the tip of an iceberg of upcoming labour strife, the analyst said. "We're going to be faced with some fairly aggressive union activity over the next few months, with these sort of issues as well as wage negotiations coming up." Gold companies and unions are due to start preliminary talks soon on a two-year wage and benefits pact that takes effect in July. -- Reuters.

London, Apr 6 -- A press report, dated today, states: Workers at Harmony Gold mines in Free State, South Africa, have reportedly accepted a deal to end an eight-day strike. The National Union of Mineworkers' (NUM) said 21,000 of its members would return to work this evening. "The parties have reached an agreement in principle that the issues in dispute have been adequately addressed," Harmony said.

SOUTH KOREA

London, Apr 1 -- A press report, dated today, states: Unionized workers yesterday joined a four-hour nationwide walkout called by the hard-line Korean Confederation of Trade Unions to protest a proposed law that would allow firms to hire more temporary workers. According to the KCTU headquarters in Seoul, a total of 168,000 workers from 231 workplaces out of its about 600,000 members were set to respond to the strike call. In cities across the country including Ulsan, Busan and Changwon, hundreds, in some places thousands, of striking workers held rallies across the country from 1400 hrs, yesterday and thousands more were expected to gather in central Seoul from 1500 hrs. However, most major industries were little affected by the stoppage since participation by rank and file unionists was modest and many of the strikers were actually off duty during the strike hours, reports said. As many as 74,700 workers at major carmakers Hyundai Motors, Kia Motors Corp. and Ssangyong Motor Co. stayed away from the job. However, the Ministry of Labor, which pronounced the walkout illegal and vowed to take due measures against the organizers of the strike, put the number of striking workers at only around 40,000, most of them local union leaders. Reconfirming that any move by politicians and the government to pass the bill would mean the start of an indefinite all-out general strike, KCTU leader Lee Soo-ho said. The highly-controversial labour reform bill is pending in the Assembly, with parliamentarians set to deal with it in

its April special session which starts next week. The bill, which is aimed at bolstering labour market flexibility by allowing firms a freer use of temporary workers while protecting the workers' right better at the same time, has drawn vehement opposition from the organized labor which claims it would only allow firms to replace permanent workers with temporary ones, who are paid less and have fewer labour rights.

UGANDA

London, Apr 6 -- A press report, dated Apr 5, states: Uganda is likely to face a fuel shortage if Uganda Railways Corporation (URC) workers do not return to work. A minimum of 15 fuel tanks each carrying 52,000 litres of fuel that Uganda railways transports into the country per day have not been coming in since the more than 1,200 workers went on a sit-down strike on Mar 31. The workers are demanding that a consolidated salary agreement (including allowances), on which the Government should base calculation of their terminal benefits, be signed, but the board of directors is reluctant. The agreement guarantees a sh16b payment to the workers and each on average gets sh0.9m after the 30% tax levied on terminal benefits. The strike has also caused a backlog of tons of imports and exports at URC collection points, causing losses to businesses. Mukwano group of companies chief executive director Hassan Risvi said they had lost billions of shillings. The workers went on strike on Mar 30 and the URC board of directors held a crisis meeting and promised to settle the matter, but Uganda Railways Workers Union general secretary Samuel Wuma yesterday said the administration had not signed the consolidated salary agreement.

London, Apr 7 -- A press report, dated Apr 6, states: The ongoing strike by the workers of the Uganda Railways Corporation (URC) is illegal, the board chairman, Mr Paul Etyang, has said. Addressing a press conference at the URC headquarters yesterday, Etyang said at special meeting held on Monday (Apr 4), the URC board, leaders of Uganda Railways Workers' Union and the management agreed that the strike was not in line with the normal procedure for handling disputes with unionised workers. Over 1200 workers have been on strike since Friday (Apr 1) over benefits. Etyang said according to the labour law, it is the Union leadership that declares action to be taken by the workers which has not been the case in the ongoing strike. "Anyone who goes on strike outside the known norms and regulations of unionised labour is committing an illegal act," he stressed. He described as "unfortunate" the action of the workers to demand what is due in December to be paid now, almost eight months in advance. A source, that preferred anonymity in the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning said the workers are demanding Shs16

billion yet according to their contractual obligations, they are entitled to Shs10 billion. They are also demanding a pension of Shs27 billion, way above their legal entitlement of Shs4 billion. The total package they are demanding amounts to Shs 43 billion. But this does not include the pension package for over 900 workers who are no longer employees of the corporation.

Awards & Settlements



ASBESTOS-RELATED ILLNESS, AUSTRALIA

London, Apr 1 -- A press report, dated today, states: The James Hardie company has raised fears about the future of its promised \$1.5 billion compensation deal for asbestos disease victims after revelations that the settlement will not be signed until at least June. The building company confirmed yesterday that a shareholders' meeting to approve compensation would be held in late July and payments to victims would not start until August or September. The settlement was expected to be signed by early this month, paving the way for a speedy flow of funds to victims. But James Hardie said complex legal and administrative issues involved in setting up a special fund to deliver long-term payments to victims was taking time. Vice-president of the Asbestos Diseases Foundation Bernie Banton blamed the delay on "typical brinkmanship" by James Hardie, claiming the company had failed to provide the NSW Government with an early draft of the settlement. Mr Banton said he was worried about the future of the deal with James Hardie but thankful that the Medical Research and Compensation Foundation had enough funds to compensate victims in the short term. He said he would not be surprised if James Hardie tried to impose more delays, penalising victims and their families who were waiting for payments. Asked if he was worried about the future of the deal, Mr Banton said: "Nothing would surprise me with James Hardie. The company has only ever responded because pressure was applied. I've never been confident about the timing and I never trust anything James Hardie says." James Hardie has agreed to provide up to 35% of its annual operating cashflow for the next four decades, about \$1.5 billion, to victims of its asbestos products manufactured until the mid-1980s.

IMPROPER FILING OF LAWSUIT, UNITED STATES

London, Apr 5 -- A press report, dated Apr 4, states: A jury awarded Tae Bo creator Billy Blanks an additional \$15 million in punitive damages in his case against a Chicago

law firm that he claims misfiled a lawsuit and attempted to cover up the mistake. The verdict today comes a week after the Superior Court jury ordered Seyfarth Shaw to pay Blanks \$20 million, including \$10 million for fraudulent concealment, \$9.3 million for professional negligence and \$500,000 for breach of fiduciary duty. Blanks hired the firm and partner William Lancaster to sue an unlicensed talent agent who Blanks claims improperly billed him for services. The fitness guru accused them of filing the lawsuit in the wrong venue and allowing the statute of limitations to expire before trying to correct the mistake. The firm's managing partner, Ken Youmans, said he plans to appeal. Blanks claims that Jeffrey Greenfield, a Los Angeles accountant, was soliciting and negotiating appearances by Blanks and charged \$11 million for his services in the late 1990s even though he did not hold a talent agent's license as required by the Talent Agencies Act. Blanks hired Seyfarth Shaw to sue Greenfield but the firm and Lancaster filed the lawsuit in Superior Court when jurisdiction resided with the state Labor Commission. When they learned that the deadline for filing a claim was August 2000, the firm and Lancaster failed to correct the mistake in order to continue collecting legal fees, Blanks claims. The claim was filed three weeks after the deadline. The commission ruled Greenfield violated the act by working as an unlicensed talent agent but owed nothing because the claim was filed late, Rosen said.

MEDICAL MALPRACTICE, UNITED STATES

London, Apr 5 -- A press report, dated Apr 4, states: A lawyer has won a \$1.2 million judgment in a malpractice case against Yale-New Haven Hospital. David Slossberg, a partner in the law firm of Hurwitz, Sagarin & Slossberg on Broad Street, said the jury award to Noreen Ranelli of Westbrook shows the large teaching hospital's staff failed to supervise its residents and medical students. Ranelli suffered permanent nerve damage and chronic pain in her left leg and foot after she was given a combined spinal-epidural during the birth of her first child in March 2000. After Ranelli and her husband "asked to see the attending anesthesiologist, a defendant, Dr. Thomas Denker, came in and identified himself as Dr. Tom, in charge of Noreen's care," Slossberg said. "He was, in fact, a junior resident on only his fourth day of his rotation on the labour-delivery floor, and who had done only a handful of combined spinal-epidurals.

London, Apr 6 -- A press report, dated Apr 5, states: A jury awarded \$11.8 million to the husband and children of a fashion industry executive who died of cervical cancer that had gone undetected through several years of medical exams and tests. Vicki Malouf, 45, died in 2001 because her gynecologist missed

abnormalities that developed into full-blown cancer and the medical laboratory that she used misread the results of two Pap smears, lawyer Judith A. Livingston argued. Livingston said the state jury apportioned blame yesterday at 55% for the gynecologist, Dr. Heidi Rosenberg, and 45% for Quest Diagnostics of Teterboro, N.J., the largest medical lab in the country. The jury awarded the money to Malouf's husband, Nicolas, a 49-year-old banker, and their sons, ages 9 and 12. Lawyers for Rosenberg and Quest Diagnostics did not immediately return calls for comment. "The number of times that Rosenberg and Quest Diagnostics failed Vicki Malouf was staggering," Livingston said. "If they had done just one thing correctly from May 1996 through 1998, she would be alive today. Instead, they wrote her death sentence." In 1998, after profuse vaginal bleeding, Malouf was diagnosed with a massive cancerous tumor, Livingston said. The lawyer said a hysterectomy, chemotherapy and radiation treatments were prescribed too late to save Malouf.

POLICE CORRUPTION, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES

London, Apr 1 -- A press report, dated Mar 31, states: Los Angeles officials today announced the city would pay an estimated \$70 million to settle lawsuits stemming from the Rampart corruption scandal that shook the Police Department. Since the scandal broke more than five years ago, 214 lawsuits have been brought by plaintiffs, many with criminal backgrounds, who accused renegade officers in the Rampart division's anti-gang unit of falsifying evidence, framing suspects and covering up unjustified shootings. So far, the city has paid out more than \$66 million to settle the lawsuits, with 27 claims dismissed. It was unclear when the last eight lawsuits still pending would be settled, though their estimated amounts were calculated in the \$70 million total, according to the city attorney's office. The payout was considerably less than the \$125 million projected by then-City Attorney James Hahn in the early stages of the scandal. Hahn is now mayor of the city. City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo said the settlements turned out lower than expected partly because city lawyers were willing to offer settlements up front. The scandal included the investigation of 82 incidents involving 50 officers and the reversal of more than 100 convictions tainted by police misconduct. Racial profiling, excessive force and the Rampart scandal caused the federal government in 2001 to impose a consent decree on the department mandating reforms. Additionally, a policy was enacted several years ago under which the city attorney's office would report to police officials if its lawyers believed officers were lying or lacking credibility, Delgadillo said. The city decided against taking some

cases to trial because of the records of implicated officers. The average settlement was \$400,000 but 30 plaintiffs received \$500,000 or more. Javier Francisco Ovando, a gang member who was shot by police and left paralyzed, received the largest settlement of \$15 million. The suspected gang member had been sentenced to 23 years in prison after two officers testified he was armed when he was shot. His conviction was eventually overturned. As a result of the scandal, more than a dozen officers left the force. Some were fired and others resigned amid investigations of alleged misconduct. Many of the misconduct allegations were made by ex-officer Rafael Perez, who later emerged as the main culprit after his accusations against other officers were largely disproved. The scandal began when Perez testified about police misconduct after he was caught stealing cocaine from a police evidence room.

PRICE-FIXING OF MEDICINES, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Apr 2 -- A press report, dated Apr 1, states: A drug company has agreed a £4.5m settlement with the NHS after a legal battle over the alleged price-fixing of medicines. The Department of Health and Ranbaxy (UK) Ltd announced the agreement after allegations against the company for anti-competitive conduct. They concerned antibiotics supplied to the NHS between 1996 and 2000. It is the first settlement in three sets of proceedings brought by the government against drug companies. The settlement with Ranbaxy relates to proceedings over the sale and supply of the penicillin-based drugs known as cillins, lodged with the High Court Dec 17, 2003, and Zantac, which started Aug 4, 2004. In a joint statement, the Department of Health and Ranbaxy said: "Under the terms of the settlement, Ranbaxy have agreed, on a full and final basis and without admission of liability, to compensate the NHS by payment of £4.5 million and to provide co-operation in the context of the ongoing proceedings. Both Ranbaxy and the Department of Health look forward to a strong working relationship in the future and are committed to the highest standards of healthcare at all levels." A further set of proceedings relating to warfarin, involving six other companies but not Ranbaxy, was lodged at the High Court in December 2002. The three cases involve claims of £28m plus interest over warfarin, £30m plus interest over cillins and £69m plus interest over Zantac. Health Minister Lord Warner said: "We are pleased that Ranbaxy - who are the first of the defendant companies to settle with us - have recognised the public interest in doing so by paying the NHS £4.5m and agreeing to co-operate. I hope that each of the other defendant companies will also recognise the strength of our claims. Ranbaxy's approach is to be applauded and is a first step in the

right direction." Jim Gee, director of Counter Fraud Services for the Department of Health, said: "We have already had an approach from a leading institutional shareholder of one of the remaining defendant companies expressing concern regarding the loss of shareholder value and uncertainty caused by the proceedings. I say to them and to the other shareholders of the companies we have sued that they should consider very carefully what course of action is in the best interests of their companies. We are pressing on with all three sets of proceedings concerning warfarin, cillins and ranitidine (Zantac). No one should doubt our determination - with all the evidence available to us - to secure and enforce multi-million pound judgments against all of those who participated."

RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, UNITED STATES

London, Apr 7 -- A press report, dated Apr 6, states: NAACP officials spoke out today about yesterday's \$2.2 million decision against the city of Milwaukee. A jury ruled the money must be paid to 17 Milwaukee police officers who they said were passed up for promotions because they're white. "The damages awarded in this matter are outrageous. The jurors have misjudged this community and misapplied the law," NAACP President Jerry Hamilton said. NAACP leaders said they are outraged by the jury's decision. Members said jurors wrongly focused on their dislike of the process of how lieutenants are promoted to captain and not on whether Jones discriminated against the officers. Jones insisted at the news conference that he did not discriminate and pointed to the fact that more than 50 percent of the officers he promoted to captain were white males. "There was no glass ceiling with respect to race or gender. I promoted those people that I felt that I needed on my leadership team to assist me to carry out my mandate," Jones said.

ROAD ACCIDENT, UNITED STATES

London, Apr 5 -- A press report, dated Apr 4, states: A Riverside County (in California) jury has awarded two-point-four million dollars to six young Arizona women who were returning from a religious retreat in 2003 when their van flipped after a tyre failure. The jury found that the van driver, who was working for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Phoenix acted improperly in reacting to the failure of the van's left rear tyre. Ford Motor Company, which made the van and was a defendant in the case, reached a confidential settlement in 2003 with the plaintiffs. According to the suit, the van was returning from a retreat in Duarte in April 2003 on Interstate Ten between Indio and Blythe, when the tread on the left rear tyre separated. The van went off the road and rolled three times.

SEXUAL DISCRIMINATION, UNITED STATES

London, Apr 7 -- A press report, dated Apr 6, states: A jury awarded \$29 million in damages today to a Wall Street executive who sued UBS AG, alleging she was discriminated against because she was a woman and was retaliated against because she complained about her treatment. Laura Zubulake, 44, of Manhattan, a former director for the bank's Asian equities sales desk in Manhattan and Stamford, Conn., said she was gratified and relieved by the verdict, delivered late in the day in U.S. District Court in Manhattan. Zubulake had filed a lawsuit against Europe's largest bank after she was fired in 2001 from a job she had begun in 1999. The jury awarded \$9.1 million in compensatory damages and \$20.1 million in punitive damages. In closing arguments, lawyer James R. Hubbard had asked the jury to award Zubulake between \$9.7 million and \$10.2 million, saying that was how much his client lost because she cannot continue her \$650,000-a-year job until age 60. Hubbard told jurors that a male executive had said Zubulake was "old and ugly and she can't do the job." In her closing statement, lawyer Bettina Plevan for UBS said Zubulake was fired because she "had performance problems" and was not a team player. "Despite the extensive coaching and counseling she received, she did not improve and she didn't even acknowledge that there was a problem that she needed to address," Plevan said. Jim Batson, another lawyer for Zubulake, said the case was also notable for the number of e-mails and other evidence that were destroyed along the way. He said the verdict would send the message, "Don't try to hide the truth."

TOBACCO-RELATED ILLNESS, UNITED STATES

London, Apr 5 -- A press report, dated Apr 4, states: The family of a man who died of lung cancer after more than four decades of smoking Marlboro cigarettes is entitled to \$50 million in punitive damages, a district's Court of Appeal ruled Friday (Apr 1). The amount is far less than the \$3 billion -- the largest jury verdict ever in favour of a single plaintiff, according to news accounts -- awarded to Richard Boeken by a Los Angeles Superior Court jury in 2001. However, the decision represents a rare defeat for Philip Morris Inc, which persuaded the California Supreme Court to send the case back to Div Four after its first decision. Boeken testified that while he had conquered addictions to heroin, methadone and alcohol, his repeated attempts to quit smoking were unsuccessful. The cancer, jurors were told, had spread to his brain, back and lymph nodes. Boeken, represented by attorney Michael Piuze, said he believed the company's long-standing insistence that cigarettes are not addictive. Jurors agreed, awarding \$3

billion in punitive damages and \$5.5 million in back pay and general damages. Judge Charles W. McCoy Jr cut the award to \$100 million and the Court of Appeal cut that in half. However, the same panel, which was instructed to reconsider its ruling in line with an intervening US Supreme Court decision, said Friday that there was no need to cut the award further. The Supreme Court, Justice J.Gary Hastings explained, said that punitive damages should generally not exceed four times compensatory damages. However, the high court also recognised the need for exceptions in extraordinary cases, the justice said. "The extreme reprehensibility of increasing addictiveness by manipulating additives, gaining smokers by fraud and marketing a product that is more dangerous than ordinary consumers expect, knowing that serious physical injury and death will result in many smokers, does justify a ratio of at least 9 to 1," the justice wrote. "We round off the figure at \$50 million."

WRONGFUL DISMISSAL, UNITED STATES

London, Apr 6 -- A press report, dated Apr 5, states: A Superior Court jury yesterday found that an Escondido basketball coach was wrongfully fired at Orange Glen High School (in California) three years ago and awarded him nearly \$1.2 million in damages. After deliberating for less than two days, the jurors unanimously agreed that the school district's decision to fire James "Ted" Carter of La Mesa was motivated by a previous dispute that prompted Carter to resign from another school. Essentially, the jurors believed Carter was fired at Orange Glen because he told officials at Monte Vista High School in Spring Valley two years earlier that their football coach had urged a player to take a weight-gaining substance. Edward Carberry, the football coach at Monte Vista, is married to Dianne Carberry, the principal at Orange Glen, who evaluated Carter's job performance and ultimately recommended to the Escondido Union High School District's governing board that he be terminated. "I found it hard to believe that the husband and wife would not talk about what had happened before," said juror Robert Lear of Rancho Bernardo. According to court documents, Carter was a teacher and varsity basketball coach at Monte Vista High School in 2000 when a student told him that Edward Carberry was encouraging a football player to use weight-gaining substances. Carter later learned that a 17-year-old football star was hospitalized after taking a weight-gain substance sold at health and nutrition stores. The former student suffered kidney failure and remains on medication today, according to testimony. The former student testified Carberry encouraged him to take the substance, saying he needed to gain weight in order to play Division I college football. Carter complained to the school's athletic director about

Carberry's actions, but the school did not take any definitive action, according to court documents. As a result, Carter quit his job at Monte Vista and was later hired to work at Orange Glen. Around the same time, Dianne Carberry, Edward Carberry's wife, began working at Orange Glen as a substitute principal, a position that became permanent the following year. Carter's attorney, Veronica Aguilar, said in an interview that she told jurors that Dianne Carberry assigned herself the task of evaluating Carter's classroom performance and ultimately "set him up for failure" out of retaliation for the incident at Monte Vista. Attorneys for the Carberrys and the Escondido Union High School District denied any wrongdoing, maintaining that there were no public policy violations and that the district acted in good faith.



BUXAR, BIHAR PROVINCE, INDIA

London, Apr 4 -- A press report, dated today, states: A fire broke out in five bogies of the Sriganganagar-Howrah Toofan Express near Mughalsarai in Bihar early today. Officials say a major accident was averted as the driver of the train stopped, after being alerted by the driver of another train. The train was stopped at Buxar near Dildarnagar railway station. Railway authorities have confirmed that no casualties occurred. Railway sources said the fire started around 0730 hrs, soon after the Toofan Express left the Patna station. The cause of the fire was not known, they added. Traffic on the route has been affected and relief and rescue teams are on the scene. The train was travelling from Sriganganagar to Howrah via Patna.

CARSTAIRS AREA, SCOTLAND

London, Apr 1 -- A press report, dated today, states: Chaos was caused to train services south of Glasgow last night after an express caught fire on the west coast main line. The GNER train, carrying about 100 passengers, broke down north of Carstairs, causing at least 15 other trains to be delayed or cancelled. Passengers were stuck on the train for several hours after it failed on the final leg of its journey from London via Edinburgh. Other services hit included Virgin trains between Glasgow and the south and First ScotRail suburban trains. Smoke was spotted coming from the rear of the locomotive. The fire brigade was called but there were no injuries.

DOMAR AREA, BANGLADESH

Karachi, Apr 3 -- At least 20 people were injured, as a Rajshahi-bound inter-city train of Bangladesh Railway, the Titumir Express, derailed near Domar Railway Station in western

Bangladesh Apr 2. The train started for Rajshahi from Chilahati at 1415 hrs and arrived at Domar after half an hour. As it resumed its journey, four coaches at the tail-end derailed at the southern end of the station. An enquiry is being ordered to find out the cause of the derailment. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

GRAND RAPIDS AREA, MINNESOTA, UNITED STATES

London, Apr 3 -- A press report, dated Apr 1, states: A nine-car derailment has halted train traffic on the railway line running east-west along Highway 2. The derailment happened at 0205 this morning about 12 miles east of Grand Rapids, according to BNSF (Burlington Northern Sante Fe) Railway spokesman Steve Forsberg. Nine cars from the 38th to 46th car were derailed in the incident. BNSF officials said they did not have an official cause for the accident, stating that it was "under investigation." The line was moving east to west from Superior, Wis. to Minot, N.D. Forsberg said that the cars were carrying stone, adding that he did not know what kind of stone exactly was being transported. No timeline regarding when the derailment would be cleaned up and the railway line reopened. Although the derailment will leave that railway line out of commission for an as-of-yet undetermined amount of time, Forsberg said that those tracks are not heavily travelled. No one was hurt in the incident.

PORTLAND AREA, OREGON, UNITED STATES

London, Apr 4 -- A press report, dated today, states: The engine of an Amtrak train derailed yesterday along the Columbia River, sending at least 26 passengers to hospitals with mostly minor injuries, officials said. The Portland, Oregon bound train was carrying 115 people when the locomotive's wheels left the track, leaving four passenger cars leaning upright against an embankment in the Columbia River Gorge, about 45 miles east of Portland, Amtrak spokeswoman Marcie Golgoski said. Two people remained in hospitals yesterday evening. Twenty-four others were treated and released. Rail crews were clearing the track, but it was not expected to re-open until today, said Gus Melonas, a spokesman for BNSF Railway Co., which owns and operates the track. By midday, passengers who could travel were loaded onto school buses and taken to Vancouver, Wash., and Portland. The National Transportation Safety Board and BNSF were investigating the cause of the accident.

SAN BERNARDINO, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES

London, Apr 5 -- A press report, dated today states: A Union Pacific freight train carrying chlorine gas and other hazardous chemicals derailed between a mobile home park and a housing tract in San Bernardino late last night, sparking the evacuation of more than

300 residents, authorities said. Some residents said they heard a roar and then felt their homes shudder from the impact of rail cars striking the ground. Thirteen cars, seven carrying hazardous materials including liquid propane and cleaning solutions, fell off the tracks in a deep rail ravine near the intersection of South Meridian and Rialto avenues at 2017 hrs. No injuries were reported, and hazardous-waste crews found no initial evidence of a chemical spill, although they continued to investigate that possibility. The cause was under investigation. "We still don't know what happened," said San Bernardino Police Sgt. Lee Chennault. "A lady in a mobile home park nearby said she heard a loud crash and then saw a lot of smoke." The rail cars sprawled in a zigzag pattern at the bottom of the ravine. Police spent several hours evacuating residents from the trailer park and a housing tract. They also blocked traffic in the area. "None of the train's engines came off the tracks," Chennault said. Workers were bringing heavy equipment to lift the cars onto the tracks. Residents were not expected to be allowed back home until mid-morning at the earliest.

London, Apr 7 -- A press report, dated Apr 6, states: An evacuation remains in effect for about 300 San Bernardino residents who live near the site of a train derailment. Thirteen Union Pacific train cars, some of them carrying potentially hazardous chemicals, derailed late Monday (Apr 4). One of the cars leaked about two hundred gallons of flammable liquid, and the leak was plugged yesterday. Company spokesman Mark Davis says crews are working this morning to offloading chlorine from two cars to empty ones. They're almost done transferring the flammable liquid. When that's done, workers will begin replacing about 640 ft of damaged track. Still no word on what caused the derailment.

Robberies & Thefts



DRUGS FROM PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURER, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

London, Apr 7 -- A press report, dated today, states: Police say A\$3 million of pseudoephedrine, which can be used to make illegal drugs, has been stolen during an armed hold-up in north-west Sydney. Investigators say three men armed with shotguns and pistols threatened employees at a pharmaceutical manufacturing company at Castle Hill last night. The trio ordered two staff members to open a safe where the drugs were being stored. The workers were not hurt. Detectives are now interviewing witnesses. Pseudoephedrine is used to make cold and flu tablets, but can also be used to make illicit drugs.

Miscellaneous



BLOCKADE OF PORTS BY THAI FISHERMEN

London, Apr 6 -- A press report, dated today, states: Trawler operators yesterday staged nationwide protests against the soaring price of diesel by blocking bays in their provinces with thousands of fishing vessels. Protesting fishing operators moored their trawlers at piers in Prachuab Khiri Khan, Chumphon, Songkhla, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Ranong, Trat and Rayong coastal provinces. The protests came after the government refused to comply with their demands for cheaper diesel. They called on the government to sell the so-called green fuel, subsidised diesel sold offshore, at 13.70 baht a litre. Green fuel is currently being sold at a fixed price of 16.19 baht a litre. Fisheries Association of Thailand president Prasan Silpipat said seven representatives of trawler operators would be sent to hold talks with the government about the green fuel price. "We want the government to set aside some budget to help the fisheries industry. A fisheries fund should be set up to conduct research on coastal farms and develop sustainable fishing. In the past, no measures have been taken by the government to seriously address our problems," said Mr Prasan. Anan Chusak, chairman of the Surat Thani Fisheries Operators Association, said over 3,000 trawlers have stopped fishing as operators could not absorb the high operating costs caused by the rising fuel prices. All fishermen across the country would hold a meeting after Apr 8 to look at the assistance measures provided by the government, he said. Somsak Puangsa-ard, the mayor of Chumphon municipality, admitted fishermen had been badly affected by the rising fuel oil prices. The cabinet recently resolved to provide cheap purple fuel to fishermen joining the government's diesel subsidy programme. Starting from Apr 8, some 115 diesel stations in 14 coastal provinces would start selling purple fuel at two baht below the pump price. A committee would also be set up to check prices of fisheries products in 23 provinces. The purple fuel is sold to small fishing boats in coastal areas while the green fuel can only be obtained offshore. Meanwhile, Deputy Agriculture and Cooperatives Minister Newin Chidchob said 27,000 fishermen had agreed to the government's cheap diesel programme.

CARGO DISPUTE, CHITTAGONG, BANGLADESH

Karachi, Apr 5 -- General cargo Ryu Gyong sailed Bangladesh Mar 30. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

ILLEGAL DUMPING OF WASTE OIL, UNITED STATES

London, Apr 5 -- A press report, dated Apr 4, states: A Panamanian shipping line today pleaded guilty to more than two dozen counts of illegal dumping around the United States, including off the coast of South Carolina, and was ordered to pay \$25 million in one of the largest fines ever imposed on a company that deliberately polluted the ocean. Evergreen International, one of the world's largest shipping lines, concealed the discharge of waste oil, obstructed Coast Guard inspections and altered records over a three-year period ending in 2001, federal officials said. The company entered its plea in U.S. District Court in Los Angeles to 24 felony counts and one misdemeanor. U.S. attorneys from five jurisdictions affected by the pollution - Los Angeles, Seattle, Portland, Newark, N.J. and Charleston, S.C. - hailed the plea agreement as a major victory in the fight against shipping companies trying to skirt the law. U.S. District Judge Terry J. Hatter Jr. ordered Evergreen to pay the five districts \$15 million that they will split equally. The remaining money will be given to environmental community service projects in each area. The shipping line must also implement an environmental plan for their vessels docked in U.S. ports. Attorneys for Evergreen said the company has been in compliance for the past four years and decided to enter a plea agreement to move forward. Federal authorities said they began their investigation in March 2001 after they found about 500 gallons of oil in the Columbia River near Kalama, Wash. They were able to trace the spill to one of Evergreen's ships. The violations led to a thorough review of Evergreen's policies. Federal officials said ship workers would use a pipe to bypass a pollution prevention device and allow them to dump sludge into the ocean - often at night - without it being treated. Attorney Eric Dubelier said the violations occurred on only seven of Evergreen's 140 ships.

MINE ACCIDENTS, CHINA

Beijing, Apr 5 -- Mine accidents in China killed 1,113 people in the first three months of the year, the government said today as it laid out a new plan to try to halt the carnage in the world's deadliest mining industry. The figure represented a 20.2 percent jump in the number of fatalities from the same period last year, the State Administration of Work Safety said. The biggest problem has been enforcing the innumerable regulations designed to keep the industry's more than 25,000 mines safe, said Li Yizhong, minister of the administration. "The most fundamental reason for these kinds of mining disasters is that supervision and administration are not very strong, and the laws are not strictly enforced," Li told a news conference. Last year, more than 6,000 miners

were killed in explosions, floods and other underground disasters in China, and Premier Wen Jiabao has pledged to spend 3 billion yuan (\$362.5 million) to improve mine safety. Funding for safety has been a problem and the administration planned to raise the bar, Li said. Mine enterprises were required to put aside two yuan to 10 yuan (\$0.24 to \$1.21) for safety measures per tonne of coal produced, he said. "We are preparing to issue a supplementary document to exceed that amount according to the situation," Li said. China produced 1.95 billion tonnes of coal last year but official media say it can safely mine only half that rate. The administration also pledged to arrest mine operators running illegal pits and supported high levels of compensation for families of victims as a deterrent. "We are cracking down on all kinds of illegal mining operations, and rectifying mines that failed to meet work safety standards," Li said. "Increasing the level of compensation is increasing the cost of accidents," he said, adding he hoped the high cost would make mine operators realise that paying for better safety would be cheaper. Some areas have recently put the level of compensation paid to families at 11 years to 15 years worth of victims' salary. The government has had trouble shutting down unsafe mines, especially amid a nationwide shortage of coal, which is the main source of energy in power-hungry China. Zhao Tiechui, deputy head of the work safety administration, denied that China's policy of reliance on coal was part of the problem, even though others in the government have admitted that China's thirst for coal was causing mine operators to keep unsafe mines open and push beyond safe production capacities. "Mine disasters and China's energy policy are not directly related," he said, pointing the finger at mining conditions and the depth of mine shafts in China. -- Reuters.

OUTBREAK OF "BIRD FLU"

London, Apr 1 -- A press report, dated today, states: The Vietnamese Government has launched a nationwide clean-up of poultry farms, to try to stop the spread of bird flu. The Ministry of Health said that large commercial operations and small local farms in every village in Vietnam would be disinfected. Bird flu has killed almost 50 people since its resurgence in South East Asia in December 2003. Many millions of poultry across the region have been destroyed in an effort to prevent the spread of the disease. "We started implementing the clean-up campaign this morning, with our communal animal health departments responsible for monitoring," said Nguyen Duy Long, head of the Animal Health Department in Long An province. Meanwhile there were signs of optimism in North Korea, which admitted last weekend that bird flu had been detected in several farms near the capital Pyongyang. An expert

from the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, Hans Wagner, told Reuters news agency that officials might be able to contain the disease. But Mr Wagner, who is currently assessing the situation in Pyongyang, said it was still not known if the virus seen in the infected chickens was the deadly H5N1 strain, which can jump from birds to humans. "There are indications that it is avian influenza, but they lack the diagnostic tools to do a proper diagnosis of which type and sub-type," Mr Wagner said.

London, Apr 4 -- A press report, dated today, states: A 27-year-old woman in central Vietnam has tested positive for bird flu and was in a stable condition in hospital, doctors said today. "The woman tested positive to the virus on Sunday in the National Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology in Hanoi," said Nguyen Van Nuoi, deputy head of the department for infectious diseases of the main hospital in Ha Tinh province. "She was admitted on March 29 with symptoms of high fever and we had to use oxygen cylinders but now she is in a stable condition, has no fever and can breathe without aid," he said. Nuoi said the patient's family raised eight ducks and she had eaten duck meat before being admitted. Medical authorities are awaiting test results to see whether the ducks are infected or not. Since the end of 2003, the bird flu virus has killed 34 Vietnamese, 12 Thais, and two Cambodians. Vietnam on Friday (Apr 1) started a month-long campaign to clean up farms and try to wipe out the bird flu virus that has killed dozens of people across the country in the past year. The campaign would focus on "cleaning up poultry farms and cages in all provinces and cities to stop the type A flu virus from spreading," said the health ministry. Thirty-five of the country's 64 provinces and cities have been hit by the virus this year. According to a daily report by the agriculture ministry, all but two have now been clear of the disease for more than 21 days.

London, Apr 5 -- A press report, dated today, states: A strain of bird flu infecting poultry in North Korea is different from that which killed scores of people in other parts of Asia, a UN expert has said. Hans Wagner, an official for the Food and Agriculture Organization, said the birds were infected with the H7 strain. The strain that has decimated poultry stocks and caused recent human deaths in Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam is the more virulent H5N1 strain. North Korea has culled 219,000 birds to tackle the outbreak, Mr Wagner said. "We have a new situation, because H7 has so far not occurred in Asia," he told reporters. "We don't know where the virus came from," he said, adding that UN experts would now try to trace the source of the infection, to prevent future outbreaks.

London, Apr 6 -- A press report, dated today, states: A 10-year-old Vietnamese girl is reported to have died from avian flu, local health

officials say. The girl, who lived in Hanoi, is believed to be the 50th recorded death from the virus in Asia since the latest outbreak hit in January 2004. Vietnam has seen 36 of those deaths, while Thailand has lost 12 people and Cambodia two. The 10-year-old girl died on Mar 27, in St Paul's Hospital in Hanoi, a local doctor told reporters on condition of anonymity. He said test results by the National Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology were released on Monday (Apr 4).

OUTBREAK OF MARBURG VIRUS, ANGOLA

London, Apr 3 -- A press report, dated today, states: The death toll from the Marburg virus had reached 142 in the Angolan province of Uige alone, the province's governor Antonio Bento Kangulo said on Friday (Apr 1), after the Ebola-like disease reached the country's fourth province. The governor said a total of 150 cases of the disease had been registered in the northern province, which has been the epicentre of the outbreak. "From the beginning up to the last 24 hours we have a total of 150 cases, including 142 dead," the governor said in an interview with private radio Luanda Antena Comercial. Earlier the southern African country's health ministry said the Marburg virus had reached a fourth province in Angola, bringing the disease closer to the capital. According to the last official toll for the country overall given by the health ministry and World Health Organisation, 130 people had been killed by the virus in the country by March 31, with 137 cases registered.

POWER OUTAGE, REFINERY, AMUAY, VENEZUELA

London, Apr 1 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: A power failure at Venezuela's giant Amuay oil refinery forced the plant to shut down its processing units today, the country's state-run oil company said. Petroleos de Venezuela S.A., or PDVSA, said its employees are working to bring the refinery to full capacity within one week. "In seven days, at most, the Amuay refinery will be operating in its totality," said the statement. PDVSA has said it will guarantee supplies for its domestic and foreign clients with existing inventories, and that the company will increase output at other refineries to compensate for the outage if necessary. "International shipments are being met according to our program. If it is necessary, we will increase processing volumes in PDVSA's refinery chain," said the statement. The Paraguana refining complex, which includes the Amuay and Cardon refineries, has an output capacity of 940,000 barrels of crude oil per day, but it normally produces around 700,000 barrels per day.

London, Apr 5 -- A press report, dated Apr 4, states: Venezuela's state-owned oil company successfully restarted one of four crude processing units at the Amuay refinery in

western Venezuela and expects it to be operating normally by the end of the week, an official said today. The unit started to work early today after a power outage last Thursday (Mar 31) which stopped the refinery. The refinery, which is owned by state-run Petroleos de Venezuela or PDVSA, is expected to be fully operating Thursday (Apr 7), Oil Minister Rafael Ramirez said. Amuay suffered a power outage on Mar 31 while workers were restarting a flexicoker unit. The restart process on the first crude unit, 75,000 barrels a day capacity, began on Apr 1.

Fires & Explosions



COAL MINE, HECHUAN, CHINA

London, Apr 6 -- A press report, dated today, states: Rescue teams are trying to free 22 miners trapped after a gas explosion in a coal mine in southwestern China. China's Xinhua news agency reports, one miner died in the explosion which occurred yesterday afternoon at the Tianfu Mining Company in Hechuan.

DIGITAL EXCHANGE, KARACHI, PAKISTAN

Karachi, Apr 6 -- A fire broke out near the Pakistan Telecommunication Company Ltd (PTCL) digital terminal exchange at Karachi in Sindh Province of Pakistan causing damage to the company's fibre optic cable yesterday. As a result, the country faced some telecommunication problems. The leading and largest privately owned cellular company: Mobilink, which has a subscriber base of over 7.5 million, reported that the fire adversely affected its network. The national airlines also faced problem with its nation wide booking system. PTCL is yet to report the cause of fire and extent of damage. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

FACTORY, ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH, LEICESTERSHIRE, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Apr 5 -- A press report, dated today, states: About 60 firefighters tackled a fire at a warehouse in Leicestershire. Fire crews were called to the plastics factory in Resolution Road in Ashby-de-la-Zouch yesterday evening. Police warned nearby residents to stay inside and keep windows shut because of toxic smoke. The A511 Nottingham Road was closed for several hours. Crews remained at the scene of the fire into this morning. An investigation has now been launched into the cause of the fire.

FACTORY, HULL, HUMBERSIDE, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Apr 4 -- A press report, dated today, states: A major blaze at a pizza and pasta factory near Hull has

caused much of the building to collapse, the Humberside Fire Service has said. Dozens of night staff at the Geest plant in Barton-upon-Humber were led to safety when the fire started in a packaging warehouse. Fire crews had been worried about the spread of toxic fumes drifting across west Hull towards the city centre. A spokesman said rain had now reduced the danger to a "negligible" level. More than 60 firefighters remain at the site on the industrial estate in Antelope Road. At the height of the blaze 100 fire personnel worked to tackle the flames after the fire started at 2232, BST, yesterday. Spokesman Nick Grainger said: "We have made few inroads but the primary concern of toxic fumes has now been reduced to a low level. At one the point the smoke had spread across areas of Hull city centre, but the rain has helped to diminish this to an almost negligible level." Fire crews were expected to remain at the scene for most of today as the collapse of parts of the building had caused "difficult to get at" pockets of fire. Mr Grainger added "It is still burning and is still too dangerous for crews to enter." The factory, part of the Geest Prepared Foods division, employees about 800 staff.

London, Apr 5 -- A press report, dated today, states: Bosses at a Geest plant in Barton-upon-Humber, near Hull, destroyed by fire, say it could take up to six months before work can restart at the site. An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive has been launched. A company spokeswoman said two of the three factories on the site had been destroyed. "A pasta factory and a factory which was used to make garlic bread have both been destroyed, but a third building has been undamaged," she said. "We had about 100 to 120 people on site at the time and all were led to safety very quickly and no-one was injured." At its height, more than 100 fire personnel tackled the blaze at the factory on the industrial estate in Antelope Road. It is thought to have started in a packaging store room.

FOREST, SOUTH KOREA

London, Apr 5 -- A press report, dated today, states: Some 1,800 people have been evacuated from their homes in South Korea as a bush fire threatens to spread to residential areas in the country's east, according to a news report. The fire, which broke out late yesterday in a forest near Yangyang, 200 kilometres east of Seoul, was rapidly spreading to nearby villages fanned by strong winds, the Yonhap news agency reported. Authorities evacuated 1,100 local residents and 700 college boarding students to safety overnight, Yonhap said. No casualties were reported. Some 4,000 emergency personnel, including firefighters and soldiers, are tackling the forest fire with 27 fire engines and 14 helicopters, Yonhap said, but strong winds and dry conditions were hampering their attempts. Yonhap said a separate fire started inside the demilitarised zone,

a no-man's land that serves as the inter-Korean border and was headed southward.

London, Apr 6 -- A press report, dated today, states: A wildfire roared through the country's eastern coastal region yesterday, swallowing up forests and forcing hundreds of residents to evacuate their homes, while Koreans elsewhere celebrated the 60th Arbor Day by planting trees. The forest fire began around 2350 on Monday night (Apr 4) in Yangyang, Gangwon Province, and was pushed along to other areas by strong winds. About 700 residents in the area abandoned their homes to take shelter, local police said. There were no immediate reports of casualties. After almost 11 hours, the blaze appeared to be contained but strong winds and dry conditions helped to keep the flames going. The city's Forest Fire Prevention Center said that as of 1100 yesterday, 80 to 90 percent of the major blaze was under control. Smaller bushfires in four nearby villages were being extinguished with the help of nearly 6,000 firefighters, police and government officials. "Some 300 residents of the total 661 people of 265 households in 16 villages have already returned to their homes," an official said. The Korea Meteorological Administration said the region will likely continue to be spring-like, with temperatures in the upper teens and southwesterly winds. There is zero chance of precipitation throughout midweek, heightening fire concerns. On Monday, a wildfire crossed over the eastern section of the DMZ in Gosong, the country's furthest northern border with North Korea, just days after a similar blaze. South Korean soldiers on the frontline were still struggling to bring the blaze under control yesterday as strong winds fanned flames. Yonhap News Agency said 12 fire trucks and three helicopters were deployed near the southern boundary of the 4-kilometre-wide DMZ to assist the firefighters. Last Thursday (Mar 31), a fire in the same area moved southward, placing frontline units on alert. The fire, which originated in North Korea, was apparently put out with the help of rain in the area. (See issue of Apr 6.)

London, Apr 7 -- A press report, dated Apr 6, states: The government is considering declaring the fire-ravaged areas as special disaster zones after an investigation team completes a damage assessment in Yangyang and Kosong in Kangwon Province tomorrow. The forest fires, the third largest since 2000, have destroyed more than 431 hectares, an area about half the size of Yoido in Seoul, in a total of 23 mountainous areas including the two regions, according to the forest authority. The Ministry of Government Administration and Home Affairs has set aside 2 billion won to help rehabilitation efforts. If the areas are declared special disaster areas, the victims will be given up to 5 million won depending on the degree of fire damage. Other financial and labor support also began pouring into

the regions to remove waste and restore electricity and water supplies. About 500 volunteers from the Korean National Red Cross (KNRC) and other private companies are joining the restoration efforts. Some 150 KNRC staff in the regional branch yesterday provided necessities such as blankets, clothes and foods for the victims, equivalent to 7 million won in aid. The Korea Forest Service said that the biggest blaze in Yangyang, engulfing the nation's thousand-year-old Naksansa Temple, came under control around 0800 yesterday, three days after it was started at about 2353 on Monday (Apr 4). During his inspection visit to the disaster region, Yoo Hong-joon, head of the Cultural Heritage Administration, pledged to help restore the destroyed temple and its cultural assets as soon as possible. The administration promised to provide 7 billion won for restoration work on the temple. About 240 houses and buildings were destroyed by fires that raged through 250 hectares of mountainous areas, expedited by strong wind gusts of up to 17.5 metres per second. However, firefighters, civil servants and soldiers are still checking for remaining small fires that may advance to other areas. The fires destroyed the homes of 350 people, who are currently staying in shelters. The exact cause of the fires has not been found, the authority said. Firefighters nearly contained the blaze yesterday morning, but it rapidly enveloped nearby regions, rekindled by a strong, dry wind. Another fire, which began two kilometres west off the Demilitarized Zone near Kosong and quickly moved southward, has been contained after engulfing about 150 hectares. The National Emergency Management Agency has mobilized about 2,000 firefighters and police officers and 14 helicopters and five fire trucks to battle the remaining small fires in Kosong. On Arbor Day, other wildfires were reported in 23 areas nationwide, including Taejon, Ulsan and Kwangju cities and North Kyongsang and Cholla provinces.

PETROCHEMICAL PLANT, TEXAS CITY, TEXAS, UNITED STATES

London, Apr 6 -- A press report, dated Apr 5, states: Texas State District Court Judge Susan Criss today allowed BP investigators into the site of the blast that killed 15 contract workers on Mar 23, but only in the company of a cameraman. BP attorney Jim Galbraith told Criss the company wanted to send its investigative team into the wrecked refinery unit at 1700 hrs, today to start BP's internal investigation into what caused the deadly explosion. Lawyers representing victims and victims' relatives suing the company wanted their own experts to accompany BP officials. Galbraith had said they could not because they lacked safety training required by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration to enter industrial chemical sites. Criss had a conference-

call hearing this afternoon, in which Galbraith said the training was about a two-hour course. Earlier today, he had told the judge the course was 40 hours. In addition to the two-hour course, plaintiffs' experts will also have to submit to a medical exam or provide medical records to ensure "they have the respiratory capacity sufficient for respirator use," Galbraith said. Criss castigated Galbraith for BP's waiting "practically until the last minute" to bring up the safety requirement. Until the plaintiffs' experts complete training, Criss ordered a videographer to film BP investigators on-site to address plaintiffs' attorney Renee Haas' concern that evidence remain unaltered. Also today, Criss signed an order governing how the two sides would exchange information in their investigations. The order requires BP to turn over a list of all people working in the area and internal memos or reports about the investigation, among other things, by Monday. It also calls for the two sides to exchange photographs and witness statements biweekly. Many of those items will likely remain secret, as part of a confidentiality agreement Criss said the two sides would likely sign this week.

PREMISES, KINGSBRIDGE, DEVON, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Apr 1 -- A press report, dated today, states: A firefighter has been hurt in an explosion at the scene of a blaze at a paint workshop in Devon. He is being treated for facial burns after gas and flames shot out of a cylinders at the Tally Ho! Coaches depot in Kingsbridge. More than 60 firefighters have been tackling the fire, and a water tanker was brought in to replenish supplies. People on the industrial estate have been evacuated and nearby residents have been warned to stay indoors. Devon Fire and Rescue said the fire began at about 0800, BST, today. Spokesman Paul Slavin said: "We have deployed six appliances and a hydraulic platform and jets have been used on the oxy-acetylene cylinders. When there is a fire with this type of flammable material, we advise people to keep their windows shut to ensure fumes do not go into their houses." Mr Slavin told BBC News an employee of the coachworks received burns to his arms, which were treated by ambulance paramedics at the scene. The fire is under control, but crews are expected to remain damping down for most of today.

PREMISES, LAKEWOOD, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES

London, Apr 4 -- A press report, dated Apr 2, states: A fire at an upholstery business next to Long Beach Airport yesterday caused more than \$1 million in damage, and investigators were sent to the scene to determine the cause of the blaze. Firefighters responded to Schultz Custom Furniture Company, 3730 N. Industry Ave., about 1820 hrs. and

found flames bursting through the roof of the business, officials said. The blaze was knocked down about 35 minutes later and no one was reported injured, said Los Angeles County Fire Dispatch Supervisor Ed Pickett. The fire destroyed the business, which sits in an industrial complex just west of the airport. Fire investigators were sifting through the ashes late yesterday to determine a cause.

RECYCLING CENTRE, OLD WOLVERTON, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Apr 4 -- A press report, dated today, states: Collections of waste for recycling in Milton Keynes will not be affected by a fire at a recycling centre, council officials have said. Firefighters were called to the blaze at the site at Old Wolverton, Bucks, in the early hours of yesterday. The fire - the second in nine years - caused major damage to the building. Andy Hudson, chief waste officer for Milton Keynes Council, said all recycling materials would be shipped to Northampton and Peterborough. A spokesman for Thames Valley Police said the cause of the fire was not thought to be arson.

SCHOOL, NEWHAVEN, EAST SUSSEX, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Apr 5 -- A press report, dated today, states: A huge fire which has destroyed the central building of a school in East Sussex is being treated as suspicious. Up to 80 firefighters were involved in tackling the blaze at Tideway Secondary School, Southdown Road, Newhaven. Crews were called at 0045, BST, today, to a "severe fire" which gutted "a significant part of the school". No one was in the building, but damage to the main hall, staff rooms and classrooms, a reception area and the gym is estimated at more than £1m. Firefighters were alerted to the blaze in the early hours of this morning by people living near the school. It has been put out and East Sussex Fire and Rescue said they are "damping down the hotspots". A Sussex Police spokesman said damage to the school had been estimated to be "in excess of £1m". An investigation is beginning into the cause of the fire.

WAREHOUSE, ROCKFORD, WASHINGTON, UNITED STATES

London, Apr 4 -- A press report, dated Apr 1, states: Firefighters were called from eight departments in Washington and Idaho to fight a spectacular fire that destroyed a warehouse where a bluegrass seed company stored straw. About 100 firefighters fought the fire that broke out at the Seeds Inc. warehouse yesterday night at Rockford, about 15 miles south of Spokane. The fire destroyed the warehouse where bagged bluegrass straw was stored, but an adjacent seed processing plant was saved, said Kevin Miller, deputy fire marshal for the Spokane Valley Fire Department. Crews were called to the Spokane County town off state

Highway 27 about 2000 hrs, after employees noticed fire in the three-sided metal building. Firefighters worked to empty the warehouse of bagged straw. No one was injured. The cause of yesterday's fire had not been determined, nor had the amount of damage.

WAREHOUSES, RASHIDIYA AREA, DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

London, Apr 7 -- A press report, dated today, states: Some six or seven warehouses located near the "Used Car Complex" in Rashidiya area of Dubai were gutted after a fire broke out in an adjoining warehouse yesterday afternoon. No casualties or injuries were reported despite the massive blaze. According to eyewitnesses, the fire broke out at around 1415 hrs reportedly at a Khalili Trading warehouse containing embroidery material, including chemical glue, and the fire soon spread to the adjoining warehouses. Eyewitnesses told Khaleej Times that the Dubai Civil Defence reached the spot some 30 minutes after the fire broke out. Firefighters were still battling the fire until well after 1845 hrs, even as strong wind conditions made it difficult to contain its spread to other adjoining warehouses. Some six of seven fire engines and more than 10 firefighters were seen dousing the fire, and two bigger tankers of the DCD joined the efforts at around 1830 hrs. The smoke from the fire rose in huge plumes and could be seen from miles away. No information or comment on the fire was available from the civil defence officials present at the site.

WILDFIRES, AUSTRALIA

London, Apr 2 -- A press report, dated today, states: Fire authorities are concerned about changing weather conditions at Wilson's Promontory in Victoria. A huge blaze has burned around 900 hectares over Mount Oberon and has almost reached Waterloo Bay. Dozens of campers and hikers have been evacuated by air and boat. The Department of Sustainability and Environment expects winds to reach up to 90 km per hour tonight. The DSE's Bernard Barbetti says fire crews have been unable to get close to the blaze. "It's very heavy coastal scrub and ti-tree that has long been unburnt," he said. "It hasn't been burnt since the sixties and it's causing 20 metre flame heights and it's spotting about five kilometres ahead of the main front and it's moving through at about three kilometres per hour. So it's moving through quite quickly and it's quite intense." Meanwhile, firefighters say a blaze south-east of Melbourne has jumped control lines and is moving quickly through grassland. The Country Fire Authority says the blaze started in the Cranbourne Botanic Gardens yesterday. They have been unable to stop a breakaway fire today which has now burnt 10 hectares. The CFA is urging residents to take extra precautions and be aware of smoke

and burning embers. Another fire is burning nearby at the district's landfill.

London, Apr 3 -- A press report, dated today, states: Fire authorities have doubled the number of firefighters deployed to a large bushfire on Wilson's Promontory in Victoria. There are now more than 200 firefighters in the area. Many of the crews are reporting flames of up to 20 metres in height. The blaze has burnt out 1,900 hectares. The Department of Sustainability and Environment's Bernard Barbetti says high winds are expected to hamper firefighting efforts overnight. "After 2100, AEST, the winds down there from the north-west may reach 60 to 90 kilometres-per-hour," he said. "We probably won't get any relief until the cool change comes through sometime mid-today." Meanwhile, firefighters say they have brought three fires under control at Cranbourne, south-east of Melbourne. The Country Fire Authority says it had been particularly worried about an intense, fast-moving grassfire in the area. It says crews will monitor the fires overnight, which burnt out nearly 30 hectares earlier yesterday.

London, Apr 3 -- A press report, dated today, states: Tasmanian firefighters will be hoping last night's warm and windy conditions have not made the fire situation worse in the Rocky Cape National Park in northern Tasmania. The bushfire has already burned out nearly 400 hectares and is burning across a five-kilometre front. Thirty firefighters will be on standby to battle the blaze today, which is burning in an inaccessible area. District officer Rob Deverell is keeping a close eye on the weather conditions. "We're hoping to get some rain which is forecast, which will not really do anything for the fire but it might just dampen the area down," he said. Meanwhile, a total fire ban is in force in the Australian Capital Territory. The official fire season ended last week but the weather bureau is forecasting a return to hot and dry conditions today. Mark Ryan from the Emergency Services Authority says lighting of fires in any open space is banned until midnight tonight, except for ceremonial purposes.

London, Apr 3 -- A press report, dated today, states: Six aircraft are battling a large bushfire at a popular Victorian holiday spot following a mass evacuation of holidaymakers. Fierce winds are fuelling the blaze in Wilsons Promontory National Park, after hundreds of people were evacuated from the area yesterday. The fire has so far spread over 4000 ha and the park remains closed. Firefighters are using six aircraft to battle the blaze, which flared out of control on Friday night (Apr 1) during a controlled burn. "Last night they were buffeted by extremely strong winds, which has caused the fire to spread," a spokesman from the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) said. "The fire perimeter is about 40km. It's all burning in the national park. There's

no threat to private property." Meanwhile, residents in other parts of the state near Powelltown and Jindivick, east of Melbourne, are being warned of a wildfire whipped up by strong winds this morning. Crews have contained outbreaks in other parts of the state this morning. DSE staff are yet to confirm whether other fires in the state began as controlled burns, and the spokesman said there would be a routine investigation into the Wilsons Promontory blaze.

London, Apr 4 -- A press report, dated today, states: A fire at Wilsons Promontory in south-east Victoria has grown to 7,000 hectares, but the full damage will not be known until later today. Severe winds fanned the blaze yesterday and prevented helicopters from getting up to inspect the fire. The fire broke out on Friday night (Apr 1) at Tidal River, where a fuel reduction burn had been conducted a week ago. Incident controller Ross Williamson says more than 140 firefighters have managed to protect the lighthouse and camp sites at Tidal River and Sealers Cove. "The main fire front has been in very rugged and inaccessible country and it's far too dangerous for us to try to direct attack it, so at this stage we're looking at developing containment strategies to keep on top of the fire and restrict the area that it burns down to a minimum," he said. Fire crews are hoping a wind change later today will turn the fire back onto itself. More than 600 campers had to be evacuated from the park in helicopters and Esso boats. "The very severe winds that we had down here yesterday afternoon meant that we weren't able to get our helicopters up and out observing what was happening, so we need to do that first thing this morning to get an accurate picture of exactly where the fire front is," Mr Williamson said. Efforts are resuming today to control a bushfire that has burnt almost 700 hectares of bush and scrub at Sister's Hill in Tasmania's north-west. The fire is believed to have started when Friday's strong winds caused a permit fire on a private property to spread into the Rocky Cape National Park. The fire service's Rob Deverall says yesterday's rain gave firefighters the chance to douse hot spots before the return of warmer conditions. He says it is a difficult operation.



ABORTED TAKE-OFF, SHARJAH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

London, Apr 4 -- A press report, dated today, states: More than 300 Britons were stranded in the United Arab Emirates today after halting a Boeing 747 during take-off because of fears of a fuel spill. Passengers told of

their terror after spotting fuel spewing over the wing of the jet as it attempted to leave Sharjah International Airport yesterday morning. The incident happened during a refuelling stop-off on the Phuket Air flight from Bangkok to London's Gatwick Airport. About 30 Britons were found an alternative flight with Emirates having refused to re-board the original aircraft, and were due to touch down at Gatwick Airport this morning. Passengers claimed the jet was forced to abort take-off twice after refuelling in the desert stop-off. According to one witness, passengers screamed and refused to sit in their seats as they demanded the pilot abandon his attempt to get the aircraft in the air. Three hours later, the pilot tried for a second take-off after the aircraft was fixed, but passengers again spotted fuel spillage and the aircraft remained grounded, she claimed. "It's the people left behind I feel sorry for because it's everyone for themselves." A Foreign Office spokesman said: "The reports we have got are that it was a routine refuelling stop. On take-off after refuelling, fuel was seen to be leaking by the passengers so the flight was abandoned. All the passengers are to be accommodated overnight in hotels in the area and they will all be given evening meals and breakfast. Then arrangements will be made for them to continue their onward flight." The Foreign Office confirmed it was a Phuket Air flight. According to some reports, the flight was initially delayed due to a fuel gauge problem and then an engine appeared to catch fire. A Phuket Air spokesman told a newspaper: "One of the engines appeared to catch fire, but it was burning off excess fuel. We are trying to fix the problem to get these passengers home."

London, Apr 5 -- A press report, dated today, states: A group of British holidaymakers who were stranded in the United Arab Emirates are on their way home, airline officials said. The passengers, some of who waited two days after separate Phuket Air flights were grounded, were due to land at 1928 today. Today, a second flight due to carry those who had stayed behind was delayed by 11 hours. "Technical problems" and the "concertina effect" of the Sunday aircraft being delayed held up the flight, Phuket Air's sales and marketing manager Gordon MacFarland said.

ACCIDENT, DADE COLLIER JET PORT, FLORIDA, UNITED STATES

See N811BC.

ACCIDENT, KUCHING AIRPORT, MALAYSIA

London, Apr 6 -- A press report, dated today, states: About 10 flights were affected when the airport at Kuching was temporarily closed after a cargo plane skidded while landing during the rain last night. The Transmile Air Cessna 208 from Sibul skidded on the runway at 2110 hrs, yesterday, leading to the closure of the airport. The pilot and co-pilot escaped

unhurt but were sent to the Sarawak General Hospital for a medical check-up. Kuching OCPD Asst Comm Kassim Yusof, who was at the scene to inspect the aircraft, said it was slightly damaged. "The plane was transporting Pos Laju cargo," he added. The airport's closure affected eight incoming flights operated by Malaysia Airlines and AirAsia, including one from Hong Kong that had earlier stopped over in Kota Kinabalu, and several others from Kuala Lumpur and Miri. "These flights were diverted either to Miri or Kota Kinabalu or retimed," said ACP Kassim. Also affected was one flight bound for Kuala Lumpur.

C-GYLE

London, Apr 5 -- At 1245, Apr 1, Cessna 172N, C-GYLE, was on a training flight to Neepawa, MB, Canada. During the landing the aircraft bounced and veered off the left side of the runway. The aircraft came to a stop in a large puddle of water, in a nose down attitude. The student pilot was not injured. However, the aircraft was substantially damaged. The pilot advised that the aircraft crabbed to the left on touchdown. The combination of the aircraft bouncing on touchdown and the gusty crosswind, resulted in the loss of directional control.

CRASH, NIAS, INDONESIA

London, Apr 2 -- An Australian navy helicopter crashed off the quake-hit Indonesian island of Nias today, with Australian media saying nine people on board were killed. The Australian defence department said the Royal Australian Navy Sea King helicopter crashed near Gunungsitoli on the Indonesian island of Nias shortly after 1930 Australian eastern time. The spokesman said the helicopter, from HMAS Kanimbla, had 11 people on board including three crew but there was confusion about who else was on board. A reporter from Australian associated press on board Kanimbla reported that Kanimbla's crew had been told that nine people, all Australians, on board the helicopter had died. In Jakarta, Indonesian air force spokesman Sagom Tambun said the helicopter had evacuated earthquake victims and was on its way back to Kanimbla. "But before it could reach the ship, it fell and burned. Residents saw three of its crew escape and they are now on the vessel, but we don't know yet how many crew were in the helicopter," the spokesman said. The AAP reporter said Kanimbla Commander George McGuire had told reporters on board that the helicopter was carrying an emergency medical team but had crashed as it approached to land near the village of Amandraya. McGuire said two people survived but were in a serious condition. He said those on board the helicopter included five Navy personnel, three from the Royal Australian Air Force and one from the Australian army. Kanimbla, an amphibious transport vessel sent to provide relief after Monday's 8.7 on

the Richter scale earthquake off Nias, had been part of a \$770 million assistance package provided by Australia in the wake of the (Dec 26) earthquake and tsunami. Kanimbla had been stationed off Aceh on the northern tip of Sumatra island and was on its way home after a month-long mission before it was ordered to return after Monday's earthquake. -- Reuters.

CRASH, SOMERSET WEST, WESTERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA

London, Apr 6 -- A press report, dated today, states: Two people died when a small aircraft crashed onto Vergelegen farm outside Somerset West in the Western Cape about 1420 hrs, yesterday, police said. "The pilot was performing flying techniques when one of the wings fell off. The pilot lost control and crashed onto the privately owned farm," said police Captain Elliot Sinyangana. Metro emergency spokesperson, Dr Wayne Smith, said farmworkers and ground crew found the detached wing of a plane on the farm. A search and rescue helicopter was dispatched to the scene and found the fuselage of a plane, presumed to be an aerobatics plane, some distance from the wing. Smith said judging by the severe damage to the plane the wing probably came off at high altitude, leaving the pilot and co-pilot with no control.

CRASH, VENICE AIRPORT, FLORIDA, UNITED STATES

London, Apr 1 -- A press report, dated Mar 31, states: A single-engine aircraft crashed into the Gulf of Mexico, killing all three people on board, officials said today. The three included a husband and wife and their friend, all from Ann Arbor, Mich. Coast Guard officials said. The were flying to Venice to visit family. The Commander 112 crashed around 2145 yesterday into gulf waters west of the Venice Municipal Fishing Pier. The pier is a few hundred yards away from the runways of the Venice Municipal Airport. The aircraft last communicated with Tampa Airport before the crash, the Coast Guard said. No emergency transmissions were reported, and last night's weather was calm and clear. The Coast Guard said the body of a woman was found in about 25 feet of water in the debris field a mile west of the airport. The bodies of the other two people have not been located. The National Transportation Safety Board is investigating.

London, Apr 4 -- A press report, dated Apr 4, states: The body of a Michigan pilot whose plane crashed into the Gulf of Mexico last week has been pulled from the wreckage. James Eaton, 53, of Saline in Washtenaw County was found amid a portion of the single-engine Rockwell Commander 112 pulled from the water near Florida on Friday (Apr 1), officials said. The body of Eaton's wife, Deanna, 58, was recovered after the crash Wednesday (Mar 30). Reports that another passenger was aboard

the plane when it crashed were incorrect, said John Lovell, an investigator for the National Transportation Safety Board. The other passenger was a flight instructor who had been traveling with the Eatons but had been dropped off at the Venice, Fla., airport, Lovell said. The Sarasota-bound plane crashed near the Venice Fishing Pier shortly after it left the Venice airport around 2145 hrs. No distress calls were recorded. Lovell said it is unlikely that the plane carried a cockpit or flight data recorder, which could reveal what happened. The winds were calm and the skies were clear at the time of the accident, Lovell added. The NTSB's investigation could take eight months or longer, Lovell said.

EMERGENCY LANDING, ELDORET INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, KENYA

London, Apr 2 -- A report from LaSalle, Quebec, dated Mar 29, states: An aircraft belonging to Aero Kenya which was forced to abort a flight from Eldoret to Nairobi yesterday. The two pilots who last week crash-landed at Kabarak airstrip in Nakuru, Kenya, were yesterday forced to crash-land another aircraft at the Eldoret International Airport. Five minutes after take off their six passengers, among them an assistant minister, heard a loud bang which shook the aircraft before it turned left and crash-landed. Dr Noah Wekesa of the Livestock and Fisheries Development ministry said they thought the aircraft, which they had boarded at 0900, was about to crash. "While in the air, we heard a loud bang followed by another one. It was a frightening moment. We thought it was going to crash," he said. However, the two pilots, Captain Kai Tinga and first officer Mary Mukulu, brought the aircraft, belonging to Aero Kenya, to a safe landing. Last week, the same pilots were forced to land a burning aircraft near former President Moi's home in Kabarak. The aircraft's engine caught fire as they flew passengers from Nairobi to Eldoret and the pilots were forced to make an emergency landing at Kabarak airstrip. Tinga said at the airstrip that he heard a cracking sound as he flew at 12,000 feet and noticed that one engine was not working. He switched it off and was left with one engine, which, he said, was not capable of making the rest of the trip to Eldoret thus necessitating the emergency landing. In yesterday's incident, the luggage compartment door flew off its hinges and hit the aircraft's left propeller, blowing off its casing and destabilising the aircraft. The two pilots stabilised the aircraft and returned to the airport's runway where they landed it. No one was injured but the shaken passengers quickly alighted from the aircraft, thinking it would burst into flames. Another aircraft was later flown to Eldoret from Wilson Airport to pick the passengers for their flight to Nairobi.

EMERGENCY LANDING, ISLAMABAD INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, PAKISTAN

Karachi, Apr 6 -- Pakistan state owned airline, Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), said this morning that its Paris bound flight PK-769 made an emergency landing at Islamabad International Airport of Pakistan soon after take-off yesterday. A spokesman of the airline said that the Airbus 310 with over 156 passengers and 12-crew on board were unhurt while the aircraft has been grounded until engineers remove the technical fault. It is reported that the twin-engined Airbus had just taken off for Paris at 0835 when its captain noticed a fault in engine two and informed air traffic control and requested an emergency landing. However, during the emergency landing at about 0935, its rear tyres burst and created a thick cloud of smoke over the runway. Later passengers were offloaded and sent to Paris on another aircraft. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

EMERGENCY LANDING, ROBERT L. BRADSHAW INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, ST KITTS

London, Apr 1 -- A press report, dated today, states: An American Eagle aircraft on its way from St. Lucia to San Juan, Puerto Rico made an emergency landing at the Robert L. Bradshaw International Airport in St Kitts early yesterday evening, sources told the Communications Unit of the Prime Minister (CUOPM). An airline official at the Robert L. Bradshaw International Airport later confirmed that the American Eagle aircraft developed pressurisation problems in its cabin as it was approaching St Kitts on its way to Puerto Rico. The flight captain took precautionary measures and requested an emergency landing at the Robert L. Bradshaw International Airport. The aircraft landed without any further problems with all emergency equipment on standby. CUOPM learned that the aircraft may have struck a bird or an object in flight and this may have caused a crack in the windscreen causing the aircraft to lose pressure. American Airlines General Manager at the Robert L. Bradshaw International Airport, Mr. Hugh Mallalieu without giving details, would only say that no passengers appeared injured and all of them will be flown out to Puerto Rico that evening on another American Eagle aircraft which makes a scheduled flight to St Kitts. The aircraft is expected to remain on the ground until it is thoroughly checked out by engineers and mechanics that are expected to arrive from Puerto Rico.

ER-IBR

London, Apr 5 -- A press report, dated today, states: The investigation into the recent Moldova plane crash in Lake Victoria will take at least half a year to reach a conclusion, Tanzanian officials said. The possible cause that lead to the cargo plane crash in western Tanzania which killed all the

eight Russian crews on board is as yet unknown, Minister for Communications and Transport Mark Mwandosya was quoted as saying by local newspaper Daily News today. The minister said the probe's final report and recommendations was expected to come out in six months, although the initial fieldwork could be concluded within weeks. Officials and experts from the Tanzania Aviation Authority and their counterparts from Russia and Moldova have already carried out investigations into the Russian-build plane. The Ilyushin 76 jet destined for Croatia with 50 tons of fish fillet on board, plunged into the world's second largest fresh water lake shortly after taking-off from the lake-side Mwanza airport on Mar 23. Rescue workers have recovered seven bodies out of the eight victims and found the two black boxes recording data of the flight.

EX 28811

London, Apr 2 -- A report from LaSalle, Quebec, dated Mar 28, states: Detectives from the Criminal Investigation Department are investigating circumstances under which a double-registered aircraft enroute from Dubai via Entebbe Airport in Uganda, and destined for Bukavu in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), violated Rwandan airspace on Friday (Mar 25). Civil Aviation Authority Director General Aimable Nsengiyumva said on phone Saturday that the aircraft, an Antonov 28, Reg. No. EX 28811, belongs to an airline company in Kyrgyzstan in east Europe. He said the aircraft landed at Kigali International Airport at about 1600 after the space controllers, citing poor weather conditions, asked the pilot to halt the journey, and either return to Entebbe or land in Kanombe. He confirmed that the pilots, both Kyrgyzstan nationals, also gave bad weather conditions on the Entebbe-Bukavu route as the reason for seeking an 'emergency landing' but hastened to add that the crew landed without authorization from Kanombe. "We have impounded the aircraft pending investigations into the incident. It flew over our space without authorization and that is against aviation rules," he said adding that "normally pilots are supposed to seek permission from a country before using its airspace". He disclosed that there were eight people on board including two Congolese nationals, a man and woman, while the rest were from Kyrgyzstan. Their names were not established. Nsengiyumva said the aircraft was carrying some cargo but could not divulge more details. "Officers from CID are assisting us in finding out the truth. We may simply let them go or ask them to pay some fines depending on the outcome of the investigation," he told this reporter. Another source close to the airport intimated that the aircraft attracted suspicion because it was registered in two places; Kyrgyzstan and the DRC, something that is not permissible under aviation rules. The source, that

spoke on condition of anonymity, also said that the aircraft could have been carrying contraband goods adding: "We cannot allow the Rwandan airspace to be abused."

GROUNDING OF SEA KING HELICOPTERS, AUSTRALIA

London, Apr 4 -- A press report, dated today, states: Australia's navy grounded its fleet of Sea King helicopters after one of the 1970s-era choppers crashed while on an aid mission in Indonesia, killing nine military personnel. Rear Admiral Rowan Moffett said that until the exact cause of Saturday's (Apr 2) crash was determined, the navy's Sea Kings would remain on the ground. The navy acted after both Prime Minister John Howard and military chief Peter Cosgrove defended the records of the 30-year-old Sea Kings and rejected criticism that the aging fleet should have been replaced long ago. The Australian Defence Association said the navy had not been given sufficient resources to follow the lead of other militaries around the world and replace the Sea Kings. (See also "Crash, Nias, Indonesia.")

INCIDENT, DENVER INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, UNITED STATES

London, Apr 2 -- A press report, dated today, states: The engine of a jetliner caught fire yesterday evening as pilots revved up the aircraft for takeoff, forcing the crew to abort the flight and evacuate 131 passengers using an emergency inflatable slide. The fire happened after the United Airlines jet had left the terminal at Denver International Airport bound for New York. The crew of another aircraft reported flames spewing out of engine during takeoff, United spokeswoman Jenna Obluck said. Pilots used an onboard fire-extinguishing system to put out the blaze. Several passengers suffered minor injuries such as sprained ankles as they went down the slide, airport spokesman Dan Melfi said. Passengers were offered another flight to New York.

N3FJ

London, Apr 7 -- A press report, dated Apr 6, states: The wreckage of a small aircraft was discovered today in a Cape May County campground and at least two people were believed to have been killed when the aircraft crashed last night, authorities said. The single-engine propeller aircraft, a Piper Arrow, crashed at a campground near the Cape May County Airport, said police Chief Joseph Evangelista. "The people at the campground heard a plane going over sometime around 2200, and it didn't sound real good," Evangelista said. Employees at Acorn Campground found the aircraft this morning and called police, Evangelista said. At least two people were dead inside the wrecked aircraft; they had not been identified this afternoon. Authorities were waiting to sift through the crash site until Federal Aviation Administration investigators

were ready. The aircraft was flying from the Millville Municipal Airport to the Cape May County Airport in Lower Township, said FAA spokesman Jim Peters. He initially had reported the aircraft had crashed this morning. He said the aircraft, which hadn't been tracked by radar and was operating under visual flight rules, was attempting a practice landing when it crashed. In addition to the workers at the campground finding the plane, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration picked up the aircraft's locator transmitter via satellite at about 0700 today and alerted the US Air Force, Peters said. The National Transportation Safety Board was in charge of the crash investigation, but it may take months before its cause is determined, Peters said.

CRASH, FORT COLLINS AIRPORT, COLORADO, UNITED STATES

London, Apr 4 -- A press report, dated Apr 3, states: A twin-engine airplane crashed into a business building in Fort Collins today around 1500 hrs, causing a fire and killing at least one person - the pilot - on board. The identity of anyone in the airplane will not be known until the coroner can conduct a postmortem examination, said Craig Kern, a corporal assistant press information officer for the Larimer County Sheriff's Office. The reason the plane crashed has not been determined, said Eloise Campanella, press information officer for the sheriff's office. An employee was inside the building, Poudre Valley Air Inc., 2416 Donella Court, but was not injured at the time. Steve Wilson, project manager for Poudre Valley Air Inc., was the employee inside the building when the plane crashed. Wilson was in his office on the second floor at the time and said he heard a plane going over really low but did not think anything of it since the building is so close to the airport. "The whole building just shook, violently," Wilson said. "The flames were so intense that you really couldn't even see any plane wreckage at the time." At the crash site the plane was a pile of rubble that was charred and partially covered with a blue tarp. The plane's tail was smashed against one of the garage doors on the building's west side and covered in soot as well. "Unfortunately the plane and the person inside it were definitely a total loss," Wilson said. The aircraft's tail number indicated it was registered to McEnrube Inc., located in Fort Collins.

London, Apr 5 -- Beech BE 55, N3FJ, operated by Mcenrube Inc., on landing, crashed into a commercial building, at Fort Collins, Colorado, at 2051, local time, Apr 3. The one person on board was fatally injured, the aircraft was destroyed.

London, Apr 5 -- A press report, dated today, states: A 72-year-old Fort Collins resident and business owner has been identified as the pilot who died Sunday (Apr 3) after his twin-engined Beech BE 55 (N3FJ) crashed into a business near Fort Collins

Airport and exploded into flames. The victim was identified as Claire Harland McMillen, who owned the nearby airport and other businesses, said Larimer County Deputy Coroner Investigator Greg Fairman. "He died of massive blunt force trauma," Fairman said after an autopsy conducted yesterday. "McMillen was the only one inside the aircraft when it slammed into the parking lot of Poudre Valley Air Inc, 2416 Donella Court, and then slid into the building about 1500 hrs. After takeoff, one of the aircraft's two propeller engines could have given out, said Arnold Scott, senior air safety investigator for the National Transportation Safety Board.

N4716F

London, Apr 5 -- At 2100, Apr 2, the pilot of Cessna P206B, N4716F, on a flight from Champaign, IL to Brantford, Ontario, conducted a missed approach at Brantford and proceeded to Hamilton for a localiser backcourse runway 30 approach. Upon landing on a snow covered runway 30 the pilot lost directional control of the aircraft and it proceeded off the left side of the runway. Once off the runway the aircraft nosed down and overturned and came to rest in an inverted position. The aircraft was substantially damaged and the pilot received a minor injury. The weather was reported as wind 360 deg at 18 knots, gusting 26 knots, 1.12 sm visibility in light snow, vertical visibility 700 feet.

N60204

London, Mar 31 -- Commander 114B, N60204, crashed near Venice, Florida, at 2135, Mar 30. The one person on board was killed.

N811BC

London, Mar 31 -- Fairchild Dornier Metro III (SA-227AC), N811BC, struck a deer on landing at Dade Collier Training Airport, Miami, Florida, at 1235, Mar 30. The aircraft sustained substantial damage. The two persons on board were not injured.

SNBFX

London, Apr 2 -- A report from LaSalle, Quebec, dated Mar 29, states: The Accident Bureau of the Ministry of Aviation and the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority have commenced investigations in Kano to find out the cause of the near crash of the Bellview Airlines Boeing 373 aircraft at Malam Aminu Kano International Airport (MAKIA). The Aviation Minister, Alhaji Isa Yuguda, who disclosed this yesterday in Kano while addressing newsmen over the averted aircraft crash, said that more information will be made public after the investigations. Alhaji Isa Yuguda who spoke through the General Manager, Public Affairs, of the Federal Airport Authority of Nigeria (FAAN), Alhaji Adamu Abdullahi, disclosed also that due to the fire which destroyed a number of transformers and some cables, runway 24 of the airport has been closed. He pointed out however

that MAKIA is open to traffic as runway 06 is operational and maintenance on the affected area has already commenced. The aircraft with registration number SNBFX departed the Malam Aminu Kano International Airport at about 1146, local time, on Sunday (Mar 27) with 101 passengers including the five crew members on board. Barely five minutes after take-off, an emergency landing was declared due to fire on one of the aircraft's engines. The flight was then aborted and the aircraft landed safely at about 1205, local time. However, at about 1152 a bushfire erupted at the end of runway 24 which was suspected to have resulted from a ball of fire that fell on the dry grasses from the departing aircraft. FAAN and Kano state fire service men who responded immediately brought the fire under control at about 1357 and the damage caused by the fire on runway 24 led to the closure of the runway.

YV-1115C

London, Apr 6 -- Pilatus-Britten Norman BN-2A-8 Islander, YV-1115C, operator Transaven, crashed on take-off from Caracas-Simon Bolivar Airport, Venezuela, at 1234, Mar 31.

Space Vehicles



DISCOVERY

London, Apr 7 -- A press report, dated today, states: A small crack has been discovered in the foam insulation on Discovery's external fuel tank, just before the spacecraft was supposed to be moved to the launch pad for the first shuttle flight since the Columbia disaster two years ago. The rollout was put on hold, and an analysis was sent to the tank's manufacturer in Louisiana while NASA officials decided whether to proceed. "It doesn't sound like it's a major issue, but because the foam is a sensitive issue we want to make sure we're in a safe and right configuration," said Jessica Rye, a spokeswoman at the Kennedy Space Centre. A delay in the moving of Discovery to the launch pad could upset NASA's plans for a mid-May liftoff. NASA has a launch window of between mid-May and early June, a period dictated by the position of the international space station, the shuttle's destination.

Product Recalls



MERCEDES BENZ MOTOR VEHICLES, WORLDWIDE

London, Apr 1 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states:

DaimlerChrysler AG said today it is recalling some 1.3 million Mercedes-Benz cars worldwide to fix problems with their alternators and batteries. The German-U.S. auto maker said it will check the voltage regulator in the alternator on six- and eight-cylinder models and replace the regulator if needed. It said it would install battery control software on the E-class and CLS-class models built from January 2002-January 2005. The company also said the braking system on the E, SL and CLS-class made since June 2001 would be updated. The company said the recall was part of its effort to improve its renewed emphasis on its cars and is notifying its customers in writing of the recall.

PROPANE HEATERS, UNITED STATES

Washington, DC, Mar 31 -- The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in co-operation with Mr. Heater, Inc., of Cleveland, Ohio, today announced a voluntary recall of about 55,000 Mr. Heater "Big Buddy" and "Tough Buddy" portable propane heaters. Consumers should stop using recalled products immediately unless otherwise instructed. The valve on the propane heaters can leak, posing a fire hazard if an ignition source is present. Mr. Heater has received 26 reports of propane leaks. No injuries have been reported. Only model number MH18B Mr. Heater "Big Buddy" and "Tough Buddy" propane heaters are included in the recall. The model number is located on the rear panel of the unit. The heaters are either black with yellow accents around the burner tiles or light gray with red accents around the burner tiles. "Mr. Heater" is printed in the lower right hand corner of the heaters. Sold at home centers, sporting goods, and hardware stores nation-wide from September 2004 through December 2004 for between \$120 and \$149. Manufactured in China. Remedy: Contact Mr. Heater for instructions on receiving a replacement heater. -- Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Washington, DC, Apr 5 -- The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in co-operation with DESA Heating Products, of Bowling Green, Ky., and Scheu Manufacturing Co., of Upland, Calif., today announced a voluntary recall of about 88,000 "ALL-PRO," "Reddy Heater" and "MASTER" Infrared (Tank Top) Propane Heaters. Consumers should stop using recalled products immediately unless otherwise instructed. The plastic ring on the heater's regulator can crack, causing gas to leak out if the propane tank and heater regulator are turned on. This can create a fire hazard if an ignition source is present. The firms have received four reports of incidents involving minor burns to the hand and two cases of minor property damage. DESA and Scheu portable propane infrared (tank top) heaters with the following model names and number are involved in this recall: All-Pro (SPC-15R & SPC-30R), Reddy Heater (HD15A & HD30A) and MASTER

(TT15A & TT30A). Reddy, ALL-PRO and Master Heaters imported by DESA have serial numbers between 016,000,000 and 016,159,999. All-Pro heaters imported by Scheu have serial numbers beginning with a "C" or "D" prefix. The model and serial numbers are on the carton and on the heater. The designation "Made in China" is on the carton and warning label attached to the heater. This recall involves only heaters made in China with the serial numbers listed above and does not include those made in Mexico or in China with different serial numbers. The heaters made in Mexico have the same or similar model numbers, but show "Made in Mexico" on the carton and warning label and use the prefix "M" in the serial number. There have been no problems with the Mexican heaters and they are not to be returned. Sold at home centers and hardware stores nation-wide from September 2002 through January 2005 for between \$45 and \$120. Manufactured in China. Consumers should stop using this heater immediately and return it to the location where you purchased it to obtain a free replacement. If consumers have any questions concerning this recall, they should contact their local retailer or DESA. -- Consumer Product Safety Commission.

SAFETY HARNESSSES, UNITED STATES

Washington, DC, Apr 5 -- The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in co-operation with Hunter's View, of Peoria, Ill., today announced a voluntary recall of about 500,000 safety harnesses sold with tree stands. Consumers should stop using recalled products immediately unless otherwise instructed. The harnesses could fail during use, resulting in consumers falling from tree stands and suffering serious injuries or death. No incidents/injuries reported. These 2004 model year Fall Arrest Systems (harnesses) have model number 3333 and Model Year 2004 written on a white label attached to the harness or the tree strap. Sold by hunting and sporting good stores nation-wide beginning in January 2004 for between \$100 and \$300. Manufactured in China. Consumers should stop using these harnesses immediately and contact Hunters View to receive a free replacement harness. -- Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Port Delays

Country/Port	Date of report	No.of vessels waiting and/or days delay
Australia		
Abbott Point	04-Apr-2005	Coal: 1 vessel berthed; 8 vessels due by 26/4; no delays expected.
Brisbane	04-Apr-2005	Coal: Fisherman Island coal berth: 7 vessels due by 12/4; up to 2 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Dalrymple Bay	04-Apr-2005	Coal: 2 vessels berthed, 47 anchored; 30 vessels due by 6/5. 20-30 days berthing delay subject to cargo availability and berth congestion; waiting times vary greatly due to different stem supply issues.
Dampier	04-Apr-2005	Iron ore: Parker Point: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 7 anchored; 6 vessels due by 18/4; up to 9 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; East Intercourse Island: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 6 anchored; 10 vessels due by 14/4; 1-10 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	04-Apr-2005	Coal: R.G. Tanna coal terminal: 2 vessels berthed, 3 anchored; 33 vessels due by 7/5; up to 4 days berthing delay expected subject to port congestion and cargo availability; Barney Point: 1 vessel berthed; 6 vessels due by 23/4; up to 3 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	04-Apr-2005	Coal: 2 vessels berthed, 13 anchored; 1 vessel due 5/4; up to 12 days berthing delay expected subject to cargo availability and berth congestion; vessels berthing in order of cargo availability..
Newcastle	04-Apr-2005	Coal: Kooragang 4, 5 and 6: 2 vessels berthed, 12 anchored; 22 vessels due by 16/4; Dykes 4+5: 2 vessels berthed, 8 anchored; 9 vessels due by 17/4; 7 unallocated vessels due by 19/4; 7-10 days delay expected prior to berthing due to planned maintenance at Kooragang terminal, coal product problems with some shippers and cargo receipt.
Port Hedland	04-Apr-2005	Iron ore: BHP Iron Ore Pty. Ltd., Mt. Newman (Nelson Point), "A" berth: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 1 anchored; 5 vessels due by 10/4; up to 5 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; there will be a 96 hour shutdown at the shiploader for repairs starting ca. 5/4; "B" berth: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 3 anchored; 5 vessels due by 10/4; up to 6 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, 2 anchored; 1 vessel due 9/4; up to 4 days delay expected; "D" berth: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 2 anchored; 4 vessels due by 6/4; up to 6 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Port Kembla	04-Apr-2005	Coal: 17 vessels due by 1/5; CB-1: 3 vessels due by 15/4; up to 4 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Port Walcott	04-Apr-2005	Iron ore: 2 vessels berthed and loading, 1 anchored; 19 vessels due by 19/4; up to 3 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability. Shippers are experiencing shortages of lump and fine grade ores.
Brazil		
Paranagua	05-Apr-2005	Thirteen vessels berthed of which 1 fertiliser discharger, 1 reefer loader, 3 pelletsloaders, 2 soya loaders, 2 sugar loaders, 1 container discharger, 3 other loaders/ dischargers; 8 vessels waiting in roads, of which 7 to load (4 soya, 2 pellets, 1 reefer), 1 other vessel to discharge; 37 vessels due over the next 7 days.
Rio Grande	05-Apr-2005	One lumber vessel berthed; 4 vessels waiting in roads; 29 vessels due over the next 10 days.
Santos	05-Apr-2005	Fourteen vessels berthed of which 1 bulk oil loader, 4 sugar loaders, 1 bulk sulphur discharger, 3 pellets loaders, 3 other loaders, 2 full container loaders/dischargers; 15 vessels waiting in roads; 23 vessels due over the next 7 days;
Sao Sebastiao	05-Apr-2005	Five vessels berthed, 5 waiting in roads; 4 vessels due over the next 10 days.
Vitoria	05-Apr-2005	Four vessels berthed of which 1 wheat/malt discharger, 2 steel products loaders, 1 other vessel; Terminal Vila Velha: 2 granite loaders; Tubarao: 2 iron ore loaders, 1 soya loader; Praia Mole: 1 steel products loader; Portocel: 2 cellulose loaders; Ubu: no vessels; 15 vessels waiting in roads; 37 vessels due over the next 7 days.

Port Conditions

Bulgaria

Bourgas	04-Apr-2005	Eight vessels in port operating, all loading, of which 1 scrap, 1 bulk ammonium nitrate, 1 zinc, 2 coils, 1 wheat, 1 iron concentrate, 1 empty vessel; 2 vessels waiting in roads, of which 1 to load cigarettes, 1 to discharge iron ore; 16 vessels due, of which 7 to load (1 copper anodes, 1 billets, 3 containers, 1 general cargo, 1 steel sheets), 9 to discharge (3 containers, 2 zinc concentrate, 1 lead/zinc concentrate, 1 gasoil, 1 glass, 1 iron ore).
Varna	04-Apr-2005	Varna East, Varna West, Electrical Power Station, Balchik: Conditions 28 March - 3 April: Twenty-five vessels in port operating of which 13 loading (1 bulk maize, 2 scrap, 1 TSP, 3 soda, 1 silica sand, 1 kaolin/soda/other, 1 packed hardboard/ammonium nitrate, 2 equipment in packing cases, 1 copper concentrate), 6 discharging (5 bulk coal, 1 raw phosphate), 6 discharging/loading containers.

Chile

Antofagasta	05-Apr-2005	Four vessels berthed, 3 berths vacant; 13 vessels due this week to load/discharge concentrates, bulk copper, containers and general cargo.
Valparaiso	05-Apr-2005	Four vessels berthed, 5 berths vacant; 6 vessels anchored; 10 vessels due this week.

Egypt

Alexandria	04-Apr-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.
Damietta	04-Apr-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	04-Apr-2005	Thirty-three vessels transiting Northbound, 28 Southbound.

Israel

Ashdod	06-Apr-2005	No labour problems. Four general cargo vessels loading at berth, 16 vessels discharging at berth (13 general cargo, 3 bulkers), 4 container vessels loading/discharging at berth; 1 general cargo vessel waiting at anchorage to load, 12 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (6 general cargo, 6 bulkers), 4 container vessels waiting at anchorage to load/discharge; 1 vessel awaiting orders; 15 vessels due, with 2-3 days delay expected.
Haifa	06-Apr-2005	No labour problems. Seven vessels discharging at berth (5 general cargo, 2 bulkers), 9 vessels loading/discharging at berth (5 containers, 3 tankers, 1 passenger vessels); 2 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (1 general cargo, 1 bulker), 1 tanker waiting at anchorage to load/discharge; 2 vessels under repairs/dry-docked, 1 awaiting orders; 22 vessels due, with 2-3 days delay expected.

Mozambique

Maputo	05-Apr-2005	Twenty-four hour berthing/sailing. There are 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. Six vessels are currently in port berthed, of which 3 loading (1 bagged cashew nuts, 1 bagged sugar, 1 coal), 3 discharging (2 bagged rice, 1 vegetable oil); no vessels due; 16 vessels due by 20/4 of which 8 to load (1 clinker, 2 ferro chrome, 2 coal, 1 bagged sugar, 1 magnetite, 1 aluminium), 3 to discharge (1 bulk aluminium, 1 clinker, 1 aluminium), 4 to discharge/load (2 containers, 1 containers/steel sheets, 1 petcoke aluminium), 1 vessel bunkering.
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Pakistan

Karachi	04-Apr-2005	Two vessels loading at berth (1 rice, 1 naphtha), 7 discharging at berth (1 sugar, 1 DAP, 1 jute, 1 SBM, 2 general cargo, 1 phosphate), 2 container vessels loading/discharging at berth; 2 cement vessels waiting at anchorage to load, 2 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (1 crude oil, 1 fertiliser); no vessels bunkering, none under repairs/dry-docked, none awaiting orders; 3 vessels due (2 containers, 1 chemicals), with no berthing delays expected.
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Port Conditions

Port Qasim	04-Apr-2005	One rice vessel loading at berth, 2 vessels discharging at berth (1 palm oil, 1 coal); no vessels loading/discharging at QICT berth; 2 vessels waiting at anchorage to load (1 rice, 1 containers), 2 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (1 containers, 1 palm oil).
Russia		
Novorossiysk	04-Apr-2005	Twenty vessels in port operating, of which 17 loading (1 WRIC/steel billets, 1 bulk cement, 2 bulk NPK, 1 scrap, 1 pipes/coils, 1 steel billets/tin plate/coils, 1 pig-iron, 1 copper, 2 wheat, 1 bulk urea, 1 bulk ammonium nitrate, 1 steel billets/slabs, 2 steel billets, 1 aluminium), 2 discharging bulk sugar, 1 discharging/loading containers; 15 vessels waiting in roads, of which 12 to load (1 steel billets/coils/steel sheets/WRIC, 1 WRIC/coils/lumber, 2 coils, 1 barley, 1 aluminium, 2 diesel oil, 1 slabs, 1 pipes, 1 bulk fertiliser, 1 copper), 3 to discharge (1 potatoes, 2 bulk sugar); 65 vessels due, of which 61 to load (4 pig-iron, 1 tin plate/steel sheets/coils, 1 paper, 1 steel billets/pipes/vehicles, 1 bulk fertiliser, 6 coils, 4 bulk ammonium nitrate, 1 steel sheets/pipes/coils, 7 steel billets, 1 cellulose, 4 aluminium, 1 steel billets/pipes, 1 steel, 1 UAN solution, 3 DRI, 1 bulk NPK, 6 wheat, 1 oil, 1 zinc, 4 copper, 1 lead, 1 slabs, 1 bulk urea, 1 cement, 1 diesel oil, 1 ammonium sulphate/tripoliphosphate, 2 WRIC/pipes, 1 pipes, 1 WRIC, 1 coils/tin plate), 3 to discharge (1 bulk NPK, 1 rice, 1 bulk sugar), 1 to discharge/load containers. Oil terminal: no tankers berthed; 9 tankers in roads, all to load, of which 7 crude oil, 2 fuel oil; 5 tankers due, all to load crude oil.
Spain		
Cadiz	04-05-Apr-2005	Seventeen vessels in port of which 9 operating (3 Ro/Ros, 3 containers, 1 sand, 1 corn, 1 shipbuilding materials), 8 vessels under repair; no delays.
Sagunto	04-05-Apr-2005	Twenty-five vessels in port operating of which 15 discharging (13 steel products, 1 vehicles, 1 containers), 3 loading (1 bulk fertiliser, 1 cement, 1 baled scrap), 5 Ro/Ros discharging/loading general cargo, 2 vessels discharging/loading steel coils; no vessels outside commercial wharf; 6 days berthing delay at present.
Ukraine		
Illichevsk	04-Apr-2005	Seven vessels in port operating, of which 4 loading (3 steel products, 1 fuel oil), 3 discharging (2 ore, 1 tropical oil); 1 vessel in roads to load steel products; 21 vessels due, of which 13 to load (6 steel products, 5 vegetable oil, 1 sulphur, 1 wheat), 8 to discharge/load containers.
Mariupol	04-Apr-2005	Eight vessels in port operating, all loading, of which 2 steel, 2 coal, 1 fire-clay, 2 sulphur, 1 sunflower seeds; 1 vessel in roads to load sulphur; 54 vessels due, of which 51 to load (28 steel, 2 coke, 11 coal, 4 fire-clay, 2 wheat, 2 carbamide, 1 bran, 1 equipment), 1 to discharge pipes, 2 to discharge/load (1 containers/fire-clay, 1 magnetite/steel plates).
Odessa	04-Apr-2005	Fifteen vessels in port operating, of which 9 loading (5 metal, 1 metal/wood, 1 scrap, 1 corn/wheat, 1 corn), 3 discharging (1 sugar, 1 oil, 1 building materials), 2 discharging/loading containers, 1 passenger vessel; 4 vessels in roads, of which 1 to load metal, 1 to discharge oil, 2 to discharge/load containers; 57 vessels due, of which 40 to load (28 metal, 4 pig-iron, 1 scrap, 1 general cargo, 1 ore, 1 wheat, 1 corn, 2 building materials, 1 ferro alloy), 7 to discharge (2 citrus, 1 oil, 1 ore, 2 general cargo, 1 building materials), 10 to discharge/load containers.

Published by Lloyd's Marine Intelligence Unit, part of T&F Informa plc, Sheepen Place, Colchester, Essex CO3 3LP.

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ISSN 0047 4908

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