

Asian nations told to unite in piracy

Call for international help if necessary, shipowners tell governments, writes Marcus Hand in Singapore – Wednesday May 11 2005

FED up with the lack of action against piracy in the Malacca Strait, Asian shipowners want coastal states urgently to implement co-operation agreements and, if they cannot solve the problem, seek international help.

"The Asian Shipowners Forum strongly urged the governments of the littoral states to adopt stronger political will and tougher action to stop piracy attacks in the Straits," the ASF said in a strongly worded statement following its 14th annual meeting in Queensland.

"If they are unable to resolve the problem they should seriously consider seeking international assistance."

Refusing

While there is much talk and many conferences discussing the issue of piracy, concrete action from governments is thin on the ground. Both Malaysian and Indonesian government officials have been emphatic in refusing any suggestion of foreign military presence beyond the three littoral states although they have said that other nations can play a role to help such as capacity building.

The 12 member associations of ASF were unanimous in their call for action.

"The forum also urged littoral states to put aside jurisdictional concerns and urgently conclude and implement

multilateral co-operation agreements," they said.

Last year saw the implementation of much heralded co-ordinated patrols between the navies of Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia, but these made no obvious impact on the number of piracy incidents in the second half of the year.

The co-ordinated patrols do not allow patrol boats from one country to pass into the waters of another in pursuit of pirates, effectively meaning all pirates have to do is speed across the sea border to escape being caught.

Tsunami

The first two months of this year saw a marked reduction in pirate attacks in one of the world's busiest shipping lanes, but this is believed to be a result of the tsunami which devastated the Indonesian province of Aceh, where most of the pirates are thought to be based.

From March this year, however, there has been a resurgence in violent incidents involving kidnappings for ransom.

"Tankers, tugs and barges have been attacked and their officers and crew kidnapped while others were threatened with guns and knives," the ASF noted. "Hefty ransom has been sought in exchange for the safety and release of the seafarers."

Concern about the lack of action over piracy goes beyond fears for the seafarers involved to potential environmental disaster and the involvement of international terrorists.

"An attack on an oil tanker could result in serious consequences such as grounding or widespread oil spillage, so having adverse effects on the marine environment," the forum said.

Delegates also expressed strong concern over the possibility of international terrorism in the Malacca Strait which could cause tremendous damage to the world economy.

They said there was no proved link between piracy and maritime terrorism but warned that the methods used by pirates could be copied by terrorists to launch an attack.

Meanwhile, the lack of action has meant that some owners are taking security into their own hands.

Armed patrols

Offshore towage companies engaged in the transport of rigs and other structures in the Malacca Strait have increasingly turned to the services of private, armed patrols to guarantee the safety of their vessels, a controversial move.

Slow moving tugboats towing offshore structures have been the particular target of pirates kidnapping crew for ransom.

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

Vessel	Type	Flag	Class	GT	DWT	Bit	Casualty
<i>ANNIE B.</i>	fishing	BEL	—	82	—	—	Capsized at Storm Surge Barrier, Zeeland, in about lat 51 30N, long 03 65E, after striking same. Apr 29. Crew rescued. Vessel observed floating upside down. Raised Apr 30 and towed to Kats shipyard. Damage heavy.
<i>CARAVOS HORIZON</i>	bulker	MLT	RI	36,015	68,438	1985	Reported immobilised about 850 miles south-west of the Azores. LOF signed May 1 Tug proceeding May 1.
<i>HAMAYUU</i>	passenger	JPN	—	16,187	3,750	1998	Had engine problems about 6 km NNE of Mutsure Island May 2. Towed back to Shimonoseki same day.
<i>HANNAH & SARAH</i>	fishing	USA	—	80	—	—	Grounded in lat 41 18.98N, long 69 54.25W, after taking water and being abandoned by crew Apr 29. Declared a total loss and to be left beached.
<i>KOBEE V</i>	hydrofoil	PAN	JS	267	—	1978	Struck underwater object, believed to be whale, leading to water ingress and listing, about 16 km off Busan Apr 29. Passengers taken off. Being towed towards land for damage assessment.
<i>ODIGITRIA</i>	bulker	LBR	RS	25,197	40,926	1994	Lost propulsion when bearing overheated on shaft between main engine and propeller in lat 46 35N, long 72 02W, Apr 30. Towed to Quebec City for inspection and repairs. Repairs in hand May 5, ETC May 6.
<i>RENE'I</i>	passenger	USA	—	98	—	1980	In collision with crude oil tanker <i>GenMar Strength</i> and capsized in the Sabine Ship Channel Apr 28. All four crew rescued, one injured. Sabine Ship Channel partially closed. Some oil reported. Lifted and moved Apr 30.
<i>SANTA EMMA</i>	ro-ro	PAN	—	4,092	6,451	1969	Broke away from moorings and beached in lat 46 07.9N, long 63 46.7W, Apr 28. Crew believed to have left vessel. Large hole in hull above waterline. Removal of fuel and oily water under way May 2, continuing May 4.
<i>SEA HUMBER</i>	general	GBR	LR	1,602	2,139	1977	Reported lost power and drifting near Mull of Kintyre May 4. Taken in tow by tug <i>Willowgarth</i> and towed to Greenock, where arrived same day.
<i>SONG THUONG</i>	general	VNM	VN	6,249	10,028	1976	Sank off Thua-Thien Hue province, Vietnam, Dec 31. Fuel oil and heavy oil spilled from vessel. Clean-up and salvage not commenced as of May 5.
<i>THIA CHRYSSOULA</i>	bulker	CYP	RI	31,643	52,350	1991	Grounded off Uotsuri, Senkaku Islands, May 4. Refloating attempt unsuccessful May 5.
<i>ZENKO MARU NO. 8</i>	fishing	JPN	—	147	—	1984	Took on water and sank off Majuro Atoll, Marshall Islands, May 4. All 14 crew rescued by another vessel and taken to Majuro.

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The following reports are reprinted from Lloyd's List



Marine

ALGONTARIO (Canada)

London, Apr 27 -- A report, dated today, states: On Apr 3, while at Thunder Bay, Ont, bulk Algontario (18883 gt, built 1960) discovered that steering gear had sustained damage while operating in ice. (Note -- Algontario arrived Thunder Bay Apr 2 from Hamilton, Ont, and sailed Apr 10 for Hamilton, Ont.)

ANDREW J. BARBERI (U.S.A.)

London, May 3 -- A press report, dated May 2, states: In the first settlement of a legal claim for a death in the 2003 crash of ferry Andrew J. Barberi, the family of a 40-year-old carpet installer will get more than \$450,000, city officials said today. The estate of John A. Valinski, who lived on Staten Island, will get the disbursement after legal documents are signed that officially settle the matter, the officials said. As of late today, total ferry claims settlements had hit \$3.2 million, the officials said. Valinski, who was engaged to be married, was killed after the vessel crashed into a dock during its approach to its Staten Island berth. Eleven people died and scores were injured in the accident. According to documents filed in October, 2003, with the City Comptroller's Office, Valinski's sister, Christine Santoro, filed a claim on behalf of his estate. Santoro made the filing in her capacity as the proposed administrator of Valinski's estate. The original claim did not specify any damage amount. Administrators are appointed by Surrogate Courts in cases where people die without wills. After the accident, a total of \$3.2 billion in legal claims were lodged against the city. To defend itself, the city filed a special action in federal court under maritime law aimed at limiting its liability to \$14.2 million. That amount is the value of the repaired vessel plus a special tonnage allowance. After the city made its defensive move in the federal court action, numerous claimants began to settle, despite criticism by some attorneys that the city was financially brow-beating the families of those who died or were injured. A reported 79 of 191 claims filed after the crash have been formally settled for \$2.7 million. Claims are considered settled after closing documents are signed by the families. An additional seven cases, including Valinski's, are awaiting closing documents and have been settled for \$565,500. That brings the total to \$3.2 million.

ANNIE B. (Belgium)

London, Apr 29 -- Following received from Den Helder RCC, timed 0910, UTC: Fishing Annie B., 82 gt, capsized in approximately lat 51.30N, long

03.65E, at 0600, local time, today. The three crew on board were rescued. The vessel has been observed floating upside down and will be salvaged.

London, Apr 29 -- Vessel with fishing number Z 28 (fishing Annie B.) sank at the Storm Surge Barrier of the Delta Works near Neeltje Jans in Zeeland this morning. The mate had fallen asleep and after the vessel came too close to the barrier; it was taken by the strong tide and tossed against the piles of the barrier. The three crew woke up and saved themselves by jumping onto the column of the barrier and the lifeboat from the nearby station was able to rescue them later. The fishing vessel sank after hitting the barrier. An investigation will be carried out by the River Police.

London, Apr 30 -- Fishing Annie B., that sank yesterday at the Storm Surge Barrier of the Delta Works near Neeltje Jans in Zeeland, after it had hit the barrier, will be raised today. After the "man at the wheel" had set the steering on the automatic pilot yesterday, he fell asleep. The vessel was drawn by the strong tide towards the Storm Surge Barrier and hit a pile. The crew had only a few minutes to climb onto the pile, before the vessel turned over and sank, on the inside of the Barrier in the Oosterschelde. Yesterday the salvage company Polderman from Hansweert started to save the cutter with two floating sheerleg cranes. In the evening yesterday they turned the cutter from lying on its side to an upright position. Today the vessel will be raised and most probably will be towed to the harbour of Bruinisse. The Storm Surge Barrier was only slightly damaged. Only a pipe, positioned under the slide, has a dent. Underwater, there is no damage.

London, May 1 -- Efforts to salvage fishing Annie B. were successfully yesterday, Apr 30. The salvage companies Polderman and Multratug commenced operations on Friday Apr 29. Two floating sheerleg cranes, divers and oilscreens were sent to the location. The salvage tug Zephyrus was also involved. At about 2100 hrs, on Friday, the vessel had been turned upright and the three holes in the hull of the cutter, caused by touching the barrier, had been sealed. During the night the cutter was pumped empty of all the water, operations completed around 0800 hrs, yesterday. No environment pollution has been caused. The vessel was the towed to a shipyard in the harbour of Kats by the tugs Zephyrus and Delta. At Kats the damaged cutter was lifted out of the water by a sheerleg crane at the shipyard. An inspection will be held tomorrow by the owner and insurers. The vessel was heavy damaged in this accident.

APOLLO (Canada)

London, May 2 -- Passenger ro/ro Apollo (6480 gt, built 1970), with 18 persons on board, reported a crankcase explosion in the port main engine in lat 47 34N, long 56 30W, nine nautical

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miles west-south-west of Cape Ray, Newfoundland, at 0046, UTC, Apr 25. A small fire resulted and was quickly extinguished. No injuries reported.

ARCA (Canada)

London, May 3 -- Tank barge Arca (734 gt, built 1963) sustained steering problems in the port of Montreal May 2. Vessel was brought back to berth under tug assistance.

B.NO.35 (U.S.A.)

London, Apr 29 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Bouchard tank barge B.No.35 (4761 gt, built 1980) was being transported by tug Bruce A.McAllister to a facility in Rensselaer, laden with gasoline spilled some of its load into the Hudson River near the mouth of the Wappinger Creek at about 1540, today, U.S. Coast Guard spokesman Mike Hvozda said. The amount of gasoline spilled has yet to be determined. It's not known yet how many of the tanks within the barge ruptured, nor how much from any one tank spilled, Hvozda said. No more gasoline was believed to be leaking as of about 1745 hrs. In addition to the Coast Guard, the Department of Environmental Conservation, Dutchess County Sheriff's Office and National Response Corporation sent vessels to the scene. The National Response Corporation is a contractor that responds to spills. The Coast Guard has ordered it to install a boom at the mouth of the Wappinger Creek to prevent gasoline from flowing in, Hvozda said. The gasoline that has been spilled will be left to evaporate, he said.

London, Apr 29 -- A press report, dated Apr 28, states: Tank barge B.No.35 spilled some of the 75,000 gallons of unleaded gasoline it was carrying after striking a rocky area in the Hudson River today. The accident happened around 1545 hrs near the mouth of Wappinger Creek. At least two of the barge's 10 tanks ruptured, the Coast Guard said, but it was unclear how much gasoline leaked into the river. Workers were using booms to prevent it from flowing into the creek. "There was a slick on the river," New Hamburg Fire Chief Jeffrey Renihan said. "But the wind was helping us out, helping it evaporate." Dutchess County Sheriff Lt. Gary Bashor said strong winds may have contributed to the accident. The rocky area is on navigation charts. The tugboat from McAllister Towing and Transport was pulling the Bouchard Transportation Co barge on its way from New York City to Rensselaer. Some residents in New Hamburg, 75 miles south of Albany, complained the odor from the spill burned their eyes and noses. The Coast Guard will investigate to determine whether the tug operator should be penalised.

London, May 3 -- A press report, dated today, states: The tug (Bruce A.McAllister) crew involved in Thursday's (Apr 28) gasoline barge (B.No.35) accident in the Hudson River near New Hamburg had experience on the Hudson River, Buck

McAllister, vice president of McAllister Towing and Transport, said yesterday. And they had extensive training, as required by federal law, he said. It still is not known how much was spilled. Leaks in the barge were being plugged yesterday at a Dynegy dock in Newburgh so the gasoline could be pumped into another barge, Coast Guard spokesman Mike Hvozda said. Once the barge is unloaded, investigators can estimate how much of the 3.1 million gallons of fuel spilled. Witnesses said the barge scraped Diamond Reef, a rock ledge in the river. The Coast Guard will not conclude its investigation before the damaged barge is moved to another port. "Part of that will be when the damaged barge gets to the next facility for repair, and they get a really good look at it," Hvozda said.

London, May 4 -- A press report, dated May 3, states: Tank barge B.No.35 has been towed to the Roseton electric generating plant where it has been docked. U.S. Coast Guard Petty Officer Mike Hvozda said the transfer of the fuel to another barge is on hold for now. "We are suspended from activity now because of a patch that they are trying to make sure has a permanent seal on it before they transfer any of the product to a barge that is waiting to take the fuel," he said. Damage is on the under side of the barge and contractors that are diving under water are making sure there is an epoxy seal to prevent more water from coming in, Hvozda said.

BAO HUA (China)

London, May 3 -- A press report, dated May 2, states: Ferry Bao Hua, Yantai for Dalian, with 698 passengers, 47 crew members and 68 cars on board, caught fire 30 nautical miles from Dalian at around 0300 today. No casualties were reported by press time. The fire, which broke out in the car cabin of the ferry, has been brought under control while the ferry is continuing its journey to Dalian "with a normal order on board," said sources with the maritime rescue centre of Liaoning Province, which rushed to the rescue upon receiving the emergency call from the ferry. The cause of the fire was still under investigation, the sources added.

London, May 4 -- A press report, dated today, states: Ferry Bao Hua, sailing between Yantai and Dalian, caught fire Monday (May 2), but all 698 passengers and 47 crew members were rescued safely, the Ministry of Transportation said yesterday. It caught fire at around 0300, Monday, in Bohai Bay, about 40 nautical miles from Dalian Port at the time. The cause of the fire is under investigation. The fire, which broke out in the boat's car compartment, was brought under control four hours later. Liu Gongcheng, deputy director of the maritime department of the ministry, said the successful rescue indicated the improved ability of China's maritime rescue operations. When the fire broke out, rescue boat, Beihai Rescue 159, was on patrol not far away

from Bao Hua. It reached the site in 27 minutes. "The co-operation of air, land and sea rescue teams have also contributed to the success of the rescue," said the ministry.

BASTO III (Norway)

London, May 2 -- Information received from Sandnes, dated today, states: Passenger Basto III (7310 gt, built 2005) made hard contact with the pier when arriving at Horten at 1844, local time, Apr 30. Two of the passengers were injured. The vessel needed drydocking. Passenger ro/ro Sogn will replace the vessel.

BBC ONTARIO (Antigua & Barbuda)

Troy, Michigan, May 4 -- After being in Duluth for about two weeks while undergoing hatch cover repairs general cargo BBC Ontario finally sailed over the weekend (Apr 30/May 1). -- Great Lakes and Seaway Shipping News.

London, May 4 -- General cargo BBC Ontario departed from Duluth on Apr 30.

BITFJORD (Sweden)

London, Apr 28 -- A press report, dated today, states: Ten fire engines were sent to Dundee harbour this morning to fight a blaze onboard chemical/oil carrier Bitfjord (1573 gt, built 1971). Bitfjord was loading oxidized bitumen from oil company Nynas at the Caledon West Wharf area of the harbour when the fire occurred. The blaze started in the ship's pump-room and was able to be contained there by the 25 firefighters who attended. None of the ship's eight crew was hurt and no section of Dundee harbour had to be closed. Tayside Fire Brigade was called by Forth Ports just after 0830 hrs, when smoke was noticed billowing out of the ship. The firefighters stripped away insulation to get to the root of the blaze, in conjunction with the ship's crew who controlled the ventilation on the ship. Three water tenders, an aerial ladder, heavy rescue unit, foam salvage unit, breathing apparatus support and a command support unit were needed in tackling the fire. Now Swedish company Tarbit Shipping, who own the vessel, are to conduct an investigation. A spokeswoman for Forth Ports said, "The blaze was contained in the pump-room and the fire was under control at about 0905 hrs." The Fire Brigade will do an official check of the vessel later today before leaving the site. (Note -- Bitfjord arrived Dundee 2135, Apr 27.)

London, May 3 -- Chemical/oil carrier Bitfjord sailed Dundee 2255, Apr 29 for Farsund.

BRUCE A.MCALLISTER (U.S.A.)

See B.No.35.

CARAVOS HORIZON (Malta)

London, May 5 -- Understood salvage services are to be rendered to bulk Caravos Horizon (36015 gt, built 1985), cargo fertiliser, by Tsavlis Salvage (International) Ltd under

Lloyd's Open Form dated May 1. Vessel reported immobilized about 850 miles southwest of Azores. (Note -- Salvage tug Fotiy Krylov left Ponta Delgada outer anchorage at 0300, local time, May 1 for high seas. Caravos Horizon was last reported to have sailed Mobile Apr 16 for Tampa.)

CEMCON (Bahamas)

London, May 2 -- Following received from Coast Guard San Juan, timed 1640, UTC: Barge La Princesa (7771 gt, built 1979), in tow of tug Monitor (538 gt, built 1975), was in contact with cement Cemcon (3875 gt, built 1981), which moored at Crown Bay, St. Thomas, on Apr 29. After minor repairs to La Princesa, the tow proceeded to Jacksonville. Cemcon sustained a 10-to-15 foot vertical hole on the port side above the waterline. Steel repairs are underway. (Note -- Cemcon arrived St. Thomas Apr 28. La Princesa and Monitor arrived and sailed St. Thomas Apr 29.)

London, May 3 -- A press report, dated Apr 30, states: The U.S. Coast Guard is investigating an accident at the Crowley Maritime Services dock, St. Thomas, involving cement Cemcon, barge La Princesa and tug Monitor. The accident took place early yesterday as Monitor and La Princesa, travelling in combination from San Juan, were pulling into the Crowley dock area, according to Lt. j.g. Eric Willis. Cemcon, was moored at the Crowley pier. For reasons that are under investigation, the tug and barge contacted Cemcon on its port side, crushing the first 100 feet of the freighter and smashing it into the pier. Willis said the accident occurred between 0700 and 0800 hrs. No one was injured, he said. While the freighter was wrecked, the commercial port and the harbor's marine life were spared from harm. The flow of vessel traffic was not interrupted and the port remained open for business. Nothing was leaking from the vessels and no hazardous material was spilled. The freighter was so badly damaged that it was at risk of sinking, so the U.S. Coast Guard Marine Safety Detachment worked yesterday with the freighter's owner to coordinate emergency repairs to keep it afloat. The freighter, which is owned by Norship and operated by Devcon, was carrying concrete. The barge, which was carrying containers filled with various goods, sustained minor damage, according to an initial assessment. The tug, which is owned by San Diego Transportation Co. and operated by Crowley, was not damaged, according to Willis. The Coast Guard's St. Thomas Marine Safety Detachment will lead an investigation, which likely will take months, to determine the cause of the crash and whether anyone was at fault.

CONTSHIP ROME (Liberia)

London, Apr 29 -- Following received from Australia RCC, timed 0140, UTC: C.c. Contship Rome (26131 gt, built 1998), from Melbourne, developed

engine problems off Melbourne, at about 0100, UTC, Apr 28. Vessel remains at anchor attempting to effect repairs.

London, Apr 29 -- Following received from Australia RCC, timed 0720, UTC: Understood c.c. Contship Rome is still anchored off Melbourne, currently awaiting some replacement parts from land. Vessel is not proving an obstruction and weather on scene is good.

London, May 3 -- Following received from Australia RCC, timed 2215 UTC: C.c. Contship Rome arrived at Adelaide about 24 hours ago.

DAIO ROBIN (Panama)

London, May 3 -- A giant loading boom has collapsed onto the deck and into the hold of Panamanian wood chip Daio Robin loading woodchips in the Australian port of Geelong. An eyewitness to the incident, which occurred yesterday, told Lloyd's List that he believed that either a wire had parted or the brake on the boom had failed, bringing the apparatus down hard on the hatch coaming. No one was injured in the incident and inspectors are expected to assess any damage to the vessel tomorrow morning. The loading boom leads from a conveyor system that runs the length of the quay. Vessel movements at the terminal, which is operated privately by Graincorp, were likely to be affected for some days at least as the loading system would require major repairs. and a safety survey would have to be carried out. More than half of Victoria's grain exports go through the port and any disruption to Geelong's only grain berth is likely to have a big impact. The vessel which is operated by Daio Paper, was loading 42,000 tonnes of radiata pine woodchip for the Japanese trading house Sojitz at the time of the incident. It was due to sail today, but it is too early to estimate how long it will take to recover the loading boom. (Note -- Daio Robin arrived Geelong Apr 28.)

DARWISA

See Weesam Express 5

DES GROSEILLIERS (Canada)

London, May 2 -- Icebreaker Des Groseilliers (5910 gt, built 1982) had a small fire behind the bulkhead of the wheelhouse windows subsequent to welding near the area at Section 93, Port of Quebec in lat 46 48.38N, long 71 12.06W Apr 29. Fire was extinguished with very minor damage.

DIA P. (Panama)

Piraeus, May 4 -- Bulk Dia P. arrived Piraeus May 2 from Lattakia. (See issue of Jan 28.)

DOCK EXPRESS 10 (Netherlands)

London, Apr 28 -- A report, dated today, states: Semi-sub HL vessel Dock Express 10 (13110 gt, built 1979), secured to tugs Westminster Pride, forward, and Westminster Hyack, aft, reported aground near New Westminster, BC, in lat 49 09 39N, long 122 57 02W, Apr 1. (Note -- Dock

Express 10 arrived Fraser River Port Apr 1 from Vancouver and subsequently arrived Vancouver Apr 9 from Fraser River Port.)

EIRIK RAUDE (Bahamas)

See "Barents Sea" under "Pollution."

ELBE DOUBLE (DIS)

London, Apr 29 -- Chem.tank Elbe Double departed from Bremerhaven at 1400 hrs., Apr 26, entering Bremen at 1940 hrs, Apr 28. (See issue of Apr 27.)

London, Apr 30 -- Chem.tank Elbe Double departed from Bremen at 1855 hrs, Apr 29, bound for Hamburg.

FOSEN (Norway)

London, May 2 -- Information received from Sandnes, dated today, states: Passenger ro/ro Fosen (2835 gt, built 1989), when arriving Rorvik from Flak, experienced engine blackout and made hard contact with the pier Apr 30. Five of the 110 passengers were injured. The vessel made temporary repairs at Fosen Mek the same day and was back in normal service Sunday (May 1). The vessel is likely to complete repairs at the end of May.

GENMAR STRENGTH (Liberia)

See Rene'I.

GLORIA (Estonia)

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

GRANDE NAPOLI (Italy)

Dubai, May 4 -- Ro/ro Grande Napoli arrived Dubai May 2. -- Lloyd's Agents.

HAMAYUU (Japan)

London, May 3 -- A press report, dated today, states: Passenger ro/ro Hamayuu (16187 gt, built 1998) came to a standstill at sea after developing engine trouble last night, forcing passengers to change to another vessel today, the vessel's operator said. The vessel, which was bound for Busan from Shimonoseki, came to a standstill at about 2000 yesterday after one of its engines developed a problem while sailing about six kilometres north-north-east of Mutsure Island in Shimonoseki, Kampo Ferry KK officials said. Nearly 160 passengers and 30 crew members were stranded on the vessel, which was towed back to Shimonoseki this morning. Nobody was injured. Passengers changed to another vessel to proceed to Busan. The operators are investigating the cause of the engine trouble.

HANNAH & SARAH (U.S.A.)

London, May 2 -- Following received from Coast Guard Boston, timed 1345, UTC: Fishing Hannah & Sarah (80 gt, built 1972) took water off Nantucket. The crew abandoned ship and the disabled fishing vessel grounded in lat 41 18.98N, long 69 54.25W, at 0500, Apr 29. A salvage operation is in progress.

London, May 4 -- Following received from Coast Guard Boston, timed 1406, UTC: Fishing Hannah & Sarah is to be left beached and is a total loss.

HIGH SPIRIT (Liberia)

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

JALALIYA (India)

Kochi, May 5 -- Dhow Jalaliya (117 nt), official number MNG 433, Beypore for Minicoy (Lakshadweep Island) India, with general cargo, sank following ingress of seawater through its bottom off Beypore/Calicut, India, May 1. Weather conditions at the time of the accident were reported as clear and sunny. All eight crew are safe and part of the cargo has been retrieved. The dhow, which is stated to be immersed in the sea and beyond economical repair, has been abandoned.

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

See under "Seizures & Arrests."

KALEETAN (U.S.A.)

London, May 5 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Ro/ro Kaleetan (2704 gt, built 1967), which is one of two car ferries that handle the Seattle to Bremerton route, is out of service tonight after some portion of the propulsion system failed, according to a state Department of Transportation (DOT) spokeswoman. The vessel stopped dead in Elliott Bay during the 1500 hrs sailing from Bremerton to Seattle. It's unclear what caused it to stall. The ferry was towed into Coleman Dock in Seattle.

London, May 5 -- A press report, dated May 4, states: An electrical problem caused ro-ro Kaleetan to go "dead" in the water this afternoon in the middle of Puget Sound, a state ferries spokeswoman confirmed. The problem was quickly fixed and it was scheduled to resume service with a 2105 hrs sailing from Seattle. It was bound from Bremerton to Seattle when it lost power and began drifting about 1600 hrs. A tug was dispatched to push the ferry to Seattle's downtown Colman Dock. Washington State Ferries spokeswoman Susan Harris said the electrical problem was in a part of the vessel's propulsion system called an exciter, and caused some wires to burn out.

KAMENITZA (Bulgaria)

London, May 2 -- Bulk Kamenitza (16188 gt, built 1980) lost rudder control and required tug assistance in lat 48 19.58N, long 70 51.57W at 0113, local time, May 1. Vessel went to emergency anchorage near Port Alfred (Saguenay).

KOBEE V (Panama)

London, Apr 29 -- A press report, dated today, states: Hydrofoil Kobee V (267 gt, built 1978), Busan for Fukuoka, became waterlogged today after hitting an unidentified object in waters some 16 kilometres off Busan, the South Korean coast guard said. Eighteen passengers and a South Korean crew member were slightly injured. There were about 170 passengers on board, including 96 Japanese, according to the vessel's

operator Miraejet Co. The passengers transferred to other ships and headed for Busan, according to the authorities. According to a report by Yonhap News Agency, Kobee V was listing at a 30-degree angle after the accident. The report said, quoting the South Korean coast guard, there is no possibility of the vessel sinking, but it was unable to navigate. The vessel travels between Busan and Fukuoka in three hours with a cruise speed of about 80 km per hour.

London, Apr 29 -- A press report, dated today, states: Hydrofoil Kobee V was being towed to land, where the damage would be assessed, the coast guard said.

London, May 2 -- A press report, dated Apr 30, states: Four Japanese people have been hospitalized while 13 others received medical treatment in Busan after a high-speed passenger vessel (hydrofoil Kobee V) from Busan to Fukuoka became waterlogged yesterday, the Japanese Consulate General in the South Korean city said today. Two of the four were injured seriously due to bone fractures in the chest or foot, it said. The vessel hit an unidentified object on its way to Fukuoka. About 170 passengers, including 96 Japanese, transferred to other vessels and were brought back to Busan, where they spent the night.

London, May 3 -- A press report, dated today, states: Hydrofoil Kobee V became waterlogged Friday (Apr 29) after hitting a whale, Yonhap News Agency reported yesterday, quoting the Coast Guard. The report said the Coast Guard came to the tentative conclusion after an investigation and issued a whale warning yesterday for high-speed passenger ships travelling between Busan and Fukuoka.

LA PRINCESA (U.S.A.)

See Cemcon.

LIAO LU DU 7 (China)

London, Apr 29 -- A press report, dated today, states: The task of refloating the sunken ferry Liao Lu Du 7, which has a potentially dangerous cargo on board, began yesterday morning when eight salvage vessels and two patrol ships took up their positions. The vessel sank after it lost power and capsized in Bohai Bay in February 2003. Some 81 passengers on board were rescued, although four died during the operation to get them off the vessel. A total of 15 cars and 100 barrels of phenol went underwater with the vessel. The salvage work, off the coast of Shandong Province, is taking place after an underwater survey that lasted more than two years. Sources from the Ministry of Communications say that 100 tons of phenol, a mildly toxic substance that is in barrels on the sunken vessel, will be retrieved.

METANOL (Malta)

London, May 3 -- Following received from the owners of chem.tank Metanol (3744 gt, built 1983) timed Malaga, 0910, UTC, today: Metanol, which arrived Lavera afternoon Apr 29 to

discharge cargo of metanol, had a minor explosion and small fire on deck same evening which extinguished by crew. There were no injuries to crew and no leakage of cargo. The vessel sustain no apparent damage, however, owners are looking for another vessel to transfer the cargo to as required by cargo receivers. The vessel is still in port. The cargo in the affected tank is to be analysed for any contamination, which seems unlikely. (Note -- Metanol sailed Yuzhnyy Apr 20.)

MOBY RIDER (Italy)

Genoa, May 2 -- Ro/ro Moby Rider sailed Leghorn Apr 29 for Genoa. -- Lloyd's Agents.

MONITOR (U.S.A.)

See Cemcon.

MSC KATIE (Panama)

Port Louis, May 4 -- All the containers on board c.c. Nordsun have been transhipped on board its sistership c.c. Nordbeach which left Mauritius three days ago. Nordsun is still at anchorage awaiting the statements to be made by the master in presence of his lawyer. C.c. MSC Katie is still under repairs for the refloating. After refloating, the vessel will go alongside for eventual transhipment on another MSC vessel. However owing to the reluctance of the Ministry of the Environment, it looks unlikely that the containers in No.7 hold will be landed. -- Lloyd's Agents.

NORDSUN (Cyprus)

See MSC Katie.

NORSEMAN (Malta)

Tunis, Apr 28 -- Tug Norseman was taken to waiting quay in Sidi Youssef, Kerkennah Island. The police are still investigating about the dead people. -- Lloyd's Agents. (See issue of Apr 29.)

Tunis, May 4 -- Tug Norseman is still moored in the same position at Sidi Youssef. -- Lloyd's Agents.

NOVA SCOTIA**(Antigua & Barbuda)**

London, Apr 29 -- A press report, dated today, states: A number of oiled seabirds have been found, dead and alive, near Kidney Cove after fuel was leaked following the grounding of ref Nova Scotia last week. More than 20 dead sooty shearwaters were found near the landing beach at Kidney Cove that showed obvious signs of oiling and smelled of diesel oil.

London, May 5 -- A press report, dated today, states: The owner and master of ref Nova Scotia operating in the Falkland Islands have pleaded guilty to failing to report to Stanley's Harbour-master oil or oil residue or a mixture containing oil, which escaped into Berkley Sound. The master, Peter Mosselburger and owners Thien and Heyenga GmbH were each fined £1,500 for the offence. Ros Cheek prosecuting told the court that Nova Scotia had come into contact with Cochon Island at around 0145, Apr 20 and managed to free itself. At first

light, the crew noted an oil spillage from port side No.4 tank. The master informed the ship's owners and agents FIC. The Harbour-master was later informed of the spillage by a member of the FIC Shipping Agency. Richard Marlor for the defence said the reason for the damage was an uncharted rock and argued that the master simply forgot to inform the authorities. "He wasn't intending on concealing anything and has apologised for his failure to contact the Fisheries Department as was his duty". Senior Magistrate Clare Faulds, sentencing said that although the oversight was not intentional, nevertheless they had the duty to report to the Harbour-master. Mr Mosselburger and Thien and Heyenga GmbH were each ordered to pay £320 towards court costs. Nova Scotia is to be towed to Montevideo for repairs by tug Anglian Warrior. However the vessel remains impounded until payment of the fine is made.

NOVITAS-H (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, May 1 -- C.c. Novitas-H sailed from Antwerp at 1414 hrs, Apr 30, bound for Rotterdam.

ODIGITRIA (Liberia)

London, May 2 -- Bulk Odigitria (25197 gt, built 1994) lost its propulsion when a bearing overheated on the shaft between the main engine and the propeller in lat 46 35N, long 72 02W, Apr 30. The vessel has been towed to Quebec City for inspection and repairs.

Montreal, May 5 -- Bulk Odigitria experienced a failure in the bearing on the intermediate shaft, and is presently under repair at Quebec City. The vessel is expected to sail on May 6 to continue its scheduled voyage. -- Lloyd's Agents.

OLYMPIC MELODY (Greece)

London, Apr 28 -- Bulk Olympic Melody departed Montreal for Ashtabula on/about Apr 10. On Apr 14, vessel was reported discharging in Ashtabula. On Apr 16, the vessel was anchored off Windsor(CAN) and on Apr 18, the vessel was reported loading in Windsor(CAN). The vessel departed on/about Apr 21, heading out of the seaway.

ORION I (Canada)

London, May 3 -- On Mar 30, during an ice-breaking operation of the buoy ship Earl Grey, fishing Orion I (55 gt, built 1983), while beset in ice during seal hunting, sustained ice damage to its rudder and propeller in lat 46 40N, long 61 40W.

PACIFIC SKY (U.K.)

London, May 5 -- A press report, dated today, states: Two more passenger Pacific Sky cruises have been cancelled. The cancellations will affect a four-night Brisbane-to-Auckland cruise starting on Jun 4 and a 13-night round trip from Auckland starting on Jun 8, P&O Cruises Australia general manager Gavin Smith said today. Mr Smith apologised

for the latest delays, which he said was unavoidable. "Whilst we sincerely regret the inconvenience caused to our passengers, we feel it is best for all concerned to take this decision now, rather than later, to ensure our passengers have more time to make alternative holiday arrangements," Mr Smith said. "The extended work on the gearbox will ensure we return Pacific Sky to service in excellent condition." The liner had been expected to leave Brisbane on Jun 4, but now will not leave for its New Zealand cruising season until Jun 18. Passengers would get a full refund and a 20% future cruise credit. Airfares would also be refunded.

PORVENIR I (Chile)

Santiago, May 3 -- Ro/ro Porvenir I should leave the slipway in a couple of days. Understand final repairs will be carried out afloat alongside Asmar Mole. -- Lloyd's Agents.

PULLEN (U.S.A.)

Baltimore, May 5 -- Dredger Pullen fractured the shell case on a 24-inch discharge pump and partly flooded its pump-room while dredging in the vicinity of Craney Island, Hampton Roads Harbour. The vessel's crew, US Coast Guard and other vessels in the area assisted with dewatering the pump-room, and repairs were put in hand. The vessel is expected to be operational by May 7. -- Lloyd's Agents.

QUEEN OF TSAWWASSEN (Canada)

London, Apr 28 -- A press report, dated today, states: On Apr 17 while ro/ro Queen of Tsawwassen (3127 gt, built 1960) was berthing at Long harbour dock, Saltspring Island, BC, made hard contact with wingwall. Slight damage to rubbing strake and wingwall.

RED POINT (Italy)

Rio de Janeiro, May 4 -- Chemical/oil carrier Red Point is still anchored in Rio de Janeiro. Repairs are almost complete, however, no ETD to Sao Sebastiao. -- Lloyd's Agents.

RENE'I (U.S.A.)

London, Apr 29 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Crude oil tanker GenMar Strength (56225 gt, built 2003) was in collision with passenger Rene'I (98 gt, built 1980) today in the Sabine Ship Channel, sinking the Rene'I with four men aboard. The Sabine Ship Channel was closed until further notice. The four were rescued after the 784-foot tanker collided with the 101-foot crew vessel in the channel near the mouth to the Gulf of Mexico. The crew vessel capsized and sank. The Coast Guard rescued three of the men, and the fourth was rescued by another vessel, the Coast Guard said. They were all taken to hospitals. At least one crew man was unconscious when he was rescued. The tanker is anchored three miles off shore. The Coast Guard found no evidence of

pollution or injuries aboard the tanker. The cause of the collision is under investigation.

London, Apr 29 -- Following received from Coast Guard New Orleans, timed 2325, UTC, Apr 28: Crude oil tanker GenMar Strength in collision with passenger Rene'I, WBW2177, at about 1140, local time, Apr 28. Four crew from the smaller vessel safely rescued. Rene'I has capsized but not sank, oil reported. Sabine Ship Channel has been closed. Genmar Strength anchored offshore.

London, Apr 29 -- A press report, dated Apr 28, states: The Coast Guard Captain of the Port, Captain Sharon Richey, opened the Sabine Ship Channel to limited ship traffic at 1600 today. Vessels of 100 feet or less are allowed to transit the channel in the vicinity of the wreck with a Coast Guard escort. The Sabine Ship Channel was closed at approximately 1130 today following the collision of between crude oil tanker GenMar Strength and crew boat Rene'I. As a result of the collision, Rene'I capsized and sank with four crewmembers onboard. The boat sank between the jetties where the channel enters the Gulf of Mexico, approximately two miles east of Sabine Pass, Texas. The crew of a Sabine pilot boat rescued one crewmember, and Coast Guard crews from Sabine rescued the other three crewmembers. All were taken to shore where awaiting EMS personnel transported them to St. Mary's Hospital in Port Arthur. Three crewmembers were later released from the hospital, and one remains in critical condition. Genmar Strength is at anchor three miles offshore. There is no report of pollution or injuries aboard the tanker. As of 1600 hrs there were six ships waiting to enter the ship channel from the Gulf of Mexico and three waiting depart. Plans are underway for the salvage Rene'I. The cause of the collision is under investigation.

London, Apr 29 -- A press report, dated today, states: The Sabine ship channel remains shut to vessels over 100 feet in length this morning, with no estimate yet when it might be reopened, U.S. Coast Guard Chief Warrant Officer Adam Wine said. Wine said eight ships including oil tankers are waiting to come into the channel, which gives some large local refineries access to the coast. Three vessels are waiting to get out. The channel was shut midday yesterday after crude oil tanker GenMar Strength, and crew boat Rene'I collided. A salvage vessel arrived on the scene last night and will begin assessing the situation this morning. "They'll start their assessment this morning," Wine said. Until that's done, the Coast Guard won't have an estimate for when the channel might reopen. The channel serves the Port Arthur refineries of Premcor Inc, Royal Dutch/Shell Group unit Motiva and Total SA unit Total Petrochemicals USA. It also serves Exxon Mobil Corp's refinery in Beaumont.

London, Apr 29 -- Following received from Coast Guard New Orleans, timed 1410, UTC: The Sabine Ship Channel remains closed except to very small vessels following the collision between passenger Rene'I and crude oil tanker GenMar Strength. The GenMar Strength remains at anchor.

London, Apr 30 -- A press report, dated Apr 29, states: A 240-foot crane barge arrived today to remove a sunken passenger Rene'I restricting traffic through the Sabine Ship Channel. Divers were to assess damage to the wreck of the Rene'I and then plan a salvage plan, the Coast Guard said. The channel was initially closed yesterday but opened to limited traffic late yesterday and vessels of less than 100 feet were allowed to transit the channel near the wreck with a Coast Guard escort. Crude oil tanker GenMar Strength is at anchor three miles offshore. There was no report of pollution or injury aboard the tanker. Early today, there were eight ships waiting to enter the ship channel from the Gulf, and three waiting to depart. The cause of the collision is under investigation.

London, May 1 -- A press report, dated Apr 30, states: The Sabine Ship Channel opened tonight to all ship traffic after passenger Rene'I was moved. A 240-foot crane barge called the Boaz began salvaging wreckage of the Rene'I this afternoon. The Coast Guard says strong winds and high seas had delayed operations from starting earlier.

London, May 2 -- A press report, dated May 1, states: The Sabine ship channel was opened Saturday night (Apr 30) to all ship traffic after wrecked crew boat Rene'I was moved, the US Coast Guard said. The channel closed Thursday morning (Apr 28) after a collision between crude oil tanker GenMar Strength and Rene'I. Two hundred and forty-foot crane barge Boaz began salvaging wreckage of Rene'I on Saturday afternoon, hoisting the capsized vessel and moving it approximately 2.5 miles north in the channel. Strong winds and high seas had delayed operations from starting earlier, the Coast Guard said. Rene'I had capsized and sank between the jetties where the channel enters the Gulf of Mexico, about two miles east of Sabine Pass, four crewmembers were aboard but were rescued.

London, May 2 -- Following received from Coast Guard New Orleans, timed 1520, UTC: Crew boat Rene'I should receive clearance at noon, local time, to proceed, as a dead ship, to Orange, Texas, for repairs. Crude oil tanker GenMar Strength is still restricted and understood to be anchored in the same position.

London, May 2 -- A press report, dated today, states: The captain of crew boat Rene'I, that capsized after colliding with crude oil tanker GenMar Strength, has died. The master died Saturday afternoon (Apr 30) in a Port Arthur hospital. He was one of four members aboard Rene'I. LaBorde Marine out of Morgan City, Louisiana,

owns the vessel. The other three crew members survived the accident with minor injuries.

London, May 3 -- One seafarer died of his wounds at the weekend after a collision between his small crew boat and a large tanker near the mouth of the Sabine Ship Channel on Thursday morning. According to the US Coast Guard, the 101-ft US-flag passenger Rene'I collided with crude oil tanker GenMar Strength in the Sabine Channel between the jetties where the channel enters the Gulf of Mexico, about two miles east of Sabine Pass, in Texas. A local source told Lloyd's List that the dredged section of this gap is comfortably wide. However, the crew boat turned into the tanker while overtaking it. This version could not be corroborated independently. An investigation is under way, as per the Coast Guard website. Adam Wine, Coast Guard spokesman, declined to provide specifics of the investigation. The collision initially blocked all traffic in the channel. Vessels longer than 100 ft were being held back thereafter. All traffic was restored as of Saturday night, after the 240-ft crane barge Boaz hoisted and moved Rene'I out of the channel. According to the Coast Guard, Rene'I capsized and sank with four crew-members on board after the collision. There were no reported injuries on GenMar Strength, which was moored three miles offshore as of Sunday. The tanker left the area on Sunday, according to a source. He said that Rene'I had been patched up, and repair options were being evaluated yesterday. A boat crew from Coast Guard Station Sabine rescued two crew-members from the water near Rene'I. A third crew-member, found unconscious, was rescued from the capsized boat. The crew of a Sabine pilot boat rescued the fourth crew-member. All four were taken to local hospitals. The injured seafarer was found unconscious with a pulse but was not breathing, according to a local newspaper report. The local source informed Lloyd's List that the injured seafarer died on Saturday. GenMar Strength is owned by GMAR Strength LLC and was being operated by General Maritime Management at the time of the collision. Rene'I is owned by Rene Marine Offshore Inc and was being operated by LaBorde Marine.

London, May 4 -- A press report, dated today, states: Crew boat Rene'I that was overrun at sea and sunk by crude oil tanker GenMar Strength in Sabine Pass was drydocked near the Port of Orange yesterday for inspection and possible repair. "We are here to look for anything out of order that might point to the cause of the accident," said Lieutenant Ian Bird of the Coast Guard Marine Safety Office in Port Arthur. James Barrett, facility manager for Tubal Cain Marine, said his company had been contracted by the company that insured the crew boat to drydock the vessel at its Georgia Street facility in Orange and inspect the boat to determine what repairs will be necessary to make the

boat seaworthy again. The boat will likely be repaired enough to make it seaworthy and then pushed or towed back to its home port of Morgan City. Yesterday, Tubal Cain crews worked to remove the temporary patches used to save the boat so it could be inspected and repaired. The boat had several obvious dents in both the port and starboard sides of its hull and had a small portion of hull near the deck replaced with a temporary patch. It was still leaking water from one of the dents when Coast Guard crews arrived to inspect the ship for clues. Lawyers for the ship's owner, and representatives of the insurance company declined comment on the ship's future.

ROCKNES (Antigua & Barbuda)

Gdynia, Apr 28 -- Bulk Rocknes is still in Gdansk shiprepair yard. Estimated date of completion of repairs about Jul 15. -- Correspondent.

ROSTOK (Russia)

Bucharest, May 5 -- General cargo Rostok: The wreck removal operations have not been completed yet. -- Lloyd's Agents.

SANTA EMMA (Panama)

London, Apr 29 -- Following received from Halifax RCC, timed 1445, UTC: Ro/ro Santa Emma (4092 gt, built 1969) has apparently been deliberately beached in lat 46 07.9N, long 63 46.7W, time unknown. The crew are believed to have left the vessel.

London, May 1 -- A press report, dated Apr 29, states: Transport Canada officials were working today to prevent thousands of litres of fuel from spilling into the Northumberland Strait from a cargo ship that broke away from the wharf. The 131-metre ro/ro Santa Emma drifted ashore between the former government ferry wharf and breakwater at Cape Tormentine, NB., after one of its mooring lines broke late Thursday (Apr 28) night. The vessel has a large hole on the bottom of its hull above the water line. Transport Canada officials are worried about 30,000 to 40,000 litres of diesel fuel and an unknown amount of bunker oil still on board the ship. Transport Canada spokesman Maurice Landry said crews attached the boat to the shore with lines this morning and filled parts of its hull with saltwater to stabilize it. Crews then began removing oily water from the ship's engine room and removing tanks of fuel, which could take several days to complete. "We want to do whatever is necessary to prevent any fuel spilling from the vessel," Landry said. By 1700 hrs, today, no oil had leaked into the water. Coast guard crews were standing by in case fuel leaked from the ship, but Landry was hopeful that wouldn't happen. "We're fairly confident that we can prevent any oil from going into the water," he said. Meanwhile, Transport Canada was trying to determine who owned the ship, which is registered in Panama. It had been

sitting idle for the past 15 months after failing an inspection in 2004. Transport Canada ordered it docked until repairs were completed. Landry said Transport Canada will investigate why the ship's moorings broke and whether there were any violations of the Canada Shipping Act. The ship's owner would be responsible for the costs of any pollution cleanup associated with the ship, said Landry.

London, May 2 -- A press report, dated May 1, states: It will be later this week before grounded ro/ro Santa Emma's hull is emptied of thousands of litres of diesel fuel in New Brunswick. Transport Canada is monitoring Santa Emma after it sustained a large hole in its hull. The vessel broke away from a wharf. Officials are hoping they can remove the 40-thousand litres of diesel fuel before any leaks occur.

London, May 4 -- A press report, dated today, states: Coast Guard crews are still pumping fuel out of abandoned ro/ro Santa Emma that broke away from its mooring and ran aground in Cape Tormentine last week. Santa Emma had about 30,000 litres of diesel fuel in its holding tank and an unknown amount of Bunker C oil. Crews have stabilized the vessel and they're working as quickly as possible to make sure no fuel leaks into the ocean. Ron MacKay, with the Coast Guard, said a large amount of oily water has already been pumped out. "The contractor has a hose down in the lower holds of the vessel. He's removing a water and oil contaminant mixture. I think he has something in the vicinity of 20,000 gallons out to this date." MacKay said Santa Emma is secured, next to a government wharf. He added that it won't break free again. But there's a large hole on one side, where the vessel rammed a concrete pier. MacKay said the Coast Guard is getting divers to inspect the hull of Santa Emma to get a better idea of its condition. "We've asked them to come along and inspect the underwater side of the vessel to determine the slope of the land so we can have a picture of what is taking place." MacKay expects they should be finished pumping out the oily water by the end of the week. What will happen to the vessel after that is unknown. The vessel was tied up in Cape Tormentine more than a year ago, when it was abandoned by its crew. Efforts to track down the owner have been unsuccessful.

SANTA REGINA (New Zealand)

London, May 2 -- A press report, dated today, states: A man was killed and a woman injured when Cook Strait passenger ro/ro Santa Regina (13358 gt, built 1985) and a small boat collided near Picton, on New Zealand's south island. Maritime Safety Authority spokesman Steve Corbett said a body from the small boat had been recovered from Picton Point in Queen Charlotte Sound, about a kilometre from Picton wharf. Crew from the Bluebridge ferry Santa Regina picked up an injured woman

who was transferred to a Coastguard craft and admitted to hospital in Blenheim with moderate injuries. At the time of the accident, Santa Regina was one kilometre from Picton on its way to Wellington on its 1900, (1700, AEST), sailing today, Corbett said. It had 100 passengers on board. Rescue Coordination Centre New Zealand responded to the incident after receiving a distress call from Santa Regina about 1930, he said. The body was recovered by a local water taxi and taken to shore. Corbett said the people in the water were believed to have been in a 10 metre runabout. A spokesman for Straits Shipping, owner of the Bluebridge ferry, said the runabout had hit the ferry, National Radio reported. The Maritime Safety Authority has launched an investigation. Santa Regina returned to Picton with its crew and passengers and was expected to be in the port for several hours while maritime authorities and police investigated.

Wellington, May 3 -- Investigators were today trying to establish why a 10m pleasure boat collided with the Bluebridge ferry, passenger ro/ro Santa Regina in Picton Harbour last night, killing one person. A man died and a woman was taken to Blenheim's Wairau Hospital in severe shock after the bridgedecker Timeless which they were on collided with the Cook Strait ferry, in what is believed to be the first fatal accident of its kind in the Marlborough Sounds. Today, authorities were focusing on what went wrong. Wendy Pannet, a spokeswoman for Strait Shipping which operates the Bluebridge ferry, said today that from talking to the master and crew of Santa Regina the company understood that the pleasure craft had hit Santa Regina near Picton Point. Santa Regina had just left Picton for Wellington when the accident happened. Ms Pannet said what happened was a "tragic accident" and the company extended its deepest sympathies to the dead man's family. Strait Shipping's managing director Sheryl Mateni, who is in Picton working with investigators, has said there were no suggestions of any equipment problems on the ferry. Authorities have not released the name of the couple on board Timeless, and it is not clear if they are from Marlborough. The boat did not appear to be a member with either the Waikawa Boating Club or the Mana Cruising Club, and Picton and Waikawa Boat brokers spoken to were not familiar with it. A Maritime Safety Authority (MSA) investigator was in Picton today to interview witnesses, and would also talk to the bridgedecker's survivor when she was up to it. The crew of Santa Regina, which has been detained at port in Picton following the fatal crash, were being kept on board by mid-morning today. Witnesses at the scene of the collision, which happened half way between Mabel Island and the Snout near Picton Point, described the area as looking like complete carnage. There were two main chunks of the

bridgedecker's hull in the water, and debris everywhere. Rescue Co-ordination Centre New Zealand was spurred into action after the Bluebridge ferry put out a distress call at about 7.30pm. Santa Regina's staff in its rescue tender picked the woman out of the water, who was taken to Wairau Hospital in shock and with moderate injuries. She was still in hospital this morning. The body of the man was recovered by a water taxi and taken to shore. The scheduled 0300 sailing from Wellington to Picton did not go ahead today and there was no 0800 sailing of the vessel this morning. Strait Shipping was contacting 100 people who were due to sail from Picton this morning and rescheduling them on to other sailings. Harbour-master Alex van Wijngaarden would not speculate on what happened, but said the visibility at the time of the collision was "not flash". He said the Interislander vessel Arahura was held back from entering Picton for about an hour. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, May 3 -- A press report, dated today, states: The man killed in the collision with Cook Strait passenger ro/ro Santa Regina last night has been named. He was 66-year-old Norman McFarlane, of Picton. His companion, a woman who has not been named is still in Blenheim's Waiaru Hospital in a comfortable condition. She has not been named and is said to be in a severe state of shock. Investigators are still trying to work out how the accident happened but say the evening's poor visibility may have been a factor. The couple's 10m bridgedecker, Timeless, was smashed to pieces in the collision, although the majority of it was salvaged last night and taken by barge into Picton. Bluebridge ferry Santa Regina also remains in Picton and its other scheduled ferry crossings have since been cancelled.

Wellington, May 4 -- Cook Strait passenger and freight ferries are being given new "non-negotiable" safety rules after a fatal collision between the BlueBridge ro/ro Santa Regina and a pleasure boat in Marlborough Sounds. Maritime Safety Authority director Russell Kilvington said the death was the eighth "significant" incident on the Cook Strait run in the past eight months and public confidence needed to be restored. "There have been a number of near misses." Picton man Norman McFarlane, 66, was killed and a woman treated for severe shock after their 10-metre launch Timeless and BlueBridge ro/ro Santa Regina collided about 1930 on Monday (May 2) off Picton Pt, close to Picton in Queen Charlotte Sound. The smaller boat disintegrated on impact. The BlueBridge ferry service is operated by New Zealand-owned Strait Shipping. Mr Kilvington said six of the eight incidents "of serious concern" referred to by the MSA appeared to have involved problems on the bridge. "Following last night's tragedy we have moved immediately to put extra

safety measures in place on all ferries while we undertake a long-term review of the operations," he said yesterday. Few details of how Monday's collision happened have been revealed, but Mr Kilvington said boats under 500 tonnes had to take all reasonable measures to keep out of the way of big ones. The investigation would be fast-tracked but could still take weeks, if not months. The new rules, effective from this morning, require ferries to double the minimum number of crew on the navigation bridge from two to four at all times while in Wellington Harbour and the Marlborough Sounds, and in Cook Strait during times of poor visibility. At least three crew had to be on the bridge at all other times, Mr Kilvington said. Extra crew would also have to be in the engine-room. The authority would increase the number of unannounced and scheduled inspections of ferries while on passage as well as in port. Ferry operations would be reviewed in the next six months by a working party including authority officials, Wellington and Marlborough harbourmasters and ferry operators. Recommendations from the review would cover existing Cook Strait ferries and any "bigger" ferries that might arrive in the future. The Interisland Line is understood to be in the process of chartering a new ferry capable of carrying 1660 passengers, almost twice the capacity of its existing ferries. Strait Shipping managing director Sheryl Mateni said she was confident the authority's investigation into the fatal collision would show Santa Regina "took every avoidance action possible". Strait Shipping's priority was to look after its crew, which was replaced yesterday. Santa Regina was not damaged and was operating last night, she said. Yesterday police recovered debris from Timeless. Both Toll Shipping, which owns and operates the Interislander Line, and Strait Shipping said they supported the new rules. -- Lloyd's Agents.

SCHIEBORG (Netherlands)

Bremen, Apr 29 -- Ro/ro Schieborg has shifted within the port from Bremerhaven Dockbetriebe to SSW Schichau Seebeck Shipyard GmbH. -- Lloyd's Agents.

SEA HUMBER (U.K.)

London, May 5 -- The following press release was issued by the Maritime Coastguard Agency, timed 1611, UTC, May 4: At 1315, UTC, today, the master of British registered general cargo Sea Humber (1602 gt, built 1977) reported to Clyde Coastguard that they were without power and drifting. Clyde Coastguard Rescue Coordination Centre put out a 'Pan Pan' broadcast on behalf of the master. Arran Coastguard Rescue Team were called out and the Campbeltown RNLI lifeboat were requested to launch. Ro/ro Loch Tarbert responded to the Pan Broadcast and are assisting the Campbeltown lifeboat with securing

lines to the vessel to keep it from drifting onshore. The Coastguard team are keeping observations on the operation from the shore. Firefighting tug Willowgarth is proceeding to the vessel with an estimated time of arrival of one and a half hours. Sea Humber was heading north in ballast past the Mull of Kintyre when it got into difficulty. Richard Newell, Duty Area Operations Manager said: "The weather at the moment is west-north-west, force 4, with good visibility. The Campbeltown lifeboat has taken over holding the vessel from the shore until the arrival of tug Willowgarth".

London, May 5 -- Following received from Coastguard Clyde MRCC, timed 0804, UTC: At 1740, UTC, yesterday, Sea Humber reported under tow of Willowgarth and vessels proceeding to James Watt Dock, Greenock, where they arrived safely alongside at 2330, UTC.

London, May 5 -- Following received from Coastguard Clyde MRCC, timed 0937, UTC: General cargo Sea Humber was safely alongside James Watt Dock, Greenock, at 2330, UTC, May 4.

SEAFRANCE MANET (France)

London, Apr 29 -- A press report, dated today, states: Passenger ro/ro SeaFrance Manet (15229 gt, built 1984) experienced a minor fire at Calais earlier today. The vessel was in a lay-by berth, undergoing repairs, when smoke was observed on the vessel's garage decks. The fire was traced back to a cabin. The local fire-brigade and a port fire-fighting tug responded and fire was extinguished in about 45 minutes. No major injuries were reported.

SILVA (Cambodia)

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

SLOMAN TRAVELLER (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, May 3 -- Ro/ro Sloman Traveller (7947 gt, built 1984), Bremen for Antwerp, grounded, and partially blocked the river, between Bremen and Bremerhaven during the night of Apr 30. The vessel was refloated with tug assistance at 0350, May 1 and taken to Neustadter Hafen (Bremen). During the stranding the vessel's water ballast tanks were damaged. There were no injuries or leakage of fuel. (Note -- Sloman Traveller sailed Bremen 1955, Apr 30 and arrived Antwerp 0435, May 2.)

SONG THUONG (Vietnam)

London, May 5 -- Salvage work of a four-month old massive oil spill off Vietnam's central coast has not yet started although relevant authorities said they would clean up the spill more than a month ago. An oil slick has already coated 900 metres of water surface about two nautical miles northwest of central Thua Thien Hue province after 11,000-ton general cargo Song Thuong (6249 gt, built 1976), carrying about 130 tons of

heavy oil and diesel, sank in the sea on Dec 31 last year. The vessel's operator, state-owned Vietnam Ocean Shipping Company (Vosco), decided to abandon the ship after all crew members were rescued by regional rescue workers. On Feb 24, the local authorities, Vietnam's National Marine Bureau, Vosco and other concerned agencies decided in a meeting to clean up 130 tons of oil before Mar 30 and lift the ship before May 30. However, agencies in charge of salvage operation have not begun to lift the ship and clean the spillage yet.

STEEL QUEEN (Netherlands)

Gdynia, May 5 -- General cargo Steel Queen is still under repair at Nauta yard in Gdynia. Repairs are expected to be completed about May 7-8. On completion, the vessel will sail to Oxelosund. -- Correspondents.

SVEAFJELL (Norway)

Trondheim, Apr 29 -- General cargo Sveafjell is still at Kvernhusvik Shipyard, Hitra. -- Lloyd's Agents.

TAMAR F.I. (Falkland Islands)

London, May 5 -- General cargo Tamar F.I. was reported sailing Stanley Harbour Apr 19.

THIA CHRYSOULA (Cyprus)

London, May 5 -- A press report, dated today, states: Bulk Thia Chryssoula (31643 gt, built 1991) Jakarta for South Korea, carrying 43,000 tons of steel, ran aground in waters off the disputed Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea around midnight, local time, May 4, the Japan Coast Guard said today. The Coast Guard said the incident occurred in the south-western part of the Uotsuri Island, the largest in the Senkakus. A Coast Guard patrol boat spotted the vessel in waters off south-western Uotsuri at 2310, local time, yesterday, Coast Guard officials said. The patrol boat tried to alert the ship to no avail and confirmed at around 0010, today, that the cargo ship had run aground, the officials said. None of the vessel's 31 crew-members were hurt and there was no oil spill, the officials added. Coast Guard officials later boarded the ship to investigate the cause of the accident, the officials said.

London, May 5 -- A press report, dated today, states: Bulk Thia Chryssoula attempted to refloat this evening but failed to do so.

TIMELESS

See Santa Regina

VESTKAPP (Norway)

Trondheim, Apr 29 -- Fosen Gjenvinning recommend we contact them again in about three months regarding the scrapping of fishing Vestkapp. -- Lloyd's Agents.

VICUNA (Chile)

Santos, Apr 29 -- Following received by Paranagua Sub-Agents: Chemical/oil carrier Vicuna: Salvors

have completed the removal of shipwreck but are still removing wreck debris from the bottom of berth and surrounding area. Cattalini Terminal: The repairs to the pier are expected to be complete and the terminal become operative again by June 1, as reported by terminal staff. - Lloyd's Agents.

W.E.RICKER (Canada)

London, May 2 -- Research W.E.Ricker (925 gt, built 1981) experienced a main-engine failure when the vessel was in lat 49 08.29N, long 123 35.48W near Gabriola Island, B.C. Apr 27.

WASHINGTON SENATOR (Germany)

Messina, May 3 -- C.c. Washington Senator arrived Gioia Tauro, May 2. -- Lloyd's Agents.

WEESAM EXPRESS 5 (Philippines)

Manila, Apr 30 -- Ferry Weesam Express 5 (230 gt, built 1999) collided with a wooden-hulled passenger ferry at 2345 hrs, yesterday (April 29) off Lampinigan island, Basilan province in southern Philippines. The Philippine Coast Guard reported that the aluminum-hulled Weesam Express 5 was on passage from Sandakan, Malaysia to Zamboanga City, when it ran into the Darwisa. The Darwisa was seriously damaged. The crew of the Weesam Express 5 rescued 26 passengers and crew from of the Darwisa. The Weesam Express 5 sustained only slight damage. There were no fatalities or injuries to it's 188 passengers. Weesam Express 5 is owned by Zamboanga-based SRN Fast Seacrafts, Inc. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Manila, May 3 -- Ferry Weesam Express 5 arrived in Zamboanga port on Apr 30 with 26 passengers and crew rescued from the wooden-hulled passenger ferry Darwisa. Weesam Express 5 resumed operations Monday (May 2), leaving for Bongao in Tawi-Tawi island in southern Philippines. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

ZENKO MARU NO.8 (Japan)

London, May 5 -- A press report, dated today, states: Fourteen crew, including 10 Filipinos, were rescued today after a Japanese longline fishing vessel sank off the Marshall Islands in the central Pacific. Aside from the Filipinos, four Japanese on board fishing Zenko Maru No.8 (147 gt, built 1984) managed to launch a lifeboat before the fishing boat sank off Majuro Atoll. They were picked up by a passing Chinese fishing boat about eight hours later, crew members said. They arrived in Majuro, capital of the Marshall Islands, late this afternoon. Crewmembers said the fishing boat started taking on water yesterday night, forcing them to abandon ship early this morning. The cause of the leak was unknown, they said.

Port State Control



UNITED KINGDOM

Hull, May 4 -- General cargo Gloria is still under detention, and there have been no developments in the vessel's situation. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Seizures & Arrests



ALMOUROL (Portugal)

See Pardelhas.

ANNOULA (Liberia)

London, Apr 29 -- Chemical/oil carrier Annoula sailed from Rotterdam at 2120 hrs, Apr 2, bound for Rio de Janeiro.

DENEB REEFER (Panama)

London, Apr 29 -- Ref Deneb Reefer, was reported passing through the Straits of Gibraltar at 1720 hrs, Apr 27, on passage from Las Palmas for India. Understood vessel has been sold to Indian breakers.

ELQUI (Guinea)

Stanley, May 5 -- Fishing Elqui has been taken over by the South Georgia Government as the owners did not pay the court fine, and is presently moored alongside Eastside Fipass. -- Lloyd's Agents.

FISHING VESSELS SEIZED BY AUSTRALIA

London, May 5 -- A press report, dated today, states: The crew of an illegal fishing boat on which a man died last week has returned to Indonesia. The captain of the Indonesian fishing trawler died while detained in Darwin Harbour for illegally entering Australian waters. A post-mortem attributed his death to natural causes. The nine remaining crew members have arrived back in Indonesia. The Australian Fisheries Management Authority says the dead man had been likely to face charges. But Michael Parolin from the authority says the Government decided against charging the nine crew members. "The crew was due to be repatriated as a matter of course anyway," he said. "Once a decision is made not to charge fishermen with illegal fishing offences they are repatriated immediately and that was to be the case in this instance anyway."

JERBA (Tunisia)

Bizerta, Apr 28 -- General cargo Jerba is still at the MI Bourguiba yard under arrest. There are no prospects

today of it's eventual release. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents.

JEWEL (St. Vincent & Grenadines)

London, May 2 -- Product tanker Jewel sailed from Piraeus on Apr 23, bound for Suez.

JIMPO MARU NO.35 (Japan)

London, May 3 -- A press report, dated today, states: Eighteen crew members of a Japanese trawler, which was seized by the Russian authorities in March, were released yesterday and are now heading home aboard the vessel from Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, the Foreign Ministry said. Captain Yukihiro Takahashi of the 279-ton trawler Jimpo Maru No.35 however, still remains in Russia as criminal procedures are still going on, the ministry said.

LOLITA (Philippines)

See Margarita.

MARGARITA (Philippines)

Manila, Apr 29 -- The Philippine National Police Maritime Group reported the arrest of Philippines coastal tanker Margarita, 500 gt, owned by Manila-based Shogun Ships Inc, for the alleged theft of its cargo of 1.2 million litres of jet fuel. Officials said Margarita was apprehended yesterday in Manila Bay as it was transferring fuel to coastal tanker Lolita, which was also arrested. Margarita was contracted by Philippine oil refiner, Petron Corp, to transport jet fuel from its Bataan refinery to its storage facility in Pandacan, Manila. The crew of Margarita, however, was alleged to have stolen the cargo and sold it in the fuel blackmarket. The jet fuel had a market value of Pesos 20 million (US\$370,000). Police said they had arrested 17 officers and crew of Margarita, including its master, Dizon Abejo. Police said that they had apprehended the two vessels following complaints from Petron Corp that its fuel was being pilfered by vessels it had chartered to move its oil products. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Manila, Apr 29 -- The Philippine National Police Maritime Group reported the arrest of Philippine-registered coastal tanker Lolita Lolita was apprehended yesterday in Manila Bay as it was taking on stolen jet fuel from another tanker. The police alleged that the crew of coastal tanker Margarita had hijacked its cargo of 1.2 million liters of jet fuel and had sold it to Lolita. Arrested on Lolita was its crew of 10 including its master, Cipriano Cabigas. Police also confiscated a 9 mm pistol and Pesos 20,000 in cash from the crew of Lolita. Police said that Lolita is owned by Lolita Shipping Co. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Manila, Apr 30 -- Philippine-registered non specific tanker Margarita is now detained at Pier 14, North Harbour terminal, port of Manila. It is under the custody of the Philippine National Police Maritime

Group. Margarita was apprehended Thursday (Apr 28) in Manila Bay for stealing its cargo of 1.2 million liters of jet fuel. It was caught as it was transferring the jet fuel to non specific tanker Lolita. The vessels, 17 crew members and officers are now under detention. Police said that the crew could be chargee with qualified theft, pilferage and violating the anti-fencing law. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Manila, Apr 30 -- Philippine-registered non specific tanker Lolita is now detained at Pier 14, North Harbour terminal, Port of Manila. It is under the custody of the Philippine National Police Maritime Group. The vessel was apprehended Thursday (Apr 28) in Manila Bay as it was taking on stolen jet fuel from another non specific tanker Margarita. The police alleged that the crew of the Margarita had hijacked its cargo of 1.2 million litres of jet fuel and had sold it to the Lolita. The Lolita's 10 crew members and officers are now under detention. Police said that the crew could be charged with violating the anti-fencing law and possession of an unlicensed firearm. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Manila, May 5 -- Philippine-registered non specific tankers Margarita and Lolita were ordered to be released by a Manila court Monday (May 2) to their respective Manila-based owners: Shogun Ships, Inc. and Lolita Shipping Co., on the condition that the shipowners would make the vessels available to court officials when required. Col. Leonardo Suan, head of the Philippine National Police Maritime Group task force which apprehended the vessels, also reported that that both vessels were likewise released pending the filing of charges against them. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

PARDELHAS (Falkland Islands)

Santiago, May 3 -- Trawlers Pardelhas and Almourol: Due to an appeal having been presented, the auction has been suspended until further notice. -- Lloyd's Agents.

SAGA WIND (Hong Kong)

London, Apr 29 -- Bulk Saga Wind sailed from Rotterdam at 0635 hrs, Apr 27, bound for Terneuzen, arriving at 2121 hrs, Apr 27. It departed at 1745 hrs, Apr 28, bound for Flushing. It arrived at that port at 1845 hrs, on Apr 28 and departed at 0518 hrs, today, bound for Varberg.

Pipeline Accidents



OAKLAND TOWNSHIP, MICHIGAN, UNITED STATES

London, May 3 -- A press report, dated today, states: No injuries were reported after a natural gas pipeline ruptured last night in northern

Oakland County. Consumers Energy spokeswoman Debra Dodd says the rupture occurred in a 20-inch transmission line. The gas did not explode and was shut off by 2330 hrs. The rupture took place in Oakland Township, 35 miles north of downtown Detroit. Police began evacuating people living within a thousand feet of the rupture, but later halted it. Nearby residents told Detroit television stations they were hearing a rushing sound like that of jet engines or heavy rain. Dodd says the sound was that of pressurized gas escaping the broken pipe. Repairs to the line will begin later this morning.

Pollution



BALTIC SEA

Gothenburg, Apr 29 -- Oil spills in Baltic: 1. An oil slick was discovered yesterday outside Hoburgen at southern Gotland and according to coast guard, the area was 20 km long and 200 metres wide. Oil lumps were found but mainly a thin surface layer. Later yesterday evening the efforts were ended, as the remaining oil is not considered serious. 2. Gothenburg northern islands at Ockerö and Hono, west of the islands, a major out slick, from unknown vessel dumping oil residuals, was discovered yesterday and a full coast guard effort with the large special environmental vessel 051 among others. One coast guard vessel remained in the area of the oil slick to follow its movement and from early this morning continued fighting the oil with vessel 051. The oil moving slightly northbound and expect to be at Tjorn and Orust at noon today. Total 20 km and 100 metre wide with large lumps of oil, Coast Guard calculate between five and 10 cbm to be collected as sea smooth and with limited wind. -- Westax Marine A/S.

BARENTS SEA

London, May 5 -- A press report, dated May 3, states: Norwegian oil giant Statoil said today it had resumed test drilling in the ecologically sensitive Barents Sea, two weeks after it was lambasted by the government for a large hydraulic oil leak there. Statoil resumed exploration with the drill platform Eirik Raude in the Norwegian sector of the Barents Sea just hours after getting the green light from authorities. The company had been obliged to halt operations after some 1.6 tonnes of hydraulic oil were spilled on Apr 12.

HUDSON RIVER, UNITED STATES

See B.No.35 under "Marine."

THUA THIEN HUE PROVINCE, VIETNAM

See Song Thuong under "Marine."

Weather & Navigation



ETHIOPIA

London, May 3 -- A press report, dated May 2, states: The death toll from flooding last month in a remote area of south-east Ethiopia has risen to at 134 and may go higher, officials say. Crocodiles are reported to have eaten at least 19 people during the floods. Rescue teams are working to bring in much-needed emergency supplies but are still unable to reach many survivors. Tens of thousands of people have been unable to return home because of floods and the fear of crocodiles, said the top local emergency official. Remedan Haji Ahmed, who heads the government's emergency response in the area, said: "We are going to declare an emergency." Red Cross and Red Crescent workers are bringing in emergency shipments of blankets, plastic sheeting, cooking utensils and medical supplies.

London, May 5 -- A press report, dated today, states: The combination of drought followed by recent floods in Ethiopia has caused a food emergency in the country where four million people now need food aid to survive. In a new report, the UN warns that 136,000 children are severely malnourished. Aid workers say that number will double if food aid is not increased and children in southern Ethiopia will begin dying. The Ethiopian Government had reported a bumper harvest last year, but it is believed the figures were inflated. Drought has seriously affected food supplies and now massive floods have hit the north-east of the country. About 150 people have died and more than 250,000 people have been displaced by the rains.

GEORGIA

London, Apr 30 -- A press report, dated Apr 29, states: Days of torrential rain and melting snow have caused the worst floods in Georgia for many years. The flooding has hit about one-third of the country, leaving villages isolated. Hundreds of houses have been evacuated. Roads, power lines and communications have been damaged by the flood waters and further rainfall is expected. Greece, the United Nations, and other international organisations have offered assistance to Tbilisi, which is also braced for more flooding. Gigi Ugulava, chief of the presidential administration in the Georgian capital, said the Mtkvari River in Tbilisi had overflowed its banks in areas. Officials say districts in the mountainous region of Svaneti, as well as the western Tsageri district, have suffered. President Mikhail Saakashvili, visiting the Shida Kartli

region in central Georgia, said millions of dollars would be needed to repair roads and bridges damaged by the floods throughout Georgia.

INDIA

London, May 1 -- A press report, dated today, states: At least 20 people have been killed and scores injured in a storm that lashed the southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, officials said. At least 10 people died in the coastal district of Guntur alone after being struck by lightning yesterday night. The severe storms, bringing rain and high winds, damaged homes and crops in at least six districts. The storm also uprooted thousands of trees and electricity and telephone poles. Temperatures dipped in the predominantly tropical state after the storm. Farmers in the districts of Guntur, Krishna, Srikakulam, Karimnagar and Nalgonda have been badly affected after the storm destroyed much of their crops. The state government is sending a team of officials to the affected districts to find out the extent of damage.

London, May 5 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Eleven people died and at least 20 were injured in the eastern Indian city of Calcutta after a wall collapsed from the impact of a storm this evening, police said. "Most of the victims were trying to shield themselves from the sudden storm by standing close to the boundary wall of an old building. But the wall itself collapsed," said the deputy commissioner of police A.M. Ranade. Three of the injured were in a serious condition, he added. Police said several roads were blocked as the storm uprooted trees in various parts of the city. Train services were also disrupted as overhead electric cables were snapped by the strong gusts of winds. However, the storm cleared within an hour of its striking.

KENYA

London, May 5 -- A press report, dated today, states: Floods caused by heavy rains have killed at least four people and displaced thousands in Kenya, officials said today as heavy rain continued to pound parts of the east African nation. Last week, four people drowned in northeastern Kenya, where at least 25,000 Somalis in refugee camps were made homeless by heavy rains, the region's police commander Gabriel Ndolo said. At least 300 families have been displaced and at least 300 animals washed away in eastern Kenya's Isiolo district. In western Kenya, rains caused the Nyando River -- which drains into Lake Victoria -- to burst its banks, affecting several hundred families and forcing President Mwai Kibaki to postpone a planned visit to the region.

ROMANIA

Bucharest, Apr 29 -- Heavy rains in western Romania have flooded hundreds of villages, forcing 3,700

people to abandon their homes and disrupting rail and road traffic, the Environment Ministry said today. Television stations showed army helicopters and national guard dinghies arriving at disaster areas to evacuate victims from what authorities called the worst floods in 50 years. Up to 2,000 people, mostly from Timis county at the border with Serbia and Montenegro, were displaced to temporary shelters on nearby highlands. They are likely to stay there until at least Sunday (May 1) However, television reports said many were risking their lives to defend saturated homes from looters by taking refuge in their lofts, which were liable to collapse at any moment. In the city of Arad, near the border with Hungary, apartment blocks and streets were flooded, with stranded residents forced to use dinghies for transport. The Environment Ministry said the floods were partly caused by broken 300-year-old dams on the Timis River but that waters were now beginning to ebb. "There's no one else awaiting evacuation and the situation is improving as meteorologists predict no rains for the next week," said ministry official Olga Lefter. Prime Minister Calin Tariceanu, who visited the flood-affected areas, said the government would rebuild destroyed houses with materials from the state reserves. The houses are expected to be ready by the winter. The government has allocated 500 billion lei (US\$18 million) to repair the collapsed railway infrastructure and 280 billion for the dams. Some 30 billion will also go towards vaccines to prevent epidemics spreading, emergency food and basic supplies. "We will also hold talks with the World Bank for a loan of 49 million euros, for safety works along rivers in the counties hit by floods," Environment Minister Sulfina Barbu told state news agency Rompres. The government had yet to present an overall assessment of the damage, but the farm ministry said 110,000 hectares of wheat, barley, sunflower and vegetables fields had so far been damaged at an estimated financial loss of 300 billion lei. -- Reuters.

RUSSIA

London, Apr 29 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Motor traffic has been interrupted on the Moscow-Vladivostok highway in Irkutsk Region by floods for the second day. The floods left about 500 vehicles stranded there, an official in the territorial centre of the Russian Ministry for Emergencies said today. On the night from Tuesday to yesterday, the small river Zamzorka overflowed its banks and flooded a 50-metre section of the roadway with a 1.5-metre-thick layer of water. The existing leadaway canal is failing to cope with the flood. There is no detour there either. The road

maintenance service of the Federal Krasnoyarsk-Irkutsk highway department is making efforts to rectify the situation with the use of 15 units of machinery, including bulldozers, cranes, and tractors. Maintenance operations are being carried out in unfavourable weather conditions.

SAUDI ARABIA

Riyadh, Apr 29 -- Flash floods killed at least 34 people in Saudi Arabia in the last two days, sweeping cars off roads and destroying houses, newspapers said today. "Al Okaz" newspaper said 37 people were killed in the southern Asir province and the port city of Jeddah. Another daily, "Al Watan", put the death toll at 34. -- Reuters.

Jeddah, May 4 -- Jeddah experienced heavy rain accompanied with hailstorm and winds exceeding 60 km/hour at 0440 hrs, Apr 28. Unofficial sources claimed 70 cm rainfall fell during this period. Several parts of the city including storage areas in Jeddah Islamic Port were flooded with rainwater causing considerable damage to various cargoes. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Earthquakes



ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS, INDIA

London, May 4 -- A press report, dated today, states: Three moderate earthquakes shook India's remote Andaman and Nicobar islands early today, but no damage or injuries were reported, a meteorologist said. The strongest quake had a magnitude of 5.5 and struck at 0803 hrs (0232, UTC). It came a few minutes after two other quakes hit with magnitudes of 5.1 and 5.3, said an official of the Indian Meteorology Department said on condition of anonymity. All three were centred in the Bay of Bengal near the island of Car Nicobar, he said.

INDONESIA

London, Apr 29 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: A tremor measuring 6.0 on the Richter scale was detected off the Sumatra coast at 2207, today. A Malaysian Meteorological Services spokesman said the tremor happened at lat 01.96N, long 95.9E.

London, May 4 -- A press report, dated today, states: A strong undersea earthquake rocked parts of Indonesia's Aceh province today, prompting people to flee their homes, but there were no reports the temblor generated any giant waves, the Indonesian Meteorology and Geophysics Agency said. The magnitude-5.6 quake occurred at 1258 and was centred about 98 miles south-west of

Meulaboh on the island of Sumatra, an agency official said. The epicentre was in the Indian Ocean about 21 miles below the Earth's surface, said an agency official. Witnesses said the quake jolted the provincial capital of Banda Aceh for about 30 seconds and residents briefly fled into the streets. Witnesses and the agency official said there were no reports of damage or casualties and no signs the quake spawned a tsunami.

IRAN

London, May 4 -- A press report, dated today, states: At least one person was killed and 26 others were injured in a strong quake which hit the western city of Borujerd yesterday, a local official Majid Roshankar announced. According to the seismological base of the Geophysics Institute of Tehran University, the quake measuring 5 on the open-ended Richter scale occurred at 1151, local time. The seismological base announced that the village of Cheghloni around the city of Borujerd was the epicenter of the quake. Head of the Lorestan Natural Disaster Headquarters Ali Barani said that the tremble heavily damaged four villages of Hassankhani, Tabrijan, Ganjineh and Delikhan. Another tremor measuring 4.1 on the Richter scale shook the city today.

NEW ZEALAND

London, May 3 -- A press report, dated May 2, states: New Zealand's South Island was hit by two strong earthquakes early today but there was little damage in the sparsely populated region, officials said. The first quake, measuring six on the Richter scale, struck at 0335 10 kilometres south of the small township of Haast. It was followed five minutes later by a second quake measuring 5.7 which was centred 10 kilometres south-west of the town. Institute of Geological and Nuclear Sciences seismologist Ken Gledhill said the quakes were strongly felt in Haast. The centres of the two earthquakes were close to the Alpine fault line, which runs almost the length of the South Island.

PERU

London, May 4 -- A report, dated May 3, states: A moderate earthquake occurred at 1911, UTC, today. The magnitude 5.8 event has been located in central Peru in lat 14 88S, long 74.53W, depth 31 km.

SOUTH-EAST ASIA

London, May 5 -- Chem.tank High Spirit arrived Fujairah Anchorage Apr 30, from Dar-es-Salaam.

TONGA

London, May 4 -- A report, dated today, states: A moderate earthquake occurred at 0857, UTC, today. The magnitude 5.7 event has been located in Tonga in lat 19.42S, long 173.90W, depth 35 km.

Political & Civil Unrest



AFGHANISTAN

Kabul, Apr 30 -- An air strike by U.S.-led forces on an Afghan rebel camp killed seven people, including three civilians, the U.S. military said today. The attack, in which four militants were also killed, took place yesterday in restive Uruzgan province, where Taliban fighters frequently attack U.S. and Afghan government forces and where a U.S. soldier was killed in a Taliban ambush on Tuesday (Apr 26). "The attack killed one Afghan woman, one Afghan man and a child. Two children were also wounded," the military said in a statement. "All possible efforts are taken to prevent non-combatant injuries and deaths." The U.S. military gave no details on the aircraft involved. -- Reuters.

Kabul, May 4 -- U.S. and Afghan forces have killed about 20 insurgents in a battle in the trouble-plagued southern province of Zabul, the U.S. military said today. One Afghan policeman was killed in the fighting yesterday. Six U.S. personnel and five Afghan policemen were wounded. Fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters of the U.S.-led force were also involved, helping U.S. and Afghan soldiers surround the rebel force of about 25 men, the U.S. military said. "Battle damage assessment is ongoing. Initial reports indicate approximately 20 insurgents were killed and one wounded," the statement said. Six insurgents and a village elder identified by villagers as a Taliban member were detained during the operation in Zabul's Dai Chopan district, the U.S. military said. -- Reuters.

London, May 5 -- A press report, dated today, states: A total of 40 "well-trained" militants died in a battle in southeastern Afghanistan this week, U.S. officials said today. Military authorities had earlier estimated that 20 militants were killed when warplanes and helicopters fired upon their location Tuesday (May 3). Double that number of bodies were found at the scene after the fighting died down, however. The dead included several Taliban fighters as well as two militants from Chechnya and one Pakistani national, an Afghan official said. American authorities said they could not yet confirm whether any foreigners had been killed. An Afghan policeman also died in the incident, and several American soldiers were injured. There are varying reports of how the battle began in Zabul province, about 320 km south-west of Kabul. One source said Taliban fighters fired upon a police checkpoint, while others said the battle started during a police

investigation into either the kidnapping of three physicians or an assault complaint.

ALGERIA

London, Apr 30 -- A press report, dated Apr 29, states: Algerian authorities say they have arrested the leader of an Islamic rebel group suspected of killing 14 civilians in an ambush earlier this month. Boulouneur Oukil of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), the interior ministry said in a statement. It said the security forces also seized a large arms cache in the operation. The interior ministry statement also said that another GIA member - Mohamed Chama - was also captured during the operation.

BELIZE

Belmopan, Belize, Apr 28 -- Police in tiny Belize arrested an opposition politician today as the country grappled with its worst political crisis since independence in 1981. The government has been fending off calls for it to step down ever since a rash of strikes and riots last week plunged Belize into mayhem. At the heart of the crisis lies nearly \$1 billion of public debt, which has forced spending cutbacks and tax increases, and persistent allegations of government corruption. Patrick Farber, a member of parliament for the opposition United Democratic Party (UDP), was arrested along with a trade unionist after they pushed past riot police blocking the entrance to a university where Prime Minister Said Musa was answering student questions about corruption, witnesses said. Dean Barrow, leader of the UDP, condemned the arrest, saying: "This is a member of the national assembly. For the police to deny him entrance to a public forum and then to arrest him is clearly politically motivated." He said that police planned to charge Farber with two counts of aggravated assault. The trade unionist, a member of the union for Belize's main telecoms company, Belize Telecommunications Limited, or BTL, was later released without charge. -- Reuters.

BURUNDI

Johannesburg, Apr 28 -- South Africa's cabinet voted today to extend the mandate of its troops in Burundi until March next year. South Africa also said it would take undisclosed steps to push Burundi's peace process forward during the course of next week, and would also "respond positively" to a request by the African Union for more troops in Sudan. A current figure of how many South African troops are in Burundi was not immediately available, but the soldiers have been deployed to protect VIPs in order to help foster a fledgling democracy in the central African state. Burundi is preparing for elections, and a new president is due to be sworn in on Aug 26, when the already extended life of the country's interim government is set to expire. Under the constitution interim Burundian

President Domitien Ndayizeye, a Hutu, must step down at the end of this latest extension to his mandate, which had been due to expire tomorrow. -- Reuters.

CAIRO, EGYPT

London, Apr 30 -- A press report, dated today, states: A bomb was thrown from a bridge not far from a five-star hotel and the Egyptian Museum in Cairo today, killing an Arab man and injuring seven, including four foreigners, police said. Remains of a body, covered with newspapers, were seen beneath the bridge a few minutes after the 1515 explosion. Less than two hours later a second explosion, possibly carried out by two suicide bombers occurred near tourist sites. The first blast happened on a road adjacent to a public bus station down the street from the Egyptian Museum. Security officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said two Israelis, a man and a woman, an Italian woman and a Russian man were injured. However, the Egyptian health minister said that three Egyptians were injured and two Israelis, one Swiss and one Italian. The discrepancy could not be immediately reconciled. Normally, the station is teeming with people heading home from work in the mid-afternoon, but the blast happened on a holiday weekend. Initially, police said they believed a car had exploded, but no vehicle debris could be seen in the area. A senior policeman on the scene, who would not give his name, said a bomb was thrown from the bridge above to the street below. Some witnesses at the scene gave similar accounts. Two rings of tape cordoned off the area where the body lay. Investigators uncovered the body and knelt to inspect it. Scores of heavily armed police, including riot officers in helmets and carrying submachine guns, kept away the crowds who gathered to watch.

COLOMBIA

Bogota, May 2 -- Marxist rebels ambushed a Colombian police patrol on a mountain highway today, killing four officers and a civilian motorist with a roadside bomb and gunfire, the police said. The attack by guerrillas of the Revolutionary Armed Forces who were hidden on the mountain slopes, blocked the major highway between Ibague and Cajamarca in the central province of Tolima for several hours, a police spokesman said. It was the latest in a wave of attacks this year against the security forces by the 13,000-strong rebel army known by its Spanish initials FARC. Separately, Colombian troops killed nine guerrillas from the FARC and another Marxist army near the northwestern town of Segovia. The fighting was part of a government operation aimed at clearing the rebels out of that part of Antioquia province, officials said. The FARC paralyzed a highway in the southwest province of Cauca, where it set ablaze two cargo

trucks. Despite opinion polls showing they have almost no popular support, Colombia's guerrillas say they are struggling for a people's revolution. -- Reuters.

HAITI

Port au Prince, Apr 27 -- At least five people were killed by gunfire during a political demonstration today in Haiti, which is preparing for elections in the autumn to replace its interim government. Police officers fired at demonstrators during the march in the capital, Port-au-Prince. Renan Etienne, central director for Haiti's administrative police, said "bandits" had attacked a police patrol and that "the police returned fire." "We know that two bandits were killed, but we can't call them demonstrators," Etienne said. Five bodies lay on the street, some with gunshot wounds in the back, and at least three people were injured. No police were hurt, Etienne said. The shooting broke out just after the demonstrators passed a headquarters building for the United Nations peacekeepers trying to stabilise Haiti, which has been plagued by violence since former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was driven out during a revolt 14 months ago. Several protesters and witnesses disputed the police account and said police fired at them without provocation. One of the injured, 21-year-old Romel Dorisma, said he had not taken part in the demonstration but was shot by police as he walked out of a pharmacy. "I saw the police open fire. I got shot in the leg and I had to crawl," said Dorisma, who hid under a wrecked car. A cameraman for a local television station said he saw police put a gun beside one of the bodies and that police summoned him over afterward and insisted that he film the gun. The demonstrators were calling for the return of Aristide, the release of imprisoned members of his administration and an end to what they called political persecution by the interim government. The crowd scattered when the shooting began but gunfire could still be heard in the area two hours later. The clash came two days after Haitian election officials began registering voters for Oct 9 legislative polls and a Nov 13 presidential election. -- Reuters.

Port-au-Prince, Apr 28 -- Gunmen kidnapped a Haitian political leader today, witnesses said, raising more doubts about the prospect for elections set for October and November. Dr. Jean Enold Buteau, head of the Movement for National Reconstruction and brother of Education Minister Pierre Buteau, was abducted in the parking lot of his medical clinic in the Haitian capital, Port-au-Prince, the witnesses said. Buteau's vehicle was abandoned on the street, police sources said. At least 675 people have died in the violence in Haiti since September, and the number of abductions for ransom of professional and business people has increased in recent months. Jessie Coicou, a

spokeswoman for the Haitian National Police, said some police officers are members of criminal groups responsible for the recent spate of kidnappings. Politicians and observers have questioned the ability of Haiti's appointed interim government to hold national elections as planned. Ballots are scheduled on Oct 9 for local offices and on Nov 13 for the presidency and legislative posts. Despite the presence of a U.N. peacekeeping force, some areas of the country are controlled by members of the rebel force that ousted former president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Evans Paul, a leader of the Democratic Unity Convention party, said the security problem should not prevent Haiti from holding elections. Others say the elections should be postponed because of violence and lack of preparations. -- Reuters.

INDIA

London, May 3 -- A press report, dated today, states: At least 10 people have been killed in fresh separatist violence in Indian-administered Kashmir. The Indian army said it had killed six suspected militants near the Line of Control which divides the territory between India and Pakistan. In the northern town of Pattan, suspected militants shot dead a local official and three guards, police say. The Indian army said yesterday that troops had killed 90 suspected militants since the launch of a cross-Kashmir bus service in early April. In the latest violence, army spokesman Lt Col DK Badola said that the six men had crossed into Indian-controlled territory in the mountainous Poonch district from Pakistani-controlled Kashmir. "They were challenged to halt but instead they started indiscriminate fire on our soldiers. Our troops retaliated killing all the six infiltrators on the spot," he said. Assault rifles, ammunition and explosives were recovered from their bodies, reports say. In a separate incident, suspected militants killed Mohammad Ramzan Miyan who headed the local municipal council in Pattan. Police said he was attacked when he was inspecting the town's main market. He had been elected to his post in February in municipal elections held across Indian-administered Kashmir. Militants, who had opposed the polls, have warned members of local bodies to resign from their posts. Yesterday, a nephew of Kashmir chief minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed died after being attacked by suspected militants the previous day. The violence comes as preparations are under way for Thursday (May 5), when the next buses will run between Srinagar in Indian-administered Kashmir and Muzaffarabad in Pakistan-administered Kashmir. The landmark cross-Kashmir bus service was launched last month as part of a major peace initiative between India and Pakistan. It was the first service across the Line of Control in more than half a century.

IRAQ

London, Apr 28 -- A press report, dated today, states: MPs in Iraq have approved the cabinet list submitted by Prime Minister Ibrahim Jaafari amid failure to agree the final line-up. Seven posts have been left vacant, including oil and defence, but Mr Jaafari promised that they would be filled very soon. As well as the oil and defence portfolios, the electricity ministry and two deputy prime minister's posts have not been filled. All posts must be filled by May 7, the constitutional deadline set for forming the government. Interest is expected to focus on what jobs are given to the Sunni minority, particularly as some of the posts left vacant have been allocated to the Sunnis. Today's session began with a minute's silence in tribute to a woman MP shot dead at her Baghdad home. Lamia Abed Khadouri was the first MP to be assassinated since the Jan 30 general election. In fresh attacks reported today: A rocket or mortar bomb hit a bus station in Musayyib, south of Baghdad, killing four people and injuring 1; gunmen in Baghdad shot dead a police official on his way to work at the passport office and a suicide car bomber injured at least four Iraqi soldiers along with three US soldiers and seven Iraqi civilians in Tikrit, Iraqi and US sources reported.

Baghdad, Apr 29 -- Four car bombs targeting Iraqi security forces killed 13 people and wounded 50 others in Baghdad today, piling pressure on Iraq's new government only a day after it was formed. The attacks, in the Athamiya district in the north of the Iraqi capital, were believed to have been carried out by suicide bombers, police said. One car bomb exploded near a restaurant where police and National Guardsmen were eating breakfast. Seven National Guardsmen, two police officers and four civilians were killed, police said. Thirty-five civilians, 13 Guardsmen and two police officers were wounded. Two car bombs exploded in the town of Madaen, about 25 miles south-east of Baghdad, police said. One targeted a police checkpoint and the second blew up near a hospital. There was no immediate word on any casualties. A U.S. soldier was killed and four others were wounded in a bomb attack in northern Iraq, the U.S. military said. The attack occurred yesterday in Hawija, about 120 miles north of Baghdad, the military said in a statement. The death raised to 1,199 the number of U.S. military personnel killed in action since the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in March 2003. -- Reuters.

Baghdad, Apr 30 -- Three car bombs targeting military patrols exploded in Baghdad today, killing four people and wounding 16, police said. Militants detonated one car bomb alongside a joint Iraqi and US military patrol in the Zayuna district of eastern Baghdad, as it passed near a police station, killing two passers-by, one of them a child, and wounding 10. A second car exploded near a US

military convoy in the west of the capital, police said. It was not immediately clear whether there were any casualties from that blast. A car bomb also killed two civilians and wounded six when it blew up near a US patrol in eastern Baghdad, police said. The explosions came a day after a series of coordinated strikes in Baghdad and nearby areas killed more than 30 people and wounded nearly 100. Among the dead were three US soldiers, raising the number killed in action since the invasion of Iraq to 1,204. Yesterday's string of at least 12 car and roadside bombings mostly targeted Iraqi security forces and the US military, and came the day after Iraq formed its first democratically elected government since Saddam Hussein's fall. Several of the blasts involved a new tactic employed by insurgents in which a second car bomber detonates his vehicle shortly after the first strike, in an effort to target rescuers and others rushing to the scene. The majority of Yesterday attacks were claimed by a group describing itself as al Qaeda's wing in Iraq, which is headed by Jordanian Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. In an audio tape put on the Internet, a person purporting to be Zarqawi threatened more bombings and bloodshed in Iraq and said US President George W. Bush would not be allowed to "enjoy peace of mind". -- Reuters.

London, May 1 -- A press report, dated today, states: A suicide car bomb exploded at the funeral for a Kurdish official in northern Iraq on today, killing 20 Iraqis and wounding more than 30, an official said. The attack occurred in the city of Tal Afar, 93 miles east of the Syrian border, said Khisru Goran, a spokesman for the Kurdish Democratic Party. The car bomber drove into a tent packed with mourners, he said. The funeral was being held for Sayed Talib Sayed Wahab, a KDP official and deputy governor in nearby Mosul who was gunned down by insurgents yesterday, Goran said. US troops, Iraqi police and ambulances raced to the scene to remove the bodies and assist the more than 30 wounded. But unidentified gunmen blocked the road and fighting broke out, Goran said. The US military confirmed the attack, but said it didn't know how many people had been killed and wounded.

Baghdad, May 1 -- Insurgents shot dead five Iraqi policemen at a checkpoint and a car bomb killed four people in Baghdad today, underscoring the dire security situation on the third day of violence since a new government was formed. The shooting attack near a military college serving as a U.S. military camp reinforced concerns that U.S.-trained Iraqi forces still have a long way to go before they can take over security from American soldiers. At least four civilians were killed and five wounded when a car bomb targeted a U.S. military convoy near a technical college in the capital, police said. There was no word from the U.S. military on whether any U.S. troops were hurt. While most of the

violence in the past three days has focused on the capital and nearby areas, there are still attacks in the country's traditional hotspots. Guerrillas fired at least seven rockets into the city of Falluja yesterday, killing three Iraqi civilians and wounding another, the U.S. military said. They also said a bomb hidden in a shrine in Mosul killed three Iraqi civilians yesterday, and a suicide bomber attacked an American convoy, killing two Iraqis. A U.S. soldier was killed by small-arms fire yesterday in the town of Khaldiya, about 130 km west of Baghdad, raising to at least 1,206 the number of American soldiers killed in action since the war that toppled Saddam started in 2003. America's top general said this week insurgents were as strong as they were a year ago, mounting up to 60 attacks a day, despite the presence of about 140,000 U.S. troops and more than that number employed in the Iraqi security forces. In a reminder of the huge security challenge ahead, U.S. Marines and Iraqi forces are having to use heavy machinery to remove vast amounts of arms and ammunition found in a guerrilla supply corridor between Falluja and another rebel stronghold at Ramadi, the military said. Weapons collected so far include nearly 38,000 high-velocity bullets, 180 artillery shells, more than 4,000 mortar rounds and 600 grenades, the military said. -- Reuters.

London, May 2 -- A press report, dated today, states: A car bomb exploded in an upscale shopping district of Baghdad today, killing at least six Iraqis and setting fire to an apartment building, police said, continuing a string of attacks that's left at least 123 people dead since Iraq's interim government appointed a partial Cabinet last week. Two other bombs exploded in the capital, narrowly missing a top Iraqi security official and a US patrol. In southern Iraq, a British soldier was killed in fighting, the British government said. Yesterday, insurgents killed at least 36 Iraqis in a series of attacks, including 25 who died and more than 50 who were wounded by a car bomb that ripped through a tent packed with mourners at the funeral of a Kurdish official in the northern city of Tal Afar. Since Thursday (Apr 28), when Iraq's interim government finally appointed a partial Cabinet after three months of political infighting, at least 123 people, including 11 Americans, have been killed in a slew of bombings, ambushes and other attacks. Laith Kuba, an adviser to incoming Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari, said today that parliament will swear in the new government tomorrow after al-Jaafari appoints officials to the government's two unfilled deputy prime minister positions and the five Cabinet posts now served by acting ministers. Yesterday, Iraqi militants released a video purporting to show Iraq's latest foreign hostage: an Australian who said he is married to an American and lives in California. The British Foreign Office also

announced three arrests in the abduction of a British aid worker believed slain last year, saying they were made yesterday morning during a coalition raid in an insurgent area 20 miles south of Baghdad. In today's attack on the shopping district in southern Baghdad, the car bomb set fire to a six-storey apartment building with a shop on the ground floor and destroyed at least three cars parked nearby, said police Lt. Ali Hussein. Six civilians were killed and seven wounded by the explosion, which had targeted a police patrol in the area, said police Lt. Col. Salman Abdul Karim Al-Fartosi. No police were hurt, he said. In another attack in Baghdad today, Maj. Gen. Rashid Feleih, the commander of a special Interior Ministry security force, narrowly escaped when a roadside bomb hit his four-car convoy, damaging one vehicle, said police Maj. Mousa Abdul Karim. Elsewhere, a roadside bomb exploded near a US military patrol in northern Baghdad, but no Americans were hurt, said US Army Master Sgt. Greg Kaufman. In Tal Afar, 90 miles east of the Syrian border, a car bomb exploded yesterday at a tent where mourners had gathered for the funeral of Sayed Talib Sayed Wahab, an official of the Kurdish Democratic Party, said deputy provincial governor Khisru Goran. Goran, who also serves as a KDP spokesman in the nearby city of Mosul, said the car plowed into the funeral tent and exploded, but the US military said it was not a suicide attack. About 25 people were killed and more than 50 wounded, the US military said. Six other car bombs exploded in Baghdad yesterday and at least five American soldiers were injured in the blasts, said Sgt. Andrew Miller, a U.S. military spokesman. A videotape obtained by Associated Press Television News yesterday showed a man identifying himself as Douglas Wood, 63, seated between two masked militants pointing automatic weapons at him. Wood, appearing disheveled and shaken, said he was an Australian national living in the San Francisco area with his American wife. He said he came to Iraq almost a year ago to work on reconstruction projects with the American military. Wood's American wife, Pearl, said she had seen the tape and the man was indeed her husband. The captive appealed to President Bush, Australian Prime Minister John Howard and Californian Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger to order coalition forces out of Iraq and let Iraqis look after themselves, saying he did not want to die. A militant group calling itself the Shura Council of the Mujahideen of Iraq claimed responsibility for the kidnapping. The British Foreign Office, meanwhile, announced yesterday three arrests in the abduction of a British aid worker believed slain last year, saying they were made after an early morning sweep of an insurgent area 20 miles south of Baghdad. An intelligence official with the Iraqi Interior Ministry said five Iraqi suspects had been apprehended and confessed to a role in

killing Margaret Hassan, the director of CARE International in Iraq. Martin Cronin, first secretary at the British Embassy in Baghdad, said he was not aware of any confessions. US and Iraqi forces also recovered articles apparently related to Hassan, the British Embassy said in Baghdad. Hassan who also held Irish and Iraqi citizenship, was abducted in Baghdad on Oct 19 on her way to work.

Baghdad, May 3 -- US forces killed 12 people and wounded two others, including a six-year-old girl, in a firefight and bombing close to the Syrian border yesterday, the US military said in a statement today. It said six soldiers of the US-led coalition in Iraq were wounded in the fight against suspected members of al Qaeda's wing in Iraq, which is headed by Jordanian Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. Coalition forces followed a truck which drove to a small camp from a suspected insurgent location at the town of al Qaim, 200 miles north-west of Baghdad and one mile from the Syrian border, the US military said. The truck was loaded with material from a shed and tent at the camp and several adult males also boarded the truck before it headed back towards al Qaim, the statement said. "Before the occupants in the vehicle could reach their destination the commander of the operation decided to interdict the vehicle; upon stopping the truck, the suspected insurgents opened fire on Coalition forces," it said. "A firefight ensued with nine enemy adult males killed in action and one enemy wounded." The US military said a six-year-old girl "sustained a minor injury to her right calf and to her head" and a suspected insurgent was also wounded. A US military spokesman said the wounded girl and suspected insurgent were taken to a coalition medical facility. All of the nine men killed were heavily armed with assault rifles and hand grenades, the US military said. Three more people were killed by a coalition airstrike on the camp. Coalition forces found fake identification cards, foreign currency and other things which the US military said linked the people at the camp and on the truck to Zarqawi's network. -- Reuters.

London, May 4 -- A press report, dated today, states: At least 50 people have been killed in a suicide bombing at a crowded police recruitment centre in the Kurdish city of Irbil in northern Iraq. The bomber entered the compound posing as a volunteer and mingled with other young men seeking jobs before setting off explosives, Kurdish officials said. The blast happened at a local office of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) which also housed an interior ministry compound for northern Iraq's regional government. "A suicide bomber entered the recruiting centre and blew himself up," Irbil governor Nawzad Hadi told AFP news agency.

London, May 4 -- A press report, dated today, states: Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer has appealed for the release of an engineer

held hostage by militants in Iraq, citing his poor health. Mr Downer made the plea in an interview for the Arabic TV station al-Jazeera. Prime Minister John Howard has ruled out talks with Mr Wood's captors. The hostage, who is a resident of California, identified himself in a video released to journalists in Baghdad on Sunday (May 1). Mr Wood's American wife says she is sure the man shown is her husband. Pictured sitting on the floor flanked by two armed men, the hostage is heard on the tape to call for US, British and Australian forces to withdraw from Iraq. A sign on the tape gives the name of a militant organisation, the Shura Council of the Mujahideen of Iraq, which has claimed previous attacks on US and Iraqi troops. The militants said the video was being released to coincide with the visit to Iraq by Australian Defence Minister Robert Hill. Australia has about 950 troops stationed in and around Iraq. It is in the process of sending another 450 troops there. Mr Wood is the first Australian contractor to be kidnapped in the Gulf since the insurgency began.

Baghdad, May 5 -- Insurgents unleashed a series of ambushes and bomb blasts targeting Iraqi security forces in Baghdad today, killing at least 24 people in the latest attacks in a surge of violence that has rocked the capital. A suicide bomber strapped with explosives blew himself up at an Iraqi army recruitment center in western Baghdad, killing at least 13 people and wounding at least 15, police said. Gunmen ambushed a police convoy in western Baghdad, shooting dead 10 policemen and then setting their vehicles ablaze, police said. Another police convoy was attacked around the same time, and there was no immediate word on casualties. Insurgents also detonated a car bomb apparently targeting the deputy interior minister, police said. He was unhurt but one of his bodyguards was killed and six people were wounded. -- Reuters.

London, May 5 -- A press report, dated today, states: Insurgents blew up an oil pipeline in northern Iraq, setting it ablaze, police said today. "An oil pipeline that links northern Kirkuk oil fields to Baghdad was set ablaze after insurgents detonated an explosive improvised device under the pipeline late yesterday near the Iraqi city of Balad, some 90 km north of Baghdad," said a statement released by the liaison office of US military and Iraqi security forces in Tikrit. Firefighters were at the scene and Iraqi security forces had sealed off the area, said the statement.

ISRAEL

Gaza, Apr 28 -- Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has ordered security forces to use what he called an iron fist if necessary to ensure militants abide by a ceasefire with Israel, the official Wafa news agency said today. In his toughest pledge yet to enforce the truce, Abbas told police in the

Gaza Strip yesterday nobody must flout the pledge of calm. Occasional mortar, rocket and shooting attacks have continued despite the truce Abbas won from armed groups last month, prompting Israeli charges Abbas is not doing enough. The main Islamic militant faction Hamas said it was committed to ensuring calm continued, though it would still respond if Israel killed Palestinians. A spokesman for the umbrella Popular Resistance Committees, a coalition of militants that says it is not bound by the truce, said: "We regret these statements by the president. Force should be used against Israel, which kills Palestinian civilians and attacks policemen and the resistance without discrimination." No faction has claimed responsibility for three rocket attacks that struck Israel and a Jewish settlement in the Gaza Strip this week. Israel, which wants to ensure calm during its planned withdrawal of settlers from occupied Gaza beginning in July, has said there would be no peace negotiations until Palestinians dismantle the armed factions. The Israeli army has reported at least 10 missile or mortar attacks and 30 shooting incidents in the past three weeks while 10 bombs had either been detonated against troops or discovered before they could be blown up. Palestinian factions say most attacks were in response to Israel's killing of three Palestinian youths on the border between Gaza and Egypt on Apr 9. -- Reuters.

Dubai, May 2 -- An Israeli soldier was killed in a West Bank clash today in which a Palestinian gunman also died, Al Jazeera television reported, putting further strain on a tenuous ceasefire between the two sides. The Arabic satellite station quoted Israeli sources as saying the clash occurred in the village of Sida near Tulkarm, one of three cities handed over to Palestinian Authority security control under the truce declared in February. Earlier, Israel Radio and military sources reported the killing of the Palestinian gunman, a member of the Islamic Jihad militant group. No immediate comment was available from the Palestinians. Yesterday, the Israeli army said it captured an Islamic Jihad member near Tulkarm who had planned to carry out a suicide bombing. -- Reuters.

Gaza, May 3 -- Palestinian police, under orders to use an "iron fist" to preserve a truce with Israel, fought a gun battle with a Hamas rocket squad in the Gaza Strip and arrested two militants, the Palestinian Authority said today. The clash yesterday night was the first between police and militants since President Mahmoud Abbas ordered a crackdown on Apr 28 against rocket fire into Israel, which has decreased sharply but not stopped. News of the incident, which coincided with renewed calls by Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon for Abbas to disarm militants under a U.S.-backed peace "road map," sent tension soaring in Gaza, the main Hamas powerbase. Hamas said the militants detained in

the northern Gaza Strip were not planning to fire rockets, but confirmed that they were armed -- defying a recent order that only Palestinian security forces should carry weapons on the streets. "The three were in a car, en route to fire rockets, when police waved for them to stop. Gunmen opened fire at the police, forcing policemen to fire back," said Interior Ministry spokesman Toufiq Abu Khoussa. "Policemen controlled the situation, took away the car, arrested the gunmen and took away their arms," he said. One of the men in the car ran away, escaping arrest. A Palestinian security official said police found rockets in the vehicle. Abu Khoussa said the gunmen had violated an agreement by militant factions in March to go along with the ceasefire that Abbas and Sharon agreed to uphold at least until the end of this year. The Hamas gunmen accused the police of opening fire first and said there was no plan to launch rockets. Another militant group, Islamic Jihad, said it carried out a rocket attack on Israel from nearby in northern Gaza shortly before the Hamas men were arrested. Hamas, which is sworn to destroying Israel, said it was committed to "maintaining calm" and accused the Palestinian Authority of trying to curry favour with Washington at the expense of local unity. -- Reuters.

London, May 4 -- A press report, dated today, states: Israeli Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz said today he is freezing the handover of West Bank towns to Palestinian security control because the Palestinians have failed to honour their promise to disarm militants. Mofaz spoke during a meeting of Israel's Security Cabinet, and his comments were reported by participants speaking on condition of anonymity.

IVORY COAST

Abidjan, Apr 30 -- Hundreds of people in the town of Duekoue have fled their homes after their houses were attacked and looted by members of a rival ethnic group, residents said today. The attacks were triggered after members of the Guere community, which hails from Ivory Coast's west, returned to work yesterday despite a call for traders and transport workers to strike over security problems in the town, locals said. "About 150 refugees have come (to the Catholic mission) with their suitcases," said Father Francois Ubach, who has worked as a Spanish missionary in Ivory Coast for over two decades. "A lot of Gueres had their windows and doors smashed and a lot of houses were looted," he told Reuters by telephone. United Nations peacekeepers based in the town said calm had been restored but gave no further details. A senior Ivorian army officer who spoke on condition of anonymity said he had not heard of any deaths and said his colleagues had been firing warning shots to calm the situation. "There are people injured but no dead. Calm has been restored.

It was a problem between the Dioula and Guere (ethnic groups)," he said. -- Reuters.

United Nations, May 3 -- The Security Council is giving the U.N. peacekeeping mission in Ivory Coast a second month-long renewal until June because it needs more time to fine-tune the mission's mandate, diplomats said today. A resolution drafted by France would renew the peacekeeping mission until Jun 4, to give council members time to negotiate adjustments in its mandate, said Danish Ambassador Ellen Loj, the council president for May. An earlier month-long extension was adopted Apr 4 to give South African mediators more time to pressure government and rebel leaders to fulfill their commitments under a 2003 peace agreement. That led to the signing of a deal last month in South Africa under which President Laurent Gbagbo and rebels who tried to oust him agreed to stop fighting, disarm militias and hold presidential elections in October. One of the main issues to be worked out in the coming month is whether to expand the peacekeeping force, diplomats said. U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan has called for an additional 1,200 troops but the United States has opposed the request, arguing that a commitment to peace on both sides was more important than extra soldiers. A report by New York-based Human Rights Watch said today that the U.N. troops were too thinly spread to deal with multiple attacks accompanied by civil unrest or violence. The latest draft resolution, to be put to a vote in the 15-nation council tomorrow, would also praise Gbagbo for agreeing to ease the eligibility requirements for presidential candidates so that opposition leader Alassane Ouattara could run against him. -- Reuters.

NEPAL

Kathmandu, Apr 30 -- Nepal's king ended a state of emergency two days early, the Palace said today, but the sudden midnight proclamation does not reduce extraordinary powers he seized in February's royal coup. Politicians said it was a positive move but advised caution and urged the king to hold talks with political parties. Constitutionally, the three-month state of emergency granting the military extra powers of search, arrest and curfew had to end or be formally extended by midnight tomorrow. King Gyanendra's announcement made no mention of him giving up most of the extra powers assumed when he sacked the government, suspended democracy and took control himself on Feb 1 in a bid to end a long-running Maoist rebellion. The midnight announcement came hours after Gyanendra returned from his first foreign tour since Feb. 1, aimed at shoring up international support, a visit during which he convinced India to resume military aid. He had reassured India and the United States, another major supporter, that he would restore democracy as soon as possible. In his

proclamation, Gyanendra said he would continue the newly established Royal Commission for Corruption Control, set up after Feb 1 with sweeping powers to arrest, investigate and prosecute politicians and bureaucrats. -- Reuters.

PAKISTAN

Karachi, May 2 -- Pakistan Railways said a portion of the main railway track linking western part with the rest of the country was blown up near the Domboli area of Nasirabad district in Balochistan Province early on Sunday morning. As a result, rail traffic on route was suspended for quite some time. It was reported that saboteurs had planted a powerful bomb on the railway track near Domboli, about 250 Km south-east of Quetta. It went off at around 2.50 am blowing up a portion of the railway. All Quetta-bound passenger trains were stopped at the Jacobabad station. It took several hours to replace the damaged track and service on the main line was restored. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Islamabad, May 5 -- Pakistani security forces have rounded up some two dozen suspects around the country in raids using information from the senior al Qaeda leader arrested early this week, intelligence officials said today. Officials said that Abu Faraj Farj al Liby, who US counter-terrorism agents say became al Qaeda operations chief and third in command two years ago, was in a good position to disclose the whereabouts of leader Osama bin Laden and his deputy Ayman al-Zawahri. Al Liby was caught on Monday morning (May 2) and brought to Rawalpindi, the garrison town close to Islamabad, for questioning. His capture was announced late yesterday. "Raids are being carried out in several cities after his interrogation," a Pakistani intelligence official said. Pakistan says Liby, whom officials say is a Libyan, was the ringleader of at least two assassination attempts against President Pervez Musharraf in December 2003. Intelligence officials say his association with bin Laden goes back to the jihad, or holy war, that the United States covertly backed against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s. Raids in Lahore, the capital of the eastern province of Punjab, Peshawar, capital of North West Frontier Province, and the Bajaur tribal area of the NWFP had already netted more than 20 other al Qaeda suspects, officials said. -- Reuters.

PHILIPPINES

Manila, May 4 -- The largest Muslim guerrilla group in the Philippines said today it will organise a team to help the government hunt down kidnap gangs and militants hiding in rebel areas in the southern island of Mindanao. The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) said the offer to help track down members of criminal and militant groups was part of confidence-building moves ahead of

peace talks due to resume next month in Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur. "The rebels informed us today of their intention to effect 'citizen's arrest' of lawless elements hiding in Muslim areas in the south," said an army official, who declined to be named. Representatives from the government and the MILF's ceasefire panels are holding three-days of meetings from today on western Palawan island. Eid Kabalu, a spokesman for the MILF, said a 20-member team will soon join the government's law enforcement operations in Muslim communities, tracking down kidnap gangs and militant groups. "The government gave us a long list of people wanted by the law that could be hiding in our areas," Kabalu said by phone. "We would be after them, including leaders of the Abu Sayyaf group involved in kidnapping activities." He said the MILF had long been helping the government in fighting criminality in Mindanao. The government and MILF signed in May 2002 an agreement that commits the rebels to "isolate and interdict" members of criminal and militant groups hiding in Muslim communities. Brigadier-General Ben Dolorfino, head of the government's ad hoc joint action group, said he opposed giving the rebels authority to make arrests, suggesting the MILF could help more by providing information on militant hideouts. "The government should have the sole power to make arrests," he told Reuters. -- Reuters.

London, May 5 -- Communist rebels executed four hostages they seized from the southern Philippines four years ago and misled state negotiators about their fate, the government announced today. Army sergeant Jeremias Roesete and three civilians were kidnapped by New People's Army (NPA) guerrillas in the southern province of Sultan Kudarat in 2001. In a statement, Manila's peace negotiating panel said they learned recently that the hostages were killed by their captors the following year. Advertisement: It said this fact was kept from the government by the NPA's political wing, the National Democratic Front, during peace talks last year. Government negotiators in a meeting with their NDF counterparts in Oslo in 2004 were assured that the rebels were working on the release of the hostages. "We deplore the CPPs disregard for life and its utter lack of humanity in withholding information from the relatives of Sergeant Rosete et al and the (government) about what they had done to their captives," the peace panel said.

SOMALIA

Mogadishu, May 3 -- At least 10 people were killed by an explosion at a soccer stadium in Somalia's capital Mogadishu where the prime minister had just addressed hundreds of supporters today, witnesses said. Prime Minister Ali Gedi escaped unhurt, they said. The cause of the blast was not immediately clear.

Seven people were killed at the stadium, one was killed by a vehicle escaping the scene and two others died on their way to hospital, witnesses said. The powerful blast destroyed a wall of the stadium and witnesses said they saw lots of blood at the scene. Gedi flew to Mogadishu on Friday (Apr 29) for the first time since his appointment last year to try to end a rift in his government and shore up sagging confidence in efforts to rebuild the broken and lawless country. -- Reuters.

SRI LANKA

London, Apr 29 -- A press report, dated today, states: A leading journalist who wrote in support of Sri Lanka's Tamil Tiger rebels has been abducted and shot dead in the capital, Colombo. Dharmaretnam Sivaram, 46, was a senior editor of the Tamilnet website and a writer for an English-language paper. He was abducted from a restaurant yesterday and his body found early today close to the parliament complex. No one has yet admitted carrying out the attack. Mr Sivaram had been gagged and shot in the head, police said. Sources said four men are reported to have driven off with Mr Sivaram after bundling him into a four wheel drive vehicle.

SUDAN

Khartoum, Apr 27 -- The Ugandan rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) have ambushed and killed nine people in lawless neighbouring southern Sudan, a government official said today. "A civilian convoy which was going to Torit from Juba ... was ambushed by LRA elements and they managed to kill about seven civilians and two soldiers two days back," Joseph Duer, a minister in the regional southern government said. He said it was a civilian convoy, which by chance included members of Sudan's army. Torit and Juba are government garrison towns in Sudan's south, near the border with Uganda. Sudan's government and the former rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) ended more than two decades of civil war in the south by signing a peace deal in January. And while a final ceasefire is slowly being implemented there, the LRA remain a thorn in the side of civilians travelling near Juba, the eventual capital of the south. "Both government soldiers and SPLA troops are hunting the LRA soldiers," Duer said. "They carried out this attack and then they disappeared." Uganda troops based in Juba are also trying to hunt down the elusive LRA. The deployment of a 10,000-strong UN peacekeeping force in Sudan began today with the first arrival of Nepalese troops. It is hoped the massive presence of these forces will deter the LRA and push them out of Sudanese territory. The deployment is separate to African Union forces which monitor a shaky ceasefire in a different conflict in Sudan's western Darfur region. -- Reuters.

London, Apr 30 -- A press report, dated Apr 29, states: The African Union has agreed to more than double the number of its peace monitors in the war-torn Sudanese region of Darfur. By September, the force should be 7,700-strong, which could be further increased to 12,000, an official said. There are currently just 2,200 troops, with another 1,000 expected next month. The peacekeepers are monitoring a ceasefire signed a year ago, which both Darfur rebels and pro-government Arab militias regularly violate. "These extra troops will further promote a more secure environment and help build confidence as well as protecting civilians," said AU Peace and Security Commissioner Said Djinnit. He said that Kenya, Rwanda, Nigeria and Senegal have all promised to send extra troops. The UN's Sudan envoy says the peacekeepers have made a difference where they are present but they are too few to cover such a large area. Jan Pronk also submitted a report saying that 12,000 troops were needed in Darfur by early next year - but they should have a stronger mandate. "The AU presence has resulted in more stability where they are, but they have to be able to back their mediation with force," he said. At its meeting in Addis Ababa, the AU did not discuss giving their peacekeepers more powers, which Sudan has opposed. Earlier this week, the AU asked Nato for logistical and financial support for its mission in Darfur. Nato is considering the request. The Sudan government says it would accept Nato logistical support but not the presence of non-African troops.

TOGO

Cotonou, Apr 28 -- Hundreds of people have fled from southern Togo into neighbouring Benin after youths and security forces clashed in the town of Aneho. Togolese residents and a police official in Benin said today. The violence came after the son of Togo's former authoritarian ruler was declared the winner of the presidential election -- triggering riots in the capital Lome in which at least 10 people have already been killed. The police official in Benin said around 600 people had already crossed the border. The United Nations refugee agency UNHCR in Cotonou said people were still arriving today although they did not have exact numbers. The head of a private radio station in Aneho, 45 km from Lome, said opposition youths attacked the police headquarters and mayor's house after the election victory of Faure Gnassingbe, son of former president Gnassingbe Eyadema. "The security forces retaliated and several people were injured by bullets and people were also killed but I don't know how many because I had to cross the frontier after the security forces wrecked my radio station," the station owner said. -- Reuters.

London, Apr 29 -- A press report, dated Apr 28, states: Residents of Togo's capital, Lome, are clearing up after violence erupted following Sunday's (Apr 24) disputed elections. Soldiers beat people to make them take down barricades and clean the streets in opposition strongholds, correspondents say. At least 20 people were killed as opposition supporters went on the rampage, saying the polls were rigged. Ruling party candidate and son of the former leader, Faure Gnassingbe, officially won with 60% of the vote. His main rival Emmanuel Bob Akitani got 38%, the electoral commission said but he declared himself president, saying there had been massive fraud. Election observers from West African regional body Ecowas accepted that there had been problems but said the results had generally reflected the will of the people. Ecowas condemned Mr Akitani's declaration and called for a national unity government to prevent further violence. Security was tightened overnight and soldiers are currently patrolling the city in jeeps mounted with heavy machine guns. They began a massive clear-up operation with bulldozers clearing the remnants of burning roadblocks. Meanwhile, communication remains difficult as telephone networks are not working and most private radio stations were taken off the air yesterday. Some 600 people are reported to have fled into Benin from southern Togo, following clashes in the opposition town of Aneho. Mr Akitani's coalition intends to appeal to Togo's constitutional court - which has still to confirm the result of the election - saying he won majorities in all the most populous regions of the country. His support is strongest in the south, including Lome, while Mr Faure's power base is in the north. Mr Faure denied vote-rigging and urged veteran opposition UFC leader Gilchrist Olympio to join a government of national unity.

London, May 3 -- A press report, dated today, states: Thousands of people are continuing to stream out of the west African country of Togo ahead of official election results expected today. About 17,000 people are believed to have fled into Ghana and Benin since the presidential election a week ago. Many have left in the last few days, expecting renewed violence when the poll results are confirmed. Opposition supporters refuse to accept the victory of Faure Gnassingbe, the son of strongman Gnassingbe Eyadema who ruled for almost 40 years. The United Nations says many of the refugees have gunshot wounds or have been beaten; most are women and children. Former colonial power Germany will raise the issue of anti-German sentiment with the UN after attacks on German residents and buildings.

YEMEN

London, Apr 27 -- A press report, dated Apr 26, states: A student was

killed yesterday when a man hurled a hand grenade at a military vehicle in the Yemeni capital Sanaa, sparking a shootout in which the attacker was killed, relatives and a security source said. The man, whose identity was not known, hurled the grenade at a Defence Ministry vehicle in a central district of Sanaa where the Finance Ministry is located, witnesses said. Security men opened fire and the attacker was killed, a security source and witnesses said. A university student passing by was killed and another injured, according to relatives. An Interior Ministry statement confirmed the attack but said only that the assailant and some passers-by were wounded. Three hand grenades and a pistol were found in a brief case carried by the assailant, said the statement carried by the official Saba news agency.

Labour Disputes



BANGLADESH/INDIA

Karachi, May 5 -- Export-import through the Benapole and Bhomra land ports in the north west of Bangladesh were disrupted for the second day yesterday as the port users on the Indian side went on wildcat strike. Local media reported that talks at checkpoints between the strikers and Benapole customs officials yesterday ended without any result. Indian port users are demanding restoration of previous rules for entry of their trucks into Bangladesh. The customs officials stood firm on new rules that required separate invoice, packing list and identification of goods carried by every truck. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

FRANCE

London, Apr 29 -- CGT union members have agreed to end their strike action after the Government's concessions allowing SNCM to opt out of the new low-cost French international register and the suspension of 210 redundancies.

NEW ZEALAND

London, Apr 29 -- A press report, dated today, states: Today's strike by metal workers in Auckland is focussing on employers who are holding back on a five percent pay rise. Up to 300 workers from 12 companies are not at work this morning and will instead be picketing in Avondale, west Auckland. The Engineers Union ditched collective bargaining earlier this month after some employers refused to agree to any pay rise above four percent. National secretary Andrew Little says many bosses have agreed in principle to the five percent increase and today's strike is concentrating on employers who have not yet agreed.

Awards & Settlements

**DENIAL OF MEDICAL COVER,
UNITED STATES**

London, May 5 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: A jury has awarded more than \$2 million to a Mandeville woman for pain and suffering and medical expenses she incurred after her insurance company denied coverage for a medical procedure. In 2000, Christine Hymel said she began experiencing a tingling sensation in her legs, feet and back. She went to a specialist, who recommended an MRI. Hymel said she didn't know where to turn after Blue Cross and Blue Shield denied coverage. Hymel disputed the denial of her claim, and when her pain worsened, she decided to save up enough money to pay for the MRI herself. In the four months it took to save the cash, an aggressive tumor grew enough to cause major damage to Hymel's spine. Even though doctors told Hymel she needed surgery immediately, Hymel said that claim also was denied. The \$2 million jury award covers the cost of past and present medical expenses, including compensation for mental anguish, and pain and suffering.

**ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE,
UNITED STATES**

London, May 3 -- A press report, dated May 2, states: The city of Bayonne will receive \$3 million for waterfront improvements under a state-approved settlement with International Matex Tank Terminals as compensation for environmental damage at the company's 700-acre site. The settlement, which comes after a state-instituted lawsuit, is the largest New Jersey has garnered so far for natural resources damages, officials said. Terms of the settlement were disclosed on Friday (Apr 29) by state Environmental Protection Commissioner Bradley Campbell and Bayonne Mayor Joseph V. Doria. IMTT, a bulk liquid petroleum storage and shipment terminal, began operating in Bayonne 22 years ago at the old Bayonne Industries Terminal and acquired other refineries, including those formerly owned and operated by Exxon. Campbell credited IMTT for "stepping to the plate" to compensate the state for injuries that occurred before the company even acquired the property. The Houston-based company inherited a century-old legacy of ground and surface water and sediment contamination on its Bayonne property -- including a 288-acre former Exxon site, Campbell said. The state has sued Exxon over a separate environmental damage claim. Since 2002, the state says, it has collected \$29.4 million in settlements

for environmental damages involving 267 cases. IMTT Terminal Manager Richard Fisette said the company has invested millions of dollars in an ongoing clean-up of petrochemicals at the site. Fisette said the company has many other remediation proposals before the state, including a plan to address the old Plattykill Creek, another contaminated area in Bayonne that stretches about 150 feet wide and 300 feet long. The state said a permanent clean-up plan will be implemented after IMTT completes these "interim" remediation measures. Under the compensation agreement, Doria said, Bayonne will apply \$500,000 toward completing its North 40 Passive Park on the western shoreline along Newark Bay. Doria said the rest of the settlement will fund water quality improvement projects and a public access overlook to the Kill Van Kull.

**LOSS OF EARNINGS,
UNITED STATES**

London, May 4 -- A press report, dated May 3, states: A federal judge has told Farmers Insurance Group Inc., the third-largest U.S. home and auto insurer, to pay \$52.5 million to claims adjusters who say they were denied overtime pay. U.S. District Judge Robert E. Jones in Portland, Ore., ruled yesterday that Farmers, a unit of Zurich Financial Services of Zurich, Switzerland, must pay damages averaging about \$50,000 to each of the 1,039 adjusters in seven states, said N. Robert Stoll, a lawyer for the adjusters. Stoll said the case arose out of a California lawsuit in which Farmers agreed in September to pay about \$200 million to settle claims that it denied overtime to more than 2,000 workers. After success in that case, workers filed similar suits in various states, which were consolidated in the Portland court. "Farmers contended that the adjusters were exempt from overtime laws on the basis that they were administrative employees, and we claimed they were white-collar production workers," Stoll said. Farmers, in a statement, said the damages phase of the case was a "cooperative effort between the parties" to calculate the amount of overtime due. Los Angeles-based Farmers also said it would appeal Jones' determination last year that Farmers was liable. After trial, Jones ruled that under federal and state laws insurance adjusters who handle real estate and auto damages must be paid overtime, while adjusters who process personal injury claims are exempt from overtime pay, Stoll said. yesterday's ruling, which covers unpaid overtime from 1999 to July 2004, involves adjusters in Colorado, Illinois, Washington, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico and Oregon. "The issue of liability for overtime pay to claims adjusters has been evolving significantly over the past several years," Farmers said in the statement.

**MEDICAL MALPRACTICE,
UNITED KINGDOM**

London, Apr 30 -- A press report, dated Apr 29, states: A seven-year-old twin girl who suffered brain damage at birth has received a £2.1m pay-out from a London hospital at the High Court. The Barts and London Hospitals NHS Trust admitted negligence in failing to deliver Zaynah Silvain with 27 minutes of her twin brother. Her injuries were due to Zaynah being starved of oxygen during a long birth, the court was told. Zaynah suffers from mild cerebral palsy and has learning difficulties. However, the Trust denied her learning problems were due to her birth injury and said they might be due to autism or a genetic fault. Andrew Spink, QC, told Mr Justice Roderick Evans that the child had been left with a permanent brain injury because of the hospital's negligence. This had left her with "a relatively mild physical disability and more controversially severe cognitive impairment," he added. David Evans, representing the NHS Trust, said: "The trust apologises in public for the negligence which led to the injury." The case was settled on the basis of a structured settlement, which will see Zaynah receive annual payments for the rest of her life.

**PATENT INFRINGEMENT,
UNITED STATES**

London, May 3 -- A press report, dated May 2, states: Hewlett-Packard and EMC said today they had signed a five-year patent cross-licensing deal that would end four years of litigation between the two vendors. The settlement agreement called for HP to pay EMC a \$325 million "balancing" payment. HP's payment obligation can be satisfied over the next five years through purchase of EMC software for internal use or resale, the companies said. HP spokesman Ryan Donovan said HP already uses EMC's VMware software internally and resells it to enterprise customers. "They use some of our products, and we use some of theirs," Donovan said. The expanded relationship gives HP a way of reselling more EMC products, said Mark Fredrickson, EMC's vice president of communications. When asked whether the settlement would lead to new products being sold through HP, Fredrickson said, "We're hopeful." EMC sued storage management company StorageApps in 2000, claiming StorageApps' technology infringed EMC patents on creating "mirror" copies of system files. HP became involved in the dispute when it acquired StorageApps in 2001. In 2002, HP slapped EMC with a retaliatory lawsuit alleging that a range of features in EMC's Symmetrix, Clariion and TimeFinder products infringed on seven HP patents. HP later followed up with a second lawsuit against EMC, while EMC fought back with a set of counterclaims. A trial was expected to commence in late 2005. HP lost a jury trial last May on EMC's case against

StorageApps. HP agreed to enter arbitration to determine damages, but appealed the judgment of liability. Today's deal, which ends all the legal cases between the companies over the patent disputes, dismisses the claims with no admissions of liability by either vendor.

SEXUAL ASSAULT, UNITED STATES

London, May 5 -- A press report, dated May 4, states: A jury in Missouri's Greene County has awarded a total of \$6 million to a former Methodist choir director over allegations that the Methodist Church failed to protect her from a pastor who she says raped her in his church in 1998. Today, the jury awarded to the choir director, Teresa Norris, and her husband \$4 million in punitive damages; the panel had awarded \$2 million in compensatory damages last Friday (Apr 29). Attorneys for Norris told Circuit Judge Miles Sweeney's court that several people from Campbell United Methodist Church in Springfield, Mo., had filed complaints about the pastor, the Rev. David Finestead, in the three years leading up to the alleged rape in March 1998. Dan Craig, one of Norris' attorneys, said a separate lawsuit has been filed against Finestead. A spokesman for the Missouri Conference, Steve Cox, said Finestead maintains his innocence and says he has an alibi. No criminal charges were brought against him in the case. Finestead, who now lives in Kansas, could not be reached for comment. Cox also said that based on the fact that Norris never filed a police report about the allegation, there was still "lack of clarity as to whether the event ever took place." In the months after the alleged incident, Cox said, the Methodist church suspended Finestead and launched an investigation but that after "two or three years" called it off when Finestead left the denomination. He never again served in a Methodist church after his suspension, said Cox. Cox said the Missouri Conference was "disappointed with the verdict and examining all the options available to us including an appeal through the legal process."

SKIPPED PAYMENTS TO PHYSICIANS, UNITED STATES

London, May 4 -- A press report, dated May 3, states: Health Net Inc. and Prudential Insurance Company of America have agreed to pay more than \$80 million to settle claims that they routinely skimmed on payments to more than 700,000 physicians. Health Net will give \$40 million to pay claims from doctors and up to \$20 million for attorneys fees, the company said. It also agreed to create a better definition of medical necessity for procedures that doctors perform and a streamlined system for physician complaints and payments, moves expected to cost more than \$80 million over four years. The Los Angeles-based company said it will record a pretax charge of about \$66 million

against earnings in the first quarter due to the settlement. "This will allow us to continue to enhance our working relationship with the physicians who serve our members. It will put a potentially contentious matter behind us," said Jay Gellert, president and chief executive officer of Health Net. Prudential agreed to give \$22.2 million to pay for efforts to monitor and improve compliance by health maintenance organizations. The New York-based company has sold its HMO business to Aetna. "This represents a large step forward in the litigation and improvement in the health care delivery system," said Harley Tropin, an attorney for the doctors. A hearing to get preliminary approval from U.S. District Judge Federico Moreno was set for Friday, and a final hearing will be set later. Moreno's approval would protect Health Net against lawsuits filed in the past decade by physicians and physicians groups. The doctors alleged that the HMOs conspired from 1990 to 2002 to program their computers to systematically underpay doctors for their services. Health Net and Prudential were two of eight original defendants. Aetna and Cigna already have settled. Doctors are still pursuing their claims against Anthem, Coventry, United Health and Wellpoint. The case is set for trial in Miami in September. "e're delighted to have settled, and we look forward to trying the rest of the case against the rest of the defendants in September," Tropin said. "The remaining defendants continue to prepare for trial and remain confident in their position," their spokesman Mike Hotra said.

UNLAWFUL DEATH, UNITED STATES

London, May 3 -- A press report, dated today, states: Victoria Snelgrove was killed by police trying to subdue rioters after the Boston Red Sox won the American League pennant last fall. Yesterday, the city paid a \$5.1 million settlement to Snelgrove's parents. It is believed to be the largest settlement in the city's history. Snelgrove, an Emerson College senior from East Bridgewater, was hit in the eye socket with a pepper-spray pellet fired by a police officer outside Fenway Park on Oct 21 after Boston eliminated the New York Yankees. Snelgrove was an innocent bystander and had not "engaged in any activity that would have led police to think that she was behaving unlawfully." Patrick Jones, the Snelgrove's family lawyer, said that acknowledgment was the most important aspect of the settlement to her family. Besides the Boston Police Department's internal review, two independent investigations are under way. The police commissioner also named a special outside panel to look into the shooting and police policies. Prosecutors are looking into whether criminal charges are warranted against the officers who fired the pepper pellet weapons. O'Toole said investigators also are trying to

determine if the weapon malfunctioned. Two other people were injured when they were hit in the face by the pellets, which are fired from compressed-air weapons. A deputy superintendent who was in charge of operations around Fenway Park that night and fired one of the weapons, announced his retirement from the force yesterday.



Railway Accidents

AMAGASAKI, JAPAN

Amagasaki, Apr 27 -- The death toll in Japan's worst rail accident in four decades looked set to top 100 today as hopes of finding more survivors in the wreckage faded along with the light of the third day of rescue efforts. As darkness fell, the official death toll stood at 94 and there was little hope for the 20 or so people still believed to be trapped inside the front carriage of the train, embedded in the ground-floor car park of an apartment building. No survivors have been found since early yesterday when three people were extracted from the twisted mass of metal. "The front carriage has been crushed to a fraction of its normal length, so we are continuing this work with very little hope," said a fire department official. Rescue teams used ultrasound equipment to check for heart beats in the crumpled carriage but there was no sign of life. Police raided JR West's offices yesterday looking for clues on the cause of the crash, which occurred as the packed commuter train rounded a tight curve just after the morning rush hour. -- Reuters.

London, Apr 28 -- A press report, dated today, states: Workers have pulled a body in uniform from the wreckage of Japan's rail disaster and police say the victim could be the 23-year-old driver of the train. The discovery put the death toll at 104 people. The actions of the driver are at the centre of the investigation into Monday's (Apr 25) deadly wreck.

London, Apr 28 -- A press report, dated today, states: Rescue teams today called off the search for further victims and survivors from Japan's worst train wreck in four decades which claimed at least 106 lives, the fire department said. "The emergency rescue team has disbanded after we confirmed that there is no visible sign of survivors," said a fire department spokesman in the western city of Amagasaki. Another fire department official said a final check was made and the mangled steel of the commuter train's front carriage handed over to police after the four-day, round-the-clock rescue operation. "The search for victims is finished. Police are now doing an investigation and our rescue operation is suspended unless the police need our help," the

official said. The debris still has pieces of bodies which could be verified for the final death toll.

Tokyo, Apr 29 -- Japanese police began investigations today at the site of a commuter train crash that killed 106 people, the country's worst in 40 years, after calling off the search for more victims. Pressure on the train's driver to make up lost time may have contributed to the tragedy, union leaders said, as police combed through the twisted metal left behind when two train carriages derailed and slammed into an apartment block on Monday (Apr 25). Among the victims was the 23-year-old driver, whose body was pulled from the crumpled metal yesterday several hours before search and rescue efforts ended. A total of 458 people were injured, about 150 of them seriously. Investigators have yet to conclude why the packed train jumped the tracks in Amagasaki, on the outskirts of the western city of Osaka, but excessive speed appears to have played a role. Media have said pressure put on train drivers by operator West Japan Railway Co. (JR West) may have contributed to the accident. Union officials say JR West was known to harshly reprimand drivers who caused delays. Punishments included cutting salaries, demotions and subjecting drivers to a "re-education" process that employees said could involve months of writing reports and doing menial tasks such as weeding flowerbeds. -- Reuters.

London, May 3 -- A press report, dated May 1, states: Workers hauled away mangled railway cars yesterday as they cleaned up the site of Japan's worst train crash in four decades, while police said the death toll rose to 107 after a woman pulled from the wreckage several days ago died. In addition, the train's operator said it would consider revising its tight timetable to ease the pressure on drivers. Investigators believe the driver of the train that crashed last Monday (Apr 25) was speeding immediately before the derailment to make up time. The front cars of the train, which workers had to pry loose from the apartment building it crashed into, were transported to a warehouse, where investigators continued their probe into the crash, said Hyogo state police spokesman Tomohiro Okubo. The West Japan Railway Co commuter train skipped the tracks at Amagasaki, an industrial city about 250 miles west of Tokyo, and slammed into the apartment building. Of the roughly 580 passengers, 107 people died and more than 460 others were injured. A 46-year-old woman, who was among the last survivors rescued early on Tuesday, died at a hospital yesterday, Hyogo police said. Police believe the train was going so fast that the lead car had tipped and was riding on one set of wheels going around the corner before derailling, matching what passengers have said about the accident. Authorities examining the tracks at the crash site found scrapes

along the outside rails but none on the inside, the national Yomiuri, Japan's largest newspaper, said, citing police sources. That suggested the lead railway car had tipped so far to one side as it hit a curve that half its wheels were airborne. Survivors riding at the front of the train have told TV networks that the car had pitched to such a steep angle that passengers were unable to remain standing without holding onto rings dangling above. The 23-year-old driver, whose body was found on Thursday, is suspected of driving too fast. Authorities, investigating allegations of professional negligence, have searched the railroad's offices and were analysing the train's "black box," a computer chip that stores information about the train's speed. Investigators reportedly believe driver Ryujiro Takami was going faster than 65 mph, far above the speed limit on that stretch of track, after overshooting a station by 40 yards. He was 90 seconds behind schedule -- a significant delay in Japan -- and many believe he was trying to make up for lost time. Responding to criticism that the train service's tight timetable was causing frequent delays and pressure on drivers, the railroad's safety director said it was considering changing the schedule to allow more time between trains. "We will review the timetable and try to find out details about the delays," Tsunemi Murakami said. "If necessary, we'll consider revising it."

London, May 3 -- A press report, dated May 2, states: The driver applied the emergency brake in last week's fatal train derailment in Japan, it was reported today. The Construction and Transport Ministry's Aircraft and Railway Accident Investigation Commission concluded that the driver, Ryujiro Takami, who died in the accident, applied the emergency brake, contributing to the train's derailment and rollover as it entered a curve at excessive speed. A train driver typically controls the brake with a right-hand lever and engine power with a left-hand lever. The brakes are controlled by moving the lever back and forth across eight levels. When the driver pushes the brakes to the forwardmost position, the emergency brake is applied. The emergency brake can also be applied by a train conductor using levers near the door of the conductor's compartment. The emergency brake system is activated automatically when a coupling gear comes off. The investigation commission concluded that the seven-car train's right wheels came off the tracks as it travelled around the curve and leaned to the left before its lead car overturned. It also said the unprecedented derailment and rollover was caused because the train entered the curve at a speed of more than 100 kph and the emergency brake was applied. The commission intends to establish when and at what point on the tracks Takami applied the emergency brake by further examining records of

monitors collected from the derailed train. Meanwhile, it was learned that serious operational errors caused by employees of the railroad -- also known as JR West -- in fiscal 2004 nearly doubled from the previous year. According to JR West, operational errors are divided into three categories. The most serious errors are level 3 incidents, which include derailments and ignoring a traffic signal. Passing through a stop and running more than 10 minutes behind schedule are designated level 1 errors while overshooting a station is regarded as a level 2 error. Other minor incidents are not subject to punishment. Total incidents in the three categories have gradually dropped from 956 in fiscal 1999 to 614 last year. However, the occurrences of level 3 incidents increased dramatically from an average of 40 each year between fiscal 1999 and 2003 to 69 in fiscal 2004, far exceeding the 37 cases reported in fiscal 2003. It was also discovered the head of JR's Osaka branch, where the driver was stationed, had indicated that making a profit was the top priority for the current fiscal year. The written policy was distributed to all 5,000 branch employees in early April. Hyogo prefectural police suspect the firm's emphasis on profit over safety may have led to the accident. Tsunemi Murakami, director of JR West's safety department, said during a press conference yesterday that the overall policy of JR West and the Osaka branch was to provide safe transport.

London, May 4 -- A press report, dated May 3, states: The railway company whose train derailed in a deadly crash in Japan last week started installing a new emergency braking system today, responding to the transport minister's warning that its service could not resume until upgrading is completed. The West Japan Railway Co commuter train derailed and slammed into an apartment building last week at Amagasaki in western Japan, leaving 107 dead and more than 460 others injured. The train's automatic brake system was an older model, which experts have said does not work at high speeds. Transport Minister Kazuo Kitagawa yesterday told the company that upgrading the system would be a key precondition to restarting service on the line. Railway workers today started installing the new braking system at the crash site, where hundreds of people continued to lay flowers and mourn the loss of loved ones. Investigators reportedly believe the derailed train's 23-year-old driver was going over 65 mph, far above the speed limit on that stretch of track because the train was running late. Critics say tight timetables put heavy pressure on train drivers in Japan, whose rail service is famous for punctuality.

BLUE RIVER AREA, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA

London, May 3 -- A press report, dated May 2, states: CN Rail officials

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

say no one was hurt when a westbound freight train derailed in the B.C. interior today. Railway spokesman Jim Feeney says 17 cars carrying containers left the tracks west of the town of Blue River. One of the derailed cars contains industrial hazardous goods, but Feeney says it's not leaking. The cause of the derailment is under investigation and it's not known how long the CN main line will be blocked.

CACERIBU RIVER AREA, RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL

London, Apr 28 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Some 60,000 litres of diesel fuel spilled after a train derailment yesterday, threatening a rare ecological reserve in the Bay of Rio de Janeiro. Environmental officials in Rio today said the spill polluted 12 kilometres of the Caceribu River, in an area just 30 metres from the Guapimirim ecological reserve. Local officials said the Central Atlantic train company, owned by the mining firm Vale do Rio Doce, failed to notify them until four hours after the accident. Four train cars, each carrying 60,000 litres of fuel, derailed yesterday. One of the cars cracked, spilling its contents into the river. Residents were forced to evacuate the area due to the strong stench of fuel and the threat of fire.

EVERETT, WASHINGTON, UNITED STATES

London, Apr 29 -- A press report, dated Apr 28, states: A freight train derailment blocking both tracks heading to Everett Station will prevent the northbound Sounder train from traveling to Edmonds or Everett this evening. The derailment occurred about 1330 hrs, when three locomotives from a Tacoma-bound BNSF train loaded with cars slipped off the track, said Gus Melonas, a BNSF spokesman. One of the locomotives leaned onto another train car that was sitting idle on the adjacent track. No injuries were reported, and the cause is still being investigated, Melonas said. Between 100 and 150 passengers typically take the evening northbound Sounder train from Seattle, but Sound Transit officials say they are directing passengers to bus service heading to Edmonds and Everett.

GRANITEVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA, UNITED STATES

London, May 4 -- A press report, dated May 3, states: Residents and business owners who had property damaged after a train wreck spilled toxic chlorine in Graniteville in January could get money from the railroad as soon as this summer. Norfolk Southern and lawyers representing a number of plaintiffs not severely injured or killed in the incident announced today in federal court they have reached a tentative settlement in a class action suit. Details, including monetary amounts, were not disclosed because some smaller points still need to be

finalised, said Joe Rice, lawyer for the plaintiffs. But both sides expect the settlement to be filed publicly in about two weeks. The settlement is novel for the speed it came about and the scope of what it covered, Rice said. It comes about four months after a Norfolk Southern train struck a parked train on a side track, causing a deadly cloud of chlorine gas to spread over parts of the mill village and nearby Avondale Mills plant. Nine people were killed and about 250 injured. The clean-up forced the evacuation of about 5,400 people who lived or worked within a mile of the wreck. The settlement covers items, such as cars damaged beyond repair or meat spoiled because of power outages, on a dollar-to-dollar basis, Rice said. It also will provide money for things that are more difficult to qualify, such as stress from the incident, lost business or inconvenience caused by the evacuation, which for some lasted more than a week, he said. It will not cover lawsuits for anyone killed in the wreck or injured badly enough to go to the hospital within 72 hours of the crash. Those suits will be handled separately, Rice said. The settlement should be presented to a federal judge in about two weeks and a hearing held to finalize it sometime the week of May 23. Depending on how long claims will be accepted, money could start going to residents and businesses by this summer, Rice said. Although the settlement would end most claims for people affected by the crash, it could be years before the serious injury and death cases are dealt with, lawyers said. But attorneys for the railroad estimate there should be fewer than 100 of those suits.

NORTH BEND AREA, NEBRASKA, UNITED STATES

London, May 3 -- A press report, dated today, states: Two train engineers were taken by helicopter to an Omaha hospital after a derailment northwest of the city yesterday at about 2330. The scene is just off Highway 30 near North Bend, about 50 miles northwest of Omaha. Two Union Pacific trains, one headed for Clinton, Iowa, and the other headed to Illinois, derailed when one rear-ended the other. Officials said 4,000 gallons of diesel fuel spilled and crews are vacuuming up as much as possible. Coal was also scattered over the tracks. The remaining soil will be removed to ensure a complete clean-up. About 320 feet of track will have to be replaced. The track should be open between 1400 and 1600 today. It took more than an hour to free the engineers. The engineers injuries were considered to be non-life-threatening.

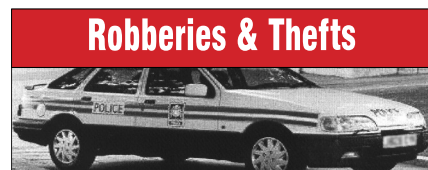
PIET RETIEF AREA, MPUMALANGA, SOUTH AFRICA

London, May 4 -- A press report, dated today, states: Three days after a train derailed near Piet Retief in

Mpumalanga, Spoornet workers are still trying to clear the railway line. Molatwane Likhetho for Spoornet told News24 today the train derailed between Comondale and Vryheid on Monday night (May 2). The 147 carriages were loaded with coal, but fortunately not all of them derailed. Likhetho said Spoornet immediately cordoned off the area and started clearing up the coal spill with heavy machinery. The line has been closed and trains have been diverted along other routes. Likhetho did not want to guess when the line would be reopened. The cause of the derailment was not yet known. The driver and his assistant were not injured. Likhetho said the situation was contained and there was no threat to the environment. He said Spoornet was investigating.

WOODLANDS, PIETERMARITZBURG, SOUTH AFRICA

London, Apr 28 -- A press report, dated Apr 27, states: A train derailment in Pietermaritzburg has raised concerns about the state of train operator Spoornet's infrastructure. The incident happened in Woodlands at about 0845 yesterday when a goods train lost its trucks, which were hauling timber. Confirming the incident, Spoornet spokesperson Mike Asefovitz said: "The train was travelling from Greytown to Pietermaritzburg, and nine of the 15 wagons left the track." He added that the derailment had occurred on Spoornet land and that it had not spilled on to anyone else's property. "There were no injuries and there is absolutely no threat to the environment at all," he said. The line at City View, where the derailment occurred, was expected to be reopened yesterday. The cause of the derailment was not yet known, but an investigation would be launched immediately.



WORKS OF ART, EUROPE

London, May 3 -- A press report, dated May 2, states: Seven stolen works of art, including a piece by Pablo Picasso, have been recovered in Italy. Among the 20th Century works retrieved were a sculpture by Italian Arnaldo Pomodoro and a piece by British modern artists Gilbert and George. Police have arrested one man in Nice, France, who they suspect of trafficking the art to Italy. Picasso's View of Cannes had been in a private collection when it was stolen in 1992. The seven recovered pieces, which also included a painting by Italian Giorgio Morandi, were estimated to be worth 1.3m euros (£881,743). Italian police captain Andrea Ilari said nine other people were under investigation in the

case, which was being held in conjunction with Interpol. He said it was suspected the works were to be sold in Italy and other countries.

Computer Systems



SOBER WORM

London, May 4 -- A press report, dated today, states: Windows users are being warned not to open a virus that poses as a message from football body Fifa. Some of the messages sent by virus say users have won tickets to the football tournament in 2006. The variant seems to have caught a lot of people out because its release coincided with a mail out by Fifa telling fans about tickets. Other messages sent by the bug contain fake warnings about passwords and messages not being delivered. The new variant of the Sober Windows worm appeared at 2000, May 2. Like other versions of the Sober virus this one is bilingual and sends messages in both English and German. Messages in English warn about problems with passwords, e-mail going astray and registration confirmations. In a bid to boost its spread, German language messages sent by the virus posed as messages from Fifa telling fans they had won tickets to the 2006 football tournament. The tactic seems to have succeeded as many security companies said they were catching infected messages in large numbers. Mikko Hypponen, head of anti-virus research at Finnish firm F-Secure, said it had seen reports from more than 30 countries hit by the virus. Part of this success may be because on May 2 the World Cup organising committee sent out messages telling some fans that their application for team tickets had been successful. In a message warning fans about the World Cup worm, Fifa said its ticket confirmations travelled without attachments. By contrast the attachments on infected messages hold the virus code. Anyone opening these attachments will have their computer infected, their address book plundered and a back door into their machine opened for others to use. The virus is likely to hit home users hardest because the variant was released into the wild late on Monday night and most company security systems would have updated overnight to protect users when they logged in on Tuesday. Security firms urged users to update their anti-virus software, be vigilant and not to open unexpected e-mails bearing attachments. This variant of the Sober worm affects computers running Windows 2000, 95, 98, Me, NT, Server 2003 and XP. The first Sober worm was seen in October 2003.

Miscellaneous



DIESEL SHORTAGE, MALAYSIA

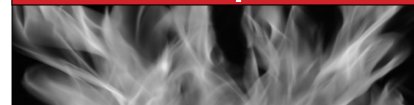
London, Apr 28 -- Twenty out of 50 trawlers at the Malaysian International Tuna Port in Batu Maung have been grounded following the nationwide diesel shortage. Many vessels could not go out to sea as the operators could now only buy 1,000 litres of diesel per boat instead of 3,000 litres previously. The diesel quota imposed since January has caused a lot of hardship to the offshore fishing industry. A diesel pipe was found padlocked at the Malaysian International Tuna Port in Batu Maung yesterday. South Penang Fishermen's Association general manager Aziz Ujang said his diesel quota to cater to the needs of 56 vessels would be reduced from 740,000 litres to 80,000 litres next month.

OUTBREAK OF MARBURG VIRIUS, ANGOLA

London, Apr 28 -- A press report, dated today states: The death toll in Angola's Marburg epidemic has topped 250, but medical experts said today they were confident the world's worst outbreak of the deadly virus would soon be reined in. Some 253 people have died of the rare Ebola-like disease from a total of 273 known cases since late last year, according to a document released late yesterday by the Health Ministry and the World Health Organisation. All the cases in this outbreak have originated from the northern Uige province, where Angolan authorities, the WHO and non-governmental organisations are trying to trace more than 500 people who are thought to have had contact with the victims. Some 48% of known cases have been among children. (See issue of Apr 26.)

London, May 3 -- A press report, dated today, states: The death toll from the outbreak of the Ebola-like Marburg virus in Angola has reached 280, most of whom succumbed to the disease in the northern Uige province, according to the health ministry and the World Health Organisation. Of the 280 dead, 269 were in Uige province and a further 208 people are under medical observation in that region after coming into contact with an infected person, a statement from the ministry and the WHO said. There have been a total of 313 cases of the Marburg virus detected since monitoring began on October 13, making it the worst outbreak on record.

Fires & Explosions



COAL MINE, HANCHENG, SHAANXI PROVINCE, CHINA

London, Apr 29 -- A gas explosion in a coal mine in western China trapped 29 miners, the government said today. The explosion occurred yesterday evening in Hancheng, a city in Shaanxi province, a major coal-mining area, citing local mine safety officials. There was no immediate word on whether there were any signs the trapped miners might be alive.

COAL MINE, KARAGANDA REGION, RUSSIA

London, May 5 -- A press report, dated today, states: Mountain rescuers have been fighting a fire at the depth of 650 m at the Karaganda Kostenko coalmine for more than a day. Thirty rescuers are involved in the firefighting efforts, chief of the press service of the Karaganda regional department for emergency situations Andrei Yermakov told Itar-Tass today. According to rescuers, a fire broke out without any blast at 0848, Moscow time, yesterday. 364 people were underground at the time. All of them were urgently raised to the surface. Doctors of the medical emergency service and an operational regional emergency team provided aid to them. A special committee is investigating the causes of the blaze.

FACTORY, COBOURG, ONTARIO, CANADA

London, Apr 29 -- A press report, dated today, states: A 12-year-old boy and a teen have been charged with arson in the massive Cobourg factory fire this week that caused an estimated ten million dollars. The boy and a 16-year-old male are charged with one count each of arson endangering life. Police say statements from employees at the Horizon Plastics plant led to the arrests. The two youths will appear for a bail hearing in a Cobourg court today.

FACTORY, LAVERTON NORTH, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA

London, May 4 -- A press report, dated today, states: A fire has broken out in a chemical factory south-west of Melbourne. Twelve fire trucks are at the scene on Pipe Road in Laverton North, where the fire began in an office of the factory about 2230, AEST. A Metropolitan Fire Brigade spokesman said so far no chemicals were involved but the situation was dangerous and crew were working to contain the blaze. He said the building was 30 by 70m. No injuries have been reported.

London, May 4 -- A press report, dated May 5, states: Fifteen people

were evacuated from a fire that caused A\$1 million worth of damage to a chemical factory south-west of Melbourne last night. The blaze at Nufarm Chemicals in Pipe Road Laverton North began at 2230, AEST, and 40 firefighters took just over an hour to control it. Crews were fearful that fire, which started in a laboratory and office area, would spread to chemicals used to make fertiliser. Later they established that only small amounts of chemicals were close by and bulk quantities were stored in a safe area. Metropolitan Fire Brigade investigators are due at the scene in the morning. It is not yet known what started the blaze. An MFB spokesman said no one was injured and the factory's emergency procedures were used to evacuate 15 employees. He said air monitoring equipment could find no contaminants in the area. Crews will remain at the factory overnight to keep watch on the building.

FACTORY, WOLVERHAMPTON, WEST MIDLANDS, UNITED KINGDOM

London, May 1 -- A press report, dated today, states: Arsonists are being blamed for causing a fire which destroyed a Wolverhampton factory yesterday night. About 80 firefighters attended the blaze at LJ Packaging on Foxes Lane. The fire is thought to be the latest in a series of arson attacks on industrial estates over the past few months.

FOREST, YANGYANG, SOUTH KOREA

London, Apr 29 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: More than 5,000 people were evacuated in Yangyang, Kangwon Province, today as a forest fire raged through the mountainous area along the East Coast. The fire, which broke out around 1525 hrs, spread fast with the wind and burned a dozen houses and 95 hectares of fields. Firefighters try to extinguish a forest fire scorching houses in Yangyang, Kangwon Province, today. The fire forced 5,000 residents to evacuate the area. Yonhap Local authorities said some 5,000 residents in 12 villages in Yangyang evacuated, while 3,800 firefighters tried to extinguish the fire with five helicopters. The fire-fighting authority suspected that tree branches were brought down by strong winds and cut a high-voltage electric wire, sparking flames.

GRAIN SILOS, VALLETTA, MALTA

Valletta, May 2 -- A local press report, dated Apr 30, states: A huge fire at the Kordin Grain Silos on Thursday night (Apr 28) caused extensive damage to equipment at the terminal and resulted in the temporary suspension of loading and unloading operations from vessels. Firemen battled the blaze for over four hours. No one was injured. The management said it was doing its best to ensure that the distribution of grain continued regularly. It was carrying

out an estimate of the damage caused by the fire, which was reported at about 2330 hrs. Members of the fire division of the Civil Protection Department, headed by Peter Cordina, rushed to the terminal where they managed to control the fire at about 1600 hrs, yesterday. The blaze engulfed the gantry crane and the vessel loader at the terminal, but, thanks to the firemen's quick action, it did not spread to offices or the grain storage area, the management said. Buildings belonging to Malta Shipyards, close by, were evacuated as a precaution. The management said there was no danger to the terminal area. The police are investigating the possible cause of the fire. An internal inquiry is also being conducted. The Kordin Grain Terminal board and management expressed appreciation at the "courage and efficiency" demonstrated by Civil Protection Department personnel during the fire fighting operation. Magistrate Miriam Hayman opened an inquiry and appointed a team of experts to draw up reports. Officers from the police criminal investigation department and the Paola district are investigating. -- Lloyd's Agents.

LIBRARY, VIRGINIA, MINNESOTA, UNITED STATES

London, Apr 29 -- A press report, dated today, states: The city of Virginia hopes to reopen most of the Virginia Public Library by early June. The library suffered significant smoke damage from a fire at a nearby department store on Apr 14. Officials told the city council Tuesday (Apr 26) night that the central and southern portions of the building will be open to the public in June. The northern section received the most smoke and heat damage. It will remain closed off until repairs are made. While some items are being replaced throughout the library, everything in the northern section was lost. Damage to the two-story, 19,000-square-foot library is estimated at about \$2 million, said John Tourville, city operations director, although appears that many of the library's 90,000 books may be salvageable. Estimates on mechanical and electrical damages aren't final, which could change total damages, Tourville said. damage, could remain closed until the end of the year, Tourville said. Because the north wall of the library stands about a foot away from the outdoor goods store, the library suffered extensive smoke and heat damage. A company that specializes in restoring smoke-damaged books is expected to arrive in Virginia today or tomorrow to begin cleaning the rest of the books. A salvage company arrives on Monday (May 2) to dispose of whatever library materials and equipment aren't salvageable.

NATURE RESERVE, NORTHLAND, NEW ZEALAND

London, May 2 -- A press report, dated today, states: More than 80 firefighters battled, over the weekend,

to contain another big blaze in a Department of Conservation reserve in the Far North. The latest outbreak, in the 260ha Lake Waikaramu conservation reserve, near the Rangaunu Harbour at Kaimaumau, 30km north of Kaitaia, began on adjacent private land late on Wednesday (Apr 27). It spread into scrub and bush on the DoC estate, and burned through 62ha during three days. The cause of the fire, which produced huge clouds of smoke, is not known. A total of 81 DoC, rural fire party, volunteer brigade and forest protection firefighters were still fighting the fire yesterday, after it went underground into peat soils. Crews used pumps to draw seawater to hot spots. Department spokeswoman Sylvia Jones said fire crews were inserting metal tube probes into the ground. Water is then forced down the tube, percolating through holes in the side and dampening underground hot areas. A major flare-up in scrub yesterday was contained without further damage to the reserve. An overnight watch was to be kept last night before relief fire crews arrive today. Some firefighters have been at the scene since late last week. The blaze is the second in a week in the area, and the fourth major outbreak on DoC land north of Kaitaia since late January. Lack of rain has caused tinder dry conditions. Early last week, a fire burned through about 100ha of DoC estate in the Puheke reserve, north-east of Kaimaumau on the Karikari Peninsula. All open fires are banned in the Far North. Some parts of the district have their driest conditions in 10 years.

PETROCHEMICAL PLANT, TEXAS CITY, TEXAS, UNITED STATES

Houston, Apr 28 -- As many as five explosions, including one directly under a trailer where workers were meeting, caused last month's disaster at BP's refinery in Texas City, Texas, that killed 15, investigators said today. "The debris pattern at the site is complex and is not indicative of a single vapor cloud explosion," John Bresland, board member of the U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board, said in a briefing. "We believe that there were a number of distinct explosions in rapid succession, possibly as many as five." One of the suspected blasts occurred inside the isomerisation unit, where an overflow and release of feedstock during restart is considered the root cause. Another blast is thought to have occurred under the trailer where several contractors from JE Merit, a division of Fluor Corp., were meeting. Vapours are thought to have gathered underneath the temporary building and ignited. "We are also examining whether this particular trailer had skirting around the base," Bresland said. "The lack of skirting would have allowed flammable vapors to travel under the trailer." The trailer was between 100 and 150 feet from the blowdown drum, where the hydrocarbon release occurred on Mar

23. Bresland added that it is not clear whether the trailer still would have been obliterated if an explosion had not occurred directly underneath. As for the cause, Bresland said the investigation continues to focus on the raffinate splitter column. According to records, the column spewed flammable vapour and liquid for six minutes because of some sort of failure that caused a pressurised buildup. "During this period, it is assumed that sufficient liquid and vapor were discharged to overwhelm the blowdown system and cause the geyser-like release and the subsequent explosion," Bresland said. Also, the CSB has found that a sewer drain, whose valve was locked open, took in flammable materials and released them nearby, resulting in a fire. That secondary fire is not connected to any fatalities, Bresland said. The agency also is looking into reports of past instances where flammable vapour clouds were vented from unflared blowdown drums at the refinery. -- Reuters.

PREMISES, CHUNGLI, TAIWAN

London, May 3 -- A press report, dated May 2, states: A fire broke out at a building within the Chungli facilities of Advanced Semiconductor Engineering Inc at approximately 1400 yesterday, the test and packaging company reported. The fire, which followed what the company suspected was a boiler explosion on the ground floor, was contained by firefighters within two hours, the company said. The facilities were not in operation at the time of the fire. Five ASE employees, one firefighter and two employees of outside contractors suffered minor injuries and received medical attention, the report added. ASE said it did not know the extent of the damage caused by the fire, but added that the fire appeared to have spread to the third floor of the eleven-floor building with higher floors also damaged by smoke. The lower floors of the building are used principally for the production of interconnect materials used in semiconductor packaging and the higher floors were used for packaging and testing of chips. "Depending on the extent of actual damage caused by the fire, ASE may use its semiconductor packaging and testing capacity at its other facilities, such as Kaohsiung in Taiwan, Malaysia, Korea and Japan, to meet the requirements of its customers who currently source from the Company's Chungli facilities," the company said in a statement. The affected building in Chungli houses no more than one-tenth of ASE's consolidated semiconductor packaging and testing capacity. Similarly, ASE plans to meet any shortfall in its production of interconnect materials resulting from the fire by increasing the production of its interconnect materials operations in Kaohsiung and Shanghai, as well as through increased purchases from other strategic materials suppliers.

London, May 3 -- A press report, dated today, states: Advanced Semiconductor Engineering Inc said yesterday that the fire which broke out on Sunday (May 1) at its factory in Chungli, Taoyuan County, caused damage amounting to at least NT\$4 billion (US\$130 million), according to initial estimates. This figure includes only part of the equipment, facilities and goods that were seriously damaged in the blaze, said Freddie Liu, a financial executive of ASE, the world's largest provider of chip-testing and packaging services. "We are still evaluating the damage in other parts of the plant," Liu said, adding that the company's insurance policy should cover most of the damage. Liu said that most of the company's customers supported an intermediate arrangement to provide chip-testing and packaging services at a plant in Kaohsiung. He said it was uncertain when the factory would be able to resume operations. The Chungli factory makes up about 10 percent of ASE's total capacity, the company said.

Taipei, May 4 -- ASE, the world's largest microchip packaging firm, put the damage from a weekend fire at less than T\$1 billion (US\$32 million) today. The figure represents less than two percent of the group's consolidated sales, ASE's chief financial officer, Joseph Tung. Advanced Semiconductor Engineering Inc. (ASE) said yesterday direct damage from the fire in the first four stories of the north Taiwan plant was US\$130 million, which was largely covered by insurance. The cause of the fire, which injured seven people due to cuts and smoke inhalation, is still under investigation. -- Reuters.

PREMISES, PUNJAB PROVINCE, PAKISTAN

Karachi, Apr 29 -- According to Lahore central fire brigades, a huge fire broke out in a privately owned chemical cum blending clothes-dyeing factory on Bund Road in Lahore city of Punjab province of Pakistan yesterday. As a result factory and most of the neighbourhood, including a mosque, a shoe factory and five new apartments wee burnt to ashes. The fire was started around 1500, Apr 28 when chemical drums being unloaded from a trailer ignited because of a spark caused by a hammer blow. The chemical drums in the factory's store exploded at intervals. A fire brigade official said that 14 fire engines and four Water and Sanitation Authority units were able to contain the blaze after four hours. Around seven hundred drums of chemical, worth millions of rupees, were reduced to ashes. Factory owner Khawaja Dawood put the loss at over Rs 0.1 billion. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

SCRUB AND WETLAND, NEW ZEALAND

London, May 4 -- A press report, dated today, states: Peat fires burning a metre below ground on Department of Conservation land in the Far North will take at least another week to be

extinguished. Firefighters pumped water underground yesterday at the Lake Waikaramu Conservation Area after containing fires above ground that destroyed 62ha of scrub and wetland. DoC spokesman Glen Coulston said the outbreak, 30km north of Kaitaia, was now at the mopping up stage, but could take more than a week to extinguish fully. Metal probes are being inserted into the ground to allow water to be forced underground. The cost of fighting the fire at Kaimaumau has already reached \$300,000 to \$400,000, according to Far North district principal rural fire officer Lance Johnston. This includes the \$90,000 cost of helicopters with monsoon buckets used when the fire first broke out on adjacent private land last Wednesday (Apr 27) and then spread, plus bulldozers to cut access tracks, more than 1000 litres of foam and up to 85 firefighters a day. The total cost is likely to be paid initially by the Far North District Council and DoC, and then claimed back from the national Rural Firefighting Fund. Lake Waikaramu is a wetland conservation area, containing rare native species such as black mudfish, green gecko and orchids and is the reason DoC is putting such huge effort into fighting the fires underground. Subsurface peat fires have sometimes been left to burn themselves out in the past, but there is now a greater awareness of conservation values, says DoC.

WAREHOUSE, LEBANON, MISSOURI, UNITED STATES

London, Apr 28 -- A press report, dated Apr 27, states: A fire destroyed a warehouse and more than a million dollars worth of merchandise early today. The owners of National TV Sales & Rental say they will rebuild and restock. Firefighters from 21 departments from as many as 50 miles away, including Rolla, battled the fire. The 22,000-square-foot warehouse had no sprinkler system. Firefighters hadn't determined a cause by midday today.

WAREHOUSES, DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Karachi, Apr 29 -- A huge fire gutted two privately owned warehouses in the Al Garhoud area of Dubai in United Arab Emirates close the city's international airport. Materials used by industrial printers were destroyed during the blaze, which started at about 1415 yesterday. Al Karama and Al Rashidiya Civil Defence crews rushed to the scene and by 1600 had extinguished the flames. Colonel Rashid Al Matroushi, Director of Dubai Civil Defence, told local media that he was unsure of the cause of the blaze. However, he said the department would conduct a full investigation and would announce the results within 15 days. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

WILDFIRES, AUSTRALIA

London, Apr 28 -- A press report, dated today, states: A hundred South

Australian firefighters from the mainland are being sent to Kangaroo Island to help control a large grassfire burning in a sparsely populated area. A phase three warning has been issued for the Timber Creek and Birchmoor road areas near Murrays Lagoon and motorists are being advised to stay off local roads. More than 80 firefighters are currently at the scene and water bombers have been diverted from the Lower Eyre Peninsula where they were used to fight a fire at Wangary this morning. Country Fire Service spokesman Brenton Ragliss says the Kangaroo Island area is sparsely populated, but any residents in the area should be prepared. "It's mainly inaccessible scrub the fire's burning through and that'll mean a lot of effort for our ground crew," he said. "So CFS crews very busy throughout the afternoon and this phase three bushfire warning is essentially letting residents know that they should not be venturing outdoors, that there is a bushfire burning in their area." The weather bureau says relief rain is expected at Kangaroo Island this evening. Improved weather conditions earlier in the day helped the CFS to bring the Wangary fire under control. Regional Commander Neil Ellis says the fire is within containment lines.

WILDFIRES, UNITED STATES

London, May 3 -- A press report, dated May 2, states: A fire north of Homer, Alaska, tripled in size yesterday afternoon, spreading across slopes of dry grass and dead spruce as hoped-for clouds and rain failed to appear. In addition, the state's only tanker aircraft was diverted with its load of retardant to three new fires south of Fairbanks. Firefighters concentrated their efforts in Homer on the southwest corner of the fire, preventing a spread south toward homes on Skyline Drive. However, as helicopters and crews from Fairbanks, Nondalton and Nikolai worked the south edge with a burn-out operation, flames moved north-west toward the unpopulated upper valley of the Anchor River. The Homer fire was touched off on Friday afternoon (Apr 29) by a fallen power line near Greer Road, eight miles north-east of town. It reached 300 acres by Friday night, 1,000 acres by Saturday night, and by last night was expected to reach 4,000 acres. State firefighter Terry Anderson said beetle-killed spruce lying on the ground was making the fire especially hot. More sunny, breezy weather was forecast for today in Homer, fire information officer Kris Eriksen said. Some precipitation might reach the area tomorrow, she said. No structures have been reported lost in the Homer area and no evacuations ordered, fire officials said. The single tanker aircraft that started duty for the state yesterday in Palmer was ordered for Homer but sent instead to a new fire along the Alaska Railroad right of way near Nenana, state fire officer John See said. Before the aircraft reached Nenana, it was diverted to a fire of about 150 acres in the New Hope subdivision north-east of

Delta Junction, he said. The New Hope fire threatened about 20 homes, he said. Then a 15-acre fire of even more concern broke out in the Tenderfoot Subdivision south of Eielson, and that was where the tanker ended up dumping its load, See said. The aircraft then headed back to Palmer yesterday afternoon for another load and new orders. A second tanker aircraft will not be in service for another week, he said. He said the state puts priority on fires that threaten homes and on making an initial attack while the fire is still small. No damage to homes was reported from any of the northern fires yesterday, See said. The number of fires Alaska is experiencing for this time of year is still about average, See said. What is different, he said, is that some of these fires are already big, whereas typical fires this time of year are less than an acre. Crews were successful in keeping the fire turned away from Skyline Drive and the nearby Eagle Aerie subdivision yesterday, Eriksen said. An 8-mph south-easterly breeze yesterday afternoon picked up the fire's pace, she said. Firefighters were trying to build a line on the west side of the fire and herd it north, said state incident commander Tom Kurth. He said the bigger, long-term concern was the fire continuing north-west, crossing the Anchor River and approaching the North Fork Road in Anchor Point and the village of Nikolaevsk. He said limited resources available this early in the season were hampering the state's efforts.

London, May 3 -- A press report, dated today, states: Alaska's fire season has already heated up, with crews scrambling to battle numerous blazes, including a fire from last year's record season that smoldered all winter. Fire managers said the outbreaks in Homer, Interior Alaska and Hoonah hit even before completion of some crews' annual training and safety refresher courses, held at the beginning of each season. "Mother Nature is throwing us a curve this year," said John See, a spokesman for the state Division of Forestry. "We're getting more challenging fires like what we usually would be seeing in a few weeks." About 80 firefighters were tackling a 3,270-acre wildfire in Homer on the Kenai Peninsula, and fire managers requested more help. The fire was reported Friday afternoon (Apr 29), and it quickly doubled in size. But half of the crews didn't arrive until a full day later. "This is the time of year a lot of crews are finishing up their training and safety refreshers, so it's hard to put together all the resources," said Kris Eriksen, a forestry-division spokeswoman. "It takes longer than it would if we were completely ready." Available crews concentrated on the southern end about two miles from a residential subdivision, even though the western perimeter was more active. That area is of less concern because there's no populated area in close proximity, Eriksen said. As of Sunday, only one of two air tankers chartered from Canada

had arrived. The other won't be delivered until May 10, said Marsha Henderson, a state forestry division spokeswoman. The tanker was immediately in demand, with three new large fires reported. The aircraft, which drops flame retardant, was heading to Homer when it was diverted to a 40-acre fire in Nenana. Before arriving there, the aircraft was diverted to a 150-acre fire near Delta Junction, then to a 15-acre blaze threatening homes, See said. In Southeast Alaska, crews were mopping up the remains of a 400-acre wildfire that came within 250 yards of a Christian farming community about three miles south of Hoonah.



AIRCRAFT STRUCK BY LIGHTNING ON INTERNAL FLIGHT, JAPAN

London, May 1 -- A press report, dated today, states: A Japan Airlines plane was hit by lightning on its way to Miyazaki from Fukuoka this morning, JAL said. The plane landed safely at Miyazaki Airport, with its 32 passengers and crew members uninjured, but a section of reinforced plastic came off its right main wing, according to JAL. The plane was scheduled to return to Fukuoka, but JAL decided to cancel the flight to examine it, it said.

C-GVCP

London, May 4 -- Piper PA-31 Chieftain, C-GVCP, operated by Nav Air Charter, reported an inflight engine fire while on final, and crashed just prior to the threshold of runway 30 at Comox, at 0800, PDT, Apr 22. Two persons killed.

CRASH INTO SEA OFF HONDURAS

London, May 2 -- a press report, dated May 1, states: A small airplane, carrying Honduran President Ricardo Maduro, went down in the Caribbean Sea near the shore, today, after its engine failed, and Maduro was taken to a hospital with minor injuries, the president's spokesman said. The airplane had a mechanical problem and fell into the sea, just beyond the end of the runway at Tela, a city on the Caribbean coast, said presidential spokesman Jorge Barrios. It is believed that the airplane's engine stopped, when it was making its approach for landing. Maduro, his daughter, Lorena, and the airplane's pilot were all unharmed, after they were plucked from the water by local residents. The president is recovering at a hospital in Comayagua. Maduro was on his way to a meeting in Tela, with Mayor Daniel Flores, about a government development project. Barrios said Maduro would hold a news conference when he returned to the capital.

**CRASH, COMOX,
BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA**

See C-GVCP.

**CRASH, HAMMERFEST AIRPORT,
NORWAY**

London, May 3 -- A press report, dated May 1, states: Most of the 27 passengers and the crew of three escaped unhurt when a Wideroe airliner crashed at Hammerfest Airport Sunday afternoon (May 1). The captain was about to abort a landing due to high winds when a sudden squall brought the aircraft to the ground. The landing gear on the right side collapsed, the wing and one propeller hit the runway, bringing the aircraft to a grinding halt, partly outside the runway. All were evacuated safely, and were sent to hospital for a check-up. Three passengers received minor back injuries. Hammerfest Airport will remain closed until Monday noon, and the traffic is re-routed via Alta Airport.

London, May 4 -- A press report, dated May 3, states: Wideroe Airlines has introduced stricter limits for landing and take-off in strong wind at Hammerfest Airport, following Sunday's (May 1) dramatic crash, in which two passengers were slightly injured. This means that passengers will be facing more delays and cancelled flights in future, Wideroe admits. We are doing this to reduce the risk for future incidents. It will affect regularity when we introduce even stricter limits for wind conditions, but a responsible airline must put safety ahead of regularity and other commercial considerations, says flight chief Bjoern Saelensminde. Wideroe will also invest in a new wind warning system which will be tested out at Hammerfest. Both the airline and the Air Investigation Board are now investigating Sunday's accident. The captain was about to abort a landing due to high winds when a sudden squall brought the aircraft to the ground. The landing gear on the right side collapsed, the wing and one propeller hit the runway, bringing the aircraft to a grinding halt, partly outside the runway.

**CRASH, LUBUTU AREA,
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF
CONGO**

London, May 5 -- A press report, dated today, states: Eleven people were killed and one survived when an Antonov 26 aircraft crashed while preparing to land in the north-east of the Democratic Republic of Congo, UN-sponsored radio reported tonight. Twelve people were aboard the aircraft, including six crew members, when the aircraft crashed yesterday near Lubutu, some 130km from Kisangani, Okapi radio said. There was only one survivor, it said. The aircraft had been chartered by the private company Kisangani Airlines.

**CRASH, LUBUTU AREA,
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
OF CONGO**

London, May 5 -- A press report, dated today, states: Eleven people were killed and only one survived when an Antonov 26 plane crashed while preparing to land in the northeast Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) city of Kisangani, Okapi, a United Nations-sponsored radio station reported today. Twelve people were aboard the aircraft, including six crew members, when the plane crashed on Wednesday near Lubutu, some 130 kilometres from the DRC's third largest city Kisangani, said Okapi. The plane had been chartered by the private company, Kisangani Airlines List. A KAL official said the plane had taken off from Kisangani's Bangboka airport early yesterday afternoon, heading for Isiro. It could not land in Isiro for unknown reasons and headed back towards Kisangani. The plane "hit a tree" before crashing, the KAL official said. Kisangani lies in a bend of the River Congo in a densely forested region. DRC aviation authorities said they were aware of the accident, but were unable to give further details.

**CRASH, MELBOURNE AREA,
AUSTRALIA**

See VH-UPS.

**CRASH, NAISH HILL, SOMERSET,
UNITED KINGDOM**

London, May 1 -- A press report, dated Apr 30, states: A man has died after the light aircraft he was flying crashed into a field in North Somerset. The man had just taken off from a small landing strip on a nearby farm when he apparently got into difficulties. His plane was seen to struggle before hitting powerlines and coming down at Naish Hill near Clapton-in-Gordano. The pilot, who has not been named but was in his 70s, was pronounced dead at the scene. Emergency services were called to the field at 1245, BST. Some buildings nearby lost power for a time because of the damage to the electricity lines. The crash site will be examined by officials from the Air Accidents Investigation Branch.

**CRASH, SHIZUOKA PREFECTURE,
JAPAN**

London, May 3 -- A press report, dated today, states: A police helicopter inspecting traffic conditions brushed the roof of an apartment block in Shizuoka prefecture today, crashed to the ground and caught fire, killing the pilot and four other officers on board, law enforcers said. The helicopter called Sky Fuji No 1 left a police air base in Oigawa, Shizuoka Prefecture, at about 1440 hrs, and pilot Teruo Morimkuni radioed that he was flying over central Shizuoka prefecture about 45 minutes later. At about 1610 hrs, the helicopter said that it was some 1,500 metres above Shizuoka's Numazu and had no problems. The pilot reportedly told the base that the helicopter would soon land in

Shizuoka's Shimizu-ku, only about five minutes before the aircraft brushed the roof of an apartment block in Shimizu and crashed at about 1630 hrs. The crash site is a residential area some 500 metres from JR Kusanagi Station. Morikuni and four other senior officers were on board the helicopter. No local residents were injured in the accident.

London, May 4 -- A press report, dated today, states: A Shizuoka Prefectural Police helicopter crashed in a residential area after clipping the roof of an apartment Tuesday (May 3), killing all five people on board, police and firefighters said. The roof of an apartment building shows the impact from a Shizuoka Prefectural Police helicopter that crashed Tuesday in the city of Shizuoka. The aircraft broke into pieces and went up in flames at around 1630, local time, right next to an apartment building in Shizuoka's Shimizu Ward, police said. The tail section fell into a nearby river. The fire was put out about half an hour later. The victims were identified as Shinichi Saito, chief of the Shizuoka police force's traffic control section; Teruo Morikuni, the pilot; and three others in Saito's section, Teruyuki Kobayashi, Shinji Masuda, and Minoru Suzuki. Nobody on the ground was injured, but the helicopter grazed the roof of an apartment building and hit the front of a car in the building's parking lot, according to police. Nine people in four households live in the apartment building. The helicopter had been monitoring an expressway jammed with Golden Week traffic. The crash occurred in a residential area about 500 metres south-east of JR Kusanagi Station where a nearby junior high school sits. The cause of the crash was not immediately known. A resident said the rotor had almost stopped moving as the helicopter fell with its left side facing downward. According to witness accounts, the helicopter erupted into flames about five minutes after impact, and the bodies of some of the crew could be seen in the river. (See issue of May 4.)

**EMERGENCY LANDING, IRKUTSK,
RUSSIA**

London, May 4 -- A press report, dated May 3, states: A Tupolev-154 passenger aircraft has made an emergency landing in Irkutsk after a collision with a bird in airspace over the city. Nobody was hurt, the airport's authorities have said. The aircraft, en route from Yekaterinburg to Khabarovsk via Irkutsk, had 74 passengers and eight crew on board. The collision occurred as the aircraft was about to land. The cockpit and fuselage were damaged. The aircraft landed safely, but departure had to be postponed for more than eight hours. Transit passengers were provided accommodation at the airport's hotel.

**EMERGENCY LANDING,
LISBON AIRPORT, PORTUGAL**

London, Apr 29 -- A press report, dated yesterday states: A Continental Airlines aircraft carrying 168

passengers to New York made an emergency landing at Lisbon airport today after the pilot detected a problem with the aircraft's hydraulic system, officials said. No injuries were reported, airport spokesman Rui Oliveira said. The Boeing 757 aircraft returned to Lisbon airport shortly after taking off at 0942, GMT, Oliveira said. The pilot asked the airport authorities to enact emergency procedures but the aircraft landed safely, Oliveira said. Officials gave no further details, but Portuguese television channel S.I.C. said technicians worked on the aircraft's brakes after it landed.

EMERGENCY LANDING, NORFOLK INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, VIRGINIA, UNITED STATES

London, May 2 -- A press report, dated May 1, states: A Continental Airlines jet made an emergency landing at Norfolk International Airport on Saturday (Apr 30). The Boeing 757 with 105 people aboard landed safely at mid-afternoon. Airport officials said the flight, en route from Cleveland to Tampa, was diverted to Norfolk after the pilot reported smoke in the cabin. Scores of firefighters from the airport's fire department and the Norfolk fire department were in position around the airport and along the runway as the jet came in. The jet taxied unaided to a regular airport concourse where firefighters went aboard and the passengers were taken off. The smoke cleared quickly. Its source was unclear Saturday. There was no sign of a fire or electrical problem. The only "hot spots" that were found were said to be typical for such an aircraft in normal operation. Firefighters released the jet to mechanics who began their own search for the problem. In the meantime, Continental staff worked to book the passengers onto regular flights out of Norfolk to their destinations.

INCIDENT AT HANEDA AIRPORT, JAPAN

London, May 2 -- A press report, dated Apr 30, states: A Japan Airlines aircraft carrying 51 passengers landed on a runway that had been closed for repairs at Haneda Airport on Friday (Apr 29) because air traffic controllers forgot about the closure. JAL Flight 1158 from Obihiro, Hokkaido, landed at 2140. Two minutes later, another JAL aircraft from Sapporo was preparing to land on the same runway, but was redirected when air traffic controllers realized the runway was closed. There were no injuries as there were no work vehicles on the runway at the time. According to Haneda Airport, all 18 air traffic controllers on duty had forgotten about the closure, and three who were in charge of the closed runway gave landing clearance by mistake. Although captains of the two aircraft queried the instructions a total of four times, two controllers overseeing the landings said the instructions were correct. The error

could have resulted in a serious accident if repair work had been under way at the time. The Construction and Transport Ministry's Aircraft and Railway Accidents Investigation Commission dispatched three investigators because the incident could be categorized as a serious incident that could jeopardize air safety under the Civil Aeronautic Law. The ministry also will remove the 18 air traffic controllers from duty and require them to undergo further training. Haneda Airport has three runways--A, B and C. According to the airport, runway A has been closed on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 2130 until 0700 since April 6 for repair work to runway marker lights. Aircraft that would usually depart from or land on runway A during those hours have been redirected to runway C, which runs parallel to A. But on Friday night, the team in the control tower failed to confirm aviation information as required by law and all the controllers forgot about the runway closure. As a result, landing clearance was given to JAL Flight 1158 and JAL Flight 1036 to land on runway A after it had closed. There were no work vehicles on the runway when JAL Flight 1158 landed because the work was scheduled to start at 2300. Air traffic control had also given landing clearance to Flight 1036. But the next air traffic control team, due to take over at 2200, noticed the error and told the controllers on duty to redirect the flight to runway C. The aircraft circled the airport until it landed on runway C. All airlines, including JAL, were informed of the temporary runway closure. But under the aeronautic law, pilots must follow directions given by air traffic control. Because the JAL captains had confirmed that runway A would be closed from 2130, they sought reconfirmation of the landing instructions four times, but air traffic control gave incorrect advice each time. The pilot of Flight 1036 told air traffic control that he would recommence the landing based on his own judgment that an accident might occur. The controllers approved his decision.

MID-AIR EXPLOSION ON INTERNAL FLIGHT, NEW ZEALAND

London, May 3 -- A press report, dated today, states: A cargo aircraft with two pilots aboard exploded in mid-air over New Zealand's North Island on Tuesday (May 3) night, according to news reports. The plane disappeared over the town of Stratford, 350km north-west of Wellington, and emergency services were flooded with calls reporting a mid-air explosion and fireball, Radio New Zealand reported. As police mounted a search for the wreckage they appealed to people to stay indoors to leave roads free for emergency vehicles. The plane was reported to be carrying mail for the New Zealand Post service between Auckland and

Wellington.

London, May 3 -- A press report, dated May 4, states: A New Zealand Post mail plane exploded over south Taranaki last night in a fireball, killing two crew members. Farmers heard a huge bang then felt the ground shudder and smelled aviation fuel as the Metroliner aircraft en route from Auckland to Blenheim went down. Emergency crews worked in heavy rain and wind to try to locate the courier aircraft in hill country 7km east of Stratford. The New Plymouth fire service found the fuselage about 2330. Residents said some of the falling wreckage had hit a farmhouse. Callers flooded 111 lines shortly after 2220 after hearing an explosion at the time as the Maritime Safety Authority reported an aircraft had disappeared off the Christchurch air traffic control radar. NZ Post confirmed that the aircraft was one of its eight AirPost aircraft specially equipped to carry mail around the country. Spokesman Ian Long said it was carrying a pilot and co-pilot but no other passengers. NZ Post would today begin investigating how the tragedy occurred and whether any of the mail was recoverable. NZ Post expressed its condolences to the families of the crew. After the crash police had appealed for residents to stay home to speed up the rescue efforts as farmers flooded into lanes and roads to look for the wreckage, which was spread over a considerable area.

London, May 4 -- A press report, dated today, states: A mail aircraft has crashed in New Zealand, killing two crew members and scattering debris across several hectares of farmland. Investigators are now at the scene of the crash. Witness Jeff Hunger said the aircraft was on fire, before it came down last night. "It was just an almighty burst of light and then it just sort of dropped out of the sky, sort of like teardrops falling out of the sky really," Mr Hunger said. Police said hundreds of parcels were scattered on the ground after the aircraft came down. Aviation authorities and police have begun investigating the cause of the crash.

London, May 4 -- A press report, dated May 3, states: A mail freight aircraft crashed in a fireball over northern New Zealand, killing the two pilots, police said today. The Metroliner aircraft operated by Airpost crashed near the rural town of Stratford late last night after it disappeared from radar on a flight from the northern city of Auckland to Blenheim on South Island, the National Search and Rescue Co-ordination Centre said. Witnesses outside Stratford reported a loud explosion and fireball, and a search helicopter found wreckage of the courier aircraft shortly before midnight, spokesman Steve Corbett said. Ground searchers found the bodies of the two pilots in the wreckage, police said. Police Inspector Tom Ireland said wreckage was scattered over three kilometres. "The aircraft came down from 20,000 ft so

the impact has been quite substantial," he told National Radio. Crash investigators would find out if the aircraft exploded in mid air.

N106PM

London, May 4 -- Cessna T210N (Centurion II) N106PM crashed near Kalispell, Montana, at 2141, May 3, while on a flight from Kalispell to Casper, Wyoming. The aircraft was destroyed. The two persons on board were killed.

London, May 5 -- A press report, dated today, states: A small aircraft (Cessna T210N, N106PM) en route to Casper, Wyoming, and then Dallas crashed and burned in the mountains east of Kalispell, Montana. Authorities say yesterday's accident killed the husband and wife who were on board. Officials didn't immediately identify the victims, but the aircraft was registered to a Whitefish, Montana, company called Papa Mike Aviation L-L-C. The aircraft disappeared from radar shortly after taking off from Kalispell.

N3691T

London, May 1 -- A press report, dated Apr 30, states: A small airplane crashed into the marsh near Chena Marina today, killing the pilot and injuring a female passenger. The pilot, a man, was pronounced dead at the scene. The passenger was taken to Fairbanks Memorial Hospital, said Assistant Chief Al Sparks of the Chena Goldstream Volunteer Fire Department. The Taylorcraft's yellow fuselage could be seen in heavy brush. Rescuers waded in water up to their waists around the crash site, a large swampy field at the foot of Chena Hills. The National Transportation Safety Board was called to investigate the cause of the crash, said Alaska State Troopers Sgt. David Drvenkar. The airplane may have crashed after takeoff, he said. "We have indications that it was (taking off) but that's still being investigated," Drvenkar said. Three investigators arrived at the scene soon after the crash.

London, May 3 -- Taylorcraft Model F-19 (Sportsman 100), N3691T, crashed on take-off from Chena Marina Airport, Alaska, at 0115, May 1, while on a flight to Fairbanks, AK. The one person on board was killed.

N3895D

London, May 3 -- Bell 206L-1, N3895D, operated by Monarch Enterprises Inc., struck the tail rotor and main rotor during descent to the bottom of the Grand Canyon at 1645, local time, May 2. The pilot was long lining with sling loads to the bottom. The aircraft descended vertically into the trees causing substantial damage.

N8314L

London, Apr 29 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Two people died today when their small aircraft crashed in a pasture near the West Texas town of Midkiff, authorities said. Federal Aviation Administration spokesman Roland Herwig said the

Cessna 172 (N8314L) was operated by American Patrols Inc. of Midland. The company had no immediate comment. Midland Fire Department Battalion Chief Russ Conley confirmed both people on board died.

London, May 2 -- Cessna 172-I (Skyhawk), N8314L, operated by American Patrols Inc, while on a pipeline patrol operation, with two persons on board, crashed, at 1807, UTC, Apr 28, south-east of Midland, Texas. The aircraft was destroyed and both persons on board died.

VH-UPS

London, May 5 -- Cessna A150L, VH-UPS, operator Royal Victorian Aero Club, Moorabbin Aerodrome, Victoria, crashed while recovering from an aerobatic flight manoeuvre at Healesville, Victoria, at 0030, UTC, Apr 24. The pilot was killed and the aircraft was destroyed.

Space Vehicles



DELAY OF LAUNCH OF SHUTTLE, CAPE CANAVERAL, FLORIDA, UNITED STATES -- SPACE

Melbourne, Fla, Apr 28 -- NASA plans to delay the launch of space shuttle Discovery, the first shuttle set to fly since the 2003 Columbia accident, from May until July, an official familiar with NASA's timetable said today. The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the decision was made by NASA's new administrator, Michael Griffin, and would be formally announced tomorrow. The U.S. space agency today temporarily halted preparations for Discovery's launch while managers debated nagging concerns that debris could damage the spacecraft during liftoff. Shuttle program managers met at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida to talk about the likelihood of ice formations on the shuttle's fuel tank and the possible effects if they broke off during the ship's climb and hit the orbiter. A piece of insulating foam from the tank hit the shuttle Columbia during its launch in January 2003, damaging the orbiter's wing, which broke apart as the shuttle attempted to return through the atmosphere for landing. Seven astronauts died. NASA grounded its remaining three shuttles for extensive refurbishments, particularly to the massive external fuel tank, which holds the fuel consumed during the shuttle's 8-1/2-minute climb into orbit. In addition to revamping how the tank's insulating foam is applied, as well as replacing some areas of suspect foam, NASA engineers have been analyzing the threat of ice formations and the possibility that they could break off, as the foam on Columbia's tank did, and damage the ship. NASA has targeted May 22 as a

launch date for the first shuttle's return to flight. The next possible launch window is from July 13 to 31. Because of new safety rules implemented after the Columbia accident, NASA has only limited opportunities to launch Discovery. The new rules, for example, restrict the U.S. space agency from launching at night. In addition, the release of the external fuel tank as the shuttle reaches orbit must take place when there is enough light for clear photography. -- Reuters.

Product Recalls



FOLDING CHAIRS, UNITED STATES

London, Apr 29 -- A press report, dated Apr 28, states: A Florida company is recalling about 1.5 million children's folding chairs that can suddenly collapse and have caused fingertip amputations of four youngsters. Seven other children suffered finger lacerations, according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, which planned to announce tomorrow the recall by Atico International USA Inc. of Fort Lauderdale. Defective safety locks can cause the chairs, made in China, to unexpectedly collapse or fold, trapping a child's fingers in the hinges. With metal tubing and padded seats, the chairs are red, blue, yellow and green and stand about 22 inches high. A label beneath some chairs bears the company name. Hardware, discount department, toy, grocery and drug stores nationwide sold the chairs from September 2002 through until April of this year, for about \$10 each or \$30 for a set of four with a table.

GAS FIREPLACES, UNITED STATES

London, Apr 28 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in cooperation with Heat & Glo announced a voluntary recall of about 7,800 Heat-N-Glo Gem 36 and Gem 42 gas fireplaces. The recall is due to gas in the fireplace can accumulate prior to burner ignition. When ignition takes place, it can cause the glass window to shatter and create a risk of burns or lacerations from broken glass. Heat & Glo has received 21 reports of shattered glass, including four minor injuries. Dealers and distributors of Hearth products nationwide sold the fireplace from July 2002 through April 2005 for between \$2,380 and \$2,700.

HONDA MOTOR VEHICLES, CHINA

London, Apr 27 -- Guangzhou Honda Automobile Co will recall 7,469 of its Fit model sedans in China for possible brake problems, China's General Administration of Quality

Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine said on its website yesterday. The recall of the 1.3 litre and 1.5 litre engine models is due to possible faulty connections inside the brake boosters, which could require drivers to apply extra pressure on their brakes in order to stop the vehicle. The recall begins today and ends on Jul 25. Guangzhou Honda, Honda Motor Corp's joint venture with Guangzhou Automobile Group in southern China, will inspect and fix the connections without charge. The recall involves Fit sedans produced between Nov 7 and Dec 19, 2004.

HYUNDAI MOTOR VEHICLES, NEW ZEALAND

London, Apr 27 -- A press report, dated today, states: Hyundai New Zealand is recalling 179 Hyundai Grandeurs - 3-litre and 3.5-litre

models - made between 1999 and 2004. Hyundai sales and marketing manager Howard Spencer said the models might have a misaligned brake tube, but the chances of brake failure were minor. "We've had no problems with cars in New Zealand. We were notified of the issue from our service department in Korea." Mr Spencer said Hyundai would be sending out letters to car owners today to organise repairs free of charge.

La Spezia: No vessels awaiting berths. Savona: No vessels awaiting normal berth. No vessels awaiting special berth. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Genoa, May 2 -- Port situation May 2: Genoa and Savona: No vessels awaiting berths. La Spezia: Four vessels awaiting normal berths, average delay one day. -- Lloyd's Agents.



ITALY

Genoa, Apr 27 -- Port situation Apr 27: Genoa: No vessels awaiting berth.

Port Delays

Country/Port	Date of report	No.of vessels waiting and/or days delay
Australia		
Abbott Point	03-May-2005	Coal: One vessel at berth, 1 at anchor; 13 vessels due by 30/5; up to 1 day's delay expected.
Brisbane	03-May-2005	Coal: Fisherman Island coal berth; Five vessels due by 20/5; up to 2 days delay expected.
Dalrymple Bay	03-May-2005	Coal: Three vessels at berth, 31 at anchor; 44 vessels due by 30/6; 20- 30 days delay expected. Vessels are berthing in order of cargo availability. Shippers have a certain entitlement of coal shipped through the terminal. If they exceed their entitlement, additional vessels are moved further down the list, with a resulting additional delay in berthing.
Dampier	03-May-2005	Iron ore: Shippers are experiencing some grade/stockpile problems. Some vessels will berth out of turn and the berthing lineup may change at short notice. Parker Point: One vessel loading at berth, 5 at anchor; 8 vessels due by 17/5; up to 7 days delay expected; East Intercourse Island; One vessel loading at berth, 4 at anchor; 10 vessels due by 15/5; up to 6 days delay expected; a shift to lay-by on completion of loading always possible.
Gladstone	03-May-2005	Coal: R.G. Tanna coal terminal: Two vessels at berth, 4 at anchor; 32 vessels due by 29/5; up to 6 days delay expected; Barney Point: 1 vessel in berth; 8 vessels due by 20/6; no delays expected. CQPA have proposed a shutdown of Barney Point shiploading activities commencing 06:00 16/5 and completion 06:00 26/5 for section replacement of wharf deck.
Hay Point	03-May-2005	Coal: One vessel at berth, 8 at anchor; 6 vessels due by 8/5; up to 10 days delay expected.
Newcastle	03-May-2005	Coal: Kooragang 4, 5 and 6: Three vessels at berth, 4 at anchor; 29 vessels due by 16/5; Dykes 4+5: 1 vessel at berth, 2 at anchor; 16 vessels due by 16/5; Kooragang and Dyke terminals: 1-4 days delay expected.
Port Hedland	03-May-2005	Iron ore: BHP Iron Ore Pty. Ltd., Mt. Newman (Nelson Point), "A" berth: One vessel loading at berth, 7 vessels due by 8/5; 1-4 days delay expected; "B" berth: 1 vessel loading at berth, 1 at anchor; 7 vessels due by 10/5; up to 2 days delay expected; BHP Iron Ore Pty. Ltd., Goldsworthy (Finucane Island "C" berth): 1 vessel due 7/5; no delays expected; "D" berth: 1 vessel loading at berth, 1 at anchor; 5 vessels due by 12/5; 1-3 days delay expected.
Port Kembla	03-May-2005	Coal: Three vessels at anchor; 11 vessels due by 30/5; CB1: no vessels; up to 2 days delay expected.
Port Walcott	03-May-2005	Iron ore: Two vessels loading at berth, 2 at anchor; 17 vessels due by 19/5; up to 4 days delay expected; cargo grade shortages and stockpile may result in vessels berthing out of turn; shippers request that load plans be submitted as early as possible (8 days) so they can co-ordinate stockpiles more effectively; shippers advise that stores, air freight and baggage can no longer be delivered to the vessel or taken off at berth, but must be delivered/removed by launch.
Brazil		
Paranagua	03-May-2005	Twelve vessels berthed of which 2 fertiliser dischargers, 2 pellets loaders, 2 containers, 1 sugar loader, 1 reefer loader, 4 other loaders; 14 vessels waiting in roads, of which 12 to load (2 sugar, 4 pellets, 1 reefer, 5 other vessels), 2 container vessels to discharge; 46 vessels due over the next 7 days.
Rio Grande	03-May-2005	Two vessels berthed of which 1 soya meal loader, 1 lumber loader; 3 vessels waiting in roads; 48 vessels due over the next 10 days.

A complete online archive covering the last 10 years of Lloyd's Casualty Week. For further information please call +44 (0) 20 7017 4779.

Port Conditions

Santos	03-May-2005	Sixteen vessels berthed of which 1 fertiliser discharger, 2 sugar loaders, 1 full container loader/discharger, 2 wheat dischargers, 1 bulk soya loader, 1 bulk sulphur discharger, 1 other discharger, 7 other loaders/dischargers; 14 vessels waiting in roads; 27 vessels due over the next 7 days;
Sao Sebastiao	03-May-2005	Six vessels berthed, 6 waiting in roads; 5 vessels due over the next 10 days.
Vitoria	03-May-2005	One sugar loader berthed; Terminal Vila Velha: 2 full container loaders/dischargers; Tubarao: 1 pig-iron loader, 1 iron ore loader, 1 other loader; Praia Mole: 2 steel products loaders, 2 coal dischargers, 1 granite loader; Portocel: 1 cellulose loader; Ubu: no vessels; 24 vessels waiting in roads; 24 vessels due.
Bulgaria		
Bourgas	03-May-2005	Fourteen vessels in port of which 11 loading (1 empty, 1 bulk ammonium nitrate, 1 profiles, 1 cigarettes, 1 metal, 3 coils, 1 barite concentrate, 1 scrap, 1 container), 3 discharging (1 billets, 1 kaolin, 1 container); 4 vessels in roads of which 3 to load (1 empty, 1 steel sheets, 1 coils), 1 to discharge coal; 7 vessels due of which 5 to load (1 equipment, 1 container, 2 coils, 1 ammonium sulphate), 2 to discharge (1 container, 1 iron ore).
Varna	03-May-2005	Varna East, Varna West, Balchik: Thirty-one vessels in port operating of which 21 loading (5 sunflower seeds, 2 scrap, 2 bulk wheat, 5 soda, 1 silica sand/chamote, 1 equipment, 1 kaolin, 1 fertiliser, 2 silica sand, 1 hydrochloric acid, 1 bulk cement), discharging (6 bulk coal, 1 copper concentrate, 2 phosphate), 3 discharging/loading containers.
Chile		
Antofagasta	02-May-2005	Three vessels berthed, 4 berths vacant; 11 vessels due this week to load/discharge concentrates, bulk copper, containers and general cargo.
Valparaiso	02-May-2005	Two vessels berthed, 6 berths vacant; 3 vessels anchored; 12 vessels due this week.
Egypt		
Alexandria	02-May-2005	Thirty-two vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 28 general cargo, 2 bulk carriers, 1 containers, 1 passenger vessel; 12 vessels dry-docked; 15 vessels at inner anchorage, 5 at outer anchorage.
Damietta	02-May-2005	Fifteen vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 8 general cargo, 3 bulk carriers, 1 tanker, 3 containers; 6 vessels at outer anchorage.
Suez Canal	02-May-2005	Twenty-six vessels transiting Northbound, 28 Southbound.
Israel		
Ashdod	03-May-2005	No labour problems. Three general cargo vessels loading at berth, 10 vessels discharging at berth (8 general cargo, 2 bulkers), 3 container vessels loading/discharging at berth; 1 general cargo vessel waiting at anchorage to discharge, 2 vessels waiting at anchorage to load/discharge (1 containers, 1 tanker); 1 vessel awaiting orders; 24 vessels due, with 2-3 days delay expected.
Haifa	03-May-2005	No labour problems. Five vessels discharging at berth (1 general cargo, 4 bulkers), 9 vessels loading/discharging at berth (4 containers, 4 tankers, 1 passenger vessel); 1 general cargo vessel waiting at anchorage to discharge, 4 tankers waiting at anchorage to load/discharge; 2 vessels under repairs/dry-docked, 1 awaiting orders; 12 vessels due, with 2-3 days delay expected.
Pakistan		
Karachi	02-May-2005	Four vessels loading at berth (3 rice, 1 ethanol), 2 discharging at berth (1 crude oil, 1 steel coils), 2 loading/discharging containers; 1 vessel waiting at anchorage to discharge crude oil; 7 vessels due (4 containers, 1 general cargo, 1 HSD, 1 ethanol), with no delays expected.
Port Qasim	02-May-2005	One vessel loading fish at berth, 12 vessels discharging at berth (11 ore, 1 crude oil); 2 vessels waiting at anchorage to load containers, 15 waiting at anchorage to discharge (2 containers, 11 ore, 1 canola seeds, 1 phosphoric acid); QICT berth: 1 vessel loading/discharging containers.
Russia		
Novorossiysk	02-May-2005	Twenty-one vessels in port operating of which 19 loading (1 bulk cement, 1 bulk fertiliser, 1 WRIC/steel sheets, 3 scrap, 1 pig iron, 1 pipes, 1 steel billets/coils, 1 wheat/copper, 1 coper, 1 WRIC/steel billets, 1 bulk urea, 1 coils/steel sheets, 1 bulk ammonium nitrate, 1 paper/cellulose, 1 wheat, 1 UANS, 1 D/O), 2 discharging (1 bulk sugar, 1 construction materials); 14 vessels in roads of which 13 to load (3 coils, 3 pig iron, 1 steel billets/pipes, 2 bulk cement, 1 steel billets, 1 sheat, 1 steel sheets, 1 D/O), 1 to discharge equipment; 73 vessels due of which 67 to load, 6 to discharge (1 bulk NPK, 1 non-ferrous metal, 2 steel, 2 ore); Oil terminal: 2 tankers loading crude oil at berth; 4 tankers in roads, all to load crude oil; 8 tankers due, all to load crude oil.

Port Conditions

Spain

Cadiz	02-May-2005	Seventeen vessels in port of which 6 operating (3 Ro/Ros, 1 containers, 1 semolina, 1 wheat), 11 vessels under repair; no delays.
Sagunto	02-May-2005	Twenty-six vessels in port operating of which 16 discharging (15 steel products, 1 logs), 3 loading (1 cement, 1 baled scrap, 1 bulk fertiliser), 6 Ro/Ros discharging/loading general cargo, 1 vessel loading/discharging steel coils; no vessels outside commercial wharf; no berthing delays at present.

Sri Lanka

Colombo	03-May-2005	Berthing/unberthing (pilotage) delays being experienced on breakbulk/conventional vessels. Delays to conventional vessels are due to the fact that container/feeder vessels are given priority at breakbulk berths if there is container congestion. Conventional cargo vessels at BQ 1 and 2 are facing navigation delays. Seventeen vessels loading at berth (16 containers/feeders, 1 cement blocks on pallets), 19 vessels discharging at berth (15 containers/feeders, 1 bagged sugar, 1 steel billets, 1 bulk urea, 1 general cargo); no vessels waiting at anchorage; 1 vessel under repairs, 3 dry-docked, 1 under arrest; 1 vessel at new tanker berth; 8 container/feeder vessels due, with no delays expected.
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Ukraine

Mariupol	03-May-2005	Four vessels in port operating, all loading (1 steel, 1 pig iron, 1 fire-clay, 1 barley); SRY: 1 equipment vessel; 5 vessels in roads, all to load (3 steel, 1 coal, 1 equipment); 50 vessels due of which 45 to load (19 steel, 11 coal, 1 kaolin, 9 fire-clay, 1 sunflower beans, 1 pitch, 1 equipment, 1 barley, 1 wheat), 2 to discharge (1 pipes, 1 kali sulphate), 3 to discharge/load containers.
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United States

Houston	03-May-2005	Normal 40 ft. 0 ins. max. channel draft reported. Channel open under normal traffic. LDC Dreyfus terminal: 2 days delay expected; Cargill terminal: no delays expected.
Kalama	03-May-2005	Kalama export terminal: 3 days delay expected; United Harvest terminal: 1 day's delay expected.
New Orleans	03-May-2005	Mississippi River terminal berthing delays: Cenex-Harstates/Myrtle Grove: no delays expected. Cargill-Westwego: 2 days delay expected. ADM/Ama: 3-4 days delay expected. Bunge/Destrehan: 2 days delay expected. ADM/Destrehan: 3-4 days delay expected. ADM/Reserve: 3-4 days delay expected. Cargill/Reserve: 1 day's delay expected. Peavey/Paulina: Closed. Zen-Noh/Convent: 1-2 days delay expected. Cargill/Baton Rouge: no delays expected. Mississippi River mid-stream buoys - estimated berthing delays based on new vessel presented as load-ready and weather permitting: Mile 121.5 ADM (Gemini) - Destrehan: no delays expected; Mile 158.0 Cargill (K2) - Convent: no delays expected; Mile 180.0 Cooper (America) - Darrow: 3 days delay expected. Ten-day forecast for Carrolton Gauge/New Orleans: expected to decrease to 8.1 ft. by 13/5/05 Mississippi River recommended draft restrictions: SW Pass to Pilottown - 47 ft. for all vessels; Pilottown to Nola - 47 ft. for all vessels; New Orleans (Mile 233.5) to mile 180 in. - 45 ft. for all vessels (vessels with drafts up to 47 ft. have been handled but are approved by pilots on a case-by-case basis based on current river conditions); Note: Motiva Convent dock No. 1 is restricted to a maximum draft of 38 ft, (fw) until dredging is completed. Dock No. 2 is restricted to 30 ft, (fw); Mississippi River Gulf outlet: 34 ft. from Bouy 1 - Mile 28.3; 36 ft. from Mile 28.3 - Mile 66.9
Portland	03-May-2005	Columbia Grain terminal: 2 days delay expected; CLD Irving terminal: no delays expected; CLD, O Dock terminals: no delays expected.
Tacoma	03-May-2005	Temco terminal: 2 days delay.

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