

Lloyd's

Lloyd's Casualty Week contains information from worldwide sources of Marine, Non-Marine and Aviation casualties together with other reports relevant to the shipping, transport and insurance communities

CasualtyWeek

September 2 2005

Lloyd's to weather Katrina despite possible £1bn bill

Chairman Lord Levene confident market will cope with disaster, writes James Brewer — Friday September 02 2005

LLOYD'S is likely to face a hit of around £1bn (\$1.8bn), net of reinsurance, from claims resulting from the devastating Hurricane Katrina, say market sources.

Despite this, Lime Street is still expected to make a profit for 2005; and the majority view is that underwriting conditions in a tighter market will remain generally attractive for 2006, especially in energy, US property and in reinsurance.

Speculation on the potential insured cost is very much unofficial and preliminary, but centres on the Louisiana hurricane taking a 5%-8% slice out of the market's 2005 capacity of £13.7bn.

It is based on a comparison of syndicate exposures to one of the society's "realistic disaster scenarios", which models the effect of a \$60bn storm on Texas.

Lloyd's investors are also waiting to see if they will face extra cash calls — as they did after the September 2001 terrorist blitz — because the US controversially requires "alien" reinsurers to post trust funds to guarantee that all claims can be paid.

Some experts say it will be six to nine months before a truly reliable picture of losses emerges.

At Lloyd's, the hit is expected to fall six times more heavily on the shore-based classes than on offshore energy.

A Lloyd's source reiterated that it was far too early to offer an estimate, and officials were still collecting information from syndicates involved.

Asked about the likely cost in an interview with Bloomberg, Lloyd's chairman Lord Levene said: "Although it is going to cost a lot of money, it is within

our normal business planning. We do not know the full cost yet, but we think we will have something in about 10 days' time."

Lord Levene added: "We had actually modelled our realistic disaster scenario exactly for a hurricane of this magnitude in this area. We model all sorts of possible disasters."

On the profit outlook, the Lloyd's chairman said: "Every year our profits are determined by the claims experience we have had. Two years ago and three years ago we had a very, very light year. Last year was tougher with those four hurricanes costing Lloyd's over \$2bn, but nevertheless we had our second best ever year of profits."

Michael Deeny, chairman of the Association of Lloyd's Members, said: "Lloyd's is quite right not to rush out an estimate. Munich Re [the major reinsurer] came out with a figure within 24 hours, and I predict within another couple of weeks that it will be announcing a substantially increased estimate."

Speaking at the ALM autumn conference, Mr Deeny said: "It is clearly a very major hit. There is a very wide range of estimates of insured losses, ranging from \$9bn to \$30bn. Hurricane Andrew in 1992, at 2004 insured values, came out at \$21bn.

"This looks at least as big as Andrew, and my own view would be a \$20bn to \$30bn insured loss. It is worth remembering that Lloyd's, in the year Andrew occurred, made a modest profit."

"Rates were not as high as they went in the mid-1990s, and I do feel that Lloyd's

can handle this loss, and, indeed, if there are no other major catastrophes this year I believe that Lloyd's can still show a modest profit.

"Obviously there will be more hurricanes, but I think that unless there is a really substantial one with an insured loss of over, say, \$4bn we shall still come out of 2005 in the black."

A top analyst, Chandon Bleackley of members' agency CBS Private Capital, pointed out that the industry globally suffered around \$50bn of losses, including a \$2.6bn energy loss, from hurricanes in Florida and typhoons in Japan last year.

There was no doubt last year's storms had the potential to firm up the market, said Mr Bleackley, particularly if there were another significant loss, "and that has come along in the form of Katrina".

He added: "One large loss has the potential to do us more damage as names because it has more of an impact on the reinsurance market." His "guesstimate" of total insured loss was about \$40bn including a pure energy sector loss of \$4bn-\$5bn.

He said the reported damage to 20 rigs, shutdown of eight refineries and loss of 95% of oil and 88% of natural gas production in the area would affect the insurance market and "I would expect significant rate increases in the offshore market".

Mr Deeny, meanwhile, spoke of the human tragedy in the stricken region and said: "Lloyd's will play an important part in the rebuilding of New Orleans and the other cities that have been hit."



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

Vessel	Type	Flag	Class	GT	DWT	Bit	Casualty
<i>AALFJORD</i>	general	NOR	—	688	599	1970	In collision with fishing <i>Tojako</i> 4 nautical miles west of Kvitholmen lighthouse, Hustadvika, Aug 22. Subsequently sank. All 4 crew rescued by <i>Tojako</i> and taken to Molde.
<i>ALGONORTH</i>	bulker	CAN	LR	18,496	28,200	1971	Had fire in engine-room electrical control panels near Pie Island, Lake Superior, in lat 48 15N, long 89 00W, Aug 19. Lost electrical power and went adrift. Towed to Keefer Terminal for repairs.
<i>BLACK SWAN</i>	bulker	BHS	RI	14,153	23,573	1978	Entered Suez Canal Aug 4. Had crankshaft trouble around Km 33.5. Taken in tow by tug <i>Baraka</i> but towline tangled around tug's propeller. Towed on to Km 53. May be towed to Great Bitter Lakes.
<i>CAP SAINT JEAN</i>	fishing	FRA	BV	497	492	1980	Reported disabled and drifting 55 miles northwest of Butt of Lewis, in lat 59 09N, long 07 39W, Aug 24, due engine failure. 11 crew taken off by helicopter, 7 remaining on board. Taken in tow for Ullapool, ETA Aug 25.
<i>CHEER ARROW</i>	cement	PAN	CR	4,186	5,939	1968	Had fire in engine-room Aug 20. All crew taken off. Reported adrift without electrical power in lat 17 22.8N, long 142 57.2E, Aug 22. Master and chief engineer back on board. Tug proceeding to tow vessel to Saipan, then China or Taiwan for repairs.
<i>KAIYUE</i>	general	CHN	—	724	—	1990	Had explosion in engine-room near Wenzhou Aug 23. 1 person killed, 3 injured. Cause under investigation.
<i>MILANO</i>	refrig	BHS	BV	8,254	9,388	1983	Had fire in engine-room in lat 35 08.6, long 09 09.1W, Aug 19. Fire extinguished Aug 20. Tug proceeding Aug 20 to tow vessel to Lisbon. Berthed at Lisbon Aug 23. Investigation under way.
<i>RASHA STAR</i>	bulker	MLT	RS	4,875	7,949	1978	Reported Aug 22 anchored in lat 39 19N, long 09 31W, with engine malfunction/rudder damage. Awaiting tug for towage to Vigo. Under tow Aug 24, ETA Vigo Aug 25.
<i>RIO SOLIS</i>	trawler	URY		718	459	1968	Reported drifting with bridge on fire in lat 35 38.10S, long 54 25.30W, Aug 24.
<i>SUPER SHUTTLE FERRY 9</i>	ferry	PHL	—	190	—	—	Swept away from shore by high tide Aug 24, while anchored near San Remigio station, Hagnaya. Listed and partially sank. All crew and passengers rescued. Investigation under way.
<i>TULSA</i>	dredger	USA	—	408	—	1976	Reported Aug 22 sank near mile marker 32, Ouchita/Black River. All 4 crew rescued. Spilled approx 840 gallons of diesel, hydraulic oil and lube oil. Waterway closed to facilitate clean-up.
<i>WILLOW</i>	general	BHS	BV	1,560	2,670	1983	Reported Aug 21 vessel had major breakdown after departing Rotterdam, after apparently putting a piston through the side of the engine. Arrived Rotterdam Aug 22 in tow of tug <i>Kingston</i> .

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The following reports are reprinted from Lloyd's List



AALFJORD (Norway)

Trondheim, Aug 22 -- According to a local newspaper, general cargo Aalfjord (688 gt, built 1970), with a cargo of asphalt, collided with fishing Tojako (97 gt, built 1965), engaged in fishing activities, four nautical miles west of Kvitholmen Lighthouse, at Hustadvika, West Norway, just after midnight last night. The four crew of Aalfjord were taken on board Tojako, as it appeared that the damages were more extensive than first assumed. Aalfjord sank at about 0400 hrs this morning. Aalfjord's crew have been taken to the port of Molde. Tojako is underway to Aure for inspection of damages. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Aug 22 -- Following received from Sandnes, dated today: At 0040 hrs, today, general cargo Aalfjord and fishing Tojako were in collision four nautical miles west of Kvitholmen Light in More. There was only minor damage to the fishing vessel, which proceeded to Aure for inspection. There were no injuries to the crew of six. The Aalfjord was seriously damaged and at 0340 hrs, today, the vessel capsized and sunk. The crew of four was picked up by rescue vessel Platou and brought to Molde. There were no injuries.

AGIOS GEORGIOS I (Greece)

Piraeus, Aug 18 -- Chemical/oil carrier Agios Georgios I was inspected by port authorities and sailed Skiathos Aug 8 for Santorini. No repairs were reported to have been effected. -- Lloyd's Agents.

AIS NIKOLAS (Greece)

Port Said, Aug 25 -- Bulk Ais Nikolas was at dock until four days ago and expect it is still there. -- Lloyd's Agents.

AL-JAZY (Jordan)

Alexandria, Aug 24 -- Ro/ro/c.c. Al-Jazy (4710 gt, built 1980): We are currently dealing with a claim involving six containers S.T.C. 60 wooden cases containing 122.7600 tonnes of graphite electrodes which, both the containers and cargo inside, arrived in a badly damaged condition. The cargo was loaded ex Al-Jazy, V/120 at Nsict Port, India, under B/L No. M/AJ/120/Alx/01, dated Mumbai Jun 16. The above cargo was transhipped somewhere before they were split ex general cargo Marchaser and general cargo Western, i.e. four containers ex Marchaser and two containers, one of them had its cargo cross stuffed into a fresh one, ex Western. (Note -- Al-Jazy arrived Mumbai Jun 16, sailed Jun 17 for Salalah, where arrived Jun 25 and subsequently sailed same day for Mumbai.)

ALGONORTH (Canada)

London, Aug 19 -- A press, dated today, states: Bulk Algonorth (18496 gt, built 1971) had a fire at the electrical control panels in the engine-room while near Pie Isl., Lake Superior, lat 48 15N, long 89 00W, at 0645, EDST, today. She lost electrical power and became adrift, towed to Keefer Terminal.

Troy, Mich, Aug 20 -- Shortly after 0500 hrs, yesterday morning bulk Algonorth contacted Thunder Bay Coast Guard Radio to report that they had an engine-room blackout caused by a fire affecting three electrical panels. They were powerless and drifting, awaiting tug assistance. The fire was put out with extinguishers and there was no other damage or injuries to any of the 22 crew members on board. The ship was forced to drop anchor around 0645 hrs, as it was drifting toward Pie Island. The tug Robert John, owned by Gravel & Lake Services Ltd., arrived about an hour later and took the vessel in tow to Keefer Terminal where repairs will be made. -- Great Lakes Shipping & Seaway.

AMERICAN EXPLORER (Vanuatu)

London, Aug 18 -- Following received from Stavanger RCC, timed 1420, UTC: Research American Explorer (6051 gt, built 1983) had small fire in engine-room in lat 58 12.3N, long 03 39E, at 1158, local time, today. Situation has been brought under control by crew and no assistance required. Vessel remains in the same position at present.

London, Aug 20 -- Following received from Stavanger RCC, timed 0850, UTC: Research American Explorer carried out its own repairs and was able to resume voyage under its own power.

ANIARA (Singapore)

Piraeus, Aug 19 -- Vehicle Aniar changed name to Morning Glory (Singapore flag) and is reported to have finally sailed from Skaramanga port on Aug 17, destination South Korea. -- Lloyd's Agents.

AQUILA (U.K.)

Glasgow, Aug 18 -- Fishing Aquila: There was no damage to the main machinery of the above vessel and loss of power resulted from an operational failure. This was rectified within 12 hours and the vessel departed from Peterhead later on Aug 9. -- Lloyd's Agents.

ARNGAST (Germany)

Copenhagen, Aug 24 -- Repairs to general cargo Arngast are expected to be completed this evening, after which the vessel is expected to depart for Warnemunde for loading and then proceed to Hamburg. -- Lloyd's Agents.

BALMORAL (U.K.)

London, Aug 24 -- Following received from the BBC, dated today: Fifteen crew members were moved from the historic steamboat, passenger

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Balmoral (736 gt, built 1949), after it began taking on water in Swansea Docks. The vessel, which carries holidaymakers on day trips in the Bristol Channel over the summer, got into difficulty after striking an underwater object. Fire crews, lifeboats and the RNLI attended the scene, where the crew reported there was a hole in the vessel. There were no passengers on board, as the day's sailing had been cancelled. Swansea Coastguard said the operation was now a salvage issue. The spokesman added that the situation was under control and pumps from the fire service and RNLI were pumping out the water. A private diving company will be brought in to assess the damage to the vessel. The vessel is currently alongside passenger ro/ro Superferry in Swansea Harbour.

BARAKA I (Egypt)

See Black Swan.

BARGE ACCIDENT, PICTON, NEW ZEALAND

London, Aug 19 -- Two Blenheim men died today when the concrete trucks they were in fell from a barge and plunged into Picton Harbour in the dark just before 0630 hrs. Rescue dive teams recovered the bodies and they were taken to Blenheim's Wairau Hospital for formal identification. A specialist dive squad from Wellington will investigate later today. Dave Baker of Marlborough Coastguard said emergency services were confronted with a difficult scene during the rescue attempt as windows on the trucks had been down at the time. "For those situations you need to be right on the spot when it happens to be successful. Unfortunately the windows were down. If the trucks had been sealed we might have been luckier." Mr Baker said both trucks, which were full of cement, were lying on their sides in the water. The two trucks belonged to Firth Industries and were being loaded on to a barge operated by McManaway Marine. Neither company would comment on the accident today. The two trucks were being loaded on to a barge at a commercial dock on Lagoon Dr, northwest of the Picton ferry terminals, at 0615 hrs when they suddenly "ended up in the water". A boom was later erected around the scene to contain any diesel spilt from the trucks and police were waiting to carry out investigations before removing them. It was not known what caused the trucks to fall off the barge. Deputy harbourmaster Dave Hoskins said the Cook Strait ferries had been told to cut their speed as they traversed the harbour. "They will just be taking it a bit quieter than usual to cut down on wash. But ferry operations won't be disturbed at all, it is well off to the side." Maritime New Zealand spokesperson Heidi Brook said an investigation into the accident had already been launched.

BASAVESHWARA (India)

Kochi, Aug 25 -- Product tanker Basaveshwara entered Kochi Port Aug

24, and the installation of the new boiler assembly is in progress. -- Lloyd's Agents.

BHN PRODUCTION PLATFORM

London, Aug 19 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: ONGC has begun salvage operations to clear the charred remains of the BHN Production Platform which was involved in the recent fire accident. The operation is being carried out with technical support from Kerney, the makers of the platform. According to official sources, a team from Kerney and ONGC is now assessing the amount and quality of debris left under the sea by pressing divers into service. Once the assessment is over, the company will appoint specialist service providers through international competitive bidding to salvage the remains. The entire project expenditure is being covered by a comprehensive insurance package. As per the package, ONGC is eligible to claim for loss of assets in fire (including the BHN platform and support Samudra Suraksha plus actual cost of rescue (including cost of fire fighting, notional salary of employees employed, cost on vessels employed by the company and other agencies). It also covers the cost of clearing the debris. Meanwhile, Royal Dutch Shell, which was entrusted with the job of probing into the reasons behind the fire, has started visiting the related facilities of the company from Aug 13. To begin with, the Shell representatives visited the Institute of Petroleum Safety, Health and Environment (IPSHE) in Goa. The institute offers sea-safety and helicopter and under-water escape training to ONGC employees working at off-shore installations.

BLACK SWAN (Bahamas)

Port Said, Aug 25 -- Bulk Black Swan (14153 gt, built 1978) entered Suez Canal Aug 4 with the southbound convoy. At km 33.5 vessel experienced crankshaft trouble. Suez Canal Authority tug Baraka (? tug Baraka I, 1805 gt, built 1993) towed it, however, during towing operations the mooring line coiled around the tug's rudder at Km 37 where vessel stopped again. It was towed again to km 53. Now vessel owes large sums of money to S.C.A. It is expected that it might be towed to the Great Bitter Lakes where vessel will remain. P&I surveyors attended. - Lloyd's Agents. (Note -- Black Swan had sailed Varna July 20 and passed Dardanelles July 23.)

CAP SAINT JEAN (France)

London, Aug 24 -- Following received from Coastguard Stornoway MRSC, timed 1324, UTC: At 1009, UTC, Mayday call received from fishing Cap Saint Jean (497 gt, built 1980), FNSX, 18 people on board, disabled in lat 59 09N, long 07 39W, approximately 55 nautical miles north-west of Butt of Lewis, due engine failure and drifting. Coastguard helicopter scrambled and initiated broadcast action. Stornoway RNLI lifeboat launched, fishing

Mariette Le Roch and another vessel responded to broadcast and proceeding. Eleven crew removed by helicopter, seven remaining crew to assist with tow. Mariette Le Roch to take vessel in tow. Stornoway lifeboat to stand-by until tow connected.

London, Aug 24 -- Following received from Coastguard Stornoway MRSC, timed 1855, UTC: Fishing Cap Saint Jean was taken in tow by fishing Mariette le Roch, at 1848, UTC, bound for Ullapool at four knots. Weather on scene now abated to force eight to nine (gale to severe gale).

London, Aug 24 -- Following received from Coastguard Stornoway MRSC, timed 2113, UTC: At 1957, UTC, position of fishing Cap Saint Jean, under tow of fishing Mariette Le Roch, lat 59 03N, long 06 57W, course 136 deg, speed 5.6 knots. Wind on scene 22 knots. All well with tow. At present speed, ETA Ullapool 1100, UTC, Aug 25.

CARAVOS HORIZON (Malta)

London, Aug 23 -- Bulk Caravos Horizon left Piraeus Aug 17 for Skaramanga.

CERRINA (Antigua & Barbuda)

See "Reunion" under "Labour Disputes."

CHEER ARROW (Panama)

London, Aug 22 -- Following received from Coast Guard Guam, timed 0625, UTC: Cement Cheer Arrow (4186 gt, built 1968) was adrift without electrical power in lat 17 22.8N, long 142 57.2E, at 0602, UTC, today, following fire in engine-room. All 23 crew were removed from the vessel Saturday (Aug 20) night by bulk Ocean King. The master and chief engineer have now returned to the vessel. Owners have hired tug Don Juan Tenorio to tow the vessel to Saipan where it will wait for typhoon "Maraw" to pass then continue the tow to China or Taiwan for repairs. At the moment Don Juan Tenorio is in Guam and will hopefully leave this evening to the casualty.

Honolulu, Aug 23 -- It has been reported that cement Cheer Arrow had a main engine fire on Aug 19-20. The vessel was approximately 260 miles north-east of Guam. A co-ordinated effort between the U.S. Coast Guard and Japan Coast Guard was put into effect and the Japanese Coast Guard helicopter spotted the vessel in flames at approximately 2200, Aug 20. Bulk Ocean King was diverted and rescued the 23 crew members. It was reported that a tug departed from Guam to tow Cheer Arrow to Saipan. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Aug 24 -- A notice to mariners issued today, states: North Pacific, Marianas, drifted engine-troubled vessel (cement Cheer Arrow) removed.

COSTA CLASSICA (Italy)

Piraeus, Aug 24 -- Reportedly fire broke out in the aft cabins of passenger Costa Classica (52926 gt, built 1991) while sailing off Poros

island this morning, en route to Piraeus from Ancona with 1,585 passengers on board. Fire was extinguished by the crew members and about 30 cabins have been damaged. All crew members and passengers were reportedly healthy and secure. The vessel is currently headed to Piraeus port anchorage by own power. No salvors are involved. -- Lloyd's Agents. (Note -- Costa Classica sailed Ancona Aug 22.)

London, Aug 24 -- At 1143, UTC, today passenger Costa Classica was at berth at Piraeus.

London, Aug 25 -- A small fire sparked a major coastguard alert in Greece when it broke out on passenger Costa Classica. The fire was quickly extinguished by the crew, cruise company Costa Crociere said. There were no casualties as a result of the incident, which occurred while the ship was heading from Katakolon in Turkey to a scheduled call at Piraeus. The Greek Ministry of Merchant Marine's search and rescue centre was informed of the fire at about 1020, local time, Aug 24, by a government C-130 aircraft. The incident triggered a massive response co-ordinated by the Greek authorities, with two coast guard patrol boats, a coast guard plane, the frigate Limnos, a navy and a Super Puma helicopter and the ro-ro passenger ferry Kriti 1 all going to the ship's assistance. "The shipboard personnel intervened at once to put out the flames and the situation is under control," Costa said yesterday. There were 1,585 passengers, mostly Italians, on board the vessel at the time and 585 crew. The fire occurred aft on deck five, in an area used by the crew for mooring operations. Some ropes caught fire creating dense smoke. Nearby areas of the ship were evacuated and about 30 cabins were reported damaged although Costa has yet to confirm this. The passengers, crew and the ship had not been in danger at any time, Costa said. A Costa spokesman said yesterday that the cause of the fire was still being investigated. Costa Classica is classed by Rina and entered with the UK Club.

London, Aug 25 -- Passengers from passenger Costa Classica are being flown back to Italy from Athens this morning after Costa Crociere cancelled the vessel's current east Mediterranean cruise. A small fire in the mooring rope area yesterday morning before the ship arrived in Piraeus reportedly caused damage to a small number of cabins, but Costa executives said a deciding factor in cancelling the cruise was the effects of smoke and fire extinguishing on the vessel's kitchens. Some 1,585 passengers, mainly Italians, were unable to eat their evening meal on board yesterday and were catered for ashore, sources said. Costa said passengers and crew were never in danger during yesterday's incident and the general emergency alarm was not activated. The crew extinguished the blaze themselves even as coastguard patrol boats and other

vessels converged on the cruise ship. The cruise line has promised a full refund for passengers plus a 25% discount on a future cruise purchase during the next year.

Piraeus, Aug 25 -- Passenger Costa Classica berthed Piraeus port at about 1500 hrs. Damages appear more extensive than originally considered with the main restaurant/galley and about 100 cabins being fire-damaged to varying degrees. Cruise was abandoned and all passengers were repatriated today. Cleaning of the damaged areas is now being carried out and vessel will sail tonight/tomorrow morning to Venice, for repairs. -- Lloyd's Agents.

DOGGER (Bahamas)

Falmouth, Aug 19 -- The contract to repair the bow damage to general cargo Dogger has been awarded to A&P (Falmouth) Ltd, Falmouth, where repairs commenced yesterday and are expected to take about 28 days. -- Lloyd's Agents.

EMILIA (Italy)

London, Aug 20 -- A press report, dated today, states: Passenger ro/ro Emilia (12523 gt, built 1979) has smashed into the wharf as it was docking in the Port of Palermo. It has been reported there maybe at least ten passengers hurt when the ferry from Cagliari hit the wharf. Ambulances were on the scene and minor injuries were reported and those passengers were taken to Palermo's hospital's accident and emergency departments, according to the first officer of inspection at Palermo's port, Pietro Caurasi. There was also damage to the ship's stern.

Palermo, Aug 24 -- Passenger ro/ro Emilia crushed a wharf (at Palermo) on the morning of Aug 20, while berthing. Thirty-one passengers were lightly injured. The ship sustained slight damage and left the port yesterday evening, after repairs. -- Lloyd's Agents.

EUGENIO

London, Aug 19 -- Following received from Reunion RCC, timed 1300, UTC: General cargo Eugenio (2200 gt, built 1987) grounded at Toliary, Madagascar, Aug 7. (Note -- Understood Lloyd's Standard Form salvage contract was signed with SMIT Salvage BV and vessel refloated Aug 18.)

EUGENIO (St. Vincent & Grenadines)

Antananarivo, Aug 22 -- General cargo Eugenio sailed Tolagnaro at 1845, Aug 21, in tow of tug Strong Deliverer. The vessel has damage to its keel and propellers and is bound for Durban, for drydocking and repairs, ETA Aug 27. -- Lloyd's Agents.

EVER GREEN (Bangladesh)

London, Aug 22 -- A press report, dated Aug 21, states: One person was missing and five others were injured as product tanker Ever Green (811 gt, built 1976) collided head on with cargo

vessel Lisa, laden with sand, in the River Sandhya near the Kawkhali Ferry Ghat in Pirojpur on Friday (Aug 19). The police said Ever Green hit Lisa bound for Noapara in Jessore from Dhaka. The cargo instantly sank. A crew member of the vessel was missing since the accident. A case was filed with the Kawkhali police in this connection.

FASTCAT RYDE (U.K.)

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

FASTCAT SHANKLIN (U.K.)

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

GAS VISION (Panama)

See Reef Pemba.

GENERAL MEHMANDAROV (Azerbaijan)

London, Aug 25 -- A press report, dated Aug 19, states: Fire took place on product tanker General Mehmandarov (4134 gt, built 1982) belonging to Caspian State Navigation Administration at about 0700 today. According to Vuqar Sadikhov, chief of Information Department of the Administration the cause for the fire was negligence of workers carrying out maintenance work. The ship moored at the shipyard for repairs today. Fire fighting vehicles from several districts of Baku were deployed to the area though Vuqar Sadikhov refuted news of fire on board and said there was only smoke. The fire was difficult to extinguish as it happened in closed room. Firemen poisoned with carbon monoxide were taken to Republican Toxicological Hospital.

GEORGE T. (St. Vincent & Grenadines)

Piraeus, Aug 18 -- Bulk George T. remains at Pylos undergoing repairs, time of completion unknown. -- Lloyd's Agents.

GOLDEN CLOUD (Hong Kong)

See "Typhoon 'Haitang'" under "Weather & Navigation."

GRAMPIAN FURY (Uruguay)

Montevideo, Aug 23 -- Trawler Grampian Fury arrived at Montevideo Aug 9, under tow, due to having the fishing net fouled in the propeller. This inconvenience was quickly resolved and, after unloading the catch and loading provisions, the vessel sailed Aug 15 to fishing area. -- Lloyd's Agents.

GRANDE SPAGNA (Italy)

London, Aug 24 -- Following received from Coastguard Humber MRSC, timed 2102, UTC: Ro/ro Grande Spagna (37726 gt, built 2002), Tyne dry dock for Antwerp, where due 0600, UTC, Aug 26, in ballast, on fire in lat 54 52.7N, long 00 46.1W. No communications due to crew fighting the fire.

London, Aug 25 -- Following received from Coastguard Humber MRSC, timed 0605, UTC: Ro/ro Grande

Spagna is now underway with no problems, bound Antwerp, where ETA 0600, tomorrow. Vessel had a fire in a paint store which was extinguished by vessel's crew.

London, Aug 25 -- A Maritime & Coastguard Agency press release, timed 0016, UTC, today, states: Ro/ro Grande Spagna which was reported as "on fire" to Humber Coastguard is now on route to Antwerp with the fire extinguished. Grande Spagna was spotted by a fishing vessel 15 miles north east of Hartlepool with flames on the deck. Humber Coastguard immediately broadcast a mayday relay message to all shipping to which four fishing vessels and a warship, HMS Severn, responded with offers of assistance, which were accepted. In addition, the Coastguard requested the Hartlepool and Teesmouth RNLI all weather lifeboats to launch. A rescue helicopter from RAF Leconfield which was out on exercise proceeded. A further helicopter from RAF Boulmer was put on standby. The car carrier with 26 crew onboard had just left Tyne after being in dry dock and had a fire in its paint locker. This fire was extinguished by the crew and the master of the vessel is keeping a careful eye on where the fire started. The vessel is now continuing on its voyage to Antwerp and all of the rescue units have been stood down.

HALIFAX (Malta)

London, Aug 19 -- Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: Product tanker Halifax (16515 gt, built 1992), cargo 30,000 tonnes of diesel oil, ran aground close to Gluckstadt on the River Elbe during the night of Aug 18-19. First attempts to free the vessel failed and next attempt will be made this afternoon. No threat to the environment at present. Traffic on the River Elbe has not been hindered. (Note -- Halifax sailed Ventspils Aug 15 for Hamburg.)

London, Aug 19 -- Information received, timed 1250, UTC, states: Understood product tanker Halifax has been refloated by local harbour tugs.

London, Aug 23 -- Understood product tanker Halifax, cargo 24,000 tonnes diesel oil, grounded at Gluckstadt on the River Elbe Aug 18. Salvage services were rendered by tugs owned by Bugsier under the terms of Lloyd's Open Form 2000 and the vessel was refloated on Aug 19.

London, Aug 23 -- Product tanker Halifax arrived Hamburg 1756, Aug 19 and sailed 0700, Aug 21.

Hamburg, Aug 23 -- Understood product tanker Halifax sustained no damage as a result of the grounding, and is currently awaiting orders off the coast of Germany. -- Lloyd's Agents.

HANSEATIC (Bahamas)

Trondheim, Aug 22 -- A local newspaper has reported that passenger Hanseatic (8378 gt, built 1991) asked for assistance from salvage vessel Skuld after having touched bottom near the coast of

Helgeland in northern Norway. Hanseatic thereafter anchored outside Sandnessjoen in order to allow a diver from Skuld to inspect its hull. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Aug 23 -- A Hapag-Lloyd press release, dated Aug 22, states: Passenger Hanseatic touched bottom near Luroy Island (lat 66 25N, long 12 50E), 22 nautical miles south the polar circle, yesterday. Vessel sustained an approximately five metre long tear in the double bottom. The vessel requires repairs therefore the vessel's cruise has been prematurely terminated, and the 161 passengers on board will be flown home to Germany.

London, Aug 24 -- Hapag-Lloyd's five-star passenger Hanseatic was forced to end a Norwegian cruise. Despite obligatory advice from a pilot, the vessel grounded 22 km off the island of Luroey, resulting in a five metre long crack in the double hull. The master, Thilo Natke, reported that the vessel was stable and that there was no danger for the 161 passengers on board. Nevertheless, they were flown home where they arrived late on Monday, a spokesperson for Hapag-Lloyd Kreuzfahrten, the cruise division of the liner company, confirmed. She added that it has not been decided which yard Hanseatic will head to for repair works. A regular docking is scheduled for Sep 12 at Hamburg's Blohm & Voss Repair, but the ship had to be repaired before that date, the spokesperson underlined. Hanseatic had originally planned to end the cruise in Kiel tomorrow. While the next 14-day cruise will have to be cancelled, the ship might be back in service for a mini cruise starting on Sep 8 in Hamburg, the spokesperson said.

HORIZON NAVIGATOR (U.S.A.)

London, Aug 22 -- C.c. Horizon Navigator arrived Honolulu Aug 18.

IONIAN QUEEN (Cyprus)

London, Aug 22 -- Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: While Cyprus passenger ro/ro Ionian Queen (ex Ionian Glory, 19796 gt, built 1988) was manoeuvring to berth at the port of Bari Aug 20, vessel contacted the quay. As a result vessel sustained damage aft above the waterline. After inspection of the damage by the crew, the vessel departed for Igoumenitsa-Patras. After arrival at Patras at 1900, Aug 21 the vessel was prohibited from departing pending inspection of the repairs and issuance of a class maintain certificate.

JO SPIRIT (NIS)

London, Aug 23 -- Chemical/oil carrier Jo Spirit sailed Hamburg 0030, Aug 20 for Trinidad.

KAIYUE (China)

London, Aug 24 -- A press report, dated Aug 23, states: One person was killed and three others seriously injured following an explosion in the engine-room of general cargo Kaiyue (724 gt, built 1990) at sea near Wenzhou this morning. Kaiyue, of a

Shanghai company, was heading for Guangdong Province in south China when the blast took place at about 1130 hrs, killing one on the spot and injured the three others, according to sources with the Wenzhou Maritime Bureau. The injured were rushed to hospital and have been out of danger. The cause of the explosion is being investigated, the bureau said.

KAPITAN VASYUKOV (Russia)

Vladivostok, Aug 22 -- General cargo Kapitán Vasyukov completed repairs on Aug 17 and sailed from Slavyanka on Aug 19. -- Lloyd's Agents.

KIPEROUSA (Malta)

London, Aug 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: Bulk Kiperousa stranded on the coast near East London and its cargo are causing concern as bad weather hampers the removal of potentially hazardous logs. The hull of Kiperousa was already showing cracks and breaking up while salvors went about the "slow, risky business" of removing the logs from the hull, said SA Maritime Safety Authority spokesperson Captain Peter Kroon. Attempts to refloat the vessel were abandoned last month. National Ports Authority spokesperson Terry Taylor said there was no choice in the matter as repeated efforts to pull the stranded vessel off the Bhenga reef were unsuccessful. Kroon said the salvors had to be very careful as they went about removing the almost 6000 logs as the bad weather often saw waves washing right across the deck. He said they did not want the logs to fall into the water as they could be potentially hazardous to passing ships, but that it was not an immediate concern. Taylor said there was no immediate danger of the ship's condition deteriorating so rapidly and to such an extent overnight that the logs would enter the sea. He said Kiperousa had taken some strain on the rocks, but had a solid structure and the salvors were comfortable that they would be able to remove the logs. There was currently one barge ferrying up to 70 logs at a time into East London. Another barge from Dubai, capable of carrying up to 400 logs at a time, was being brought in to speed up the operation. "There is no crisis at the moment but we have to get the logs off. The challenge is to get them off as soon as possible," said Taylor, who estimated that the operation would take about two months. About 2000 logs had been brought into East London and it was up to the owners and insurance companies to decide whether to sell the logs locally, or bring in another ship to take the logs to the Far East. Once the cargo has been removed the ship will be cut down, according to maritime laws, to a certain level below the water mark and then left to the sea, Taylor said.

LIA-C. (U.K.)

London, Aug 21 -- Following received from Corsen MRCC, timed 0805, UTC: General cargo Lia-C. (2999

gt, built 2001), Amsterdam for Seville, cargo 4,750 tonnes of fertiliser, has been stopped with oil system problems in lat 48 30.4N, long 06 04.4W, for the last hour. Crew attempting to rectify problem.

London, Aug 21 -- Following received from Corsen MRCC, timed 1700, UTC: General cargo Lia-C. has commenced its voyage to Seville at 0900, UTC, after it had stopped about an hour earlier for oil system problems.

LISA

See Ever Green.

MADRUS (Estonia)

Montreal, Aug 18 -- Trawler Madrus: A fire was noticed in No 2 'tween deck on Aug 12; smouldering fire in packaging. Vessel had difficulties putting out fire at sea and proceeded to St. John's. It extinguished fire while alongside at St. John's with the assistance of the local fire department. Damage to hold linings, insulation and local lighting. At present, work is in hand to clean smoke residue and effect temporary lighting repairs. Madrus expects to sail to fishing grounds on or about Aug 23. -- Lloyd's Agents.

MALASPINA CASTLE (Cayman Islands)

See Matterhorn.

MATTERHORN (Liberia)

London, Aug 18 -- Following received from Aarhus RCC, timed 1430, UTC: Ref Matterhorn and bulk Malaspina Castle are still anchored outside Skagen. Matterhorn is expected to be released shortly by Danish maritime authorities for a single voyage to a shipyard.

London, Aug 19 -- Following received from Aarhus RCC, timed 0920, UTC: Ref Matterhorn and bulk Malaspina Castle are still anchored off Skagen. The Matterhorn has been cleared to proceed by Danish maritime authorities and will be proceeding to Gdynia in due course.

London, Aug 20 -- Following received from Aarhus RCC, timed 0840, UTC: Ref Matterhorn proceeded on voyage for Gdynia at 1021, UTC, yesterday. Bulk Malaspina Castle resumed voyage at 0518, UTC, today, bound Uusikaupunki.

London, Aug 24 -- Ref Matterhorn arrived Gdansk 1310, Aug 22.

MGM 3030 (U.S.A.)

London, Aug 19 -- A Coast Guard Houston press release, dated Aug 18, states: The U.S. Coast Guard, working with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and local officials, report today that the sulphuric acid that began leaking from tank barge MGM 3030 in Chocolate Bayou yesterday appears to have stopped leaking. Officials monitored the amount of product in the barge, as well as the level of the barge in the water and the pH levels around the, throughout last night and into this morning and concluded that the barge was not leaking. Approximately

358,000 gallons of the original 430,000 gallons of acid cargo has been offloaded from the barge. Efforts to remove the remaining acid and water mixture from the barge are expected to continue into tomorrow. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department biologists continue to monitor the situation and will advise the incident command team regarding potential impacts to fish and wildlife resources. The extent of the spill and its impact on wildlife are still being determined but are believed to be minimal. Coast Guard investigators from Marine Safety Unit Galveston, Texas, are on scene gathering information to determine the cause of the accident. The Coast Guard has established a safety zone for Chocolate Bayou near Peterson Landing.

London, Aug 22 -- A press report, dated Aug 20, states: Tank barge MGM 3030 that leaked an unspecified amount of sulphuric acid into Chocolate Bayou could be removed as early as today, officials said. The barge, which belongs to Kilgore-based Martin-Gas, was carrying about 426,000 gallons of sulphuric acid when it ran aground Monday night about 1.5 miles north of FM 2004 and became partially submerged. The barge was ferrying the acid shipment to Solutia Inc's docks along Chocolate Bayou. Crews from T & T Marine Salvage syphoned the remaining 60,000 gallons of sulphuric acid from the barge overnight Thursday, Brazoria County Emergency Management Coordinator Rick Perry said. Contaminated water was being removed from void spaces in the barge's hull yesterday," Perry said. "The only reason they wouldn't move that barge (last night) is if the Coast Guard said it needs to be moved in the daylight," he said. Removing the acid and water lifted the barge somewhat, but Perry said it was still difficult to determine the source of the leak on the barge's hull yesterday. Officials at the scene think it could be as small as a crack that isn't visible to the naked eye, Perry said. "We think it's something down on the bottom of the barge," Perry said. "Until they get it drydocked they're not going to know for sure." Nearby segments of Chocolate Bayou were reopened to recreational boaters but the immediate area around the damaged barge will remain closed until the barge is removed, U.S. Coast Guard Petty Officer Andrew Kendrick said. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality will study whether Martin-Gas violated any regulations, Houston assistant regional director Donna Phillips said. The final environmental impact on the bayou is unknown, but Texas Parks and Wildlife officials have said any impact should be minimal.

MILANO (Bahamas)

London, Aug 19 -- Following received from Rabat MRCC, timed 1226, UTC: At approximately 0600, UTC, ref Milano (8254 gt, built 1983) reported a fire in its engine-room, in lat 35

08.6N, long 09 09.1W. The fire is now understood to be under control. Rabat arranged for a surveillance aircraft to fly over the vessel and the aircraft has reported seeing no smoke coming from the vessel. It is understood that there were no injuries to the vessel's crew. A merchant vessel "Barcelona" is nearby and is proceeding to the scene and will offer any assistance, if required.

London, Aug 20 -- Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 0745, UTC: Ref Milano, Algeciras for Panama, 23 persons on board -- 22 Poles and one Greek -- is currently in lat 35 06.6N, long 09 09W, with fire on board under control. Bulk CSAV Barcelona is standing by one mile away ready to render assistance in taking off the crew if necessary.

London, Aug 20 -- Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 0825, UTC: The fire on board ref Milano is now out. Vessel's sistership, ref Salerno, is on scene and is expected to take 19 crewmen off and transport them to Algeciras. Tug Sertosa Diecisiete is to take vessel in tow for Lisbon, where ETA not before Monday (Aug 22).

London, Aug 23 -- Following received from Lisbon MRCC, timed 0915, UTC: Ref Milano was towed to Lisbon, however, port authority refused to grant it permission to enter port yesterday but should be allowed to enter port today.

Lisbon, Aug 25 -- Agents, Pinto Basto Navegacao, of ref Milano (8254 gt, built 1983) report that vessel arrived Cascais Aug 22 and inspected by the authorities involved. Berthed Sta. Apolonia quay, Lisbon, Aug 23. Port State Control is presently on board together with other authorities trying to investigate the possible cause of fire. No details available yet on commencement of repairs. -- Lloyd's Agents.

MTONGWE 1 (Kenya)

London, Aug 20 -- A press report, dated Aug 19, states: The Kenya Ferry Service (KFS) has disbursed US\$486,840 to 81 families who lost relatives in the disaster involving ferry Mtongwe 1 in Mombasa in 1994. The tragedy claimed 257 lives, becoming the worst marine disaster in Kenyan history. The ferry capsized as it crossed the Likoni channel on its way to Mombasa Island. KFS managing director John Ria said plans were under way to compensate others who lost loved ones in the tragedy by December this year.

MURMAN 2 (Russia)

Bergen, Aug 24 -- Fishing Murman 2: We have been in contact with the yard and it will take another one-two months until repairs are completed. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents.

MUSASHI MARU

See Ryoka Maru.

NATIONAL PROSPERITY (Panama)

Taipei, Aug 19 -- Bulk National Prosperity was refloated from the breakwater of Hoping Aug 11,

discharged cargo there and sailed, arriving Kaohsiung today to await repairs. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Taipei, Aug 25 -- Bulk National Prosperity is now docking at China Shipbuilding Corp, Kaohsiung, for repairs which expected to be completed on/about Sep 3. -- Lloyd's Agents.

NAZEK T. (North Korea)

Bucharest, Aug 19 -- General cargo Nazek T. reportedly completed repairs on or about Aug 4 and it is presently still at Constantza, waiting for completion of class surveys and issuance of certificates. -- Lloyd's Agents.

NOORD-NEDERLAND (Netherlands)

London, Aug 23 -- On Saturday, Aug 20, ferry Noord-Nederland (361 gt, built 2002), from the ferry company Doeksen, stranded on a sandbank the whole day, near the Isle of Terschelling. It was on its way from the Terschelling to the Isle of Vlieland when it ran on an unmarked sandbank, at about 1130, local time, between the bouys Schuitengat 10 and 12. The crew of the catamaran ferry tried to free it, after that they asked for the assistance of a tug, but they did not succeed in freeing the vessel. Then it was decided to wait for the next tide and, at about 2230 that night, the vessel came afloat and sailed for the port of Harlingen. The next day, on Sunday morning, it sailed to Vlieland to deliver its freight. After inspection it was found that the vessel had no damage.

OMIROS (Cyprus)

See "Reunion" under "Labour Disputes."

OUR LADY PAMELA (U.K.)

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

OUR LADY PATRICIA (U.K.)

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

PAC MAKASSAR (Singapore)

London, Aug 23 -- Following received from the owners of c.c. PAC Makassar (5593 gt, built 2003), dated Singapore today: A container in No.4 hold of PAC Makassar exploded Aug 5 while the vessel was enroute to Jakarta. Following the explosion the vessel returned to Singapore where the containers in the affected hold were discharged for inspection. Although some containers were damaged the vessel only sustained very slight damage. (Note -- PAC Makassar sailed Singapore 0755, Aug 5 for Jakarta and arrived back at Singapore 0740, Aug 9 and sailed again 0030, Aug 12 for Laem Chabang.)

PAXOS FLYING DOLPHIN (Greece)

London, Aug 24 -- Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: During the afternoon of Aug 23, while hydrofoil Paxos Flying Dolphin (142

gt, built 1981) was sailing from Paxos to Kerkyra, the vessel sustained damage to the port main engine. At the time of the incident vessel was four nautical miles north-west of Paxos and returned to port using only the starboard main engine. On arrival the 44 passengers were disembarked and will be forwarded to their destination on another vessel. The Port Authority has prohibited the vessel from sailing pending inspection of the repairs and issuance of a class maintain certificate.

PHOCEA (Cayman Islands)

Genoa, Aug 24 -- Our Olbia correspondent confirms that yacht Phocea has called in that area for bunkering but no casualty was reported or sea protest was issued to local Authorities whatsoever. Understand that the yacht did not have any local shipagent, was cruising with VIPs on board and sailed soon after the casualty which probably did not affect seaworthiness. -- Lloyd's Agents. (See issue of Aug 18.)

Genoa, Aug 25 -- Our local correspondent reports that yacht Phocea struck a rock off Mortorio Island with bulbous bow, (draught 6 metres) and sustained only minor internal damage to furnishings, very slight injuries to passengers have been reported; therefore it continued cruising around Sardinia. Checkings and possible repairs have been postponed to the end of the cruising season. -- Lloyd's Agents.

POLARBORG II (Uruguay)

London, Aug 25 -- Following navigation warning issued Aug 24: Fishing Magritte towing trawler Polarborg II (351 gt, built 1975) in lat 45 05S, long 61 38W, line length 450 metres, speed 6.6 knots, course 340, bound for San Antonio Este.

RADWAN (Cyprus)

See "Bay of Bengal" under "Piracy".

RASHA STAR (Malta)

London, Aug 23 -- Following received from Lisbon MRCC, timed 0915, UTC: Bulk Rasha Star (4875 gt, built 1978) reported at 0200 yesterday anchored in lat 39 19N, long 09 31W, with engine malfunction. Awaiting tug for towage to Vigo. (Note -- Rasha Star, Ceuta for Antwerp, where ETA Aug 24, passed Tarifa west Aug 17.)

Vigo, Aug 24 -- Bulk Rasha Star is reported proceeding to Vigo, where ETA 0200, Aug 25, in tow of local tug Charuca Silveira with rudder damage. -- Lloyd's Agents.

RATNA SHALINI (India)

London, Aug 24 -- A press report, dated Aug 23, states: Kenya is in danger of oil spill disasters from single hull ships that call at Mombasa port with large quantities of oil cargo. Paul Musili a maritime law lecturer at Nairobi University said that a revised schedule for the phasing out of single-hull tankers and a new regulation banning carrying of heavy grade oil in single-hull oil tankers entered into

force on Apr 5, yet Kenya still allows in the ships. Earlier this year (Apr 8) crude oil tanker Ratna Shalini had its hull punctured, spilling oil into the Kenyan waters. Compensation is yet to be paid because Kenya has no laws to force the ship owners to pay the claim. The owners committed a bond of Ksh78 million (\$1 million) which the company is yet to pay.

REEF PEMBA (St. Vincent & Grenadines)

Muscat, Aug 22 -- General cargo Reef Pemba sank in a depth of about 2,500 metres. As far as we are aware no attempts to salvage the vessel have been made. Lpg Gas Vision has sailed from the location to its intended destination. It had suffered some damages to the bow, above the water level. Concealed damages, if any, are not known to us. -- Lloyd's Agents.

RENJO (Netherlands)

London, Aug 20 -- General cargo Renjo, length 80 metres, touched some dolphins at the entrance of the Van Cauwelaertsluis, Antwerp, while entering this lock from the River Scheldt about 1115, local time, Aug 19. The vessel, loaded with containers, experienced a leak in its hold and began listing. Tugs came alongside and pumped the incoming water out and the vessel was discharged at a container berth. It then went to a shipyard for permanent repairs after temporary repairs had been effected. The shipping traffic had to be diverted for a few hours to the Boudewijnsluis.

Maassluis, Aug 23 -- General cargo Renjo left the Van Cauwelaertsluis around 1730 hrs the next day (Aug 20) bound for Sluiskil for repairs. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Aug 23 -- General cargo Renjo, ran into a dolphin at about 1105, local time, Aug 19, near de Van Cauwelaertsluis, the dolphin broke and the vessel got stuck on top of the broken remains. Renjo heeled over to starboard and could not move. Divers inspected below the waterline and found the hull was cracked. A floating crane was ordered, together with the pushbarges Banco 5 and Amber 2 and they started to unload its cargo of 192 empty containers. This discharging started at 2030, local time, Aug 19. The next morning, two thirds of the containers had been discharged and, at 1320 hours, the harbour tug No. 82 tried to pull Renjo off the remains of the dolphin, but did not succeed. Two manholes had to be sealed to prevent the water entering into the engine-room. Also the collision hole had to be sealed with rubber and cement. Then two tugs, No. 90 and No. 82 tried again and, at 1513 hours, the vessel was pulled free. At 1528 hours, they started to discharge the last empty containers from Renjo, which was finished at 1714 hours. Renjo left Antwerp on Saturday evening, Aug 20, bound for a ship repair yard in Sluiskil, in the Netherlands, where it arrived the same evening.

RIO SOLIS (Uruguay)

London, Aug 25 -- Following notice to mariners issued Aug 24: Trawler Rio Solis (718 gt, built 1968), with 30 crew, reported adrift with its bridge on fire in lat 35 38.10S, long 54 25.30W. Any sight or information of this is to be reported to the nearest authority.

ROSTOK (Russian)

Bucharest, Aug 22 -- General cargo Rostok: Further parts of the vessel, including the remainder of the engine room, have been lifted from the bottom and removed from the place of the casualty. The information gathered subsequently would suggest that operation was reportedly completed on May 9, "i.e. detaching and complete removal of the engine room section was not fully successful at the time." It now appears that the consortium involved in the removal of the Rostok is approaching the end of operations i.e. cleaning of river bottom. -- Lloyd's Agents.

RT-456

London, Aug 22 -- A press report, dated Aug 21, states: River tug RT-456 in distress on the Volga river near Saratov, poses no threat to the river's ecology. "Rescuers managed to straighten the damaged tug and prevent a fuel spill," a spokesman for the Russian Emergencies Ministry's regional department said. A special repair ship arrived at the site to patch cracks cause by contact with an unknown metal object. The tug will later be pulled to a dock to be minutely examined and repaired, the source said. RT-456, owned by one of Saratov's enterprises, was seriously damaged after striking an unknown object while moving between the coastline and the Kazachy Island yesterday afternoon.

St. Petersburg, Aug 23 -- Understood that tug RT-456 was towed to the shiprepair yard at Engels city for further repairs, to its bottom. However, details of the extent of damage are not known to us. -- Lloyd's Agents.

RYOKA MARU (Japan)

London, Aug 19 -- A press report, dated today, states: Chem.tank Ryoka Maru (689 gt, built 1992) and fishing Musashi Maru, 4.3 gt, collided off the Boso Peninsula in Chiba Prefecture yesterday afternoon, marking the second time the tanker had caused an accident in about a month, the local office of the Japan Coast Guard (JCG) said. At around 1455 hrs Ryoka Maru collided with the 4.3-ton Musashi Maru about 15 kilometres east of Ohara, JCG officers said. Tsuruo Saito, 68, master of the fishing boat, suffered serious injuries in the accident. At the time of the accident, crewmembers on the two vessels were not paying sufficient attention even though visibility in the area was poor, according to JCG officials. The local JCG office is questioning crewmembers of both vessels on suspicion of professional negligence that endangered traffic. On July 14,

Ryoka Maru collided with a vessel (dredger Horai Maru) off the Omaezaki lighthouse in Shizuoka Prefecture, causing it to sink.

SAFMARINE MEROULA (Cyprus)

Cape Town, Aug 24 -- The port of Saldanha advises that the arrest of general cargo Safmarine Meroula was lifted, subsequent to which the vessel sailed for Walvis Bay in Namibia. -- Lloyd's Agents.

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

See "Somalia" under "Piracy".

SIDER MARLEEN (Italy)

Piraeus, Aug 18 -- General cargo Sider Marleen was inspected by port authorities and sailed Volos Aug 2 for Malaga. -- Lloyd's Agents.

SIR TRISTRAM (U.K.)

Liverpool, Aug 18 -- Ro/ro Sir Tristram, fire at Cammel Lairds: Inquiries have been made and apparently a bag of oil impregnated rags was found smouldering which set off the alarm. This has caused no delay to the work being carried out at the shipyard. -- Lloyd's Agents.

SPEED ONE (U.K.)

London, Aug 24 -- Following received from Coastguard Dover MRCC, timed 0950, UTC: Ferry Speed One (5007 gt, built 1997), Dover for Boulogne, was reported in lat 51 08.48N, long 01 25.44E, at 0935, UTC, course 52 degs, speed 9.4 knots, undergoing engine test after incident yesterday when the vessel contacted the southern breakwater, Dover, following engine command problem. Vessel sustained slight damage to anchor and windlass and starboard wave piercer.

London, Aug 25 -- Following received from Coastguard Dover MRCC, timed 1041, UTC: Ferry Speed One is now operating normally.

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

London, Aug 22 -- A press report, dated Aug 21, states: Passenger ro/ro Spirit of Ontario I (6242 gt, built 2004) crashed into the gangway at the port of Toronto this evening, according to witnesses and a Bay Ferries official. Several windows were blown out, and a scratch is visible above the Cat logo, according to passengers. "It seemed to crash into the gangplank, into the windows toward the front of the ship. From what I could see, it seemed to shatter three or four windows," said Robert Zack, of Rochester, who watched from the shore. "It didn't seem to slow down as it came into the pier, or into the dock. It seemed to keep going at the same speed. It hit and then seemed to bounce back and then hit again." "The three windows were boarded up and the walk ramp to get onto the ferry is messed up and inoperable, and they had to make all the people walk-in through where the cars are put on," said Deborah Goungo, who was waiting to board the ship when the crash happened. The ship returned to Rochester just before

2300 hrs, about an hour and a half behind schedule. Don Cormier, vice president of Bay Ferries, says a "master-in-training" was at the controls when the mishap occurred. he said his inexperience was "likely" a factor in the accident. No one was hurt.

London, Aug 22 -- At 1800, EDST, Aug 21, while berthing, passenger ro/ro Spirit of Ontario I struck the gangway at the Toronto Ferry Terminal dock, Ontario, in lat 43 42N, long 79 26W. Minor damage was sustained by the ferry and some damage sustained by the terminal gangway.

Troy, Mich., Aug 22 -- Rochester's fast ferry passenger ro/ro Spirit of Ontario I returned to service on time and on schedule this morning, after a mishap in Canada left the vessel with three broken windows yesterday. As the ferry pulled into the port of Toronto yesterday evening the ferry hit the gangway at the port. The collision broke three windows on the ship near the front part of the vessel. Due to the damage, the ferry's return trip to Rochester was delayed. "The Cat" pulled into the port of Rochester just before 2300 hrs, yesterday. This morning, the ferry took off for Toronto at 0800 hrs, right on schedule. Crews spent the overnight working to replace the glass broken in the mishap. Yesterday night, crews boarded up the windows, for the trip back to Rochester. Dan Schiavone, a passenger on board, said that passengers were told windy weather may have caused the accident. Passengers also were told to either wait for the repairs or find an alternative way to get to Rochester. Bay Ferries, the ferry operator, will reimburse them. -- Great Lakes Shipping & Seaway.

SUPER SHUTTLE FERRY 9 (Philippines)

Manila, Aug 25 -- The Philippine Coast Guard launched an investigation into the sinking of ferry Super Shuttle Ferry 9, 189.64 gt, off Hagnaya, Cebu, yesterday, reports reaching ABS-CBN Regional Network Group said today. Coast Guard officials said Super Shuttle Ferry 9 sank 0700 yesterday as it was anchored near the San Remigio station in Hagnaya. No fatalities were reported. The Coast Guard said all of the ferry's passengers, crew and officials were plucked to safety. The vessel reportedly carried 11 passengers, 18 crewmen and five officials. The vessel's cargo of six-wheeler trucks and a 10-wheeler truck, however, sank with it. Witnesses said the ferry was moored as the crew prepared it to sail for Santa Fe island when the high tide swept it away from shore. The vessel listed to its side first before sinking. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Aug 25 -- A press report, dated today, states: Ferry Super Shuttle Ferry 9 sank into shallow waters off Cebu province yesterday, reports from the Philippine Coast Guard said today. While in the middle

of boarding at around 0426, hrs, low tide forced Super Shuttle Ferry 9 to drift a few hundred metres away from the Hagnaya wharf, reports said. A suspected "miscalculation" by the ship's master Gene Montescalros, caused the ship to list and sink. There were no reported casualties. The ship was carrying a 10-wheeler truck and four six-wheeler trucks when it sank. About one-third of the 189.64-ton ship, owned by Asia Marine Transport, was submerged in the sea.

Manila, Aug 25 -- The Philippine Coast Guard reported that ferry Super Shuttle Ferry 9, 173.43 dwt, owned by Asian Marine Transport, ran aground off Hagnaya port in northern San Remigio town, Cebu Island, early Aug 24. No one was hurt among the 23 crew members and 11 passengers on board. The vessel operates between the central Philippine ports of Hagnaya, Sta. Fe, and Bantayan and was carrying four six-wheeler trucks loaded with softdrinks and another 10-wheeler truck bearing animal feeds. The Philippine Coast Guard said that the vessel was on its way to the anchorage area off Hagnaya port when it ran aground at around 0426 hrs at the Hagnaya entrance channel. The Coast Guard attributed the accident to a combination of strong waves and currents aggravated by crew's miscalculation of the channel's depth. The Coast Guard said that the vessel had keeled over on her starboard side and was presently half-submerged. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

SWEET LADY II (Malta)

London, Aug 25 -- Bulk Sweet Lady II sailed New Orleans Aug 19.

TANJA (Madeira)

Gothenburg, Aug 25 -- At 0530 today, general cargo Tanja (2190 gt, built 1989), with pilot on board, asked to pass the foldable bridge at Vanersborg and got "go ahead." When half way under, the bridge suddenly lowered and hit the forward mast, which was bent and broken, and lanterns broken. Despite full astern and stop the incident could not be avoided. Authorities inspected and tested bridge function and found all OK and no technical problems despite the incident. Vessel due for repair. -- Westax Marine Services AB.

TAXIARCHIS (Greece)

London, Aug 22 -- Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: During the morning of Aug 21, passenger ro/ro Taxiarchis (10749 gt, built 1976) sustained damage to the port main engine while on passage: Chios for Piraeus, approximately 5.2 nautical miles from the southern end of the island. The damage was inspected by the crew but found to be more serious than initially believed and at 0400 hrs, the decision was taken to return to Chios. The vessel which was performing the schedule Mytilene-Chios-Piraeus with 594 passengers on board, arrived back at Chios port at 0640 hrs. At 1745hrs,

following inspection of the repairs and issuance of class maintain certificate the vessel was permitted to sail for Piraeus. The passengers bound for Mytilene were forwarded to their destination on another vessel at 1800 hrs. At 0030 hrs Aug 22, the vessel again experienced damage to the port main engine, while bound for Piraeus with 537 passengers on board, but continued onto Piraeus.

Piraeus, Aug 22 -- Passenger ro/ro Taxiarchis arrived Piraeus today with a mechanical failure in its port main engine. The vessel is still in port, awaiting inspection. -- Lloyd's Agents.

THERESA R II (U.S.A.)

London, Aug 21 -- A press report, dated Aug 20, states: The Coast Guard said seven fishermen from New Bedford were rescued last night from fishing Theresa R II (length 75 ft) that was sinking in the waters off Nantucket. The fishermen were on board the vessel when it started taking on water in waters about 145 miles north-east of Nantucket around 2230 hrs. Crew members from fishing Harvester, another vessel from New Bedford, rescued the fishermen about an hour later. No injuries were reported. A Coast Guard cutter is taking the rescued fishermen to Boston today. It was not immediately clear if the fishing vessel sank. The Coast Guard searched the area but were unable to locate it.

London, Aug 22 -- A Coast Guard Boston press release, dated Aug 20, states: A Coast Guard cutter is transporting seven fisherman to Boston today after they were rescued, 2328 Friday night, by a New Bedford, Mass. fishing vessel 145 miles northeast of Nantucket, Mass. Coast Guard Group Woods Hole, Mass. received a report 2030 last night from other nearby fishing boats that fishing Theresa R II, also from New Bedford, was taking on water and needed assistance. Fishing Harvester, that was in the area, came along side and rescued Theresa R II's crew members. Coast Guard cutter Seneca diverted from a routine patrol last night and arrived on scene 1030 hrs when it took the rescued fisherman onboard from Harvester. Seneca is enroute to Boston, Mass. where the fishermen will be dropped off. Air Station Cape Cod launched a Falcon jet and a Jayhawk helicopter last night. Both were released from the case after the fishermen were safely onboard Harvester.. No injuries are reported, and the Coast Guard will investigate the cause of the sinking.

London, Aug 22 -- A press report, dated today, states: Seven New Bedford fishermen rescued from sinking fishing Theresa R II late Friday night were dropped off in Boston by the U.S. Coast Guard early yesterday morning. The 75-foot steel fishing boat sank 145 miles northeast of Nantucket. A fellow New Bedford boat, the scalloper Harvester, rescued the Theresa R II's crew from the sinking vessel. "They couldn't keep up with the water. They couldn't figure

out where it was coming from and it just overwhelmed them," said John Rita, owner of Theresa R II, who built the vessel in 1968.

London, Aug 22 -- A report from Boston Coast Guard, timed 1341, UTC, today, states: Fishing Theresa R II reported taking on water in lat 41 11N, long 66 43W, Aug 20, and subsequently sank.

TOJAKO (Norway)

See Aalfjord.

TRADEWIND SUNRISE (Panama)

London, Aug 21 -- A press report, dated today, states: Chemical/oil carrier Tradewind Sunrise, on board which four men perished in a blast in June, was last night to be "arrested", following an ex-parte order granted by Justice Rajendra Narine in the Port of Spain High Court. The order was granted around 1830 yesterday and was in the process of being served about two hours later by Supreme Court Registrar Evelyn Ann Petersen. The tanker is anchored about two miles off Staubles Bay, Chaguaramas. Petersen was accompanied by attorney for the families of the four dead men, Nyreen Alfonso, who had appeared before Justice Narine that evening. The order is that the vessel be detained pending the outcome of the current court battle for compensation for the deaths of the four. It is understood that the ex-parte order was sought after it was discovered that moves were in train, which suggested that the vessel was being prepared to leave the jurisdiction. Two security officers were to be left stationed on the tanker.

London, Aug 22 -- A press report, dated today, states: The preliminary draft report by the Maritime Services Division on the investigation of the explosion onboard chemical/oil carrier Tradewind Sunrise, on June 22, has concluded that safety procedures were not followed by ship officials and that there was negligence in ensuring that a gas-free environment was maintained onboard the ship before welding operations were conducted. The tanker was not in a gas-free condition when four Trinidadian contract workers, who were employed by InterIsle Construction and Fabrication Company Limited, Chaguaramas, were instructed to perform maintenance and repair work onboard the vessel. Police found a cutting torch in the hand of one of the workers, with the propane valve in an open position, and the enquiry has determined that the cause of the incident was due to the lighting of the propane/oxygen torch within the area of the No.2 port tank. Investigators discovered that the butterworth (tank cleaning cover) lid of the No.2 port tank was found open and they believe that sparks or flames from the welding torch entered the tank and caused the explosion. Family members of the victims who were grief-stricken by the untimely death of the men retained attorney Nyree Alfonso to help seek compensation as a result of

the explosion. Alfonso said that family members had not received workman's compensation from V Ships of Miami and that an ex-parte order was sought to detain the ship after it was learned that the boat was trying to secure release by the Maritime Services Division in order to leave the country. The order states that the vessel will be "arrested" until the current court battle for compensation for the deaths of the four has been settled. Although Melville Shipping is the local agent for the boat, Interisle Construction was sub-contracted by V Ships of Miami which was recruited by the owner of the vessel to provide technical management services. Interviews were conducted with the contractor, V Ships of Miami, the entire crew, and Inter Isle Construction and Fabrication Company Ltd and there has been no evidence that a request for the authorisation for a hot work permit was obtained from the management's office. There was also no evidence that the ship's staff conducted a risk assessment of the repairs before allowing the hot works to be conducted, the draft report said. It said before the explosion, the vessel was last used to transport diesel and no one was delegated as being responsible for safety procedures or the supervision of the work or for maintaining a fire watch. The area was not tested by any gas-testing device for determining the gas/vapour concentration in the area, the report added. Alfonso is fighting to have the families compensated under common law damages for negligence. The attorney, who specialises in maritime law, has been contacted by the lawyers of V Ships of Miami, Steers International Legal Consultants (Barbados) and negotiations are expected to be initiated today.

London, Aug 22 -- V-ships reports that attorneys for the P and I Club of chemical/oil carrier Tradewind Sunrise are in discussion with the lawyers for the families of the four shipyard workers who lost their lives following an explosion on board the vessel, while it was undergoing maintenance repairs. The issue of compensation in this regrettable incident, is a private matter between the families and the Club. The vessel has completed temporary repairs in Trinidad. Following the conclusion of discussions, the vessel will proceed to Curacao drydock to make permanent repairs. Following permanent repairs, the vessel will resume its regular trade from Trinidad. V.Ships is awaiting the full and final investigative report, in which it participated, but has in the interim, issued a Fleet Circular reaffirming practices on board ship, while undergoing maintenance and repair, especially covering instances where shore/yard personnel carry out the repairs, as was the case in Trinidad.

London, Aug 24 -- Chemical/oil carrier Tradewind Sunrise, which had a repair yard blast in June, killing four people, has been arrested in Trinidad. An ex-parte order was

granted to prevent the ship leaving the island until a legal wrangle over compensation to the victims' families is sorted out. But it appeared yesterday that the vessel will be able to leave as soon as the owner posts a bond. Meanwhile, there have been accusations of negligence on the part of ship staff employed by V.Ships. According to the Trinidad & Tobago Express newspaper, a preliminary draft report into the incident concludes that safety procedures were not followed. In particular, there is said to have been negligence in insuring that a gas-free environment was maintained during welding operations. Police reportedly found a cutting torch in the hands of one of the workers, with the propane valve in an open position. Investigators discovered the butterworth lid (tank cleaning cover) of the No 2 port tank was open, and believe that sparks or flames from the torch caused the explosion. There was also no evidence of any request for the authorisation of a hot-work permit, nor that the ship's staff had conducted a risk assessment before hot works commenced. The vessel was last used to transport diesel, with no one delegated as responsible for safety procedures, supervision or fire watch. No tests were conducted for gas/vapour concentration, the report is said to have added. Sean O'Connor, director of InterIsle Construction, which had employed the dead men, said yesterday that the company accepted the thrust of the article. "There are little bits of inaccuracy, but other than that, there is not really a lot to disagree with," he said. A spokesperson for V.Ships declined to be drawn on whether the company accepted that the ship staff had been negligent. He said the report was preliminary and V.Ships' comments had not yet been incorporated. "Until all the facts are in ... we are not going to get a balanced picture," he said. The company said attorneys for P&I club Steamship Mutual were talking to legal representatives of the bereaved, but did not disclose the sums involved. Tradewind Sunrise has completed temporary repairs in Trinidad and intends to proceed to Curacao dry dock for permanent repairs before resuming service. "V.Ships is awaiting the full and final investigative report, in which it participated, but has in the interim issued a fleet circular reaffirming practices aboard ship while undergoing maintenance and repair, especially covering instances where shore/yard personnel carry out the repairs," the company added.

London, Aug 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: A Trinidadian attorney representing the families of four men killed onboard chemical/oil carrier Tradewind Sunrise on Jun 22 is now seeking TTS\$5 million in compensation from the ship's owners. At a joint news conference yesterday between the Seamen and Water Front Workers Trade Union and attorney for the victims, Myre Alphonso, it was stated that a report on the explosion revealed gross negligence on the part

of the owners of the vessel and that such vessel should not leave Trinidad waters until there be full compensation. "That figure that I have worked through the night to come up with is TTS\$5.6 million, they will be asked to put up a bond and that sum should sit in a bank in Trinidad in the form of a guarantee," said attorney Myre Alphonso. The money she said will be processed on final determination of the court matter. Attorney Alphonso launched a heavy verbal attack on the ship's owners saying the vessel continues to pump dirty oily water into the Chagaramas west coast area. She said had this happened in another country both master and crew would have been immediately arrested, thrown in jail and fined for environmental pollution. Trinidad and Tobago's Environmental Management Agency, the EMA, also came in for heavy criticism for what she said was its failure to be proactive on the matter. The Seamen and Water Front Workers Trade Union is also calling on the Trinidad government to enact new shipping legislation to deal with such maritime offences. Preparations were underway over the weekend for the ship to leave the country when, within hours, a high court order was served on its owners preventing it from leaving, pending a legal outcome.

London, Aug 25 -- A press report, dated today, states: Chemical/oil carrier Tradewind Sunrise is expected to be released from arrest today as Steers International Legal Consultants (Barbados), have agreed to pay the \$5.6 million bond for the release of the vessel. The lawyer for the families of the victims, Nyree Alfonso said that an attorney from the Barbados-based law firm has confirmed that the owners of the vessel will deposit the \$5.6 million bond into a Republic Bank account today. President general of the Seamen and Waterfront Workers' Trade Union's (SWWTU) Michael Annisette confirmed at a press conference on Tuesday at the SWWTU Hall at Wrightson road that InterIsle Construction and Fabrication Company Ltd agreed to pay compensation for the deaths of the four employees. Alfonso is fighting to have the families compensated under common law damages for negligence.

TRANSMODAL (Argentina)

Buenos Aires, Aug 22 -- Ro/ro Transmodal is still under repairs, berthed at TRP Terminal of the port of Buenos Aires. Repairs are expected to be completed in approximately two months. -- Lloyd's Agents.

TULSA (U.S.A.)

London, Aug 24 -- A Coast Guard New Orleans press release, dated Aug 22, states: The Coast Guard is responding to an inland oil spill at mile marker 32 of the Ouchita/Black River where dredger Tulsa (408 gt, built 1976) sank in the middle of the channel today, spilling an estimated

840 gallons of diesel fuel, hydraulic oil and lube oil. All four crewmembers were safely rescued from the water and the waterway was closed to maritime traffic to facilitate the cleanup and salvage operations. Leading the cleanup and investigation of the incident are personnel from Coast Guard Marine Safety Unit Baton Rouge, La. Also assisting are personnel from the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Louisiana State Police and Army Corps of Engineers.

Vlieborg (Netherlands)

London, Aug 25 -- A press report, dated Aug 24, states: General cargo Vlieborg (6130 gt, built 1999) struck the north pier of the Duluth Ship Canal near the Aerial Lift Bridge shortly before 1330 today as it was leaving the port of Duluth-Superior. Vlieborg struck the pier wall just before it would have sailed under the bridge. The vessel turned around near the Duluth Entertainment Convention Center and headed back into the harbour. "He was lined up straight with the ship canal," Aerial Lift Bridge operator Dale Mitchell said. "All of a sudden, he went to port and hit the wall." There were no reports of injuries on the pier or the vessel. Mitchell said the pier and ship sustained little visible damage above the waterline. He did not know how much damage either received below the waterline. Mitchell said the vessel had left the General Mills elevator. It was loaded with beet pellets, according to the Shipping News. After hitting the pier Vlieborg moved to the harbour's inner anchorage to be inspected by the U.S. Coast Guard. USCG Lt. Scott Stoermer of the Marine Safety Unit in Duluth said it was too early to tell what may have caused the accident. "The Coast Guard will be conducting an investigation of the vessel and the situation surrounding the incident," he said shortly before 1500 hrs. "That investigation will be started shortly. There will be a Coast Guard boarding team going out to Vlieborg. The team consists of Marine Safety Unit personnel who will inspect the vessel and interview crew members.

Willow (Bahamas)

London, Aug 23 -- A Port of Bideford report states: General cargo Willow (1560 gt, built 1983) had major breakdown after departing from Rotterdam apparently putting a piston through the side of the engine. It was awaiting a tug to tow it back to Rotterdam, said the agents Pike Ward, am, Aug 21. (Note -- Willow sailed Rotterdam 1700, Aug 18 for Bideford, passed Dover Strait Aug 19 westbound, and passed Dover Strait eastbound Aug 21, in tow of tug Kingston and arrived Rotterdam 1115, Aug 22.)

ZARA (Malaysia)

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

ZARA 3 (Malaysia)

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

ZIEMIA GORNOSLASKA (Liberia)

London, Aug 22 -- Bulk Ziemia Gornoslaska was today reported at Ste Zotique anchorage, for repairs.

ZIEMIA LODZKA (Liberia)

London, Aug 24 -- Upbound bulk Ziemia Lodzka (17458 gt, built 1992) struck Lower Beauharnois lock No.3, Quebec, in lat 45 19N, long 74 55W at 1241, EDST, Aug 23. Both the vessel and lock sustained damage. No pollution and no injuries reported.



BAY OF BENGAL

Karachi, Aug 24 -- Understand from Chittagong Port Authority, that product tanker Radwan is being scrapped, while the pirates that tried to loot it are on trial in a local court. Lloyd's List Correspondent.

SOMALIA

Nairobi, Aug 18 -- The hijackers of a food aid-laden general cargo Semlow off the northeastern coast of Somalia in June have not off-loaded any of its cargo as has been reported by various media, a local official told IRIN today. "Nothing has been removed from the ship and no food from it has been to our markets," Muhammad Shaykh, the district commissioner of the central Somalian town of Haradhere, said. He was reacting to media reports that the hijackers had off-loaded some of the food aid from the ship and were selling it in markets in and around Haradhere, where the ship is anchored. Muhammad said the seas around Haradhere were "rough at this time of year and no one can off-load anything". The UN World Food Programme (WFP) said it was attempting to verify the conflicting reports about the ship and its cargo. "We are still checking, but if it is true that it's not being off-loaded, WFP welcomes it," Peter Smerdon, a senior WFP spokesman in Nairobi, Kenya, told IRIN on Thursday. "We are, however, calling for the immediate and unconditional release of the ship, its crew and cargo." -- Reuters.

London, Aug 24 -- A press report, dated Aug 23, states: A regional Somali warlord said today that the crew of a United Nations-chartered relief ship hijacked two months ago off the lawless country's eastern coast will be prosecuted for illegally entering Somali waters. Mohamed Sheikh Ali, who the controls district off of which the vessel has been held by armed pirates since late June, said the 10-man crew of general cargo Semlow will be tried under laws intended to protect the coast from illegal fishing and dumping. "The laws

were already in place before the arrest of the ship," said Ali, who claims the title of district commissioner for area in central Somalia around Haradere, the home region of the gunmen. "The district introduced them to protect Somalia's fishing zones and prevent the dumping of chemical waste there," he said. Ali gave no details of the law nor any explanation of why the crew - who were transporting 850 tons of German and Japanese donated rice for the World Food Programme (WFP) to distribute to Somali tsunami victims, would be tried under it. Ali and the apparent leader of the hijackers, Mohamed Abdi Afweyne, both said the use of intermediaries was delaying the release of the ship and crew. "They are wasting time by talking to people who have no power to release the ship," Ali said, referring to the WFP's efforts with the fledgling transitional government that asserts little control over most of the anarchic nation. "The best method is to negotiate with the people of Haradere if they really want a solution," Ali said, in comments echoed by Afweyne who also spoke from Haradere. "The owners of the ship and WFP seem to be less concerned about the crew than the cargo," Afweyne said, adding that the 10 seamen were being well treated and even allowed alcoholic beverages.

SOUTH EAST ASIA

London, Aug 23 -- A report from Johore Bahru, dated Aug 21, states: Ships plying the Straits of Malacca have been enlisted to help in the hunt for the missing tug Zara and barge Zara 3, which was reported to have been hijacked by armed Indonesians on Tuesday (Aug 16). The International Maritime Bureau (IMB) has passed on photographs of the Sarawak-registered vessel to regional maritime authorities as well as to passing ships. IMB piracy reporting centre regional manager Noel Chong said the pictures were provided by the owners. Malaysian marine police and their Indonesian counterparts have launched an operation to locate the ship, which was transporting oil platform spare parts worth RM1.8 million from Pasir Gudang to Miri. The vessel, with a crew of nine, was reported to have been attacked at about 0230, local time, in Indonesian waters after it had left Teluk Ramunia in Johor for Labuan 12 hours earlier. The incident came to light the next day when the sole Malaysian crewman of the ship was found adrift clinging on to a piece of wood by an Indonesian navy crew and taken to their base in Tanjung Pinang. The crewman has been identified as John Balang from Limbang, Sarawak. The other crew members, including the master, are Indonesians. Meanwhile, Bernama reports that the fate of the missing eight remained unknown. It quoted Southern Region Marine Police chief Supt. Omar Dawam as saying that the boat had yet to be traced.

SOUTH-EAST ASIA

London, Aug 22 -- A press report, dated Aug 19, states: A joint search

operation between the marine police and Indonesian navy is under way for Sibu-registered ship Zara 3 (barge Zara 3, 957 gt, built 1991) believed to have been hijacked by Indonesian pirates on Tuesday (Aug 16). Zara 3 was transporting oil platform spare parts from Pasir Gudang to Miri when it was believed to have been attacked in Indonesian waters about 0230 hrs. The incident was only known the next day when the sole Malaysian crewman of the ship was found adrift on a lifeboat and taken to an Indonesian navy base in Tanjung Pinang. The crewman, identified as John Balang from Limbang, Sarawak, was rescued by a fishing boat. Southern region marine police chief Assistant Commissioner Abdul Aziz Yusof said Zara 3 was believed to be in Indonesian waters. "We have sent word to ships sailing in the Straits of Malacca to be on the lookout for the vessel and to inform us if they see it," he said. Sources said the ship's owner in Sibu has yet to receive any ransom demand. Zara 3 had a nine-man crew, including the master. Other than Balang, the rest of the crew are Indonesians.

London, Aug 22 -- A press report, dated Aug 20, states: The fate of eight crew members of tug Zara (95 gt, built 1999) believed to have been hijacked by pirates in Indonesian waters on Tuesday (Aug 16) still remains unknown. Southern Region Marine Police chief, Supt Omar Dawam said Malaysia and Indonesia had intensified efforts to trace the vessel, which was carrying offshore equipment valued at RM1.8 million. "Until now we have not been able to trace the ship," he said when contacted Saturday. In the incident, Zara which was towing barge Zara 3, and carrying nine crew was attacked by three masked men armed with long knives about 60 nautical miles after it had left Teluk Ramunia in Johor for Labuan 12 hours earlier. Eight Indonesian crew and their Indonesian master were taken hostage while a local, John Balang, 33, from Limbang in Sarawak was thrown overboard. John was rescued by the Indonesian navy and is reported to be doing well and under the care of the Indonesian authorities. John's company reported the matter to the Marine Police here on being informed of the incident.

Port State Control



UNITED KINGDOM

London, Aug 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: A major ferry service has been suspended because of serious concerns about the safety of the vessels. The Maritime and Coastguard Agency said the Portsmouth to Ryde Wightlink Fastcats posed "a risk of serious danger to safety of life and property."

The MCA said the company needed to take corrective measures. Wightlink denied there were any concerns over the "inherent safety of the vessels" and said it was meeting the MCA today about the issue. The company said the route would be run temporarily by another company until the suspension was lifted. The fleet of roll-on roll-off car ferries from Portsmouth to Fishbourne, also on the Isle of Wight, are unaffected. Mark Clark, a Maritime and Coastguard Agency spokesman, said withdrawal of the international safety management document of compliance and safety management certificates followed two unreported engine fires on board one of the vessels. They happened on May 12 and 13, but were only discovered by the MCA at the end of July, he said. A subsequent inquiry raised serious safety concerns about the rest of the fleet, he added. "Removal of these certificates will result in the immediate suspension of services on these ferries. The reason for the withdrawal is the consideration that the company is unable to operate these vessels without creating a risk of serious danger to safety of life and property without undertaking further corrective measures." In its statement Wightlink said: "We do not believe that the MCA's action has arisen through any concern about the inherent safety of the vessels, nor has there been any major incident on board any of our vessels, endangering the safety of life or property. Wightlink places the highest priority on the safety of its passengers and crew at all times."

London, Aug 18 -- A press release from the Maritime & Coastguard Agency, timed 1252, GMT, today, states: Earlier today the MCA withdrew the ISM Document of Compliance and Safety Management Certificates from the following Wightlink Fast Ferries: Ferry Fastcat Ryde (478 gt, built 1996), ferry Fastcat Shanklin (482 gt, built 1996), ferry Our Lady Patricia (312 gt, built 1986) and Our Lady Pamela (313 gt, built 1986). Removal of these certificates will result in the immediate suspension of services on these ferries. The reason for the withdrawal is the consideration that the company is unable to operate these vessels without creating a risk of serious danger to safety of life and property without undertaking further corrective measures. The concerns have come to the attention of the agency as a result of investigation into a recent incident. The action does not affect the services of the Company's ro-ro ferries. Passengers who are booked on the affected fast craft are advised to contact the company directly or the travel agent from whom they booked their tickets. The MCA has advised Wightlink of their decision and have asked that the Company contact the Agency directly to discuss proposals in order to restore the withdrawn certificates.

London, Aug 19 -- A press report, dated today, states: A ferry service

suspended yesterday because of safety fears over its fleet has restarted after two of its vessels were given the all clear. The Maritime and Coastguard Agency withdrew the safety certificates for Wightlink's four Fastcat ships as fires on board had gone unreported. This evening, the agency confirmed it had reinstated safety certificates on two vessels. Wightlink said they are running a full service from Portsmouth to Ryde. A Wightlink spokeswoman said: "We have worked non-stop to put in place the documentation and reporting and other procedures requested by the MCA." She said the company apologised to passengers for any inconvenience.



AMBAR (Honduras)

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

CAN GIO (Honduras)

London, Aug 20 -- A press report, dated Aug 19, states: General cargo Can Gio will leave Africa on Tuesday (Aug 23) for its return voyage home, said the deputy director of the SEA Sai Gon Shipping Co, Pham Ngoc Son. Son said the vessel was still in fine operating condition because it was regularly maintained. With a current maximum speed of six nautical miles per hour, it would return to Vietnam in two months, he said. The Can Gio was seized by Tanzanian officials on Jul 27, 2004, over a trade dispute. The dispute arose over a commercial contract between another company and Tanzania's Mohammed Enterprises for 6,000 tonnes of Vietnamese rice. A Tanzanian court ordered seizure of the vessel and the Vietnamese Government was named as a defendant in the case. Son said SEA Sai Gon received a judgement last Tuesday from a Tanzanian court allowing the vessel to leave Tanzania. The document ordered the vessel to leave the port as soon as possible and stated that all parties to the dispute would bear the burden of their own losses. After receiving the court order, the company sent representatives to come to terms on payment of port and service fees which amounted to about US\$96,000.

CAPE ENDURANCE (Panama)

Cape Town, Aug 25 -- Standby safety vessel Cape Endurance: The port of Cape Town confirms that the vessel is still at this port. -- Lloyd's Agents.

CROATIAN VESSEL BOARDED BY INDONESIAN NAVY

London, Aug 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: The Indonesian navy stormed a Croatian ship early on Monday (Aug 22) and detained all 25 crew members, Croatia's ambassador

to Indonesia said, calling it an illegal act. "We are asking the foreign ministry to explain what happened," said ambassador Aleksander Broz, adding that the ship's owner is considering bringing Indonesia to an international maritime court. The privately owned Croatian vessel has been involved in a lengthy legal battle with Indonesian officials since August 2004, when it was accused of using improper travel documents. The East Java High Court ruled in favour of the company in May and ordered the navy to escort it to international waters, but local authorities prevented it from leaving, Mr Broz said. Yesterday, 200 armed navy personnel and police stormed the vessel and seized the 25 Croatian crew members, officials and witnesses said. A navy spokesman said it was acting on orders from prosecutors who claimed the vessel was carrying illegal logs. "This ship was free to sail on May 6," Mr Broz said. "Everything that has happened since that point is illegal."

GEPARD (Cyprus)

Maassluis, Aug 23 -- Tug Gepard is still under arrest at Flushing. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents.

JUPITER (Cyprus)

St. Petersburg, Aug 23 -- Bulk/c.c. Jupiter, now named Silver Lakes, under Belize flag, sailed from St. Petersburg on Aug 13. -- Lloyd's Agents.

MAWASHI AL-GASSEEM (Kuwait)

London, Aug 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: Livestock Mawashi Al-Gasseem which has been impounded at Port Adelaide since March, is to be sold. Orders were made in the Federal Court today commencing the sale process. The ship has racked up debts to oil suppliers and other companies of more than \$600,000. The ship's Saudi owners have not paid the 69 foreign crew since February. Creditors and crew hope the valuation and sale of the vessel will bring an end to the six-month saga. Jamie Newlyn from the Maritime Union of Australia says the ruling is finally some positive news for the crew. "It's still a waiting game for the time being," Mr Newlyn said. "We just need to wait and see what the valuation occurs and whether there is a sale so the crew can be paid and repatriated."

MIRNA (Croatia)

London, Aug 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: The Indonesian navy has impounded a Croatian ship and detained its 20-man crew, state-run HRT television reported today quoting the Croatian ambassador. The report quoted "Croatian sources" as saying the action was taken "because it was carrying illegal cargo". Croatian Ambassador Aleksander Broz said the Indonesian action was "not in line with the law". "We are asking the Foreign Ministry to explain what happened," said Ambassador Aleksander Broz, adding that the

ship's owner is considering bringing Indonesia to an international maritime court. The privately owned general cargo Mirna has been involved in a lengthy legal battle with Indonesian officials since August 2004, when the logging vessel was accused of using improper travel documents. The East Java High Court ruled in favour of the company in May and ordered the navy to escort it from the port city of Surabaya to international waters, but local authorities prevented it from leaving, Broz said. Lt. Col. Guntur Wahyudi, a navy spokesman, said the troops were acting on orders from prosecutors who claimed the vessel was carrying illegal logs, which were seized by forestry officials. "This ship was free to sail on May 6," Broz said. "From my standpoint, everything that has happened since that point is illegal, including the seizure, even if that was done by court order." When the Mirna was originally intercepted in the Arafuru Sea in eastern Indonesia, it was carrying 15,000 cubic meters of logs. The vessel was subcontracted out to a third party. Agoes Salim Dunda, the ship's representative in Jakarta, called on the government - including the ministers of foreign affairs, transportation and forestry - to abide by the high court's decision to release the Mirna. "Our crew knows nothing about illegal logging," he said. "Prosecutors should investigate the company that is involved in the felling of the trees, not us."

London, Aug 24 -- The Indonesian Navy stormed a Croatian-flagged cargo ship early yesterday and detained all 25 crew members on board, AP reports. The privately owned general cargo Mirna has been involved in a lengthy legal battle with Indonesian officials since August 2004, when the logging vessel was accused of using improper travel documents. Some 200 armed Navy personnel and police stormed the vessel and seized the 25 Croatian crew members, officials and witnesses said. Lt Col Guntur Wahyudi, a Navy spokesman, said the troops were acting on orders from prosecutors who claimed the vessel was carrying illegal logs.

London, Aug 25 -- Croatian shipping company Losinjaska Plovidba plans to take legal action against Indonesian authorities after one of its vessels was stormed by the Indonesian Navy and 17 crew were held at gunpoint. General cargo Mirna has been at the centre of a legal dispute since last August when Indonesian officials claimed the logging vessel was using improper travel documents, and on Tuesday armed navy personnel prevented the ship from leaving port. Speaking from Losinjaska Plovidba's headquarters in Rijeka, company director Zlatko Mokovic said: "We will sue them because they have detained our ship without proper reason to do so. Mirna had legal approval to leave port. "But around 200 soldiers boarded the ship on the day when Captain Joso Nekić and his crew were about to

leave the port. The authorities had no legal reason to do so. "A court has already ruled that the navy should escort the ship out of port but instead soldiers actually stopped the ship leaving." The East Java High Court had ordered the navy to escort it from port in Surabaya after ruling in favour of the company in May. But on Tuesday hundreds of navy personnel, claiming orders from prosecutors who said the vessel was being used to transport illegal logs, boarded the ship and held crew at gunpoint. Mr Mokovic denied claims that the ship had at any point been using improper documents. "The court gave out a clear decision which cleared us of all allegations," he said. Mr Mokovic's words echoed those of a company representative in Jakarta. "We will file a suit with the (International) Maritime Court," Reuters quoted Agoes Salim Dunda as saying. Government officials and prosecutors are not abiding by their own laws." An Indonesian government official said the case against Mirna was now before the Supreme Court. "The boat cannot leave port until the legal process is finished," Foreign Affairs Ministry spokesman Yuri Thamrin said. Senior Security Minister Widodo Adisucipto said the ship would continue to be held until the court hearing is completed. "If the legal process finds the ship is not guilty then we will ask the Indonesian eastern fleet authorities to release it so it doesn't disrupt bilateral relations," he told reporters. He said releasing the ship without completing the legal process would give the impression that foreign ships can enter Indonesian waters with inadequate travel documents. The Croatian Foreign Ministry meanwhile expressed "dismay at the conduct of executive authorities in the Indonesian government, who were acting in complete contradiction with ... the rule of law", spokeswoman Ivana Crnić said.

NAVIGATOR

Cape Town, Aug 25 -- Tug/supply Navigator: The port of Cape Town confirms that the vessel is still at this port -- Lloyd's Agents.

PAULIJING (Belize)

London, Aug 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: Malaysian marine police have detained a Belize-registered merchant ship and arrested 20 Chinese crew including the captain on suspicion that the vessel is, in fact, general cargo Natris I, reportedly hijacked and missing for three years. General cargo Paulijing (5678 gt, built 1982) is reported to have been stopped at 0320 hrs, in an operation involving the special operations force about nine nautical miles off Kukup, Pontian. Police believe the Paulijing, is the Natris I which went missing in Batam waters, Indonesia on Nov 17, 2002 after reportedly being hijacked. The owners of the Natris have been contacted to identify the vessel with the help of forensics.

RA NAM (North Korea)

London, Aug 22 -- General cargo Ra Nam is today reported still at South East Lamma Anchorage, Hong Kong, under arrest.

London, Aug 24 -- General cargo Ra Nam sailed from Hong Kong 1309, Aug 24.

RIGEL 4 (South Africa)

Cape Town, Aug 25 -- Fishing Rigel 4: The port confirms that the vessel is still in the port of Cape Town. -- Lloyd's Agents.

SAFMARINE MEROULA (Cyprus)

See under "Marine."

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

Venice, Aug 22 -- General cargo Talavera is still at Chioggia under arrest. -- Lloyd's Agents.

TRADEWIND SUNRISE (Panama)

See under "Marine."

**BULGARIA**

United Nations, Aug 18 -- More than a quarter of Bulgaria's 7.4 million people have been affected by flooding that has killed 20 and caused some \$633 million in damage, the United Nations said today. Following more heavy rainfall last weekend, a state of emergency remained in force in 15 cities and unfavourable weather conditions were expected to continue in some parts of the country, the U.N. Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs said. The office has been helping co-ordinate the international response to the emergency. Nearly all arable land has been destroyed in five regions including around the capital Sofia, it said. Bulgaria and neighboring countries have been swept for weeks by torrential rains. Bulgaria's response has been hampered by the absence of a government following inconclusive elections in June, but a new centre-left cabinet started work yesterday, ending the political stalemate. While flooded roads and collapsed bridges have made it difficult to assess needs, preventing the possible spread of disease was a major concern and priority items included food and bedding for 20,000 people, hepatitis vaccine, antibiotics, insect repellent and motor pumps, the office said. Austria, the Czech Republic, Moldova, Switzerland, Britain and the United States were among those providing emergency aid. The U.N. Development Program and the U.N. Children's Fund UNICEF were also helping out with cash, blankets, water purification equipment and other household items, the U.N. office said. -- Reuters.

CANADA

London, Aug 23 -- A press report, dated Aug 22, states: The City of Toronto continues to clean-up and repair roads and facilities damaged by Friday's (Aug 19) storm. Emergency services staff responded to over 1,700 calls. In addition, city staff have responded to several hundred calls for assistance related to flooding. As a result of the excellent work of the emergency services and City staff the storm did not result in any major injuries or deaths. Crews continued work throughout the weekend and work is expected continue on major projects this week. Mayor David Miller said: "The clean-up and repair of the areas still affected will take some time. Residents have helped tremendously by cleaning up debris and advising the city of areas that need attention. The amount of rain that fell in such a short time was extraordinary by any standard, the response of emergency crews and city staff cushioned the impact of the storm." The following is an update on major storm related work: Transportation: Finch Avenue West (past Sentinel): A large section of Finch Avenue West washed away as a result of the heavy rain and flooding. Repair of the collapsed section of road will take approximately three to four months. The total cost of repairs will be approximately \$5 million. Transportation staff are inspecting bridges and overpasses for any damage as a result of the storm and flood. Water: Highland Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant: The plant was flooded and sustained damage to approximately 30% of its equipment and operation. Emergency bypass of storm water was activated in order to protect equipment. Damage to the plant is still being assessed, but is expected to exceed \$1 million. Parks, Forestry and Recreation: Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff attended 350 calls, working more than 600 hours of over-time. Some Parks facilities were flooded and sustained damage. Associated costs and impact to programs and services are still being assessed. Repairs to facilities will be carried out immediately.

London, Aug 24 -- A press report, dated Aug 23, states: Damage from a vicious series of thunderstorms and tornados that battered Southern Ontario on Friday (Aug 19) is estimated to be more than Can\$100-million, according to the Insurance Bureau of Canada. There have been about 5,200 homeowner insurance claims, and 700 automobile insurance claims in the Greater Toronto Area alone, said Mark Yakabuski, the Insurance Bureau's vice-president federal affairs and Ontario. The storms, which rolled across Southern Ontario from Lake Huron to Lake Ontario in the afternoon, brought with them heavy rain, lightning and wind. Two F2 level tornadoes, with wind speeds up to 240 kilometres an hour, hit the communities of Conestoga Lake and Fergus, Ont. In Fergus, a

rural farm community north of Guelph, Ont., more 300 home insurance claims have been already been filed, said Mr. Yakabuski. Barns were toppled and roofs ripped off homes in the area. "Very easily this storm will exceed \$100-million in damages," said Mr. Yakabuski. Most victims of the storm were covered by home and auto insurance, said Mr. Yakabuski, although houses that saw water creep in from windows and doors due to surrounding overland flooding are not covered. About 40 per cent of insurance companies have currently reported to the Insurance Bureau of Canada. On top of insurance costs, the city of Toronto anticipates it will spend more than \$5-million to repair washed-out roadways and other damage.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

London, Aug 19 -- Flooding has caused 3,500 houses to collapse, killing a baby and leaving 22,500 people homeless in the Central African Republic's capital Bangui, the Red Cross said in a revised assessment of flood damage yesterday. The three-month-old child was killed when a house collapsed on Sunday (Aug 14) in Malimaka, one of several poor, crowded neighbourhoods in the city of 600,000, the Central African Red Cross said. Several other people were hurt as buildings, constructed mostly of clay and without foundations to support them, tumbled down in the aftermath of wet-season deluges.

CHINA

London, Aug 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: Heavy rain and landslides have killed at least 47 people across China and storms are snarling transport and flooding reservoirs, reports said yesterday. The central province of Hubei was hardest hit, with heavy rain and flooding there claiming 32 lives, China Central Television reported. In the southern manufacturing hubs of Shenzhen and Dongguan, north of Hong Kong, eight people died after 30 landslides and house collapses during the weekend. Many streets in the busy downtown areas were flooded, bringing traffic to a standstill as cars and buses were stranded. At least 10 towns were flooded in Dongguan, where at least one person was killed. Weather officials warned the rain was likely to continue in the south through the early part of the week. In the north-western province of Shaanxi, six people were killed during the past week as heavy rain and mud-rock flows destroyed more than 600 houses and cut off roads.

EUROPE

London, Aug 22 -- A press report, dated today, states: A husband and wife have drowned in north-eastern Romania, becoming the latest victims of devastating floods and storms that have killed 18 people over the past week, authorities said today. Some 20,000 homes throughout Romania were flooded and more than 1,000

small bridges were damaged. Flooding has also affected about 1,000 kilometers of roads and contaminated some 8,600 wells.

London, Aug 22 -- A press report, dated Aug 21, states: At least 16 people have died in severe storms and flooding which have hit Romania in the past week, the interior ministry has said. The latest victim was an 11-year-old boy, who was swept away by flood waters as he was playing with friends. Another two people are still reported missing. More than 1,400 people from across the country have been evacuated and thousands of homes have been damaged. More than 1,000km of roads have been flooded and thousands of wells contaminated, officials say. Interior Minister Vasile Blaga said some 9,000 soldiers had been deployed to help those affected by the bad weather.

London, Aug 22 -- A press report, dated today, states: Torrential rain has unleashed landslides and floods in Switzerland, cutting off villages, and bringing rail and road traffic to a standstill. Central Switzerland, especially canton Lucerne where two firefighters were killed and nearly 1,500 people evacuated, was the most affected region. Flooding stretches from the Bernese Alps in central Switzerland to the city of St Gallen in the north-east, as rivers burst their banks and lakes overflowed. Two firefighters were killed by a mudslide during the night in the Entlebuch region in canton Lucerne. The area remains cut off after roads and rail tracks were flooded. Lucerne police said in a statement there had been several landslides in the Entlebuch, while the Reuss and Emme rivers had burst their banks. The towns of Emmen, Wohlhusen, Malters and Emmenbrücke were all facing rising waters this morning. In the city of Lucerne, power, gas and phone connections worked intermittently. Flooding closed roads around the town and in much of the canton. In canton Obwalden, local authorities in Sarnen warned the population to stay on the upper floors of buildings and to be prepared for an evacuation. The Aare river also burst its banks in the capital Bern, flooding the Matte neighbourhood and reaching the nearby zoo. In canton Aargau, the situation was described as "critical" by the authorities, especially along the Reuss valley. Navigation along the Rhine was brought to a standstill. The Federal Railways advised against travelling in central Switzerland and said numerous train links, including most of those connecting Lucerne, were cut. The main north-south line through the Gotthard tunnel leading to and from canton Ticino and Italy was shut down by the weather. Trains on the Bern-L tschberg railway ground to a halt this afternoon, after the railway had managed to get a reduced service up and running in the morning. Its services link the Bernese Oberland with the south side of the Alps, which was not badly affected by the wet weather. Some regional train

companies in canton Bern and central Switzerland were forced to cut services. Goods trains have also been cancelled. It has not been possible to transfer merchandise to the road, given that many of the country's motorways and main roads have also been cut off or overloaded by traffic. Travel information service Viasuisse estimated that up to 50 roads had been closed or partially blocked, with cantons Lucerne, Obwalden, Nidwalden, Schwyz and the Bernese Oberland bearing the brunt of the disruptions. The worst affected highways today were the A4 motorway between K ssnacht and Goldau, the A14 between Rotsee and Gisikon-Root, the A6 between Muri and Rubigen and the A8 between Interlaken and Spiez. These routes were closed in both directions. To make matters worse, many minor roads, particularly around the A4, have also been closed, making it difficult for motorists to find alternative routes. Up to 110mm of rain fell in parts of central and western Switzerland by yesterday and more wet weather has been forecast. Viasuisse advised travellers in the most badly affected regions to stay at home if at all possible or to seek information about the state of roads and rail links before setting off on journeys.

London, Aug 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: Severe flooding hit parts of central and eastern Europe yesterday, leaving more than 20 dead, causing landslides and closing roads. In Romania, already hard hit by floods in recent months, new storms and flooding left 18 people dead in the last week. Twelve drowned and six were struck by lightning. The latest victims were a husband and wife in north-east Romania who drowned when a small bridge they were crossing collapsed. Heavy rains also claimed lives in Switzerland and Austria, where landslides triggered by surging waters killed three people. Two Swiss firefighters died yesterday in a landslide caused by this weekend's (Aug 20-21) torrential rains. In southern Austria, the river Mur had burst its banks and continued to flood. A mudslide killed a 50-year-old woman on Sunday and injured her 77-year-old mother-in-law, a local official said. They were in a house that was partially destroyed by the slide. In Turkey, floods collapsed tents housing agricultural workers. Two children drowned after being washed away in a flooded creek in the town of Cadirardic, in Yozgat province. Several streams in eastern Croatia burst their banks after days of heavy rains. Border areas between Croatia and Slovenia were also flooded and emergency services were on alert. Emergency flood warnings were issued in many of Switzerland's cantons as weather experts said they expected the amount of rainfall between Sunday and today to reach the average monthly amounts for August. Raging waters severely affected railway traffic in central and eastern Europe and flooded thousands of

roads, hundreds in Austria, and two national highways in Switzerland. In Romania, where more than 600 miles of roads were flooded, two trains derailed because of the high water. Yesterday, Switzerland's national railway company SBB advised people to refrain from travelling to central Switzerland, after flooding forced the suspension of several lines. Bad weather also led tourists in Italy and Slovakia to shorten holidays after unusually low temperatures and storms.

London, Aug 24 -- A press report, dated Aug 23, states: The worst flooding in southern Germany since 1999 cut off the ski resort of Garmisch-Partenkirchen, washed away roads and led to some areas declaring an emergency, the Interior Ministry in the state of Bavaria said. "It's been raining for days and the rivers are still rising, which we find very worrying," ministry spokesman Michael Ziegler said today. Garmisch-Partenkirchen and the village of Balderschwang in the Allgaeu area of western Bavaria have been cut off from the outside world, Ziegler said. At Eschenlohe at the foot of the Alps a dam broke, threatening to overflow the village, he said. More than 1,000 emergency personnel are piling sandbags on riverbanks and dams in efforts to contain the Loisach and Iller rivers and prevent houses from being washed away. Helicopters are evacuating residents from their homes in the worst-hit areas south of the Danube river, Ziegler said. The A8 highway between Munich and Stuttgart was closed near the city of Augsburg as a bridge under construction was in danger of collapsing. The train service between Munich and Garmisch, about 80 km south has been suspended, the ministry said in a statement on its web site. Augsburg and the town of Kempten have declared emergencies, together with three districts in southern Bavaria.

London, Aug 24 -- A press report, dated Aug 23, states: In Switzerland, record rainfall in the center and east of the country killed four people and left another person missing as water levels in several lakes and rivers approached new highs.

London, Aug 24 -- A press report, dated Aug 23, states: At least six people have been killed and hundreds evacuated from their homes as Switzerland and its neighbours struggle with widespread flooding after days of torrential rainfall in the northern Alps. Rivers deluged by alpine waters burst their banks in Austria and Germany today, while mudslides blocked roads and railway tracks. A train lies derailed at the side of the track after floods in the small Vorarlberg village of Ludesch, Austria. After massive rainfall during the night rivers burst their banks and parts of Tyrol and Vorarlberg were cut off as roads and rail tracks are flooded. One person was killed when a swollen stream tore down eight houses in the central Swiss town of Brienz

and a second flooding victim was found drowned in a river in another town. In southern Tyrol in Austria, a rockfall caused by the flooding killed one man. Another two people were reported missing in Switzerland, one of them a woman swept away by a river in the Eastern canton (state) of Grisons. Swiss television showed pictures of bridges that had collapsed, huge chunks of caved-in motorway, farms swept away by mudslides and people being evacuated by boat through normally busy city streets. Electricity was cut off and drinking water contaminated in several parts of Switzerland. Villages were isolated as roads were swept away and railways stopped their services. In Switzerland's capital Berne, almost 300 people were evacuated from a residential area. Over a thousand people have been evacuated throughout the country. "The water levels are still rising. We'll probably be here for another 48 hours pumping water out of the hospital," Swiss army lieutenant Benno Stutzer, heading an army crew dealing with the floods in the village of Sarnen, said. The Swiss Insurance Association of private insurers said it expected claims amounting to a triple-digit million Swiss franc figure from the floods. Weather forecasts predicted only light showers for today in Switzerland and gradual improvement through the rest of the week. But rains were forecast to continue in Germany, where parts of southern Bavaria including most of the Alpine region as well as the city of Augsburg, where two rivers meet, have been declared catastrophe zones. Emergency services rescued hundreds of people as rising flood waters in the south of the country blocked major roads and cut off several towns and villages from the outside world. There were no reports of casualties or estimates of damage, although local authorities said the waters were higher in some places than in 1999, when costs from flooding in the same region were estimated at 335 million euros. In Austria, over 100 houses were evacuated in the Tyrol village of Pflach after a dam broke. Innsbruck, the capital of Tyrol, closed all bridges over the river Inn as debris in the waters threatened to damage bridge supports. Stretches of motorway and dozens of roads in the west of Austria were closed as the situation there worsened, and most road links between Tyrol and neighbouring Bavaria were cut off, Austrian motor club the OeAMTC said.

London, Aug 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: In Bavaria, some flood defences have collapsed, allowing water to flood through streets and into homes. In Bulgaria, where floods have killed at least 26 people and left 14,000 homeless, torrential rains flooded the north-western region of Montana. Widespread floods in Romania have killed 18 people over the past week, and destroyed or damaged more than 5,500 homes. In Moldova torrential rain has damaged homes and other property near the

capital Chisinau. Torrential rain in Slovenia has washed out roads in several towns in central and eastern districts. Croatia has declared a state of emergency along the Mura river, on the border with Slovenia, where it is shoring up flood defences.

London, Aug 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: Torrential rains have caused havoc across central and eastern Europe, killing up to 34 people. Worst affected is Romania, where at least seven elderly people were swept away by swollen rivers overnight, bringing deaths there to 25. At least 11 people are reported dead or missing in Switzerland, Austria and Germany, where emergency services are struggling to restore basic services. Thousands of people have been forced to abandon their homes in recent days. Many are still unable to return. Floods inundated about 1,400 houses in central parts of Romania. In Bavaria, some flood defences have collapsed, allowing water to flood through streets and into homes. Authorities evacuated patients at the city of Neu-Ulm after the Danube burst its banks. In Bulgaria, torrential rains flooded the north-western region of Montana. In Moldova torrential rain has damaged homes and other property near the capital Chisinau. Torrential rain in Slovenia has washed out roads in several towns in central and eastern districts. Croatia has declared a state of emergency along the Mura river, on the border with Slovenia, where it is shoring up flood defences. At least four people have died and two are missing in Switzerland, where floods have affected an area stretching from the Bernese Alps to St Gallen in the north-east. Many Alpine valleys in Bavaria and Austria have also been under water. More than 1,000 Swiss have been evacuated, along with hundreds more in Austria and Germany. In the Swiss capital Bern, the River Aare burst its banks flooding parts of the historic old town. Parts of the resorts of Lucerne and Interlaken were also flooded. Many popular mountain holiday villages have been completely cut off. The authorities were using helicopters to rescue people from roofs and balconies, as rising waters and strong currents made the use of boats risky. Mudslides have blocked roads and railway tracks. In Austria, floods caused chaos in the west of the country, leaving three people dead and one missing. Rain stopped overnight and an interior ministry spokesman said the worst is over. About 17,000 firefighters helped by soldiers are involved in the rescue and repair work. Lechtal Valley in Tirol and the Kleinwalsertal Valley in Vorarlberg have been particularly badly affected. Water rose up to five metres outside the house of Ernst Cavegn.

London, Aug 25 -- A press report, dated today, states: Flooding in Romania has killed 66 people this year and caused more than 1.5 billion euros (\$1.85 billion) in damage as rising waters smashed dams, swept away

roads and collapsed bridges, Interior Minister Vasile Blaga said. Rain in the past three days alone killed 13 people as it unleashed flash floods as deep as seven metres in a Transylvanian county, Blaga said in a news conference in Bucharest today. A four-year-old girl and two older men are missing "with little chance of being found alive," he said. Blaga said the damage estimate was "partial" for early August and doesn't include flooding since Aug 23, the worst this year. In July, the government said extra spending would widen the budget deficit to one percent of gross domestic product, beyond the target 0.74 percent target agreed upon with the International Monetary Fund. Blaga said in the last three days water destroyed 46 houses, 230 bridges, 35 kilometres of roads and flooded more than 2,500 hectares of farmland and left some villages without electricity. He said 1,400 soldiers and more than 900 people from his ministry are performing rescue work. The heaviest damage this week was in the central counties of Prahova and Harghita, Blaga said. "In Harghita rains fell at a rate of 100 litres per square meter but not in 24 hours - in 15 minutes," Blaga said. "That made possible flash floods rising seven metres. This explains the number of dead. They're generally older people who wanted to get stuff out of their houses and drowned." Blaga gave no overall estimate of houses and roads destroyed this year. On Jul 25, he said floods that month alone destroyed 3,571 houses, more than 2,200 bridges, crops on 300,500 hectares and 1,354 kilometres of roads. On Jul 28, the European Union, which Romania aims to join in 2007 at the earliest, said it could allocate more than allocate more than 130 million euros in aid.

HURRICANE "HILARY"

London, Aug 20 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: Tropical storm "Hilary" centre located near lat 13.7N, long 100.6W, at 0900, UTC, today. Position accurate to within 30 nautical miles. Present movement towards the west, or 275 deg, at 16 knots. Maximum sustained winds 40 knots with gusts to 50 knots. Radius of 34-knot winds 40 nautical miles north-east and north-west and 35 nautical miles south-east and south-west. Radius of 12-ft seas 40 nautical miles. Forecast for 0600, UTC, Aug 21: Position lat 14.6N, long 105.4W. Maximum sustained winds 60 knots with gusts to 75 knots.

London, Aug 21 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: Hurricane "Hilary" centre located near lat 14.6N, long 105.3W, at 0900, UTC, today. Position accurate to within 40 nautical miles. Present movement towards the west, or 280 deg, at 11 knots. Estimated minimum central pressure 982 mb. Maximum sustained winds 70 knots with gusts to 85 knots. Radius of 64-knot winds 20 nautical miles north-east and north-west. Radius of 50-knot winds 40 nautical miles north-east and north-

west and 25 nautical miles south-east and south-west. Radius of 34-knot winds 90 nautical miles north-east and north-west and 50 nautical miles south-east and south-west. Radius of 12-ft seas 200 nautical miles north-east and north-west and 150 nautical miles south-east and south-west. Forecast for 0600, UTC, Aug 22: Position lat 15.9N, long 109.9W. Maximum sustained winds 85 knots with gusts to 105 knots.

London, Aug 22 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0900, UTC, today, the centre of hurricane "Hilary" was located near lat 18.1N, long 110.7W. The position is accurate to within 20 nautical miles. The present movement is toward the west-north-west, or 295 degs, at 16 knots. The estimated minimum central pressure is 970 mb and the eye diameter is 15 nautical miles. The maximum sustained winds are 90 knots with gusts to 110 knots. The radius of 64 knot winds: 25 nautical miles in the north-east, south-east and north-west quadrants and 15 nautical miles in the south-west quadrant. The radius of 34 knot winds: 240 nautical miles in the north-east quadrant, 120 nautical miles in the south-east quadrant, 100 nautical miles in the south-west quadrant and 175 nautical miles in the north-west quadrant. At 0600, UTC, Aug 23, the centre is predicted to be near lat 19.7N, long 114.7W, with maximum winds of 95 knots and gusts to 115 knots.

London, Aug 23 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0900, UTC, today, the centre of hurricane "Hilary" was located near lat 19.4N, long 114.6W. The position is accurate to within 30 nautical miles. The present movement is toward the west-north-west, or 295 degs, at 10 knots. The estimated minimum central pressure is 977 mb. The maximum sustained winds are 80 knots with gusts to 100 knots. The radius of 60 knot winds: 25 nautical miles in the north-east, south-east and north-west quadrants and 15 nautical miles in the south-west quadrant. The radius of 34 knot winds: 250 nautical miles in the north-east quadrant, 200 nautical miles in the south-east quadrant, 175 nautical miles in the south-west quadrant 150 nautical miles in the north-west quadrant. At 0600, UTC, Aug 24, the centre is predicted to be near lat 20.7N, long 117.4W, with maximum winds of 70 knots and gusts to 85 knots.

London, Aug 24 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0900, UTC, today, the centre of hurricane "Hilary" was located near lat 21.1N, long 117.5W, position accurate within 25 nautical miles. Present movement toward the west-northwest or 300 degrees at nine knots. Maximum sustained winds 65 knots with gusts to 80 knots. Forecast valid 0600, UTC, Aug 25, lat 22.6N, long 120.0W, maximum wind 45 knots, gusts 55 knots.

London, Aug 25 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated

today: At 0900, UTC, today, the centre of tropical storm "Hilary" was located near lat 23.3N, long 119.5W. The position is accurate to within 45 nautical miles. The present movement is toward the west-north-west, or 300 degs, at eight knots. The estimated minimum central pressure is 1,000 mb. The maximum sustained winds are 40 knots with gusts to 50 knots. The radius of 34 knot winds: 60 nautical miles in the north-east, south-west and north-west quadrants and 90 nautical miles in the south-east quadrant. At 0600, UTC, Aug 26, the centre is predicted to be near lat 24.8N, long 122.2W, dissipating, with maximum winds of 25 knots and gusts to 35 knots.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

London, Aug 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: About 13,000 people in Siwai, South Bougainville, and many more in Central Bougainville are severely affected by flooding rivers and the ongoing heavy rains. More than 1,329 people in Siwai urgently need immediate attention with an additional 1,164 people from along the coast badly affected by the floods. Animals and gardens in the area have also been washed away. Road links have been closed from the outside world, causing all stores to run short of goods. Relief supplies from Bougainville have been used and many families were already going hungry. In Vito, Central Bougainville, people need urgent technical assistance to stem a flooding river that washed away an elementary school and a house. The only aid post was also at risk of being washed away. But reports from the area were sketchy. Furthermore, information on the number of houses washed away and casualties, if any, was not clear. An assessment team comprising Bougainville Administration officials Ian Job (local level council), John Kusivai (health), Wendy Sawa (economic services), Joyceline Lessie (economic services), Moses Hilu (National Agriculture and Quarantine Inspection Authority (NAQIA) and Martin Terea, of the information office, returned from a visit to the affected areas late on Sunday (Aug 21) night. The team went to assess the physical extent of the damage, work out the cost of the damage and assess the general situation in the area. According to the officials, classes for all students in Siwai (Monoitu, Harinai and Tonu schools) have been suspended because all three constituencies, Ramu, Kopia and Motuna/Huyono, Tokonutui, have been cut off from the outside world. The team told the Post-Courier basic medical supplies was an immediate need, including water. The officials said there were five rivers in Siwai that were very dangerous, including 12 culverts in Buin and Siwai that were impassable. Villages affected included Mamagota, Aitera, Pihanawa, Moronei, Duisei, Kunnu, Kimuku, Kokui, Tonnui and Panakei. The team

could not visit all villages because most areas were only accessible from the air. A full report on the situation is expected today.

SIERRA LEONE

Freetown, Aug 18 -- Torrential rains have killed at least 20 people and destroyed homes in southern Sierra Leone, with thousands more villagers at risk as the floodwaters spread, local officials in the West African country said today. "The death toll has risen to 20 and more houses are being destroyed by floods after disastrous heavy rains in the Pujehun district," a government official in the capital Freetown said. A team of rescue workers from the Sierra Leonean navy, Red Cross and the UN mission in the country had flown by helicopter to the region, which lies near the Atlantic coast around 300 km south of Freetown, the official said. About 600 people had been saved from flooded villages but some 15,000 more were still waiting for help. Some families had managed to rescue themselves by canoeing to nearby villages or climbing trees. -- Reuters.

THAILAND

London, Aug 19 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: The death toll from last weekend's flash floods in northern Thailand has risen to 10, with six people still missing, the interior ministry said today. Seven people died in Mae Hong Son province, two in Lampang and one in tourism magnet Chiang Mai, the ministry's Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Department said. All six missing people are from Mae Hong Son province, which borders military-ruled Myanmar. Another 85 people have been injured and about 119,270 people suffered property damage or had to be evacuated. The floods also damaged 87 bridges, 95 roads and 44,640 acres of farm land, the ministry said. Government spokesman Surapong Suebwonglee said the 200 millimetres of rain that had fallen in Chiang Dao district of Chiang Mai province was the highest in a century.

TROPICAL STORM "GUCHOL"

London, Aug 22 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0600, UTC, today, the centre of tropical storm "Guchol" was located near lat 28.1N, long 146.8E. The position is accurate to within 60 nautical miles and is based on the centre being located by satellite. The present movement is toward the west-north-west, or 350 degs, at 11 knots. The maximum sustained winds are 55 knots with gusts to 70 knots. The radius of 34 knot winds: 60 nautical miles in the north-east and south-east quadrants and 60 nautical miles in the south-west and north-west quadrants. At 0600, UTC, Aug 23, the centre is predicted to be near lat 33.8N, long 147.0E, with maximum winds of 55 knots and gusts to 70 knots.

London, Aug 23 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated

today: At 0600, UTC, today, the centre of tropical storm "Guchol" was located near lat 32.3N, long 147.0E, approximately 415 nautical miles east-southeast of Tokyo, Japan, has tracked north-eastward, or 35 degs, at 15 knots over the past six hours. The position is accurate to within 40 nautical miles and is based on the centre being located by satellite. The maximum sustained winds are 55 knots with gusts to 70 knots. The radius of 34 knot winds: 55 nautical miles in the north-east and south-east quadrants and 45 nautical miles in the south-west and north-west quadrants. The maximum significant wave height is 17 feet. At 0600, UTC, Aug 24, the centre is predicted to be near lat 37.0N, long 151.9E, with maximum winds of 40 knots and gusts to 50 knots.

London, Aug 24 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0600, UTC, today, the centre of tropical storm "Guchol" was located near lat 36.7N, long 153.0E, movement past six hours 055 degrees at 18 knots. Position accurate to within 40 nautical miles. Maximum sustained winds 60 knot, gusts 75 knots. Forecast valid at 0600, UTC, Aug 25 lat 42.4N, long 160.6E, maximum sustained winds 40 knots, gusts 50 knots. (See issue of Aug 24.)

London, Aug 25 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0600, UTC, today, the centre of tropical storm "Guchol" was located near lat 44.3N, 163.9E, moving north-northeast 28 knots. Maximum winds: 50 knots near the centre. The radius of over 30 knot winds: 180 miles south-east semicircle and 120 miles elsewhere. At 0600, UTC, Aug 26, the centre is predicted to be near lat 48.0N, long 167.0E. Maximum sustained winds: 45 knots, becoming extratropical.

TROPICAL STORM "JOSE"

Mexico City, Aug 22 -- "Jose", the 10th tropical storm of an unusually active Atlantic hurricane season, dumped heavy rain in the Gulf of Mexico today and was expected to make landfall overnight near the port of Veracruz, authorities said. None of Mexico's key oil ports farther southwest was closed to shipping, the Transport Ministry said. Miami's National Hurricane Centre said "Jose", packing sustained winds of 50 mph and higher gusts, was expected to strengthen before making landfall. Rains of up to 10 inches can be expected on higher ground once the storm hits land, the centre said. "These storms could cause life threatening flash floods and mud slides." It said a tropical storm warning was in place for a wide swathe of the Gulf coast, from Veracruz northwards to Cabo Rojo. -- Reuters.

London, Aug 23 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: Tropical storm "Jose": A tropical storm warning remains in effect for the Gulf coast of Mexico from Veracruz northward to Cabo Rojo. This

warning should be discontinued later today. At 9600, UTC, today, the centre of "Jose" was located near lat 19.8N, long 97.1W. The position is accurate to within 30 nautical miles. The present movement is toward the west, or 275 degs, at eight knots. The estimated minimum central pressure is 1004 mb. The maximum sustained winds are 35 knots with gusts to 45 knots. The radius of 34 knot winds: 20 nautical miles in the north-east quadrant, 30 nautical miles in the south-east quadrant and 40 nautical miles in the south-west and north-west quadrants. At 0600, UTC, Aug 24, the centre is predicted to be near lat 20.1N, long 99.8W and dissipating, with maximum winds of 20 knots and gusts to 25 knots.

Mexico City, Aug 23 -- Tropical storm "Jose" dumped heavy rain on eastern Mexico today but was downgraded to a depression as it moved over the central highlands. Mexico withdrew storm warnings along its Gulf Coast as "Jose" weakened after hitting the coast of Veracruz state, some distance from its main oil ports. No deaths were reported, although emergency services feared "Jose" could trigger landslides in the mountains and cause lowland flooding. Miami's National Hurricane Centre said "Jose"'s winds dropped to 35 mph as it climbed into Mexico's central highlands, and that further weakening was expected throughout the day. Authorities at the Cotzacoalcos port in southern Veracruz reported low winds and no rain and said the storm had not affected shipping. -- Reuters.

TROPICAL STORM "KATRINA"

London, Aug 25 -- A press report, dated Aug 24, states: A hurricane warning was issued for the south-east Florida coast late today and people were advised to take safety precautions in advance of a late tomorrow strike by a growing Tropical Storm "Katrina". "Katrina" was expected to reach hurricane strength as it moved west from the Bahamas and across the Gulf Stream, said forecasters at the National Hurricane Centre. The forecast path appeared centred on the Miami-Fort Lauderdale area, but forecasters warned that the storm could easily slip more to the north or south before making landfall early Friday (Aug 26). The hurricane warning was issued for the south-east Florida coast from Vero Beach to Florida City, including the Miami and Fort Lauderdale areas, as well as inland Lake Okeechobee. A hurricane warning means that hurricane conditions are expected in an area within 24 hours. Many in the area - hit by two hurricanes last year - didn't seem too worried about the slow-moving storm whose worst threat appeared to be flooding. Hardware stores noticed a slight increase in sales, but there didn't appear to be a crush of customers looking for plywood, water and other supplies. Broward County recommended that people evacuate barrier islands and low-lying regions, and some schools in

the area were closing tomorrow and Friday. "Katrina" formed today over the Bahamas and was expected to cross Florida before heading into the Gulf of Mexico. It could drop six-12 inches of rain in the state, with some spots getting up to 20 inches. National Hurricane Centre meteorologist Eric Blake said residents of threatened areas should consider putting up hurricane shutters, particularly in coastal and exposed areas. Storm surge flooding of three to five feet topped by battering waves is expected. At 2300 hrs, "Katrina" was centred about 135 miles east of the south-east coast of Florida and was moving west at eight mph. That motion was expected to continue through tomorrow, bringing "Katrina" across the warm, storm-feeding waters of the Gulf Stream.

London, Aug 25 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: Tropical storm "Katrina": A hurricane warning remains in effect for the south-east Florida coast from Vero Beach southward to Florida City, including Lake Okeechobee. Preparations to protect life and property should be rushed to completion. A tropical storm warning remains in effect for the north-west Bahamas. At 0500 hrs, a tropical storm watch was in effect for the Florida west coast from Florida City to Englewood, including Florida Bay. A tropical storm watch remains in effect for the east-central Florida coast from north of Vero Beach northward to Titusville, including all of Merritt Island and for the middle and upper Florida Keys from the west end of the seven mile bridge northward to south of Florida City. At 0900, UTC, today, the centre of tropical storm "Katrina" was located near lat 26.2N, long 78.7W. The position is accurate to within 25 nautical miles. The present movement is toward the west-north-west, or 295 degs, at 10 knots. The estimated minimum central pressure is 1000 mb. The maximum sustained winds are 45 knots with gusts to 55 knots. The radius of 34 knot winds: 60 nautical miles in the north-east and south-east quadrants and zero nautical miles in the south-west and north-west quadrants. At 0600, UTC, Aug 26, the centre is predicted to be near lat 26.3N, long 80.4W, with maximum winds of 65 knots and gusts to 80 knots.

TYPHOON "HAITANG"

London, Aug 24 -- General cargo Golden Cloud sailed Kaohsiung Aug 18 for China.

TYPHOON "MAWAR"

London, Aug 20 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: Tropical storm "Mawar" centre located near lat 21.1N, long 141.7E, at 0900, UTC, today. Position accurate to within 40 nautical miles. Maximum sustained winds 45 knots with gusts to 55 knots. Radius of 34-knot winds 75 nautical miles north-east, south-east and south-west and 50 nautical miles north-west. Radius of 12-ft seas

40 nautical miles. Forecast for 0600, UTC, Aug 21: Position lat 22.5N, long 140E. Maximum sustained winds 60 knots with gusts to 75 knots.

London, Aug 21 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: Typhoon "Mawar" centre located near lat 22.4N, long 140.5E, at 0600, UTC, today. Position accurate to within 30 nautical miles. Maximum sustained winds 100 knots with gusts to 125 knots. Radius of 64-knot winds 20 nautical miles north-east, north-west and south-west and 25 nautical miles south-east. Radius of 50-knot winds 40 nautical miles north-east, north-west and south-west and 45 nautical miles south-east. Radius of 34-knot winds 115 nautical miles north-east, north-west and south-west and 120 nautical miles south-east. Forecast for 0600, UTC, Aug 22: Position lat 24.1N, long 138.6E. Maximum sustained winds 120 knots with gusts to 145 knots.

London, Aug 22 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0900, UTC, today, the centre of typhoon "Mawar" was located near lat 23.8N, long 139.1E. The position is accurate to within 40 nautical miles and is based on the eye being located by satellite. The present movement is 335 degs, at four knots. The maximum sustained winds are 125 knots with gusts to 150 knots. The radius of 64 knot winds: 30 nautical miles in all four quadrants. The radius of 34 knot winds: 120 nautical miles in the north-east and south-east quadrants and 110 nautical miles in the south-west and north-west quadrants. At 0600, UTC, Aug 23, the centre is predicted to be near lat 25.9N, long 137.6E, with maximum winds of 125 knots and gusts to 150 knots.

London, Aug 23 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0600, UTC, today, the centre of typhoon "Mawar" was located near lat 26.1N, long 137.6E, approximately 585 nautical miles south of Tokyo, Japan, and has tracked north-northwestward at seven knots over the past six hours. The position is accurate to within 25 nautical miles and is based on the centre being located by satellite. The maximum sustained winds are 100 knots with gusts to 125 knots. The radius of 64 knot winds: 25 nautical miles in all four quadrants. The radius of 34 knot winds: 110 nautical miles in all four quadrants. The maximum significant wave height is 42 feet. At 0600, UTC, Aug 24, the centre is predicted to be near lat 29.1N, long 136.1E, with maximum winds of 105 knots and gusts to 130 knots.

London, Aug 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: A powerful typhoon is approaching Japan's Pacific coast and likely to land somewhere between the Kinki region in western Japan and the Kanto region in the east of Japan's mainland tomorrow evening or Friday (Aug 26), the Japan Meteorological Agency said today. Typhoon "Mawar"

is expected to bring strong winds, high waves and torrential rain in the Kanto, Tokai, centering on Nagoya, and Kinki regions.

London, Aug 24 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0600, UTC, today, the centre of typhoon "Mawar" was near lat 29.7N, long 136.9E, movement past six hours- 005 degrees at nine knots, position accurate to within 40 nautical miles. Maximum sustained winds 105 knots, gusts 130 knots. Forecast valid at 0600, UTC, Aug 25, lat 33.5N, long 137.3E, maximum sustained winds 105 knots, gusts 130 knots.

Tokyo, Aug 25 -- A powerful typhoon was beating a path toward Tokyo today and was forecast to make landfall near the Japanese capital in the evening, bringing with it strong winds and heavy rainfall that was snarling transportation and disrupting oil shipments. Typhoon "Mawar" was 170 km south-southwest of the Shizuoka prefecture coast at 1345 hrs (0445, UTC), the Meteorological Agency said. It was moving north at 20 km an hour, and winds were gusting up to 144 km an hour at the centre of the typhoon. "Mawar" is expected to hit the Tokyo region or areas slightly to the west at around 1800 hrs (0900, UTC), and then move north across the country. The agency issued flood warnings for the Tokyo region, and some flights and express trains out of Tokyo were cancelled. Television footage showed high waves hitting the coastline of Shizuoka prefecture. Officials said waves up to 11 meters high were observed in some areas. Oil refiners said they were forced to suspend waterborne operations in eastern and central Japan. Top Japanese refiner Nippon Oil Co. halted shipments and unloading of crude oil from tankers at the country's largest refinery. Idemitsu Kosan Co. and Cosmo Oil Co. also halted shipping operations in the area. -- Reuters.

London, Aug 25 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0600, UTC, today, the centre of typhoon "Mawar" was located near lat 33.4N, long 137.8E, approximately 165 nautical miles south-west of Tokyo, Japan, and has tracked northeastward, or 40 degs, at 10 knots over the past six hours. The position is accurate to within 40 nautical miles and is based on the centre being located by satellite. The maximum sustained winds are 90 knots with gusts to 110 knots. The radius of 64 knot winds: 25 nautical miles in all four quadrants. The radius of 34 knot winds: 120 nautical miles in the north-east and north-west quadrants, over water, 100 nautical miles in the south-east quadrant and 80 nautical miles in the south-west quadrant. The maximum significant wave height is 31 feet. At 0600, UTC, Aug 26, the centre is predicted to be near lat 36.8N, long 141.6E, with maximum winds of 50 knots and gusts to 65 knots.

UNITED KINGDOM

London, Aug 19 -- A press report, dated today, states: Summer storms have swept across southern England causing flooding and at least one fire due to lightning. The localised storms moved across Dorset, Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Wiltshire, Sussex and London. Sixty-one firefighters tackled a blaze in West Moors, near Bournemouth, caused by lightning. Shoppers were told to stay away from flooded stores in Hants. Sussex fire crews faced dozens of calls to flooded buildings and a water spout was reported off the coast at Shoreham. It did not move from the sea onto land, according to reports. Fareham Shopping Centre in Hampshire was forced to close for the morning after a dozen of its 81 shops were flooded, along with parts of the mall itself. Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service took about 150 calls in a five-hour period from concerned members of the public. There were lightning strikes in Fareham, Cosham and Havant. About a dozen houses were flooded in Dayshe Close, Bridgemary, Gosport. There were also reports of flooding in Portchester and in Ryde and Newport on the Isle of Wight. Motorists had to abandon their cars on the A32 near Gosport because of flooding.

UNITED STATES

London, Aug 19 -- A tornado killed one person and damaged dozens of homes as it roared through this southern Wisconsin city late yesterday. At least eight other people were hospitalised as the severe storms blasted their way across the central and southern parts of the state, authorities said. State Emergency Management spokeswoman Lori Getter said one person died in the tornado and five others were hospitalised, she had no further information about the victims. The tornado destroyed 15 homes, and 35 others had moderate to severe damage, she said. Getter said a natural gas leak caused the evacuation of about 200 residents. The storms also damaged homes in Viola, about 70 miles northwest of Madison. Getter said three people there were treated for injuries and about 70 to 80 homes were damaged.

London, Aug 22 -- A press report, dated Aug 21, states: As hundreds of volunteers streamed into Dane County today to help residents clean up from storms that spawned tornadoes in southern Wisconsin, officials estimated that the storms caused \$21 million in damage. Emergency management crews continued to survey the damage in Dane County, said Tim Hillebrand, EMS co-ordinator for the county's Department of Emergency Management. He said the estimate likely could increase as the crews continue their surveys. Most of the damage occurred around Stoughton, where a tornado killed a man and ploughed through a subdivision. More than 60 homes were destroyed in Dane County. In all, 26 tornadoes touched down in the state

Thursday (Aug 18), setting a one-day record. The National Weather Service office in Sullivan today revised its previous count of 28. The storms damaged about 380 homes throughout Dane, Lafayette, Richland and Sauk counties.

London, Aug 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: Storms dumped up to four inches of rain across southern Arizona yesterday, flooding washes and waterways and forcing evacuations of some 46 people in the Tucson area, including a mother and two children rescued by a helicopter. Several flights were delayed and one was cancelled from Tucson International Airport, and the rains forced the closure of five roads in Tucson and more than two dozen in Pima County. The severity of the storm, on the heels of another on Aug 14, caused Pima County Supervisors' chairwoman Sharon Bronson to declare a state of emergency. Doing so enables the county to seek aid from the state for infrastructure losses, already near \$500,000 from the earlier storm. Authorities used a Blackhawk helicopter to reach one woman and her children stranded by floodwaters on the porch of a mobile home south-west of Tucson's city limits, Rural Metro spokesman Rick Flores said. Rain in Tucson swept a man from his pickup into the Santa Cruz River after he drove into a flooded area and his truck was carried to a culvert grate. Firefighters formed a human chain to reach him on a sandbar. The Franco Wash south-west of Tucson overflowed its banks and began flooding a number of mobile home parks in the area during early morning hours. By about 0700 hrs, "we started receiving multiple 911 calls from people either trapped in their vehicles or trapped in their homes by floodwaters that were rising and swift-moving," Flores said. The force of the water -- flowing between three and five feet deep and moving at between 10 and 20 mph -- knocked about seven mobile homes of their foundations, and the homes began to float downstream, he said. By mid-afternoon, close to 40 mobile homes had been evacuated.

URUGUAY AND ARGENTINA

Montevideo, Aug 24 -- A strong atmospheric depression, on Aug 23/24, travelling from west to east, with winds around 100 Kph, caused severe damages in the southern half of Uruguay, affecting numerous cities, towns and other locations, with felling of trees, telephone posts and power lines, the toppling of a 130 metre aerial tower on a dwelling. Caused two casualties, two more casualties occurred in the city of Maldonado. Roofs were blown causing numerous homeless to be evacuated. An estimated 30/40.000 affected by blackout. Roads interrupted by fallen debris caused numerous traffic accidents. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Aug 25 -- A press report, dated Aug 24, states: Seven people killed and extensive damage in urban areas was the result of hurricane

strong winds and rain storms that struck Uruguay in the last 24 hours, reported officials in Montevideo. The storm, which was described as the worst in recent years blew roofs; sunk yachts and fishing vessels in marinas; knocked energy pylons and trees, leaving vast areas without electricity and drinking water. Maldonado authorities closed schools today as a safety precaution until trees and other debris were removed from streets. In Montevideo wind gusts recorded 160 kilometres per hour, causing havoc in street traffic, knocking over an estimated 2,000 trees and the Fire Department received 3,600 emergency calls. The electricity company midday today had still over 12,000 services to reconnect. Highways Police reported that two national highways remained closed because of overflowing rivers and streams. The storm also caused damage to the Uruguayan Congress building, which tomorrow is scheduled to celebrate its 80th anniversary with the presence of invited guests from several countries. An exhibit of historical objects and furniture, including the country's first constitution, had to be taken down after a skylight broke and water cascaded into the hall where the items were displayed. In neighbouring Argentina, the same storm system left at least two dead and forced the evacuation of 2,400 people in downtown Buenos Aires. Argentine Civil Defence authorities are working on a massive evacuation of people in the most-affected districts, including Avellaneda, Escobar, Lomas de Zamora and Pilar, all of which lowlands near the capital threatened by overflowing streams.

YEMEN

London, Aug 23 -- A press report, dated Aug 22, states: Flash floods have killed a dozen people in Yemen and have injured at least six others in the poor Arab state, officials said today. "Twelve people have died in the last two days due to heavy rains and there have been six injuries," a police official said, adding that 50 farmland animals had also died in the floods. The country's meteorological office has warned the heavy rains will continue for the next two days.

Earthquakes



JAPAN

Tokyo, Aug 21 -- An earthquake with a preliminary magnitude of 5.0 jolted northern Japan today but there were no immediate reports of injuries or damage. No tsunami warning was issued after the quake, which occurred at 1129 hrs, the Meteorological Agency said. The focus of the tremor was very shallow in Niigata Prefecture, the agency said. A local official said the

quake caused a brief scare. The superfast bullet train system was stopped briefly when the quake caused electricity to be cut off but resumed operations minutes later, broadcaster NHK said. Parts of an expressway were also closed off after the tremor. -- Reuters.

London, Aug 24 -- A report, dated today, states: A strong earthquake occurred at 1015, UTC, today. The magnitude 6.0 event has been located near the east coast of Honshu, Japan, in lat 38 47N, long 142.63E, depth 50 km.

Political & Civil Unrest



AFGHANISTAN

London, Aug 19 -- A press report, dated Aug 18, states: Two US soldiers were killed and two were wounded in Kandahar province today when a roadside bomb hit their armoured vehicle, the US military said. The vehicle was part of a convoy supporting a road construction project, the US military said in statement. "These terrorists are attacking the very forces working to improve Afghanistan," said Brig Gen Jack Sterling, the deputy commander of US forces in Afghanistan. The two wounded soldiers were in stable condition. Also, Afghan and US forces backed by American warplanes raided a Taliban stronghold in southern Afghanistan and killed five militants, a military official said today. The operation began on Tuesday (Aug 16) in Kandahar provinces Khakriz district and the militants were killed yesterday, said Gen Muslim Hameed who led the troops.

London, Aug 22 -- A press report, dated Aug 21, states: A massive bomb exploded under a wooden bridge as a convoy of armoured Humvees was crossing it today, killing four U.S. soldiers and wounding three others in the deadliest assault on American forces in Afghanistan in nearly two months. The troops were part of a major offensive against militants who have vowed to subvert legislative elections on Sept 18. Rebels also stepped up attacks elsewhere, wounding two U.S. Embassy staff in a roadside bombing in the capital Kabul and killing a senior pro-government cleric and a colleague in the country's south. Though the U.S. military operation has left dozens of suspected rebels dead or captured, a number of American troops also have been killed, including 13 this month. U.S. and Afghan officials have warned violence may worsen ahead of the polls. The bomb tied to the bottom of the small bridge exploded as the last of three Humvees was slowly crossing it, said Bashir Ahmad Khan, the government chief in Zabul province's Daychopan district. "It was an enormous remote-

controlled bomb. The American vehicle was tossed into the air and off the bridge. It's totally destroyed, as is the bridge," he told The Associated Press. The three wounded troops were hit by shrapnel from secondary explosions as they tried to pull the four soldiers out of the burning Humvee, the military statement said. Some 187 U.S. service members have been killed in and around Afghanistan since the start of Operation Enduring Freedom in late 2001. The bloodshed has led the military to rush in an airborne infantry battalion of about 700 troops on standby in Fort Bragg, N.C., boosting the number of American troops in Afghanistan to about 20,000. Some 3,100 soldiers from 19 other nations also are members of the U.S.-led coalition. A separate NATO-led peacekeeping force also has brought in reinforcements ahead of the polls and now numbers about 10,500. In the southern Kandahar province, gunmen riding a motorbike killed cleric Mawlawi Abdullah - the latest in a string of attacks on religious leaders who have openly condemned the Taliban and other extremists. Abdullah - a senior figure in the Islamic Ulama Council - and a colleague were killed as they walked out of a mosque after praying at dawn Sunday, said Interior Ministry official Dad Mohammed Rasa. Police set up roadblocks around the area, but no one was arrested. Two roadside bombs also exploded near police convoys in the southern provinces of Zabul and Uruzgan late yesterday, each killing two officers, officials said. Gunmen also opened fire on a senior cleric in southern Spin Boldak district today, but he fled into his house and was unhurt, local police chief Abdul Wasai Khan said. In the eastern province of Kunar, rebels ambushed two tanker trucks carrying fuel to a U.S. military base, burning the vehicles but letting the drivers go, officials said.

London, Aug 23 -- A press report, dated Aug 22, states: U.S. and Afghan troops killed at least 40 suspected rebels in an offensive targeting militants who ambushed US Navy SEAL commandos and shot down a special-forces helicopter, U.S. officials said today. The military declared the weeklong operation in lawless Kunar province near Pakistan a success. The offensive, was centered on eastern Kunar province's Korengal Valley and ended over the weekend. "It was successful," spokesman Lt. Col. Jerry O'Hara told The Associated Press. "We had over 29 separate engagements with enemy forces that resulted in over 40 enemy killed in action and many others wounded." Before the operation started, hundreds of Afghan rebels, as well as militants from Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Chechnya, were believed to be hiding in the valley, just miles from the Pakistan border, and gearing up for attacks on polling stations on Sep 18. O'Hara also announced that a separate battle: Aug 7-10, in southern Zabul province's Daychopan district, left 65 suspected militants dead. The military initially

reported that 16 rebels were killed. More than 750 suspected insurgents have been killed in clashes over the past six months, according to figures provided by U.S. and Afghan officials and compiled by The Associated Press. Nearly 200 civilians and about 100 Afghan security forces also have died. Afghan and American officials have rejected suggestions that next month's vote be postponed because of the bloodshed. They point to a similar, but smaller, spike in violence ahead of last October's presidential elections, which were carried out peacefully amid a massive security clampdown. American military commanders say they are making similar preparations for the upcoming polls and have stepped up raids on rebel hideouts in violence-wracked southern and eastern regions. U.S. military spokeswoman Lt. Cindy Moore said American-led coalition and Afghan troops were now carrying out about 150 patrols each day.

Kabul, Aug 25 -- U.S. and Afghan forces backed by a giant B-52 bomber, A-10 attack aircraft and helicopters killed an estimated 16 militants in southern Afghanistan in the past two days, the U.S. military said today. The militants were killed on Tuesday (Aug 23) and yesterday during an operation codenamed Vigilant Sentinel aimed at ensuring security for Sep 18 parliamentary and provincial council elections. The U.S. military said six militants were killed on Tuesday after Afghan and U.S. forces saw them planting improvised explosive devices in Shinkay district of Zabul province. An Afghan and U.S. patrol also pinned down another group of militants south-east of the town of Tarin Kot and called in a B-52 bomber, A-10 attack aircraft and attack helicopters, it said, adding that casualties there were being assessed. In other incidents yesterday, five militants were killed by aircraft and ground fire north-east of Tarin Kot five more in Kandahar province, the statement said, adding that there were no U.S. casualties or damage in any of the incidents. -- Reuters.

ALBANIA

Bari, Aug 23 -- Product tanker Ambar is still under arrest at Bari, and there are presently no prospects for the vessel's release. -- Lloyd's Agents.

BANGLADESH

London, Aug 19 -- A press report, dated Aug 18, states: Security forces across Bangladesh have conducted extensive raids after yesterday's bomb blasts which killed two people and injured more than 100. Officials say nearly 100 people have been detained or arrested so far in connection with the explosions. The main opposition Awami League has called a general strike for Saturday (Aug 20), accusing the government of failing to act against crime. More than 400 small devices went off simultaneously across the country. An outlawed Islamic group, Jamatul Mujahideen

Bangladesh, says it carried out the attacks. Police in the south-western district of Satkhira say they have made progress in their investigation into the explosions. The district's police chief Abdur Rahim said that two people have been arrested in connection with the blasts and they confessed to the police that they were involved in the attacks. Rahim said the two men told police that they are members of a little-known Islamic group Ahle Hadith. In each of yesterday's incidents, bombs were set off in crowded spots, mainly at government offices, journalists' clubs and courts, between 1030 and 1130 hrs. Officials said timing devices were found at the scenes of blasts but most of the bombs were small, homemade devices - wrapped in tape or paper. Leaflets from the Jamatul Mujahideen Bangladesh were found at the site of some of the blasts. Early this year the Bangladesh government banned Jamatul Mujahideen and another group, Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh. They were accused of being behind a series of bomb blasts, including those at two local aid agencies - Grameen and Brac.

Dhaka, Aug 20 -- A countrywide general strike gripped Bangladesh today as Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia returned after cutting short a visit to China because of hundreds of simultaneous bomb blasts across the country. The strike was called by opposition parties to protest against the 200 or so bomb attacks on Wednesday (Aug 17) that killed two people and hurt about 100. Islamic militants are believed to be responsible. Traffic was off the streets in the capital Dhaka today and businesses, shops and schools were closed. Work at the country's main Chittagong port was also disrupted but trains moved on schedule. Police and security forces were patrolling Dhaka and other cities in strength but said there were no reports of violence. "We are trying to make sure that people and their properties are safe," said one police officer. The opposition, led by the Awami League party of former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, has blamed the government for not cracking down on militancy earlier. Hasina escaped unhurt in a bomb attack in August last year in which 23 of her party members were killed. Khaleda, who returned late last night after cutting short a long-publicised visit to China, has condemned the bombings as a "heinous, cowardly, conspiratorial and well-planned act of terrorism." She has appealed for calm and ordered security agencies to crack down on suspects. No one has claimed responsibility for Wednesday's simultaneous explosions in 60 cities and towns, which caused little damage and appeared to be aimed at spreading panic. However, copies of a leaflet found at the bomb sites carried a call by Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen, a banned group, for Islamic rule in Bangladesh - the world's third most populous Muslim nation. Police have since detained scores of suspects, and

yesterday said two of them had confessed to being members of the Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen. "Nearly 20 out of some 150 suspects arrested following the spate of bombings claimed themselves as militants of Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen and said they have acted under the instructions of their mentors," a senior police officer said today. At least 10 of them were being questioned by a joint interrogation cell manned by police and armed forces, he said. -- Reuters.

Dhaka, Aug 23 -- Banned Islamic militant group Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen, widely blamed for hundreds of bomb blasts across Bangladesh last week, has warned it will strike again unless Bangladesh introduces Islamic rule. "This is the third invitation to the government of Bangladesh ... if (it) fails to establish the Islamic law or try to arrest any member of Jamatul Mujahideen Bangladesh ... (we) will take direct action," the group said in a statement on its website, jihadunspun.com. "Everybody is the enemy of Islam who wants to launch democracy as an institutional form. Therefore we invite the ruling party and also the opposition to initiate the rule of Islam within a short time in Bangladesh," the statement said. Two people were killed and about 100 injured as hundreds of home-made bombs exploded simultaneously across the country of 140 million last Wednesday (Aug 17). -- Reuters.

BURUNDI

Bujumbura, Aug 18 -- Burundi's sole presidential candidate vowed today to bring its last active rebel group into peace talks hours after a reported clash between the army and the hardline Hutus showed how tough that task might be. Pierre Nkurunziza, head of the former Hutu rebel Forces for the Defence of Democracy (FDD) is virtually certain to win since he will be unopposed when members of a two-chamber legislature acting as an electoral college make their decision tomorrow. The vote is the last in a series of polls this year designed to end 12 years of conflict between the Hutu majority and the Tutsi minority that held Burundi's levers of power. The FDD dominates the legislature after commanding wins in elections for both houses that passed off with little violence. Fighters of the militant Hutu Forces from National Liberation (FNL) clashed with the army in the northwest late yesterday and five rebels and three soldiers were killed, army spokesman Adolphe Manirakiza said. The FNL also launched a mortar attack in the hills north of the capital, the army said, adding that no one was injured. "There are indications that the FNL is planning to intensify attacks from now until the inauguration, just to show that it is still present on the ground and maybe put some pressure on the new government to talk to them," Manirakiza said. A ceasefire signed by the outgoing government and the FNL earlier this year crumbled with both

sides swapping accusations the other has broken the truce. Nkurunziza said his government will tackle rising crime resulting from extreme poverty and the demobilisation of former combatants who have no livelihood but retain access to weapons. "I want to tell everybody that we no longer tolerate people who are troublemakers and want to disturb security," he said. -- Reuters.

Bujumbura, Aug 24 -- Integration of ex-Hutu rebels into Burundi's Tutsi-dominated army is encouraging refugees from the tiny central African country's civil war to return in bigger numbers, the U.N. refugee agency said today. The relatively violence-free progress of recent democratic elections has also helped speed along the voluntary returns over the past two months, said Kaba-Guichard Neyaga, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) representative for Burundi. "The new army and security services are contributing to the impression of confidence among refugees," Neyaga told Reuters. "Refugees have historically feared the army, because they have been accused of discrimination. With the new configuration, there is a representation of both ethnicities." Under a peace accord signed in 2000 that has guided Burundi's path out of a 12-year civil war, former Hutu guerrilla forces have been integrated with their former foes in the largely Tutsi army. The big Tutsi presence in the army often made many Hutu refugees -- who made up the bulk of the hundreds of thousands of Burundians to flee their homes -- fear oppression and abuse because of their ethnicity, a routine occurrence in the past. The UNHCR said as of Sunday (Aug 21), a total of 32,024 refugees had returned to Burundi this year. Neyaga said it was difficult to predict how many would return in the coming year, because all of the returns are voluntary. The almost violence-free election of a new government, to be led by president-elect and leader of the former rebel Hutu Forces for Defence of Democracy (FDD) Pierre Nkurunziza, is another factor giving refugees a reason to come home. "It's going fast because people are looking forward to returning and are confident they can return. People are coming back to stay and reintegrate in their country," Neyaga said. A U.N.-led peacekeeping mission has also helped, Neyaga said. "The presence of the peace mission is something important ... we can see it's been calmer." -- Reuters.

COLOMBIA

Bogota, Aug 22 -- Colombia today eased a key condition for peace talks with Marxist rebels by accepting an offer from the Roman Catholic Church to mediate in a four-decade-old guerrilla conflict. President Alvaro Uribe said he had accepted a church offer to try to set up preliminary talks with both of Colombia's main Marxist rebel armies about conditions for possible cease-fires. Peace talks would

begin only after cease-fires were declared. Until now the government had insisted the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, the largest rebel army that is known by its Spanish initials FARC, declare a cease-fire before any talks at all. "The government accepts the church's efforts for a preliminary dialogue towards a cease-fire," Uribe told reporters after meeting the church's most senior figure in Colombia, Monsignor Luis Augusto Castro, who made the offer over the weekend. Security forces believe the FARC has 17,000 fighters, paid for from the proceeds of the cocaine trade, extortion and kidnapping. A key demand for any peace deal would be redistributing land to poor peasants. Thousands of people are killed in Colombia's conflict every year. The United States has provided Colombia with more than \$3 billion in mainly military aid since 2000 to tackle the cocaine trade and Marxist rebels. -- Reuters.

ECUADOR

London, Aug 19 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Ecuadorean troops took control of government buildings in two Amazon provinces and reinforced security at oil wells today as they moved to quell protests that have slashed crude production and exports, a senior officer said. Acting after President Alfredo Palacio declared a state of emergency in the provinces of Sucumbios and Orellana late yesterday, security forces fired tear gas at protesters in the eastern jungle city of Lago Agrio, in images shown on local television. Ecuador's crude oil output has fallen by 63 per cent to 198,000 barrels per day since protesters invaded oil camps, sabotaged equipment and blocked highways on Monday, state-owned Petroecuador and a private producers' association said. Petroecuador declared force majeure on its oil exports, a contract clause that allows it to stop shipments due to events beyond its control. Most of Ecuador's oil exports go to the United States. Petroecuador usually exports about 144,000 bpd, but the protests have cut its production to 29,000 bpd from the usual 201,000 bpd. The disturbances, which are throttling the country's principal source of export income, are the worst faced by Mr Palacio since he came to power in April.

Quito, Aug 21 -- Leaders of protests that shut down Ecuador's oil industry halted their attacks and flew to the capital today to negotiate with the government as the country's petroleum output showed signs of recovery. A delegation of about 60 protesters arrived in Quito from the Amazon region where they had started blowing up pipelines and vandalizing pumping machinery nearly a week ago, demanding jobs and infrastructure investment. The government released some of them from prison yesterday after they agreed to suspend the violence and start talks tomorrow morning. The

leaders warned that members of their group remain in the region and are prepared to renew attacks if negotiations fail. Output by state oil firm Petroecuador, which suspended exports on Thursday (Aug 18), totaled 54,000 barrels per day today. That is an increase from 33,167 bpd on yesterday, but far below the 201,000 bpd production seen before the protests began. "The good news is that the army has regained control of all oil pipelines and production, allowing output to rise today," said government spokesman Andres Seminario. Last Monday (Aug 15) the protesters invaded oil fields in the eastern provinces of Sucumbios and Orellana, helping push U.S. crude oil futures up \$2 to more than \$65 a barrel on Friday (Aug 19). The government declared a state of emergency in Orellana and Sucumbios on Wednesday (Aug 17), allowing authorities to restrict freedom of movement and association and censor media. The government says it will take until November to restore Petroecuador's production, which is key to the country's economy. The company said it could take longer to restore production in some fields. Oil output by private companies has been reduced to nearly zero, said Rene Ortiz, president of the Ecuadorean Hydrocarbons Association.

London, Aug 22 -- A press report, dated Aug 21, states: Protests in Ecuador's north-east Amazon region that brought oil production to a halt were suspended today after demonstrators and the government agreed to a truce. A state of emergency declared on Wednesday (Aug 17) remained in place for the Sucumbios and Orellana provinces, where residents had taken over two airports, blocked roads, occupied oil camps and sabotaged oil facilities. The demonstrators have demanded that oil companies hire more local residents and make income tax and royalty payments directly to local governments. Both sides were debating the possibility of sending representatives to Quito for negotiations. "The protests are suspended momentarily while we engaged in a dialogue," Guadalupe Llori, an official with the province of Orellana, said today. "But either we will have results from the talks or we will return to the previous measures." Police and soldiers moved forcefully to quell the protests, arresting some local officials and retaking control of the region. Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez said today that his country had agreed to provide oil to Ecuador until its industry stabilises. "Venezuela will assume the commitments of the Ecuadorean government," said Chavez, who was hosting his weekly radio and television show from Cuba. He said Ecuador would not be charged. Ecuador's government says crude production will not be able to return to normal until at least October.

London, Aug 24 -- A press report, dated Aug 23, states: Ecuador's state-owned oil company is pumping at 45

percent of its normal production, but not enough to resume exports cut during a week of protests, a source at Petroecuador told AFP. "The level at Petroecuador rose to 90,000 barrels per day, the source said. "Production is rising little by little," the source said on condition of anonymity. On Monday (Aug 22), Minister of Energy and Mines Ivan Rodriguez said, "On Sunday (Aug 21), production was at 62,000 barrels and on Monday we hope to reach 70,000, which is less than 50 percent of our production." The state-owned business' normal production of 201,000 barrels per day was cut to nothing on Thursday (Aug 18) as protesters staged takeovers at wellheads and blocked highways in Ecuador's Amazon basin oil fields to demand a greater share of Ecuador's oil wealth. They also demanded that US-based oil company Oxy leave Ecuador on the grounds it ceded its rights to Encana of Canada without the government's authorization. With Ecuador's production down, the Venezuelan state oil company agreed to help Quito make up the shortfall with a shipment of refined products in September. A statement from Petroleos de Venezuela (PDVSA) did not specify the exact amount of fuels being offered, but said a deal was agreed today with a delegation from Ecuador to provide especially naphtha and diesel, and that the assistance could continue to October if necessary. In Ecuador, protestors, which include local and regional government officials, met for a second day with representatives of President Alfredo Palacio to press their demands. Cabinet officials announced that the protesters' demands for more paved roadways in their region would be met. However, security officials said that a state of emergency would remain in force, as protesters called the halt in demonstrations only a break in the action to allow for dialogue. Rodriguez called protesters' damage to the wells "worse than a war," and estimated economic losses of 400 million dollars to the impoverished South American nation by year end.

Quito, Aug 24 -- Protesters who have choked off Ecuadorean oil exports threatened today to launch a hunger strike to pressure the government into granting them immunity, as settlement talks headed into a fourth day. Demanding that oil firms invest more in the poor Amazon communities where they drill, the militants crippled Ecuador's petroleum industry last week and helped lift world crude prices by dynamiting pipelines and vandalizing pumping equipment. About 60 protest leaders are in Quito for negotiations aimed at ending the crisis. They warned that members of their group remain on alert near the oil fields of eastern Ecuador, ready to attack again if the talks fail. "The issue of immunity is the sticking point," said mediator Ramiro Gonzalez, prefect of Pichincha province, where the capital city Quito is located. "Negotiations will resume

in the morning." Oil companies oppose granting immunity from prosecution for participation in the attacks. "We cannot sponsor anarchy," Rene Ortiz, president of the Ecuadorean Hydrocarbons Association, told reporters. State security forces clashed with people of the town of Lago Agrio in Sucumbios province who accused the government and energy firms of dragging their feet during the talks. "If they do not agree to give us immunity from prosecution, we have a consensus to call a hunger strike as a way of increasing the pressure," Edmundo Espindola, a protest leader and mayor of the oil town of Shushufindi, told Reuters. "If immunity is granted, we are ready to sign the settlement," he said. The activists' stance put President Alfredo Palacio in a difficult position. The government wants to settle, but granting immunity would set a bad precedent because other groups would get the message that they can stage violent protests without legal consequences," said Carlos Larreategui, political analyst and pollster at the University of the Americas in Quito. Under a draft settlement proposal negotiators are thrashing out in Quito, oil companies including Occidental Petroleum Corp., Petrobras and EnCana Corp. would pave 160 miles of new roads in the eastern provinces of Sucumbios and Orellana. About two-thirds of the 25-percent income tax paid by the companies would be steered toward local health, environment and development projects, according to the draft agreement. In exchange, protesters would call a permanent end to the attacks and the government would end a state of emergency that allows the army to censor local media and restrict freedom of movement and assembly. Exports are still paralyzed, but output from state oil firm Petroecuador has climbed back to 135,084 barrels per day, more than half its average normal production. Output from private companies in Ecuador was 316,932 bpd on today, compared to 329,000 bpd before the crisis. But Ecuadorean Energy Minister Ivan Rodriguez has said some wells may be too damaged to return to normal. -- Reuters.

INDIA

London, Aug 18 -- A press report, dated Aug 17, states: The Indian state of Andhra Pradesh has imposed a ban on the rebel Communist Party of India (Maoist) group and what it says are six front organisations. The ban comes two days after suspected Maoist rebels shot dead 10 people, including a ruling party legislator. The state government had earlier empowered the chief minister to impose the ban and the federal government in Delhi today gave approval. The rebels have been fighting since 1980 for a communist state. The rebel groups were banned between 1992 and 2004 but the ban was not renewed last year in a bid to engage in peace talks. The peace process ended in failure in January

this year. More than 250 people have been killed in violence between police and rebels since the ceasefire ended. Today the federal home ministry gave Chief Minister YS Rajasekhara Reddy the go-ahead to impose the ban. State government sources said some ministers from the Telangana region were opposed to the ban but the chief minister reportedly told the cabinet he had no option other than to resort to strong measures in the wake of rebel violence. State minister for information Mohammed Ali Shabbir on Tuesday (Aug 16) ruled out any talks with the rebels until they laid down their arms. On Monday (Aug 15), Congress party legislator, Narsi Reddy, was returning from a function when four suspected rebels attacked his group. In addition to the 10 killed, eight others were injured in the raid in Makhtal, 130km south of the state capital, Hyderabad. The rebels are pressing for the creation of a communist state comprising tribal areas in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Bihar and Chhattisgarh.

New Delhi, Aug 23 -- Indian officials and Christian separatists from the remote state of Nagaland have held talks to preserve a four-year ceasefire and resolve a decades-old revolt, seen as the key to peace in the country's turbulent northeast. The talks, held late yesterday, were the first formal dialogue between the government and the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (S.S. Khaplang), which has observed a truce with Indian forces since 2001. "They discussed the ceasefire and how to continue talks," an Indian home ministry official told Reuters. "The Nagas had some demands about the ceasefire monitoring group and they will be examined." The two sides would meet again but no dates were set, he added. The Naga tribal rebellion is India's oldest insurgency, and security analysts say peace with the Nagas is crucial to a broader peace in the northeast -- seven states connected to the rest of India by a thin strip of land and home to dozens of insurgent groups. The Khaplang faction of the NSCN is the second most powerful separatist group in Nagaland, a mainly Christian state of two million people on India's far eastern border with Myanmar. A more powerful group, the NSCN (Issac-Muivah) has held repeated talks with the Indian government since it started a ceasefire in 1997. But there has been little progress over the rebels' central demands -- the unification of Naga-dominated areas in northeast India and ultimately independence. Both NSCN factions, which split in the late 1980s, have thousands of fighters, and raise money mainly through "taxes". -- Reuters.

INDIA-BANGLADESH

Kolkata, Aug 20 -- Indian and Bangladeshi border guards were firing at each other again today, a day after a dispute over a construction along the frontier flared into a gunfight, an

Indian official said. Early yesterday, Indian troops fired on hundreds of Bangladeshi workers and soldiers to stop the construction of a river embankment close to the zero line, triggering a gunbattle that lasted almost the whole day. There was no official word yet on casualties on either side but Indian officers said people in at least 15 border villages had been evacuated to safer places. Firing had largely stopped yesterday evening, and both sides said they were trying to organise talks to ensure hostilities did not flare. However, an Indian border official said Bangladeshi guards opened fire without provocation this morning. "According to reports we have this morning, heavy firing has resumed," a senior official of India's Border Security Force (BSF) said in Kolkata. "We had to return the fire after Bangladeshi troops resumed firing. The situation looks worse." Yesterday's fighting began as Indian troops opened fire after Bangladesh ignored a request to stop disputed construction work on their side of the border, along a river that flows into Bangladeshi territory from India, another BSF officer said. The incident took place at a border post about 350 km north of Kolkata. Indian officials said they had earlier turned down a request from Bangladeshi border authorities to allow the building of a river embankment because the issue was still being discussed by an India-Bangladesh panel on border rivers. Normally friendly relations between India and Bangladesh have often been marred by border skirmishes, especially after New Delhi began fencing off the frontier to stop illegal migrants and militants. Bangladesh denies its people are living and working illegally in India. Dhaka does not oppose the fencing project, but objects when the fence is built too close to the zero line along the 4,096-km land and riverine border. -- Reuters.

INDONESIA

London, Aug 22 -- A press report, dated today, states: More than 1,000 Indonesian troops have left Aceh province - the first withdrawal of forces after a peace deal made with separatist rebels last week. About 1,200 troops left northern Aceh onboard naval vessels. Under the terms of the peace deal, the government has pledged to withdraw all non-local forces from Aceh by the end of the year. The rebels, from the Free Aceh Movement (Gam), have agreed to disarm in return for political representation. An estimated 40,000-50,000 police and troops are currently stationed in Aceh. About 14,700 military and 9,100 police will remain after the Indonesian military completes its withdrawal under the terms of the peace deal. Monitors from the European Union and South East Asia begin work on Sep 15.

IRAQ

London, Aug 19 -- A press report, dated today, states: Iraqi insurgents killed four American soldiers and

assassinated a Baghdad judge yesterday while beleaguered government officials and U.S. military leaders worked to shift attention from the violence to efforts to rebuild the country. The soldiers died when their vehicle struck a roadside bomb in the city of Samarra, about 75 miles north of Baghdad, according to the U.S. military. The attack occurred on a dirt road in the southern section of the city. Military officials did not provide further details. U.S. military deaths in Iraq since the March 2003 invasion now total 1,864, according to The Associated Press. This month, there have been at least 59 fatalities, surpassing July's total and on track to pass the 77 recorded in June. Also yesterday, Jasim Waheeb, an investigative judge from a Baghdad appellate court, and his driver were shot to death in the capital's Dora neighborhood less than two miles from the heavily protected Green Zone that is home to the Iraqi government. He was assassinated by unknown gunmen while leaving his home, according to the Interior Ministry. West of the capital, the governor of troubled Anbar province escaped injury when gunmen attacked local leaders who were meeting at a mosque in Ramadi to discuss the efforts to write a new national constitution. Nine people were injured in the attack, including four from the Sunni Waqf, or religious endowment, and five guards, the Interior Ministry said. The violence came a day after a series of car bombings killed 43 people in what appeared to be an attack on Shiites designed to incite sectarian strife. Separately, a spokesman for the biggest Shiite party yesterday predicted a breakthrough on the constitution within the next two days, as negotiators scrambled to finish the draft by next week's deadline. The Associated Press reported. Afterward, leaders of the factions -- Shiites, Sunni Arabs and Kurds -- conferred late into yesterday night at the home of Vice President Adil Abdul-Mahdi in the heavily fortified Green Zone. AP reported. No statement was issued after the meeting, but representatives of all three factions spoke optimistically about prospects for finishing by the new deadline Monday (Aug 22.). Haitham al-Husseini, a spokesman for the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, said he expected a breakthrough within 48 hours, adding "the work is being done in an inclusive way to overcome the points of disagreements." However, Shiites and Kurds again pointed to Sunnis as the main holdouts because of their opposition to transforming Iraq into a federated state, which they fear would lead to the breakup of the nation.

Kabul, Aug 21 -- Four US soldiers were killed and three wounded in a bomb attack in Afghanistan today as they were trying to clear militants from an area before an election next month, the US military said. Hours later, two US embassy staff were hurt when their vehicle was hit by a blast

near the capital, Kabul. US forces have now suffered 47 deaths in combat in Afghanistan this year making it the worst period since they arrived to oust the Taliban in October 2001. The three wounded US soldiers were hurt in secondary explosions as they tried to pull fellow soldiers to safety after the first blast in Zabul province, in the south of the country. "Attacks such as this strengthen, not weaken, the resolve of the US/Coalition, Afghan National Security Forces, and the Afghan people," said a US commander, Major-General Jason Kamiya. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack in Dai Chopan district. A Taliban spokesman, Abdul Latif Hakimi, speaking by telephone from an undisclosed location, said Taliban fighters had planted the bomb. Two Afghan government soldiers were killed in a similar blast in another part of troubled Zabul, a provincial official said. The US unit was involved in operations in support of the September 18 parliamentary and provincial elections, which the Taliban and other militants have condemned and vowed to disrupt. "The unit's mission is part of a much larger operation to disrupt enemy forces and to thereby provide a safe environment for upcoming September elections," the US military said. The Afghan government and US officials say the militants will fail in their bid to spoil the vote. Today's casualty toll is the worst for US forces in Afghanistan since 16 American servicemen were killed in June when their helicopter was shot down as they tried to rescue four trapped US special forces soldiers. -- Reuters.

London, Aug 22 -- A press report, dated today, states: With the deadline for agreeing a new constitution just hours away, Iraq's deadlocked communities are meeting in a final attempt to hammer out a deal. An original deadline last week was shifted to midnight today (2000, UTC) when no agreement was reached. Officials are being forced to discuss a further delay, or even the more radical option of dissolving parliament. Shia, Sunni and Kurdish teams have been unable to agree on key issues including federalism, oil and the role of Islam. "If the text is not handed to the national assembly by the [new] deadline, one choice is to task for another one-week extension," the prime minister's spokesman, Leith Kubba, told reporters. "Or... the national assembly would be dissolved and the government becomes a caretaker government." Correspondents say there appears to be little appetite for fresh elections, so an extension appears the more likely outcome if the deadline is not met for the second time. The United States has led the way in urging the completion of the constitution, seeing it as a step towards stabilising Iraq, but as the wrangling continues, a leading Sunni member of the committee accused the US of applying too much pressure. "The Americans want the constitution to be submitted

on the deadline, but Iraqis know that it is not ready," said Saleh Mutlaq. Sunni politicians complain of being sidelined and have urged the international community to prevent the pushing through of a constitution lacking consensus. He says significant differences remain on crucial issues, and the most optimistic participants believe a final text at this stage would still leave some details unresolved. Officials say the communities have edged closer on some issues, but not close enough to come up with a draft form of words for the constitution. The Sunni contingent remains strongly opposed to allowing greater autonomy for the Kurdish north and Shia south, fearing its share of revenues from those oil-rich regions could eventually be compromised. A draft constitution agreed by the committee would be put to a referendum due in October. If it was approved, fresh elections would follow to elect a fully-mandated parliament under its terms, probably in December.

London, Aug 23 -- A press report, dated Aug 22, states: Saboteurs triggered a cascade of blackouts that halted Iraq's entire oil export capacity for most of today, a move that cost the country almost \$60 million in lost exports and rattled already jittery world markets. Government officials blamed the outage on insurgent attacks that toppled key power pylons in central Iraq and darkened broad swaths of the country, including its two largest cities - Baghdad and Basra. By late today, tankers were being loaded at less than a third of normal capacity with the help of backup generators, Dow Jones Newswires reported. The pumps failed as two oil tankers - one Brazilian, one Spanish - were in the midst of taking on Iraqi crude. Analysts said the disruption - a brief one by the standards of postwar Iraq - wasn't likely to affect world oil prices, especially with demand in North America expected to contract as the summer driving season ends. Since the start of 2004, Iraq has lost \$11 billion in oil revenues, mostly to sabotage, said George Orwel, an oil analyst for Petroleum Intelligence Weekly in New York. Today's disruption was the first since June, interrupting a rare run of good fortune for Iraq's oil sector. Earlier this year, insurgent attacks and rough weather that prevented ships from docking halted exports for days at a time, but over the summer, the country managed to raise production and exports, reaching production of 2.1 million barrels per day and exports of 1.6 million barrels per day in July, Orwel said. At times over the past year, overall production dipped as low as 1.6 million barrels per day, he said. At the same time, Iraq's badly overtaxed oil fields and export terminals got some long overdue maintenance, Orwel said. The maintenance, which includes new pumps that inject water back into Iraqi wells to restore pressure, appears to be reversing a drop in the quality of Iraqi crude, which had

become heavier, Orwel said. In the north, the export pipeline from Kirkuk to the Turkish port of Ceyhan even managed to handle brief export shipments before it was closed again by insurgent bombings, Orwel said. Most of the 300,000 or so barrels per day produced in Kirkuk is instead sent to local refineries for domestic use. That pipeline has been shuttered by rebel bombs almost continuously since the U.S.-led invasion in 2003.

London, Aug 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: Iraqi Prime Minister Ibrahim Jaafari has said he is confident that the country's politicians will reach an agreement on a new constitution. Yesterday, politicians submitted a draft document to parliament, but MPs did not vote on it because several key issues were still unresolved. Iraqi MPs gave negotiators three more days to reach agreement on the draft. Today, politicians again resumed negotiations aimed at resolving differences related to federalism. Sunni Arab representatives fear that further provincial devolution could lead to the break-up of the country. Kurdish officials were also against imposing a text without Sunni approval. The original deadline was last week, but it was shifted to midnight yesterday (2000, UTC) when no agreement was reached. Mr Jaafari said that 151 of 153 articles of the constitution had been agreed. He insisted the issue of federalism had been settled. Earlier, the head of the committee responsible for drafting the constitution, Humam Hammoudi, said he did not think the three days political leaders had given themselves to agree a deal would be enough. Mr Hammoudi, said the leaders might have to find a way of postponing discussion of some of the issues. Sunnis have expressed concerns that allowing for federalism may lead to the creation of an autonomous Shia area in southern Iraq - like the Kurdish north but under Iran's influence. The Sunnis fear greater autonomy for the Kurdish north and Shia south could compromise their share of revenues from those oil-rich regions. Shia and Kurdish political groups have enough of a majority in parliament to push through a draft constitution without the support of Sunni members of parliament, but correspondents say this would be a politically damaging move. Iraqi parliament speaker Hajim Hassani opened the a late-night session yesterday saying a draft had been received but outstanding issues remained. These included: federalism, and the way to form [federal] regions; the terminology used in eradicating the influence of the former Baath regime - whether to use the term Baath party or Saddam's Baath and structuring of authority between the presidency, parliament and the government. There was strong interest in reaching unanimity on the draft "so that the constitution pleases everyone", Mr Hassani said.

London, Aug 24 -- A press report, dated Aug 23, states: A suicide bomber

has killed 10 people in an attack on a joint US-Iraqi base in the Iraqi town of Baquba which led to three more "friendly fire" deaths. Eight policemen died in the explosion along with a US soldier and a contractor, according to US military and Iraqi police reports and three members of an Iraqi special forces unit in the area were killed in error by US troops, Iraqi police added. Elsewhere, an Iraqi minister said she had survived an assassination attempt. The explosion in Baquba, 50km north-east of Baghdad, occurred in a dining area in the Provincial Joint Co-ordination Centre. According to the police, US soldiers responding to the blast apparently mistook the special forces soldiers for insurgents and opened fire. Environment Minister Narmine Othman, an Iraqi Kurd, said today she had survived an assassination attempt a day earlier by gunmen who attacked her convoy. The minister was travelling through the Oudhaim region, between the northern city of Kirkuk and Baquba, when attackers opened fire, injuring three of her guards. Two Iraqi policemen were also reported killed in a clash with insurgents during a raid in Haydariya, north of the city of Najaf.

London, Aug 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: A senior Iraqi official of the Justice Ministry escaped a second attempt on his life when gunmen opened fire on his convoy in western Baghdad today, killing four of his bodyguards and wounding five others, police said. "Unknown gunmen attacked the convoy of Busho Ibrahim, the Kurdish under-secretary of the Justice Ministry on the highway near Adil district as he was heading to work, killing four bodyguards and wounding five others," an Interior Ministry source said on condition of anonymity. The official escaped unhurt, the source said, adding that two vehicles within the convoy were burned. Yesterday, Ibrahim escaped assassination when gunmen ambushed his convoy at 1600 hrs (1200, UTC) in western Baghdad, wounding three of his bodyguards and a civilian.

London, Aug 25 -- A press report, dated today, states: At least 35 people were killed in rebel attacks across central and northern Iraq yesterday. The deadliest strike was in Baghdad when a suicide car bomber attacked a police patrol in Ghazalia district sparking a gunbattle between rebels and security forces. At least 15 people were killed and 59 wounded, security sources said. Around 40 insurgents, some of them wearing masks, could be seen brandishing weapons in the streets of Hay al-Jamma, a district in the west of the city, shortly after they attacked police checkpoints with rockets and assault rifles. A Reuters cameraman at the scene said at least six police vehicles were on fire and gunfire and explosions could be heard. The police said they had called for reinforcement from US forces to repel the attacks. Twenty other people were killed in attacks yesterday, including four bodyguards of the deputy justice

minister, Boshu Ibrahim, when his convoy was attacked by gunmen in Baghdad. Iraqi security forces conducted raids in Amiriya and Ghaziliya, rounding up several suspected insurgent ringleaders.

London, Aug 25 -- A press report, dated today, states: Political leaders in Iraq are under pressure to agree on a new constitution before a deadline tonight. On Monday (Aug 22), parliament gave Shia, Kurdish and Sunni negotiators three more days to secure consensus on several outstanding key issues. These include provisions on federalism, which is opposed by the Sunni Arabs, who fear the break-up of Iraq. Adding to these tensions, yesterday, five people died in violence between rival Shia in several Iraqi cities. The clashes spread after radical Shia cleric Moqtada Sadr's office in Najaf was attacked and burnt down. Mr Sadr's supporters blamed the armed militia of the leading Shia political party, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (Sciri). Mr Sadr has sided with Sunni leaders in opposing the federalist tone of the draft constitution, warning that this could lead to the break-up of Iraq. Despite some signs of flexibility, it is thought unlikely that the Sunnis will sign up to the draft constitution today. President Jalal Talabani, a Kurd, said yesterday that Iraq's stability could only be ensured if consensus were reached. "The constitution will be to serve everybody and not only one community of the Iraqi society," Mr Talabani said. Negotiators are due to have further talks today, but it is not clear what will happen. The Shia and Kurdish groups have an overwhelming majority in parliament and can pass the constitution without Sunni support. But the insurgency that still plagues Iraq has its roots in the Sunni heartlands and the constitution is supposed to be part of the process of winning the Sunni community round, our correspondent says. Prime Minister Ibrahim Jaafari has said that 151 of 153 articles have been agreed since then - including the issue of federalism. Sunnis have expressed concerns that allowing for federalism may lead to the creation of an autonomous Shia area in southern Iraq - like the Kurdish north but under Iran's influence. The Sunnis fear greater autonomy for the Kurdish north and Shia south could compromise their share of revenues from those oil-rich regions. In other developments, Iraqi police say they have found the bodies of 36 men dumped in a shallow river near the town of Kut, south-east of the capital, Baghdad. A spokesman said the men had been handcuffed and stripped to their underwear, and most had bullet wounds to their heads. The spokesman said it appeared they had been shot as recently as two days ago. Elsewhere, a Filipino contract worker and two Iraqis were killed in a bomb attack on their convoy in the Iraqi city of Kirkuk, the Philippine foreign ministry said today. Two other Filipinos were wounded in the attack,

said Gilbert Asuque, a ministry spokesman. "Based on information we received from our mission in Iraq, the convoy carrying the Filipino workers and their Iraqi escorts hit an IED on the road to Kirkuk," Asuque told reporters, referring to an improvised explosive device.

ISRAEL

Gadid, Gaza Strip, Aug 19 -- Israeli troops stormed one of the last pockets of resistance to withdrawal from Gaza today, dragging settlers and their supporters screaming and sobbing from a settlement synagogue. Settlers took to rooftops in the tiny Gadid enclave shouting "Nazis" as security forces swept in, hours after clearing Gaza's main anti-pullout strongholds, all but breaking the back of opposition to ending 38 years of occupation. With the latest poll confirming solid support among the Israeli public for the first removal of settlements from land Palestinians want for a state, troops rushed to wrap up their toughest tasks before the start of the Jewish Sabbath at sunset. Pushing past burning barricades, security forces in riot gear surrounded Gadid's synagogue and forced their way in as 90 protesters who had barricaded themselves inside lay on the floor, crying and shouting. Police wrestled them out one by one, as they had in assaults yesterday on two other synagogues in hardline settlements. More than 80 percent of Gaza's 8,500 settlers have been evacuated under Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's "disengagement plan," and officials said the operation could be completed by Tuesday (Aug 23), far ahead of schedule. Many of Gadid's 350 residents had already left before troops moved in, but a few families and dozens of protesters defiantly remained. Columns of smoke rose from piles of burning tyres and debris as soldiers went door to door ordering people out. After negotiations failed yesterday, troops stormed synagogues in Neve Dekalim, the biggest Gaza enclave, and in the religious community of Kfar Darom, scene of the most frenzied clashes. Police used cranes and water cannon to battle protesters on the roof of Kfar Darom's house of worship, who fought back with rocks, paint-filled light bulbs and chemical irritants. The army said 31 security personnel were hurt. Opponents of the pullout were also dragged kicking and screaming from Neve Dekalim's synagogue after troops moved in. -- Reuters.

Atzmona, Gaza, Aug 21 -- Israeli forces hoped to complete the evacuation of the biggest bloc of Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip today as further confrontations loomed with ultranationalist protesters. Several hundred radical youngsters, reinforcing dozens of settler families that ignored last week's army directive to leave the occupied land, awaited troops sent to remove them. Only four of the 21 Gaza settlements, built on territory Palestinians want for a state, remain after forced

evacuations last week, during which settlers were carried from their homes and protesters were pulled from synagogues. President Mahmoud Abbas decreed that the Palestinian Authority would take over all the settlements as the Israelis pull out. Contingents of unarmed soldiers planned to head to the settlements of Katif and Atzmona, farming communities of a few hundred people, and to Slav, where most residents have left, to complete the evacuation of the Gush Katif bloc. Netzarim, an isolated settlement near Gaza City, is due to be emptied tomorrow. With Palestinian agreement, Israeli forces are due to start full-scale demolition of evacuated settler homes today. Withdrawals were suspended yesterday for the Jewish Sabbath. More than 85% of Gaza's settlers have gone, but resistance has been reinforced by ultranationalists like those who made stands last week at Neve Dekalim, the biggest settlement, and Kfar Darom, an outlying religious outpost. -- Reuters.

London, Aug 22 -- A press report, dated today, states: Israeli forces are evacuating the last inhabited Jewish settlement in the Gaza Strip as an eviction operation started five days ago draws to a close. Netzarim's residents are the last of 8,500 people in 21 settlements in Gaza to be evicted under a pullout plan. Attention will then shift to the West Bank, where four other settlements are being abandoned amid expectations of possibly violent resistance. Troops are heading to the West Bank for the operation, due to start tomorrow. Residents of two West Bank settlements due to be evacuated have already left, but an estimated 2,000 activists have gathered at two others - Sanur and Homesh - and are expected to mount fierce resistance. Skirmishes were reported yesterday as tensions rose ahead of the operation. Military officials believe some of the protesters have weapons and may be ready to use them, the Associated Press news agency reported. Former Israeli intelligence chief Ami Ayalon told Israeli television that about eight percent of the 230,000 settlers in the West Bank should be considered dangerous, and did not recognise the state's authority. The military says armed troops may be deployed to clear the two settlements, a shift from the policy in Gaza where all troops were unarmed. According to the AFP news agency, some 2,000 Israeli security personnel are helping clear Netzarim. An officer in charge of the operation told the agency he expected all settlers to have left by the afternoon, following a final mourning ceremony. Israeli bulldozers began demolishing homes in four of the empty Gaza settlements yesterday - at Nissanit and Dugit in the north, and Peat Sadeh and Ganei Tal in the south. The demolition work - expected to take several weeks - is being carried out in agreement with the Palestinian Authority, which will assume responsibility for the land once the Israeli army has left. The final departure of troops is expected within about a month, once army bases and military installations have been dismantled.

London, Aug 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: Israeli troops are evicting residents of two Jewish settlements in the West Bank, a day after the removal of 8,500 Jews from Gaza was completed. They met little resistance, but had to cut through barbed wire to reach protesters barricaded in synagogues. In one instance, a crane was used to lift troops onto a rooftop at the settlement of Sanur to take protesters down in two shipping containers. The closure of 21 settlements in Gaza ended yesterday in a quick operation. It is the first time Israel has withdrawn from Palestinian land captured in the 1967 war. The atmosphere in Sanur is described as "calm", despite media reports that radical settlers had weapons and could resort to violence. A group of around 30-40 protesters barricaded themselves on the roof of an old Ottoman fort where they are holding final prayers. Troops firing water cannon stepped from containers hoisted by cranes onto the roof - but they are allowing the protest to end before taking them down. In Homesh troops removed a small group of protesters from the roof of a religious school using a bulldozer shovel. Security in the area will remain in Israeli hands, unlike in the Gaza Strip, where the Israelis are withdrawing entirely from the area and will hand over security to the Palestinian Authority. The residents of Ganim and Kadim, two other settlements in the northern West Bank, have already left voluntarily. Demolitions have already begun in Ganim. The last Jewish settlement to be cleared in Gaza was Netzarim, which was evacuated with little or no resistance following tearful prayers by residents. Israeli bulldozers have already begun demolishing homes in the empty Gaza settlements. The demolition work - expected to take several weeks - is being carried out in agreement with the Palestinian Authority, which will assume responsibility for the land once the Israeli army has left.

Homesh, West Bank, Aug 24 -- Israeli troops should be out of Gaza in late September, ahead of schedule, its army chief said after wrapping up early the evacuation of 15,000 settlers and supporters from the strip and the West Bank. The removal of 25 settlements in just six days drew a call from U.S. President George W. Bush for a return to an internationally sponsored peace "road map" that envisages a Palestinian state alongside a secure Israel. "It's over, but there's more to go," Lieutenant-General Dan Halutz said yesterday after security forces ejected ultranationalist protesters making last stands in the West Bank settlements of Homesh and Sanur. Halutz said the army planned, under a deal with the Palestinians, to complete the demolition of homes in all 21 Gaza settlements and four enclaves evacuated in the northern West Bank in about 10 days. A troop withdrawal from occupied Gaza, he told a news conference, would follow "close to the end of September ... a little bit before

the estimated date". All of Gaza would then come under Palestinian rule, although Israel would still control the narrow coastal strip's air space. Palestinians want Israel to hand over all of the West Bank and Arab East Jerusalem for their capital. Israel captured both along with Gaza in the 1967 Middle East war, but Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has vowed to keep all of Jerusalem and large West Bank settlements. Forecasts of tough resistance to evacuation proved wrong in Homesh and Sanur just as they did in Gaza where settlers were cleared out in five days, two weeks ahead of schedule, in Sharon's bid to "disengage" from conflict with Palestinians. Police stormed an old British police station and synagogues in the two enclaves fortified by some 1,000 radicals, drawing a hail of bottles, light bulbs, paint, ketchup, eggs and tomatoes, but there was little violent resistance and the two settlements were emptied in less than a day. Palestinian militants have feted the pullout as a victory. Israeli rightists, including many in Sharon's Likud party, condemned the pullout, saying it rewarded a Palestinian revolt. An anti-pullout mutiny in Likud has raised doubt whether the party will renominate Sharon as its candidate for prime minister in the next election, due in 2006. A poll published by the Haaretz daily today found that Sharon's main Likud rival, Benjamin Netanyahu, would take 47 percent of the vote to 30 percent for the premier if a Likud primary were held now. Sharon has dismissed media reports that he could form a new moderate party with Likud allies if needed to win re-election. -- Reuters.

Jerusalem, Aug 25 -- Violence erupted in Jerusalem and the West Bank yesterday just as Israeli and Palestinian leaders said plans were taking shape for a peaceful handover of the Gaza Strip next month. In the West Bank, Israeli troops killed four Palestinians, one of them Islamic Jihad leader Ribhi Amara, in a late-night undercover raid on Tulkarm refugee camp, witnesses said. Israeli forces entered Tulkarm and surrounded a house planning to arrest five men suspected in suicide bombings in Tel Aviv in February and Netanya in July, a military source said. When the soldiers arrived, a gunbattle ensued. Witnesses said four people, including Amara, were killed. "The intention was to come to arrest them. All were wanted and all were armed," the source said. The Islamic Jihad group, bent on destroying Israel, vowed to avenge the killings. In Jerusalem, a Palestinian stabbed to death an ultra-Orthodox Jew and wounded another, ending a long period of relative calm in the walled Old City, police said. Police also said the stabbing had a nationalist background and the attacker had fled. The attacks were the first since Israel on Tuesday (Aug 23) finished removing the last of 15,000 settlers and their supporters from 21 enclaves in Gaza and four in the West Bank. Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz said Israeli

military forces were expected to leave Gaza in mid-September, completing a withdrawal from the territory after 38 years of occupation. All that remained was to complete the demolitions of some 1,700 homes, dismantle army bases and pull out troops from Gaza. -- Reuters.

JORDAN

London, Aug 21 -- A press report, dated today, states: Three rockets were fired from a rented warehouse 8 km from the port of Aqaba. The first rocket targeting a warehouse for the Jordan Armed Forces at the main port, killing a Jordanian soldier and injuring another one. The second rocket hitting a Jordan army training yard outside the port near a local military hospital. The third rocket fired in the direction of Eilat port in Israel. The report stated that the preliminary investigations show that the three rockets were fired from a local warehouse in Aqaba rented by four Iraqi and Egyptian people. A group named 'Abdullah al-Azzam group' related to al-Qaida Organization announced its responsibility of the attacks. Additionally, there was a thorough search in Aqaba done by the Jordan armed forces via helicopters in search of the Iraqi and Egyptian suspects. The police forces closed the port premises and denied the entry of people and vehicles upon the incident. In relation to tourism, it was reported that tourism was not affected by the incidents and no tourist were reported to leave Aqaba city. The life in Aqaba continued normally as usual. As a result of the attacks, there had been some road closures by the Police. Traffic in and out of Aqaba was only affected for few hours after the incident. After that all roads were opened and the truck movements were back to normal. Aqaba port is open as usual for all vessels and discharging/loading operations is not affected. At the moment there are no special concerns in relation to any upcoming vessels calling Aqaba port.

LEBANON

Beirut, Aug 23 -- A local press report, dated today, states: A powerful explosion has rocked Lebanon, after weeks of calm, bringing fear and chaos to the country's capital once again. At around 2245 hrs, yesterday night, a blast occurred in Zalka, one of the capital's Christian suburbs, raising speculation that the spate of bombings that had kept citizens at home had once again started their destruction. According to security sources, a bomb placed near the car park of Hotel Promenade, inside the Moussa shopping centre went off, lightly injuring at least five people and causing extensive damage. It was unclear who the bomb was targeting, but it was understood that it was not a car bomb, but an explosive placed inside the centre. The bomb resembles the series of explosions that targeted other Christian areas since the February assassination of former

Prime Minister Rafik Hariri on Feb 14. Lebanese Health Minister Mohammed Khalifeh has asked all hospitals to accept the injured at the expense of the ministry, according to sources. Witnesses said smoke was billowing into the night sky near a hotel. Zalka, on the Mediterranean coast, is a mixed residential and commercial area on a main street. The area is heavily populated and has several cafes, restaurants and other nightspots that were full of patrons and tourists. The last explosion to target Beirut took place on Jul 22. -- Lloyd's Agents.

LIBERIA

Monrovia, Aug 24 -- The new head of the UN Mission in Liberia, Alan Doss, said today that his immediate priority was ensuring that October's crunch elections pass off peacefully. Liberians head to the polls on Oct 11 to choose a new president and parliament in polls that are supposed to return the West African country to democracy after 14 years of civil war. "The most immediate priority is to ensure that elections are held in a free, fair and transparent manner in an atmosphere of peace and security," Doss, a career UN diplomat, told reporters. With so many former fighters among the 1.3 million people expected to vote, observers and diplomats say there is the potential for trouble when one candidate wins and the others lose. Just hours after the election campaign kicked off last week, there was scattered low-level violence as rival political supporters tore down posters and damaged several cars. The Liberian government had already banned public demonstrations not approved by authorities but tightened its restrictions in the wake of the trouble to include all forms of street campaign that had "the propensity to destroy the peace and security". Around 15,000 UN peacekeepers are deployed across the heavily-forested nation, and security concerns still loom large. "Despite the peace in this country and the fact that UN troops are deployed throughout the country, there are many challenges ahead," Doss said. "Security is the focus, because without security, there can not be recovery and development." In the longer term, Doss faces the difficult task of persuading Liberia's notoriously corrupt government officials to mend their ways while at the same time securing international aid to help rebuild the country after the civil war which ended in August 2003. International donors have threatened to withhold funding for Liberia's reconstruction if politicians continue to squander cash designed to help the country's estimated three million population. Donors are currently trying to agree with the government on a plan to reduce corruption, known as the Governance and Economic Management Assistance Plan (GEMAP). "It is under discussion," Doss said. "The main concern is to strengthen the financial base of Liberia to take on the huge

problems that await the incoming government". Doss has several years experience of conflict resolution in West Africa. Before taking up the UNMIL post last week, he was deputy head of UN mission in neighbouring Cote d'Ivoire and before that he held the same position in Sierra Leone. -- Reuters.

NEPAL

Kathmandu, Aug 18 -- Dozens of heavily armed Maoist rebels stormed and bombed a textile factory in southern Nepal but no one was hurt in the attack on one of the impoverished nation's biggest plants, police said today. The attack on Jyoti Spinning Mills Ltd's plant at Parwanipur, 150 km south of Kathmandu, came late yesterday when guerrillas overpowered a guard and set off the bomb, a police officer told Reuters. "Fire fighters were rushed to the plant. They are still fighting the blaze caused by the blast," the officer said. No one has claimed responsibility but police blamed the rebels fighting to overthrow the monarchy and install a communist republic. Nepali investors including the junior finance minister in the Himalayan kingdom's royalist government own the firm. It was not clear why the factory was bombed. Yesterday, consumer goods maker Unilever Nepal, owned 80 percent by India's Hindustan Lever Ltd., part of Anglo-Dutch Unilever Plc, said it had shut its plant following a threat from rebels. The nine-year insurgency has scared investors forcing many industries to close. The army said today Nepali soldiers had recovered the bodies of 12 colleagues killed in a deadly gunbattle with rebels earlier this month pushing the military's death toll in the clash to 55. An army officer said the bodies were found in the mountains in Kalikot district, a Maoist stronghold 600 km west of Kathmandu, where the fighting took place on Aug 7-8. At least 26 rebels also died in the overnight battle. The clash in the Himalayan kingdom caused the highest number of military fatalities in the past year. The army said 64 other soldiers were still missing. The Maoists have said they had captured 60 troops as well as a huge cache of weapons from dead soldiers in the battle. The army said it would not comment on the Maoist claim or on the fate of the missing troops. "The search is continuing in the area," the officer said. -- Reuters.

London, Aug 20 -- A press report, dated Aug 19, states: Government troops in Nepal have killed six Maoist rebels in clashes in a western district which left a soldier injured, officials say. The clashes are said to have occurred during a search for rebels who took part in a deadly attack on an army camp in a neighbouring district last week. At least 70 soldiers and rebels were killed in the clash. It was some of the bloodiest fighting since King Gyanendra seized direct control of power in February. In a separate incident, suspected rebels set off a home-made bomb in the residential

complex of a royal adviser, Sachit Shumsher Rana, in the capital, Kathmandu. The bomb caused minor damage and no has been hurt.

London, Aug 22 -- AQ press report, dated today, states: Six policemen have been killed and four others, including a civilian, wounded in a landmine explosion in south-western Nepal. Maoist rebels said that they carried out the attack. The authorities say reinforcements have been sent to the area to launch a manhunt for the attackers. The latest incident took place when a police vehicle ran over a landmine apparently placed by the rebels in Rupandehi district, 325km south-west of the capital Kathmandu.

Kathmandu, Aug 23 -- Nepal's main political parties said today they were preparing to talk to Maoist rebels to plan joint protests against King Gyanendra, reversing an earlier decision to shun the guerrillas. The decision by the seven parties came after Maoist leader Prachanda last month agreed to key conditions set by them. Prachanda promised that the rebels would not target unarmed civilians, stop extortion and urged the parties to name negotiators for talks on a united campaign against the king. "The parties will set up a team for meeting the Maoists in due course," Gopal Man Shrestha, chief of the third biggest group, Nepali Congress (Democratic) party, told Reuters. Shrestha was speaking on behalf of the seven parties which held talks among themselves late yesterday and agreed to discuss joining hands with the rebels to restore democracy. "The Maoists have made some positive gestures. We'll first set up a panel of distinguished citizens to monitor whether those promises were translated into practice or not," Shrestha said, referring to Prachanda's offer. He said the parties would try to convince the rebels to give up violence and join peaceful pro-democracy rallies. Seven political parties that controlled more than 190 seats in the 205-member parliament dissolved in 2002 have been protesting against Gyanendra's Feb. 1 sacking of the multi-party government and assumption of absolute power. "The fact is neither the Maoists can win through violent means nor can the government crush the rebels militarily," Shrestha said. -- Reuters.

NIGERIA

Port Harcourt, Aug 22 -- Protesters today lifted a week-long siege of oil facilities in Nigeria as a prelude to talks with oil company Royal Dutch Shell, a lawyer representing them said. The protest by five communities over compensation for an oil spill and fire in 2003 had originally shut a 14,000 barrel-per-day pumping station, but the impact rose to 25,000 bpd yesterday when villagers blockaded a pipeline intersection known as Agbada-2. "I told the communities to open Agbada-2 and they have just done that now, because Shell is now ready to seriously negotiate," Azibaola Robert, the

lawyer representing the protesters, said. Shell fully restored its production from the area after the siege was lifted, and a company spokesman confirmed that talks were due to start today. The protest began last Tuesday (Aug 16) after talks broke down over the level of compensation due to five communities near the Rivers state capital Port Harcourt. The communities had demanded \$5 million for the spill, which sparked a fire on agricultural land nearby, but Shell offered just \$900 to the two worst affected villages. Shell, Nigeria's largest oil producer, accounts for one million bpd of the OPEC member's 2.5 million total. Oil operations are frequently disrupted by protests in the Niger Delta region, where impoverished villagers feel they should get a greater share of the wealth being extracted from their tribal lands. -- Reuters.

PAKISTAN

London, Aug 19 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: A homemade bomb exploded near a polling station today, while clashes between supporters of rival candidates in Pakistani municipal elections left seven dead and 82 injured, police said. Security was beefed up for the first round of the three-phase elections that started today in 53 districts across the country, with authorities deploying some 35,000 policemen, 10,500 paramilitary troops and 40,000 soldiers to guard polling stations and voters. The bomb hit a polling station in the southwestern town of Khuzdar, but nobody was injured, local government administrator Amir Farooqi said. No one claimed responsibility for the blast. Three people were killed and 12 injured when gunmen opened fire on a candidate's supporters in the northwestern town of Bannu, police official Abdi Ali said. Four others died and 70 were wounded in separate incidents in provinces across the country.

RUSSIA

London, Aug 20 -- A press report, dated today, states: A bomb detonated by remote control killed at least three police officers in the troubled southern Russian region of Dagestan and wounded several more, officials said today. An Associated Press reporter saw two dead bodies in police uniforms lying in the street in downtown Makhachkala, the capital of the Caspian Sea region. Armed police, firefighters and paramedics rushed to the scene, and dazed residents watched workers sweep glass from the street. City police officer Akhmed Magomedov said, that a six-man police patrol was walking past a grove of trees at about 1600 when the bomb exploded. He said four officers were wounded, but police spokeswoman Marina Rusolova said one officer died on the way to the hospital. The blast occurred near a banquet hall, Rusolova said. Makhachkala is about 1,000 miles south of Moscow. Near-

daily attacks on police and authorities in the Caspian Sea region have raised fears that violence is spreading from neighbouring Chechnya. Some of the violence is believed to be linked to criminal gangs.

London, Aug 25 -- A press report, dated today, states: The prime minister of Russia's Ingushetia republic has been wounded when two bombs targeted his car in an assassination attempt, his office said. Prime Minister Ibragim Malsagov was injured in the leg but is in satisfactory condition in a hospital after the car he was riding in was hit by an explosive device in the city of Nazran this afternoon. Only a few seconds later, there was a second explosion, which the prime minister's driver was able to avoid, the prime minister's office said. One of the prime minister's security guards was killed in the attack and two other security personnel were wounded. Nazran is the main city in the Ingushetia region, which has suffered frequent spillover violence from neighbouring Chechnya and attacks by native militants and criminal gangs. Last week, the Nazran police chief was wounded when unknown assailants detonated a radio-controlled land mine as his car was passing.

SOMALIA

Nairobi, Aug 24 -- Senior religious leaders in Somalia have called on the country's interim government to either end the divisions that have paralysed the administration or resign, a spokesman said today. "It is almost a year since they have been elected and up to now they have not accomplished one thing," Shaykh Nur Barud, deputy chairman and spokesman of the Ulama Council of Somalia, told IRIN. "They are all busy attacking each other over the media." Barud said the country needed leadership to "pull it out of the mess" it was in. The Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs) have been divided over the location of the government within Somalia following its recent relocation from Nairobi, Kenya. President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed, Prime Minister Ali Muhammad Gedi and their supporters in the TFIs relocated in June from Nairobi to the town of Jowhar, 90 km north of the capital, Mogadishu. They maintain that Mogadishu must be secured before they can transfer the government there. About 100 members of the 275-strong Transitional Federal Parliament - led by Speaker Sharif Hassan Shaykh Aden - are currently in Mogadishu attempting to restore stability to the war-scarred city. A section of the government, including several prominent faction leaders, strongly disagreed with the decision to install the administration in Jowhar. The proposed deployment of peacekeepers, particularly from Somalia's neighbours, has also deeply divided the new government. There have been numerous attempts by the international community and the UN to mediate an end to the divisions.

Earlier this month, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General to Somalia, François LonsÈny Fall, presented an "agenda for dialogue" to Somali leaders, aimed at helping them overcome the current differences and find a way forward. "We are ready to mediate between the two groups," Barud said. He said the council had already talked to the Mogadishu-based group and "been encouraged by the discussions so far". "We want to send emissaries to Jowhar once the president and the prime minister are back," he added. Both Yusuf and Gedi are currently out of Somalia. Barud warned, however, that Somali efforts alone would not solve the problem, and called on the international community to "put pressure" on both sides to end "this petty politicking". He added: "The People have suffered enough. They need a unified and effective government. If this group [TFIs] cannot provide it, then they should step aside and let others who can lead and deliver step in." -- Reuters.

SRI LANKA

Kilinochchi, Aug 17 -- Sri Lanka's Tamil Tiger rebels, accused of assassinating the foreign minister last week, have said for the first time that they will not resume a two-decade war for self-rule, but the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam said they would defend the island's minority Tamils from attack. In contrast to recent warnings of an imminent return to a civil war, the rebels -- who deny any hand in the minister's assassination -- said abiding by an ongoing truce was the only way to resurrect a stalled peace process. "We want to maintain the ceasefire momentum, the peace ... and ensure that we walk back into the peace process again," S.P. Thamilselvan, head of the Tigers' political wing, told Reuters in the rebel stronghold of Kilinochchi late yesterday. The Tigers have said repeatedly in recent weeks the truce, in place since 2002, could collapse because of a rash of killings in the restive east that the military and rebels each blame on the other. President Chandrika Kumaratunga has accused the Tigers directly of assassinating Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar, an ethnic Tamil seen by hardliners as a traitor to the rebel cause by campaigning to have them banned internationally as a terrorist group. Few in Colombo believe the Tigers' denial of any role in Kadirgamar's killing. Analysts say it is a stock disclaimer. The Tigers, who run a de facto state in Sri Lanka's war-ravaged north and east, with their own courts, taxation system and even speedgun-toting highway police, say Kadirgamar's killing by snipers late on Friday (Aug 12) was probably an inside job by elements opposed to the peace process, but Thamilselvan stopped short of accusing anyone directly, saying it was up to the police to investigate and find the culprits and for the courts to try them. Kadirgamar "had 24-hour security," he

said. "So if in the end someone had been able to infiltrate into that set up and meticulously carry out a killing, definitely there is an inside element in this matter." He toned down his recent threats that the ceasefire could collapse unless the military disarmed a renegade rebel faction attacking Tiger cadres in the east, saying the group's leadership "may have to sit down and think about it" if the killings continued. But the rebels still demand that the government stick to the terms of the ceasefire and disarm the renegade faction - which it has refused to do. "The most simple way to get the peace process back on track is by sincerely and effectively giving implementation status to the ceasefire agreement," Thamilselvan said. "That alone is sufficient to get the peace process back on track for the parties to sit down and talk." -- Reuters.

London, Aug 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: Tamil Tiger rebels in Sri Lanka have agreed to hold direct talks with the Colombo government. The move comes less than a week after the killing of the country's Foreign Minister, Lakshman Kadirgamar, near his heavily-guarded home in Colombo. The talks will be the first high-level meeting between the two sides in more than two years. A Norwegian diplomat described the talks as a significant step forward for the peace process.

SUDAN

Khartoum, Aug 17 -- Darfur rebel commanders say they still aim for a peace deal by the end of 2005 even though they have asked for a postponement of talks with the government, the top U.N. official in Sudan said today. Jan Pronk, speaking after two days of meetings with Sudan Liberation Army commanders in the western region, said they had requested the delay to hold a rebel movement conference to reach a unified position in the negotiations with Khartoum. But a long postponement of the African Union-sponsored talks in the Nigerian capital Abuja would not be acceptable, he said. Talks had been due to resume on Aug 24. "If a postponement is unavoidable ... it should be a very brief postponement," he told reporters. "But not a long postponement because that will not be accepted." Agreements made at the Abuja talks with the rebel leadership have often been ignored by commanders on the ground, but Pronk said they now recognised the need for a deal to end the violence in the vast and arid region. "The commanders are united in their desire to continue the talks in order to reach a peace agreement by the end of this year," Pronk said. He said he had advised them to hold the planned conference for all SLA commanders, political and humanitarian officials across Darfur in September or October. Pronk said that if the SLA did not reach a deal this year, they would have to negotiate under pressure next year, when he feared donors would reduce their humanitarian aid to Darfur. Pronk

also said he had heard reports in the past day of forced relocations from camps around Khartoum, which house around two million people mostly from Darfur and Sudan's war-torn south, despite promises from the government that they would be consulted before any people were moved from the slum areas. Pronk said there had been violence but did not give details, saying the authorities had prevented U.N. personnel from entering the area. -- Reuters.

TONGA

See under "Labour Disputes".

TURKEY

London, Aug 22 -- A press report, dated Aug 19, states: The Kurdish rebel group fighting for autonomy in south-eastern Turkey, the PKK, has announced a one-month ceasefire. The statement called on the armed wing of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) to hold fire until Sep 20, but the PKK said rebels would defend themselves if attacked. Last week Turkey's prime minister described the situation in the south-east as a political problem which needed settling through more democracy. The PKK statement today said the ceasefire call was a response to Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's speech. "We will give time to Prime Minister Erdogan's well-intended efforts," said Zubeyir Aydar, head of the PKK's political wing Kongra-Gel.

Labour Disputes



BANGLADESH

See under "Political & Civil Unrest."

INDIA

Mumbai, Aug 25 -- An indefinite strike by various transport service providers and associations has affected container movement at India's largest container port - Jawaharlal Nehru Port (JNPT). The strike, which commenced yesterday morning, has come as a blow to the port, which has been slowly recovering from the recent floods, and has a backlog of 35,000 containers as of yesterday. The striking transport operators are protesting against the road access for the newly-built National Highway. A senior JNPT official said cargo movement by road from the ports and its private terminal Nhava Sheva International Container Terminal to various container freight stations has come to a complete standstill. A senior official from Nhava Sheva Container Operators Welfare Association (NSCOWA) said transport operators under various associations would boycott cargo movement to port, to protest against the decision to levy a Rs.260 toll for using National Highway 4B(NH 4B) which connects to Jawaharlal Nehru Port at Nhava

Sehva. In addition to NSCOWA, Bombay Goods Transport Association, Maharashtra Heavy Vehicles Interstate Association and various upcountry transport operators are taking part in the boycott. "Currently NH 4B is the only road which links the port and there was no road access till recently. From Aug 10, Jawaharlal Nehru Port started levying a toll for entry and exit at the port for using just 5-6km. This is applicable to local and upcountry traffic", said the official. He said the toll was being collected even from empty trailers leaving the port and movement of trailers from empty yards falling outside the toll area was being diverted in order to levy the toll. Meetings held with National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) officials and port authorities have failed to arrive at a satisfactory a solution. Operators have suggested a state-wise levy of toll. NHAI has appointed a committee to thrash out a quick settlement, and has called a meeting today. NH-4B was recently inaugurated in the presence of shipping minister TR Baalu and Maharashtra CM Vilasrao Deshmukh. NH-4B connects the port to the Mumbai-Pune Expressway and Goa and is the primary road connectivity to the port. Around 12,000 containers bound for inland depots are stuck at JNPT. -- Lloyd's Agents.

REUNION

Reunion, Aug 25 -- Stevedores at Reunion port on strike since Aug 22. Following vessels stuck at Reunion port: Bulk Omiros (25169 gt, built 1987) ETA Reunion port Aug 19, bulk cereal cargo, and c.c. Cerrina (7361 gt, built 1993) ETA Reunion port Aug 22, general cargo, containers. -- Lloyd's Agents.

TONGA

London, Aug 19 -- A press report, dated today, states: Vehicles have been torched and scores of students arrested as a wave of lawlessness spreads through Tonga. The violence, which erupted on Wednesday (Aug 17), comes as a strike by the country's 3000 civil servants enters its second month. Yesterday, four government vehicles were torched outside the Inland Revenue department in the capital, Nuku'alofa, while police were also hunting dozens of students who fled after ransacking their school. Nearby buildings were scorched by the heat. Just hours earlier, a student group had threatened to "burn government buildings" if authorities didn't move to settle the strike, called last month after senior government officials received pay rises of up to 80 per cent. On Wednesday, students at Tonga College ransacked the school's computer rooms and offices before smashing Education Ministry vehicles, belonging to staff brought in by the government to replace striking teachers. The students were demanding the reinstatement of the college principal and other senior staff dismissed for supporting the strike.

London, Aug 24 -- A press report, dated Aug 23, states: Tongan protesters have scuffled with New Zealand police outside a residence of the king of Tonga in the northern city of Auckland. Civil servants on the impoverished South Pacific archipelago have been on strike for several weeks. A blaze engulfed one of the king's houses on Tonga on Monday (Aug 22), although it was not clear if this was related. New Zealand has said it will send a negotiator to Tonga to mediate between the government and civil servants. Some 3,000 government employees have been on strike since July, demanding pay increases. The unrest is now spreading to Auckland's large Tongan community. About 50 Tongans were involved in the clashes with police and royal staff outside the residence of 87-year-old King Taufa'ahau Tupou in the town on Monday. They demanded to meet the king but were blocked by 30 police officers. Reports said two men and two women were arrested after the scuffles. New Zealand Foreign Minister, Phil Goff, said the strike was having a significant impact on Tonga's economy. "It is important that a process is put in place to help resolve the issues and reduce tensions in Tongan society," he said according to the French news agency AFP. Tonga's civil servants launched their protest after senior government officials were awarded pay rises of up to 80% in July. They have rejected offers by Tonga's authorities to increase their wages by a third.

UNITED KINGDOM

London, Aug 25 -- A press report, dated today, states: More than 3,000 civilians working in Scotland's eight police forces are taking strike action over a pay offer. The action is the first in their history, but support workers involved in the Rory Blackhall murder inquiry have been exempted from taking part. The union Unison said its members had found a pay offer of 2.95% plus 2.5% over the next two years "wholly insufficient". But employers insist the unions had no justification for an increased offer. About 70% of staff voted to take action, which includes control room staff, information assistants, reception and fingerprint staff across the eight forces. Unison official Peter Veldon said: "Police staff are crucial in providing effective policing in Scotland. They have never before voted for strike action. "However the obdurate refusal of Cosla (Convention of Scottish Local Authorities) to negotiate realistically means they have no other option." But Cosla said it had tabled the same deal offered to all other local government workers. "Local authorities put in over 50% of the funding for the service so local government quite properly wants to see effective management and deployment of that money," a spokeswoman said. "We have settled with these same trade unions on behalf of other employees working in local government at exactly the same

level as is now being offered to police support staff. "The unions have put forward no justification for an increased offer." She said negotiations south of the border had been linked to modernisation, a move consistently rejected by unions in Scotland. Scottish Conservative leader David McLetchie called for the support workers to be covered by a no-strike rule to ensure public safety. Chief constables have said that front-line policing will not be affected during the strike. Unison said there was an agreement in place to grant further exemptions from the strike should a major emergency arise.

UNITED STATES

London, Aug 22 -- A press report, dated today, states: Mechanics at Northwest Airlines start their third day on the picket lines today, but without the support of pilots or flight attendants, the union's efforts to disrupt operations at the USA's No. 4 airline have so far been a failure. The airline's success keeping planes in the air this weekend sent Northwest shares up 54 cents, or 10 percent, to \$5.92, in pre-market trading on Inet early today. Still, the airline faces challenges as it tries to win concessions from other unions and continued high fuel prices could bring a bankruptcy filing even if the carrier wins the labour cost savings it is seeking, according to one analyst. No new talks are scheduled between management and the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Organization, which represents 4,400 mechanics at the Eagan, Minn.-based airline. The carrier reported it operated its normal schedule over the weekend. CEO Doug Steenland told Reuters the plans to use replacement workers, outside contractors and management to service planes could keep its planes flying "foreseeable future." However, the airline's reported success of maintaining operations will be tested this week. The airline will see the average number of flights rise to 1,300 from 1,100 a day over the weekend. The airline also cut back to its reduced fall schedule on Saturday (Aug 20), earlier than it would normally trim the number of flights. The Detroit News reported that a review of Northwest's Web site yesterday showed that 29 of 59 nonstop flights from Detroit Metro to ten top destinations were delayed or cancelled, with most delays attributed to maintenance issues. The delays ranged from 10 minutes to several hours, according to the paper's report. A Northwest spokesman said today he couldn't confirm or deny that report. While the pilots are not supporting the mechanics strike, a message from the pilots union leadership at Northwest early Saturday morning warned its members to expect a large number of aircraft to be on the ground due to maintenance issues and a large number of non-critical maintenance problems on the planes that are operating. The leadership of the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal

Association said it doubts the No. 4 airline will be able to maintain a normal schedule on a prolonged basis. "As time progresses, it'll get worse and they'll have more equipment on the ground," predicted Steve MacFarlane, the union's assistant national director, in comments shortly before the start of the strike. One striking mechanic, who has worked for 18 years at Northwest and declined to be named, told Reuters that the impact of strike would be felt more heavily in 10 days or so. "Then problems will start because the replacement workers they hired aren't as skilled as us," he said. "They won't be able to keep up with the work." But airline management said that the replacement workers have an average of 14 years experience working on aircraft, and they are confident they will be able to maintain Northwest's fleet as normal. AMFA's position weakened in the early moments of the strike when the leadership of the Air Line Pilots Association and the rank and file of the Professional Flight Attendants Association both voted against staging sympathy strikes. The pilots leadership said a sympathy strike was not in the interest of pilots. The mechanic union's statement blamed management for the strike, saying the final offer called for even harsher terms than earlier offers, including elimination of the jobs of more than half of the union members. It said the company's contingency plans to operate with replacement workers, formed over the last 18 months, are proof that the company's main goal is to bust the unions, not win cost reductions. In a statement, Northwest chief executive Steenland defended the offer. "The Northwest final offer was fair to our employees while recognising the need for equitable labour costs savings from all labour groups so that Northwest could restructure successfully." Management had said it needs \$176 million in labour cost savings from the mechanics union, as part of a target of \$1.1 billion in total cost cuts it says it needs to stay out of bankruptcy court. The union said it made an offer that would have saved the airline \$176 million it sought, but without costing members their jobs. But management said the AMFA offer would only have saved about \$100 million a year.

London, Aug 24 -- A press report, dated Aug 23, states: Day four of the Northwest Airlines mechanics strike found little change in the debate over how well the carrier's highly touted "new airline" was actually faring in getting people from point A to point B. Outside estimates of its performance painted an even less flattering picture of the Egan, Minn.-based airline's ability to function on time. Northwest said it cancelled 3.1 percent of its 1,473 flights yesterday, or a total of about 45. That compares with an average cancellation rate of 16 per cent in August 2004. Northwest continued to not provide information about late flights. Joseph Brancatelli,

publisher of the business traveller Web site "Joe Sent Me", said that according to his survey of 99 Northwest flights in the United States and Canada, just 37.5 percent of flights yesterday were on time. That's far below Northwest's 81.2 percent on-time performance for August 2004, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation. The company, in turn, has called Brancatelli's report unscientific. Metropolitan Airports Commission spokesman Pat Hogan said today's flight activity out Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport was a "carbon copy" of yesterday. "There have been a few cancellations and some delays," but nothing extraordinary, he said. MAC operates the Twin Cities airport. Northwest has said it expects to complete about 96 percent of its daily operations this week as its 1,200 replacement workers and 350 managers work with outside vendors to maintain its fleet. Travel experts say they believe the carrier will avoid problems if that percentage falls into the low 90s. When it comes to operating on time, Northwest struggled today in some key markets, according to a survey of its Web site by the Knight Ridder Newspapers. That included one of its most critical business travel markets: flights between the Twin Cities and Chicago's O'Hare International. Northwest competes vigorously with American and United airlines there, and today both of those airlines fared far better in operating timely flights. Just two of Northwest's first nine flights to O'Hare were on time, according to the airline's Web site. Federal guidelines consider a flight to be on time if it arrives less than 15 minutes past its scheduled time. Northwest flight 124, scheduled to arrive at 1129 hrs in Chicago, was 67 minutes late due to non-scheduled maintenance, according to the Web site. Two of the late flights are operated by Northwest's regional partner, Mesaba Airlines, which is unaffected by the strike. From O'Hare to the Twin Cities, Northwest fared better. Seven of its first nine flights were on time. United, meanwhile, was running flawlessly during its first nine flights between the Twin Cities and O'Hare and its first seven flights from O'Hare to the Twin Cities. In another key business-travel market, the Twin Cities to New York's LaGuardia International Airport, two of Northwest's first five flights were late. A Federal Aviation Administration spokeswoman said the carrier's contingency plan has posed no safety issues. According to the FAA, 80 inspectors have been assigned specifically to Northwest with a pool of additional inspectors available if needed. "Everything is going well, from a safety standpoint," said Elizabeth Isham Cory, a spokeswoman for the FAA. "We are pleased with what we are seeing."

Awards & Settlements



DEATH DUE DROWNING, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 24 -- A press report, dated Aug 23, states: The family of a five-year-old girl who drowned in a naval housing complex last year has been awarded a \$2 million settlement. E-mails from the Navy and the contractor that built the complex show they knew about the drainage problems there long before the girl drowned. Last February, Charlotte Schaefer's drowned in a flooded detention pond as she rescued another child near her home in the Pearl City Peninsula Housing Complex. An e-mail from Hunt Construction Co., which built the complex, shows the company knew the drain there was 89 percent clogged but didn't make repairs because the cost to repair it could exceed the liability. Another e-mail shows a Navy housing official joked about the flooding problem nearly a year before Charlotte's death, saying that residents could "go water skiing" and "teach scuba lessons" there. But, the last line of the e-mail was more serious: "My recommendation is that the contractor should put up some type of barrier to this hazard." This is the largest known settlement in the death of a child in Hawaii.

DEATH DUE PAINKILLER VIOXX, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 19 -- A press report, dated today, states: US pharmaceutical giant Merck & Co has been found liable over the death of a man who took the once-popular painkiller Vioxx. Jurors at a court in Texas awarded Robert Ernst's widow, Carol, \$253.4m (£141.07m) in damages. The damages cover a combination of Mr Ernst's lost pay as a Wal-Mart produce manager, mental anguish, loss of companionship and punitive damages. Shares in Merck, which plans to appeal against the verdict, fell 5% today.

DEFAMATION, UNITED STATES

New York, Aug 24 -- Anheuser-Busch Cos Inc. said today it agreed to pay \$120 million to settle a defamation lawsuit brought by the family of former Major League Baseball star Roger Maris. The brewer said in a filing with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission that it would take a pretax charge of \$105 million in the third quarter. The Maris family, which operates Maris Distributing Co., and Anheuser-Busch brewer announced they settled the suit yesterday, but did not disclose terms at the time. -- Reuters.

LIBEL, MALAYSIA

London, Aug 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: Malaysia's High Court has awarded former deputy

leader Anwar Ibrahim \$1.2m in damages over a pamphlet that hastened his downfall in 1998. The pamphlet, *Fifty Reasons Why Anwar Ibrahim Cannot Be Prime Minister*, included allegations that Mr Anwar was corrupt and a homosexual. When Mr Anwar launched this libel suit he was still deputy prime minister. In the time it's taken to settle the case, he was sacked, and imprisoned for six years for corruption and sodomy. The latter conviction was eventually overturned and he was released from jail a year ago. After seven years, the High Court has finally ruled that the claims in the pamphlet were very vicious and very serious. The damages, said the judge, Hishamuddin Yunus, were unusually high to reflect the gravity of the allegations and the lack of an apology. The author, Khalid Jafri, is critically ill in a Kuala Lumpur hospital. He is currently on bail pending his appeal against a one-year jail term for writing the leaflet. The pamphlet was widely circulated at the height of the political and economic turmoil that gripped Malaysia in 1998, just as some of Mr Anwar's supporters started to press for him to replace the then premier, Dr Mahathir Mohamad. The allegations were seized on by Mr Anwar's opponents and are believed to have contributed to his arrest and prosecution. Mr Anwar is currently barred from holding office until 2008 but this ruling can only strengthen his hand.

MEDICAL MALPRACTICE, MIDDLESEX COUNTY, MASSACHUSETTS, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: In what is being called the biggest personal-injury verdict in state history, a Middlesex County (Massachusetts) jury awarded nearly \$40 million yesterday to the family of a Dracut boy born with severe brain damage in 1996 after a traumatic delivery at a Lowell hospital. After deliberating for about 6 1/2 hours, the jury found Dr. Jacqueline Halladay, an obstetrician and gynecologist, negligent for having waited more than five hours to deliver the baby, Philip Antonelli Jr., in a caesarean section, despite signs of severe fetal distress. The boy, now 8, has cerebral palsy and functions at the level of a 2- to 4-year-old. His mother, Lisa Antonelli, said she felt relieved and vindicated by the malpractice judgment against Halladay. Her lawyer, Robert Higgins, said the verdict, which exceeds a \$30 million award to a Randolph mother and her brain-damaged child in 1992, apparently stemmed from the severity of Philip Antonelli's injuries and the care he will need for the rest of his life. Halladay's lawyer, Kenneth D. Weiss, declined to comment yesterday. In a memorandum submitted to Middlesex Superior Court before trial, he said that Halladay had done nothing wrong in the delivery at Saints Memorial Medical Center in Lowell and that she could have done

nothing to prevent the injuries. The hospital was not a defendant in the case.

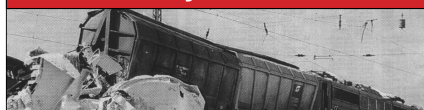
ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENT, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 25 -- A press report, dated Aug 24, states: The State of California will pay 10 million dollars to relatives of a mother and her three children who were killed two years ago and whose deaths could have been prevented if a guardrail had been extended. Marisol Morales and her three young children were killed in February 2003 when their pickup truck lost control on Pearblossom Highway in the Antelope Valley. The truck smashed through a barbed-wire fence and swerved into a swift-flowing channel. The state will pay part of the settlement in the wrongful death case to Morales' husband and surviving relatives. About 7.5 million dollars will cover extensive medical cost for Morales' niece who survived the crash and is now a quadriplegic. The settlement also calls for the state to repair the section of the California Aqueduct bridge near Palmdale.

SEXUAL ASSAULT, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 18 -- A press report, dated Aug 16, states: Former Dodgers pitcher Carlos Perez was found liable in a civil sexual assault trial in Miami and ordered to pay \$15 million in damages. Perez was not in court when a six-member, all female jury ordered him to pay Miami resident Amy McQuillin \$9 million in punitive damages and \$6 million in compensatory damages as a result of an incident that took place in 1999 in Vero Beach, Fla. Perez was with the Dodgers during spring training at the time. Perez did not attend the two-day trial, and is believed to be living and pitching in the Dominican Republic. It took jurors one hour of deliberation to award McQuillin the full amount following the two-day trial. The trial ended with McQuillin's emotional testimony detailing how Perez forced her to have sex with him in March of 1999 at the apartment he was renting during spring training. Jurors also heard from two other women who claim Perez sexually assaulted them in the past. Perez, whose lawyers withdrew from the case after he stopped communicating with them, now has 30 days to appeal. If he doesn't, McQuillin and her lawyer will then try to collect on the \$15 million, although their only recourse is to go after Perez's United States assets.

Railway Accidents



BRONX, NEW YORK, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 23 -- A press release, dated today, states: A freight train has

derailed in the South Bronx, creating major problems in the area. No one was hurt in the derailment, which happened around 0715 hrs, at Oak Point Yard. However, it's blocking Amtrak's tracks and damaged the overhead electric power lines used to provide power for Amtrak trains. That has forced the cancellation of service between New York City and New Haven until at least the afternoon. Metro-North Railroad is honouring Amtrak tickets for passengers wishing to travel between New York Grand Central Terminal and New Haven. A limited Amtrak service is being operated between New Haven and Boston.

London, Aug 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: There's no high-speed train service today between Boston and New York. A freight train derailment in New York yesterday knocked out all Amtrak service between Manhattan and New Haven, Connecticut. The rail line says it plans to resume New York-to-New Haven service today with extensive delays, but service on the high-speed Acela between New York and Boston has been cancelled until later in the week. Regional trains will operate on their regular schedules with delays of about 30 minutes.

GRANITEVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 18 -- A press report, dated Aug 17, states: A federal judge approved a class-action settlement today for damages from a January train crash that killed nine people in Graniteville. The settlement outlines how residents and businesses should be reimbursed for property damages and lost wages and profits after a Norfolk Southern train crashed into parked railroad cars. Under the settlement, the railroad will pay \$2,000 per household, as well as \$200 a day per person in the household for the time they were evacuated. A family of five with no major illnesses that was evacuated for 13 days would receive \$15,000 in addition to property damages and other losses. Those who sought medical treatment within three days of the disaster were advised to opt out of the per-day payments, and those cases will be resolved later. Attorneys for residents and the railroad disagreed about whether punitive damages should be awarded. Both sides said the court would hear the issue at a later time. While no estimate of the cost of today's settlement was available, the railroad has said it expects to spend \$35 million for clean-up costs, legal claims and all other expenses from the wreck. Norfolk Southern spokesman Bob Wells said the railroad had settled one wrongful death case, but he wouldn't give the amount of the settlement.

MALIR RAILWAY BRIDGE, PAKISTAN

London, Aug 21 -- A press report, dated today, states: Several carriages of goods train went tumbling down the track by a powerful blast at Malir

Railway Bridge, disrupting all trains from Karachi. A goods train leaving Karachi for Lahore was passing by the Malir Railway Bridge at around 1145, when a blast went off badly wrecking the railway track that overturned several carriages of the train besides damaging the Railway Bridge. Bomb disposal squad and railway police immediately arrived at the scene of incident. DIG operation, Mushtaque Ali Shah told that police has already started investigation. Apparently, it seemed that bomb or some explosive material was there, which caused the damage at such a scale, he added. Eyewitnesses told that the blast occurred first and then the goods train met with the accident. The remaining safe carriages of the ill-fated goods train have been removed from the site of accident. Trains from Karachi have been halted completely that resulted into delaying of the scheduled trains, while six trains remained stranded at different stations. Tezgam Express, which had left Landhi station remains blocked 500 meters away from the scene of occurrence, while the Night Coach from Lahore and Mehran Express coming from Mirpurkhas were awaiting standstill at Landhi Station and Qaraquram Express from Lahore at Bin Qasim Station. Super Express scheduled for leaving Karachi has been delayed and awaiting at Cantt. Station. The lone relief train available at Karachi Cantt has been sent to the place of accident, but it is feared that the restoration of normal train traffic might take quit a time.

London, Aug 24 -- A press report, dated Aug 23, states: Goods transportation to "upcountry" remained suspended for the second consecutive day as railways authorities failed to repair track damaged by an explosion, and traders now plan to claim over Rs 100 million damages caused by the operations. Custom agents and transporters involved in goods transportation through railways said they had not sent a single consignment since early Sunday (Aug 21) when an explosion at Malir river bridge derailed a freight train suspending railway operations from Karachi. The Pakistan Railways has caused us over Rs 100 million losses as it wasted all the goods in nine cars of the derailed Parcel Express while removing wreckage from the track, said Arif Butt, a goods transporter who booked the cargoes in the damaged wagons of freight train for Lahore. The railways should pay the damages. Contrary to their assurance they (Pakistan Railways) have been unable to repair the track and open it again for the railways traffic. He said the goods transportation association had offered the PR high-ups that they could arrange cranes and remove wreckage. However, Mr Butt said the divisional superintendent PR misbehaved with the traders and transporters and refused their offer. The PR authorities have been unable to clear the track and have shifted the entire railway passenger operations

from two major city and cantonments stations to the suburban Landhi station. The goods supply from the port city to the country and transportations of consignments imported under the Afghan Transit Trade Agreement have come to a total halt. "We are engaged in 24-hour repair work on the track," said a senior official at the PR. "We get Rs 30 million revenue per year from the cargoes transportation and we realise the importance of such operations. He said the PR refused the traders offer to clear and repair the track as it required particular expertise involving technical assistance by heavy cranes possessed by the PR. Custom agents involved in clearing ATT consignments from the port passed a second day sitting idle, as no cargo was moved from the port for Peshawar. The customs agents said in first phase ATT cargoes were dispatched to Peshawar through Pakistan Railways and from there the consignments crossed the borders on trucks. "We met the PR officials again but could not get satisfactory response," said Amir Altaf, a senior customs agent and executive member of the Pak Afghan Transit Trade Clearance Group. "We are unaware about the resumption of our operations and this is a major reason of our concerns. The imported goods are piling up at the port." He said traders of cargoes other than ATT were now looking for alternatives to transport goods through trucks to upcountry and most of them had started using the land route. But according to ATTA regulations Afghanistan-bound goods can only be transported through Pakistan Railways so the agents involved in such business have no option but wait, said Mr Altaf.

MAZABUKA, ZAMBIA

London, Aug 24 -- A press report, dated Aug 23, states: About 41 people were injured when a passenger train derailed today at Mazabuka, 125 km to the south-west of Zambian capital Lusaka, the official Zambia News Agency said. Francis Bwalya, director of health at Mazabuka District, Southern province, was quoted as saying that the injured have been admitted to the Mazabuka district hospital. Police sources at Mazabuka and Babe Botana, managing director of the Railway Systems of Zambia (RSZ), both confirmed the accident. The train was bound for Livingstone, Zambia's tourism capital in the Southern province when the accident happened. Three coaches overturned and were completely detached from the engine, while five others remained intact. Two luggage coaches was also detached but remained on the rail line. The immediate cause of the accident is yet to be known.

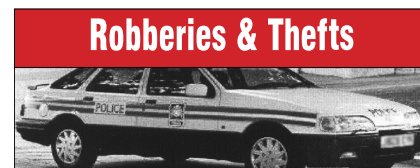
SANGLA HILL AREA, PAKISTAN

Karachi, Aug 19 -- Three persons were killed and several others were injured when the Badar Express of Pakistan Railways, going to Lahore from Faisalabad struck a truck, loaded

with sand, at Kartal Railway Crossing near Sangla Hill in Punjab Province, Pakistan, this morning. According to Geo TV the train derailed adding to the casualties. The injured passengers were shifted to hospital by private vehicles with the help of local residents. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

WATERVAL BOVEN, SOUTH AFRICA

Johannesburg, Aug 22 -- Hundreds of looters battled police all weekend at the site of a beer train wreck in violence that left one woman dead, South African police said today as they kept a heavy guard on the remaining alcohol. The train carrying 180,000 crates of beer from South African Breweries derailed on Friday night (Aug 19) near Waterval Boven, 200 km east of Johannesburg, Superintendent Izak van Zyl said. By Saturday morning, police were battling up to 200 people from the nearby township trying to make off with crates of beer. "It was a lot of trouble from one train crash," Van Zyl said. "They were firing rubber bullets into the crowd. The issue was the beer." A 19-year-old woman in the crowd was killed when she fell under the wheels of a lorry, he said. Police handed the site over to railway security staff but were back again yesterday morning, firing more rubber bullets as looters converged on the train. Officers raided nearby houses, recovered three out of 500 missing cases and arrested six people. Van Zyl said 20 officers would remain at the site until the overturned wagons and surviving beer crates could be recovered, an operation that could take up to a week. -- Reuters.



Robberies & Thefts

PAINTINGS, NORWAY

London, Aug 24 -- A press report, dated Aug 23, states: Norwegian authorities today expanded the pool of suspects in the bold theft of painter Edvard Munch's "The Scream" and "Madonna". Five people were initially arrested and three remain jailed. Two suspects were released and police said today eight more possible suspects were being sought. The paintings worth millions were stolen off the wall in an armed robbery at Oslo's Munch Museum last year. Neither work had been recovered as of today. "We're still hopeful, but we are no longer confident (the paintings will be recovered). The chances of finding the paintings diminish with time and already a lot of a time has passed," Museum spokesman Jorunn Christoffersen said. There was concern in the art world that the paintings were destroyed after the thieves realized they were too well known to sell.

Computer Systems



FAILURE OF UNITED STATES CUSTOMS COMPUTER NETWORK

London, Aug 19-- A press report, dated today, states: U.S. Customs computer system used to process passengers arriving on international flights shut down for more than five hours in some areas yesterday evening. The worst delays appeared to be at Miami International Airport, where at times as many as 2,000 people were waiting to clear immigration, airport spokesman Marc Henderson said. At New York's airports, customs officials processed international passengers by hand during the shutdown. In Los Angeles, they used backup computer systems to keep passengers moving. The cause of the shutdown wasn't immediately clear, but it did not look like terrorism, said Zachary Mann, spokesman for U.S. Customs and Border Protection in southern Florida. The computer problem originated in database systems located in Virginia and lasted from around 1800 hrs until about 2330 hrs, Mann said. The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, which runs operations at metro area airports, said customs officials there were processing travellers by hand. Mike Flemming, spokesman for U.S. Customs and Border Protection in Los Angeles, said the customs computer system at Los Angeles International Airport experienced problems yesterday, but only for about an hour and a half.

FLIGHTS DELAYED AT UNITED KINGDOM AIRPORTS DUE COMPUTER SYSTEM FAILURE

London, Aug 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: Flights at UK airports were delayed by up to two hours today after a system failure forced air traffic controllers to briefly suspend departures from the nation's airports. National Air Traffic Control said services were disrupted for 20 minutes this morning due to a fault with a flight-data processing system at its West Drayton centre near Heathrow. The disruption resulted in delays of one to two hours for some flights, but the average delay was less than 10 minutes, a NATS spokeswoman said. "The restrictions that had been imposed on flights and which led to delays for some travellers have now been lifted," NATS said in a statement, adding it was still working to clear a backlog of flights. British Airways said it cancelled nine return short-haul flights from London's Heathrow Airport and seven from Gatwick today due to the disruption.

ZOTOB VIRUS

London, Aug 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: Car-maker Holden

says it is confident a computer virus that disrupted the production of \$6 million worth of cars at its Adelaide plant yesterday has been contained. Holden's Elizabeth production line was disrupted for several hours from 0600, ACST yesterday when the virus affected vital car-making computer software. Holden's corporate affairs manager for South Australia, David Ellis, says the ZOTOB virus, which attacks Microsoft Windows' operating systems, is the main suspect for the production breakdown. He says while computer technicians tried to fix the problem, workers carried out maintenance and training work at the plant. Mr Ellis says the event was "very unusual" and is confident the virus responsible will not be a problem in the future.

Miscellaneous



COLLAPSE OF RAIL TUNNEL GERRARDS CROSS, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Aug 23 -- A press report, dated Aug 20, states: A busy commuter rail route has reopened seven weeks after a tunnel collapse. The line through Gerrards Cross in Bucks was closed when a tunnel collapsed next to where a new Tesco store was under construction. Allan Spence from the Health and Safety Executive was "confident" he now understood how the collapse happened. "The part of the tunnel which fell down was linked to the way the material was being placed over the tunnel ground," said railway inspector Mr Spence. "So we're confident we understand why that part failed," he added. The line, which has now been declared safe, serves commuters into London from the Chilterns area and is also an inter-city link to the Midlands. Reconstruction work has been carried out over the past seven weeks and experts have investigated the construction site.

DAMAGE TO UNDERSEA INTERNET CABLES, ARABIAN SEA

London, Aug 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: Etisalat is hoping that internet services in the UAE will be back to normal by Friday after repair work on two cables damaged during bad weather is completed. Internet connections going through Etisalat have been slow since the beginning of the month after eight of the UAE's 20 internet links to the outside world were broken. Two extra internet links have been added, resulting in a slight improvement in services, but things will not return to normal until the eight severed links are restored. Officials at Etisalat said services could remain slow beyond Friday if the improvements needed

turn out to be very complex. Abdullah Hashim, senior manager for business development and marketing at eCompany, Etisalat's internet arm, also warned that bad weather could delay the timetable. The start of repair work was delayed until various ministries of the Indian Government gave their approval to internet operators Sea-Me-We 3 and Flag to send their ships to the area where the cables were broken. One ship sat at Kochi for several days awaiting approval to begin repairs on the cable that belongs to Sea-Me-We 3. A second ship was sent to the Mumbai area to fix damage to the cable belonging to the Flag network.

DRUGS FOUND ON CYPRUS VESSEL AT BRIDGETOWN, BARBADOS

Bridgetown, Aug 18 -- Apparently the officer on watch by the gangway saw a diver in the water by general cargo EWL Trinidad. This was at night and hence it was rather suspicious. The ships agents were informed and also the Coastguard. The Coastguard arrived with divers some time later. By then the original diver seen by the officer had disappeared. The Coastguard divers searched the bottom of the vessel and found a container bolted onto a bracket on the hull below the waterline. One set of bolts on this container had been loosened, perhaps by the previous diver. The container was unfastened from the hull and brought ashore, cut open and found to contain marijuana. This was the third incident in recent weeks here where drugs were found in containers attached to ship's hulls below the waterline, hence the authorities here are rather concerned and will be carrying out more diving surveys on cargo vessels in future. -- Lloyd's Agents.

EWL TRINIDAD (Cyprus)

See "Drugs Found On Cyprus Vessel At Bridgetown, Barbados" under "Miscellaneous".

OUTBREAK OF "BIRD FLU"

Tokyo, Aug 19 -- Japanese authorities have completed roughly half of their random nationwide inspections for bird flu on farms, a Farm Ministry official said today, a day after such checks revealed a new case of the disease in the country. The inspections, due to be completed by Sep 16, were launched after a weak strain of bird flu was detected in late June on some farms in Ibaraki prefecture, north-east of Tokyo. Authorities have so far examined 1,270 farms across the country, the official said. Yesterday, authorities said they found a new case of bird flu in Saitama prefecture, a region neighbouring the capital. It was the first time the checks had revealed a case of bird flu in the country. Authorities are conducting further tests to determine the details of the latest case, which experts say is likely to be the weak H5N2 strain. As a precaution, all 98,300 chickens on the

farm in Saitama will be slaughtered, and restrictions placed on the movement of eggs and chicken in a five-kilometre radius around the farm to prevent the spread of the disease. Chickens on the farms in Ibaraki were found with the weak H5N2 strain. -- Reuters.

London, Aug 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: One of three farms in Ibaraki Prefecture, northeast of Tokyo, which shipped chickens to a bird flu-hit Saitama farm, has also been found to be infected with a bird flu virus of the H5 strain, the farm ministry said yesterday. Yesterday's finding comes after the farm ministry and Saitama prefectural government found Thursday (Aug 18) that chickens at a farm in Konosu, Saitama Prefecture, have tested positive for an antibody which indicates they had been infected with a bird flu virus in the past.

London, Aug 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: The bird flu situation is stabilising in Russia with the exception of the Siberian region of Tyumen where 40 birds died yesterday, officials say. No birds have died in several other affected regions of Siberia while one bird death was reported in the Urals. Fearing the spread of the virus westwards, the Netherlands banned its farmers from keeping fowl outdoors. The European Union is to hold talks on Thursday (Aug 25) but is unlikely to follow the Dutch example, experts say. "We are following the situation closely, but we are not being alarmist," European Commission spokesman Philip Tod said. "Our analysis is that the risk is low." Germany said it may adopt similar precautions, following the Dutch announcement yesterday. Russia's emergencies ministry said bird flu had stabilised in nearly all the affected regions apart from Tyumen, local news agency Itar-Tass reports. More than 120,000 birds have been culled in an attempt to curb the spreading of the virus. The strain found in several regions in Siberia has been identified as H5N1 - the type that has killed at least 57 people in Asia in 2003. Russian officials say there have been "no cases of sickness among the human population".

POWER OUTAGE, INDONESIA

London, Aug 19 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Power supplies to large areas of Java and Bali islands in Indonesia, including the whole of the capital, Jakarta, were disrupted today, state electricity company PT Perusahaan Listrik Negara (PLN) said. "There was a disruption in the Java-Bali transmission network. It was quite big and we are still checking for the cause," Mulyo Aji, an official at the company, said. At least three key power plants on Java - Paiton, Muara Karang and Suralaya - were down, he later told a radio station. "With 30 per cent of the supply gone, there's nothing we can do. Jakarta was completely blacked out, the supply to

the city has gone ... Now some areas (in Jakarta) have started to regain power," Mr Mulyo told Trijaya radio. Many buildings in Jakarta were operating on their own back-up generators. Advertisement: The blackout stopped electric trains operating around the Indonesian capital, Antara news agency reported. Indonesia's railway company, PT KAI, was working to move electric trains from rail tracks that were also used by non-electric trains connecting Jakarta to other cities on Java. Other radio reports and witnesses said Jakarta's main international airport was also affected by the outage. High global oil prices have seen Indonesian authorities introduce various power saving schemes in recent months, including rolling blackouts in the capital and other cities.



CHEMICALS STORE, BIDEFORD, DEVON, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Aug 22 -- A press report, dated Aug 21, states: More than 40 firefighters have spent the night tackling a fire at a north Devon chemicals store. Crews were called to cosmetics manufacturer Swallowfield PLC in Alverdiscott Road, East the Water, Bideford, at 2350 BST, yesterday. A single-storey building used to store acetone and cellulose was severely damaged by the fire. The Environment Agency was also called to prevent any chemical contamination in the area. Divisional Officer Andy Revez, of Devon Fire and Rescue Service, said the chemicals inside the store gave the crews cause for concern. Crews from Bideford, Appledore, Torrington and Ilfracombe attended the scene. A foam tender from Royal Marines Base Chivenor was also brought in.

FACTORY, BIRMINGHAM, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Aug 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: Up to 70 firefighters tackled a blaze at a furniture factory on a residential street in Birmingham. Firefighters were called to Treetops Pine Furniture on Grange Road in Kings Heath, early yesterday evening. Crews were unable to get inside the building safely after there was an explosion inside. Fourteen appliances attended the scene. No one was injured and an investigation into the cause has been launched. The Kings Heath High Street has reopened. A West Midlands Fire Service spokesman said the fire spread more easily because some of the building's walls were made from timber. He said the contents of the factory have been destroyed.

FACTORY, PLYMPTON, DEVON, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Aug 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: Bulldozers have moved in to knock down a factory which was destroyed by fire last month in Devon. Nearly 400 staff were made redundant after the fire at Hilliers food manufacturers in Plympton on the outskirts of Plymouth. Contractors say it will take about three weeks to demolish the site, dashing workers' hopes that the building could be saved.

FOREST, INDONESIA AND MALAYSIA

Jakarta, Aug 22 -- Heavy rains and an international firefighting effort on Indonesia's Sumatra have extinguished most forest fires that had spewed choking haze over parts of the island and neighbouring Malaysia, officials said today. "Heavy rains on Saturday (Aug 21) made the total number of hotspots decline. On Aug 21, it was reported that there were only 28. Everything is going back to normal now," Eviarni, an official from the environmental supervisory agency in Sumatra's Riau province, told Reuters. More than 100 hotspots -- areas satellites show as having fires -- could be seen at the height of the haze. Residents in Riau province, hardest hit by the fires and home to some of the world's major palm oil plantations, were no longer required to wear face masks, she added. The foreign firefighters had contributed to putting out the blazes, Yusman, another official from the environmental agency in Rokan Hillir, at the epicentre of the worst fires, told Reuters. -- Reuters.

GARAGE AND VEHICLES, LONDONDERRY, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Aug 22 -- A press report, dated today, states: A garage housing council vehicles has been destroyed in a fire in Londonderry causing damage estimated at £1m, police have said. Fire crews were called to the Derry City Council depot on Pennyburn Industrial Estate at about 0100, BST. An investigation into the cause of the fire is under way and police said while they are keeping an open mind, arson has not been ruled out. Station officer John Gurney said there had been fears the roof would collapse. "When we arrived at the depot we found the garage, containing seven road cleansing vehicles and other motorised machinery for grass cutting etc, had all been damaged in the fire," he said. "The fire was to such an extent that we feared there would be a collapse of the roof area. We fought the fire from outside the garages with a number of jets to extinguish the fires within the vehicles and the building itself."

London, Aug 24 -- A press report, dated Aug 23, states: Forensic scientists have returned to the scene of a major fire which caused over £1m of damage to vehicles at a council depot in Londonderry. Seven cleansing vehicles and other grass cutting

equipment were destroyed in the blaze at Pennyburn Industrial Estate on Monday (Aug 22). The building which housed the plant and machinery will have to be demolished. An examination aimed at determining the cause of the fire began on Monday but was not completed. The intensity of the blaze made it necessary for the building to be stabilised before the scientific tests could commence. Derry City Council has said the fire will cause disruption to street cleaning services in the city. Police have said while they are keeping an open mind, arson has not been ruled out.

GRAIN ELEVATOR, DES MOINES, IOWA, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 25 -- A press report, dated Aug 24, states: The Iowa state fire marshal said an explosion at a Carroll County grain elevator was accidental. The co-op manager said today they are removing large chunks of concrete from inside the elevator. Until that's done, they won't be able to determine the total amount of damage, but they do hope to have the elevator running again in time for harvest. The blast happened at about 1100 hrs, Monday (Aug 22) in the small town of Lanesboro. No one was injured in the explosion, including someone who was working on top of the elevator at the time of the blast. Much of the damage was at the base of the elevator near the dumpsite where farmers unload their grain. There are some large cracks on the side of the elevator. Investigators say they do believe the elevator is sound enough that it won't collapse.

INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, LEYTON, LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Aug 25 -- A press report, dated today, states: A group of artists and collectors including Damien Hirst and Dave Stewart is to sue a storage company for negligence over a fire at its premises that destroyed many of Britain's most famous contemporary art pieces. The 30 claimants, seeking up to £15 million, also include the artist Gillian Ayres, the daughters of the late Patrick Heron, the collector Shirley Conran and the Royal Academy. The fire swept through Momart's storage facility in London in May 2004, destroying over 100 works, worth an estimated £60 million. These included the "Britart" works produced by the Young British Artist movement, including Hirst's Charity, Tracey Emin's Everyone I Have Ever Slept With 1963-1995, and Hell by Jake and Dinos Chapman. Jonathan Wood, of Clyde & Co, the firm of lawyers co-ordinating the claim, described the fire as a "disaster waiting to happen". The case against Momart will argue that its premises were "wholly unsuitable as a storage location for high-value fine art", according to a statement from Clyde & Co. "The premises were located among other units where there was a high risk of fire; the building itself was not constructed so as to prevent the rapid spread of fire... coupled with this was

the inadequate security and fire detection provisions." Momart denies negligence over the fire. A statement from its board said: "The fire was a tragedy for those of Momart's customers who were affected, and for Momart. However, it must be borne in mind that it was caused by arson in an adjacent warehouse. Given that High Court proceedings have been commenced, it would not be appropriate for us to comment on the legal issues, but it should suffice to say that all claims against Momart will be defended vigorously." Robert Read, the fine-art director at Hiscox, one of the insurance companies represented in the lawsuit, said the action was standard practice for an insurance firm seeking to mitigate its losses. The destruction of the Britart pieces attracted most of the headlines, although it subsequently emerged that many works from an earlier period were also destroyed. Eighteen paintings by Gillian Ayres were lost, as well as about 50 paintings by Patrick Heron. The case is expected to be heard next year.

NIGHTCLUB, WOLVERHAMPTON, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Aug 19 -- A press report, dated today, states: There were dramatic scenes as a devastating blaze destroyed a Wolverhampton city centre nightclub in the early hours of this morning. Flares in Lichfield Street was reduced to a shell by the huge fire which took hold at 0300 hrs and raged through the night. The roof has been reduced to a burnt-out skeleton which is expected to leave the club closed for weeks if not months. More than 80 firefighters in 10 engines were called in to tackle the blaze. Fire crews used two aerial platforms as they spent three hours bringing the blaze under control. It is believed it began on the second floor of the three storey building and investigators have not ruled out the possibility of arson. The fire did not spread to the ground floor club itself, but the fixtures and fittings on the lower and first floors have been ruined by water pouring down from above. No-one was injured and the building was unoccupied at the time. A club spokesman confirmed the venue will be closed until further notice.

REFINERY, AMUAY, VENEZUELA

London, Aug 18 -- A press report, dated today, states: A brief fire has forced the partial shutdown of Venezuela's Amuay oil refinery, an official of the state-owned oil company Petroleos de Venezuela (PDVSA) said. The fire, which occurred in one of the refinery's pipes, has already been put out, Jesus Luongo, manager of the Paraguana refining complex where Amuay is located, told Union Radio. It is unclear how extensive the blaze was but Luongo said a decision had been made to cut refining capacity from 410,000 barrels per day to 150,000 barrels. He added that workers had also adjusted refining activities in other units to evaluate the damage.

The massive Paraguana complex, one of the world's largest refining installations, has a stated capacity of 940,000 barrels a day.

London, Aug 19 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: A fire broke out at Venezuela's Amuay oil refinery, forcing the facility to temporarily cut production, but it will return to normal output within 48 hours, an official said. The fire yesterday did not affect the refinery's capacity, but temporarily forced it to reduce output from 410,000 barrels a day to 150,000 barrels a day, refinery manager Jesus Luongo said told the state-run Bolivarian News Agency, or ABN, in a report early today. Luongo said the fire started about 1700, yesterday in a rack of pipes, and was under control an hour later. Officials were evaluating damage to the pipes, and had turned off the flow in that area as a precaution, Luongo told ABN. He said the fire did not appear to have caused major problems. "In 48 hours at most, the plant will be functioning again at maximum capacity," he told the state-run news agency. Officials were investigating the cause of the fire.

SHOPPING TAVERN, SYDNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA

London, Aug 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: Fire has gutted a tavern in a shopping centre in Sydney's southwest, causing Aus\$2 million (US\$1.5 million) damage. Officers were called to the blaze on Spitfire Drive, Raby, at 1215 hrs, today, Macquarie Fields Local Area Commander Chief Inspector Graham Donnelly said. Insp Donnelly said the alarm was raised by the centre's caretaker and the blaze was extinguished by crews from five fire stations. Investigating officers were awaiting safety clearance to enter the gutted premises. The fire caused an estimated Aus\$2 million in damage to the Raby Tavern, which had been recently renovated, Insp Donnelly said. The cause of the blaze has yet to be determined.

WAREHOUSE, CARLISLE, CUMBRIA, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Aug 23 -- A press report, dated Aug 22, states: A rubber fire which has sent clouds of thick black smoke across Carlisle could continue for days, firefighters say. The fire at a warehouse on the Kingmoor Park estate today destroyed £750,000 worth of rubber destined for the Pirelli tyre factory in the city. Fire crews from Scotland have been drafted in to help tackle the blaze. A special foam compressor from Glasgow was also brought onto the site, since the use of water produces a toxic run-off which could affect rivers. Cumbria's assistant chief fire officer Dave Keevil said: "This is a very difficult fire situation which could continue for days and continue to produce black smoke. We are inhibited in the use of water because that will produce a toxic water run-off which has the potential to get into the water

courses." Emergency services earlier warned people to stay away from the area, which is about two miles outside Carlisle. People were advised to close their doors and windows, although fire officers said the risk to residents at this stage is very low.

WAREHOUSE, CLARK, NEW JERSEY, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 22 -- A press report, dated today, states: A warehouse decimated by a fire on Saturday (Aug 20) in Clark was partly demolished yesterday so that firefighters could safely investigate the blaze, officials said. Investigators have not determined what caused the fire in the rear building at 277 Central Ave., Fire Chief John Pingor said, but the blaze was not considered suspicious. Much of the building had been torn down by yesterday afternoon. Charred concrete blocks, blackened file cabinets and burned debris lay strewn about the remains of the building. Three businesses -- Evening Cool, an industrial maintenance company, Millco Custom Fabricators, which made steel cabinets and countertops, and a wood shop -- were destroyed in the fire. Firefighters were called at 1415 hrs, on Saturday and efforts to douse the flames were stalled when officials discovered the nearest hydrant was across Central Avenue, about 1,000 feet away. But the 250-foot-long building was so engulfed in flames that "a few minutes" did not matter, Pingor said. The one-story building is set back from Central Avenue behind a row of businesses between Terminal Avenue and Raritan Road. It appeared to be up to code, even though old rules had allowed the hydrants to be so far away, the chief said. Minutes after firefighters arrived, the half-dome shaped roof collapsed, Pingor said. Flames shot 30 feet into the air and the smoke was so thick it occasionally obscured the structure, witnesses said. About 150 firefighters from nearly every municipality in Union County helped fight the blaze. Demolition will continue after insurance investigators arrive this week, Pingor said.

WAREHOUSE, IPSWICH, SUFFOLK, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Aug 22 -- A press report, dated Aug 20, states: A distribution warehouse in Ipswich may have to be demolished after a blaze early this morning. Nine fire engines arrived at Budget Transport on Ransomes Europark in Suffolk at about 0100, BST. No-one was inside and its cause is not yet known, said Suffolk Divisional Fire Officer Phil Collins. "The fire has caused such structural damage that it's unstable now. We anticipate it's going to be demolished," he said.

WILDFIRES, PORTUGAL

London, Aug 22 -- A press report, dated Aug 21, states: Portugal has called on the EU to help extinguish the wildfires that have destroyed 140,000 hectares of forest and

farmland across the country. Interior Minister Antonio Costa acknowledged that Portugal could not cope without help from abroad. Spain and France were sending aircraft today, and help from Italy and Germany is due to arrive tomorrow. Some 3,000 fire fighters, soldiers and police are tackling more than 20 fires, made worse by hot weather and wind. The fires have so far killed at least 11 firefighters and four civilians, according to AP news agency. Two Canadair planes were due to arrive from France this afternoon, and more planes are expected to be sent from Spain, which is also suffering from wildfires. Another Canadair plane from Italy, and two German helicopters are due to arrive tomorrow. The Portuguese request was made to the European Commission, which has a special unit to co-ordinate member countries in tackling emergencies.

London, Aug 22 -- A press report, dated today, states: Several European countries have responded to Portugal's request for help in fighting wildfires raging across the country. Spain and France have each sent two water-dropping aircraft and another is due to arrive from Italy today. Germany said it would send three police helicopters with experts to help around 2,700 Portuguese firefighters tackling around 27 blazes in wood and farmland. The fires have left at least 15 dead and 140,000 hectares destroyed. Central and northern Portugal have been the worst affected; several villages have been evacuated. The most serious fire over the weekend was in the Pampilhosa da Serra region, in the Coimbra district 196 km north of Lisbon. President of the European Commission Jose Manuel Barroso visited areas affected by fires in the north of Portugal during a holiday visit and pledged support for his home country. European Commission spokesman Rupert Kreitemeyer told the BBC's World Today programme that the commission had co-ordinated the response to Portugal's appeal for help. He said France and Spain had already sent water-dropping aircraft, while help from Germany and Italy was expected to arrive later. The Portuguese Interior Minister, Antonio Costa, has said the fires were the most damaging in recent times and that the country could not cope without help from abroad.

London, Aug 23 -- A press report, dated Aug 22, states: Wildfires fanned by high winds burned out of control today, destroying more than 10 houses on the outskirts of Portugal's third-largest city and forcing 50 people to leave their homes amid the country's worst drought in years. Most of the fires burned in the northern districts of Viseu and Viana do Castelo. Coimbra, the country's third-largest city with nearly 110,000 people, was surrounded by two fire fronts, firefighters said. Flames and smoke could be seen from different parts of the city, located about 120 miles north of Lisbon, and the fire had already

spread to a number of boroughs, firefighters said. More than 10 houses on Coimbra's outskirts were burned, and 50 people had fled their homes, firefighters said. Seven planes were dumping water on the fires, but Mayor Carlos Encarnacao said it was still moving quickly. About 200 firefighters were battling another large fire in Abrantes in the district of Santarem, about 50 miles north of Lisbon. Traffic on one of the district's highways was disrupted by a blaze. Nearly 2,000 firefighters, supported by 795 fire trucks and 31 aircraft, were involved in the nationwide effort. The army sent 600 men to monitor areas where fires had been extinguished, and civil protection workers stood by in case residents had to be evacuated. Strong winds rekindled several fires during the weekend, and more winds and high temperatures were forecast. Temperatures were expected to reach 96 degrees in some districts today. They were likely to begin dropping only on Wednesday (Aug 24), when there was also a chance of mild rain, forecasters said. The wildfires have burned through 346,000 acres, already more than the total area hit last year, when 320,000 acres were destroyed, officials said. In 2003 - the worst year in the last two decades - the blazes burned one million acres, causing losses of \$1.4 billion. Portugal received \$59 million in compensation from the Solidarity Fund that year.

London, Aug 23 -- A press report, dated today, states: Dozens of wildfires are still raging out of control across Portugal, despite desperate efforts to contain them. The worst-hit areas include the central region, where fires are threatening the outskirts of the third-largest city of Coimbra, firefighters say. Fire-fighting aircraft from several EU states joined some 3,000 Portuguese firefighters following an urgent appeal for help by the government in Lisbon. The blazes have left at least 15 dead and 140,000 hectares destroyed. Firefighters say more than 25 fires fanned by high winds are burning across Portugal, which is experiencing one of its worst droughts in years. They say the blazes are advancing on Coimbra, which has a population of more than 100,000 people, on several fronts. The fast-moving wildfires have already destroyed at least 12 houses in the suburbs of the city. A state of emergency was declared in the region. Wildfires are also continuing to burn in the northern districts of Viseu and Viana do Castelo, officials say. Two firefighting aircraft from France, together with a Spanish aircraft, joined in the battle yesterday. Five helicopters from Germany and the Netherlands, along with an aircraft from Italy, are due to start firefighting operations later today.

London, Aug 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: Forests, farm and scrubland continue to blaze in Portugal despite some success in containing some of the fires. Hundreds of firefighters are tackling fires near the historic city of Coimbra, and other

districts remain on high alert. Water-dropping aircraft provided by other European countries continue to work alongside Portuguese firefighters. A summer of drought has sparked fires across southern Europe, with Spain and France also fighting flames. At least 15 people have died and 140,000 hectares have been destroyed in Portugal this year from fires, often started deliberately in bone-dry countryside forests. Four people, including a former firefighter, were arrested yesterday on suspicion of arson, police said. A total of 102 people have been held this year. The fire near the university city of Coimbra has been burning since Sunday (Aug 21). More than 400 firefighters are trying to contain the blaze and there are hopes that cooler temperatures could help the situation. "The intensity of the fire is diminishing considerably, let's see if we are a bit luckier today," the fire chief of nearby Penela, Mario Lourenco, told radio TSF. Portugal's fire service (SNBPC) said six fires were now under control but three were still burning out of control in the Viseu district. Duarte Caldeira, of the League of Portuguese Firefighters, said the mainly volunteer firefighting force would suffer exhaustion if the fires continued until the end of the month. "The firefighting forces are at their limit," he told daily newspaper *Correio da Manhã*. "I have met with firefighters who have been battling blazes since Saturday (Aug 20), with just short breaks of just a few hours to rest." A state of emergency has been declared in the Coimbra region, 196km north-east of Lisbon. It was unclear whether Portugal would be eligible for cash payments under the European Union solidarity fund, made available in cases of natural disaster. The EU suggested Portugal would be eligible, although the country's agriculture minister said the fires had not caused enough damage. Samuel Infante, of Portuguese environmental group *Castelle Branco*, said that poor forest management had contributed to the problem of forest fires. Planting different types of tree would help prevent fires, he said, but he added that private ownership of forests was restricting co-ordinated action.

London, Aug 25 -- A press report, dated today, states: Cooler weather in parts of Portugal has helped firefighters bring a series of forest fires raging across forest and scrubland under control. Thousands of firefighters have been battling the blazes for days in central and northern parts of the country. Cooler, foggy conditions near the historic city of Coimbra helped crews douse the worst fires, although some smaller ones flared up in strong winds. At least 15 people have died in the fires and vast areas been left charred. Forecasters have said the more humid weather should last until at least the weekend, raising hopes that firefighters may keep the upper hand.

Water-dropping aircraft provided by other European countries continue to work alongside Portuguese firefighters in the worst-hit areas. More than 100 homes and 180,000 hectares of land have been destroyed in Portugal this year by the fires, often started deliberately in bone-dry countryside forests. More than 400 firefighters remain near the university city of Coimbra to help prevent the flames which have menaced the area since Sunday (Aug 21) flaring up again. Dozens of people have been forced to leave their homes and at least 10 houses on the outskirts of the city have been destroyed by the fires. A state of emergency has been declared in the region, 196km north-east of the capital, Lisbon. Paulo Tavares, co-ordinating volunteer firefighters from the town of Coja, told the Reuters news agency: "We can now claim victory. At this moment everything is under control - if it remains cool, this will remain under control." Meanwhile, President Jorge Sampaio urged the government to force landowners to take action to keep forests clear of the scrub which helps wildfires spread. "We must improve management of Portugal's forests," he said. "From September, all our energies must be focused on this."

WILDFIRES, SPAIN

London, Aug 23 -- A press report, dated Aug 22, states: Spain's environment ministry said today that 265,000 acres of forest had been destroyed in wildfires. More than 20 fires continued to burn in the northwestern region of Galicia, many of them believed to have been started intentionally, authorities said.

WILDFIRES, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: Lightning caused a wildfire in south-west Utah County that consumed 1,200 acres yesterday afternoon. The blaze, which started around 1300 hrs about eight miles south-west of Elberta, got to within half a mile of structures before fire crews got that corner under control. Several construction crews in the area also had to be evacuated before the winds shifted west and alleviated the danger. Sgt. Darren Gilbert of the Utah County Sheriff's Office said the north-east and south-east sides of the fire were contained by early evening, although it was still burning out of control on Buck Horn Mountain toward the west. According to the Bureau of Land Management, the fire was 30% contained by last night. Fire crews from Goshen, Genola, Santaquin, Eagle Mountain, Saratoga Springs, Utah County Sheriff and the Bureau of Land Management all were on scene to fight the flames, which began on private land but spread to BLM property. Two helicopters, two air tankers and 15 fire engines were on site to control the blaze, which should be completely contained by tomorrow if the weather cooperates, according to BLM.



5B-DBY

London, Aug 19 -- A press report, dated Aug 18, states: The Cypriot plane that crashed and killed all 121 people aboard flew on autopilot to its Athens destination - but passed thousands of feet above the airport runway, the chief accident investigator told *The Associated Press* today. Helios Airways Flight ZU522 then turned toward the sea, flying in a holding pattern for more than an hour before changing course again and crashing into a mountain north of Athens. Chief investigator Akrivos Tsolakis told AP that an air traffic control diagram showed the plane had flown on automatic pilot to the Greek capital's international airport, but it was flying at 34,000 feet and turned south into a holding pattern over the island of Kea. "What troubles us is that the automatic pilot was functioning up to a certain point, and then it was disengaged, possibly by human action," Tsolakis said. He said the automatic pilot had been programmed to fly the plane up to Athens' airport and it was unclear how or why it was disengaged. "Possibly, there was human intervention. I'm not speaking with certainty, because I don't have all the evidence yet," Tsolakis stressed. Investigators are examining whether the 115 passengers and six-member crew aboard the Boeing 737-300 had lost consciousness, possibly just after take-off. The aircraft appears to have flown from Cyprus to Athens on autopilot - a flight of about an hour and a half. Tsolakis' comments were the first official confirmation that the autopilot was disengaged after the plane flew over the Athens airport. That could give credence to speculation that somebody tried to take control of the plane before it crashed. The strange circumstances of the flight - and disturbing scenes witnessed by F-16 fighter pilots sent to intercept the plane - have baffled authorities. Officials have said there were no indications of sabotage or terrorism. According to the government, the two F-16 fighter pilots - who first established visual contact with the plane while it was flying above Kea - reported seeing the co-pilot slumped over the controls, apparently unconscious. They said the pilot was not in his seat, and they later saw what appeared to be two people trying to regain control of the plane. Oxygen masks also were seen dangling from the ceiling of the passenger cabin. Tsolakis said investigators were still examining the possibility that those on board lost consciousness because of sudden cabin decompression. A six-member team of coroners also was conducting toxicology tests on some of

the bodies to determine whether the passengers and crew might have inhaled something - possibly carbon monoxide - that rendered them unconscious. Results of those tests were expected by the weekend. A total of 118 bodies have been recovered from the crash site. Crews were still searching for three bodies, but Kalogrias said they might never be found. Autopsy results on 26 bodies identified so far have shown passengers and at least four crew members - including the co-pilot - were alive, but not necessarily conscious, when the plane went down. The body of the plane's German pilot has not been identified, and it was unclear whether he was one of the three still missing. Some answers could be provided by the contents of the plane's flight data recorder, or black box, which has been sent to Paris for decoding.

AIRCRAFT DIVERTED TO BILLINGS, MONTANA, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 25 -- A press report, dated Aug 24, states: A Northwest Airlines flight travelling from Minneapolis to Bozeman was diverted to Billings because of a mechanical problem. An airline spokesperson said the hydraulic problem was not linked to the strike by Northwest mechanics and maintenance workers that began on Saturday (Aug 20). The Airbus A320 with 136 passengers aboard landed at Billings Logan international airport during the afternoon today and passengers used portable stairs to exit the plane. There were no injuries. "We heard this flapping noise. The captain came on the intercom and said we were having hydraulic problems," said passenger Kathee McCafferty of Traverse City, Michigan. She said passengers began hearing unusual noises about half an hour before the plane touched down. Kurt Ebenhoch, a Northwest Airlines spokesperson from Minneapolis, described the problem on Flight 1271 as a "hydraulic issue", but declined to be more specific. Ebenhoch said the plane remained in Billings this evening and would be returned to Northwest's fleet as soon as possible. He said passengers who were not able to arrange their own transportation were taken to Bozeman by bus. Also today, a Northwest plane at Baltimore-Washington International Airport had its tyres deflated, forcing passengers to take other flights, the airline said. Two landing-gear tyres on a 757/200 were found to be deflated during a preflight inspection, according to Todd Morgano, a spokesperson for Northwest. No other damage was found, he said. Passengers scheduled to take the flight to Minneapolis were put on other flights. Morgano said the airline was co-operating with federal officials in investigating the incident.

CRASH, DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA

London, Aug 23 -- A press report, dated Aug 22, states: Civil aviation authorities are investigating

yesterday's plane crash in Durban North, where a light aircraft carrying five Austrian tourists and a pilot nosedived into the roof of a house. The general manager of the nearby Virginia airport, Glen Bryce, said: "Our tower gave the pilot clearance to land but then he did a go-around." He said the police and airport officials were clearing the scene of the crash. Civil aviation authorities are to remove the plane and take it to the airport where they would inspect it for clues to the cause of the crash. The pilot, Alistair Freeman, suffered a broken leg, lacerations and bruising. He was in a stable condition in the St Augustine's hospital in Durban. "He's lucky to be alive," the hospital's client relations department said today. The Austrian family, who were due to fly to Cape Town today, was waiting to hear when three of their members would be discharged from the Umhlanga hospital.

CRASH, LUBLIN PROVINCE, POLAND

Warsaw, Aug 21 -- General Jacek Bartoszcze, the chief of Poland's air force, died in the crash of a two-seater plane yesterday, a military spokesman said today. "An inquiry is under way into the crash of the plane in which the General Bartoszcze was killed," Army General Staff spokesman Colonel Zdzislaw Gnatowski told Reuters. Bartoszcze, 44, was performing aerobatics with an unnamed Belgian friend when the plane crashed in a rural area of eastern Lublin province, reported private television channel TVN-24. -- Reuters.

CRASH, OVERTON COUNTY, TENNESSEE, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 19 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: Authorities spotted the wreckage today of a small twin-engine aircraft that crashed in Overton County. Both people on board apparently were killed. The wreckage in a rugged, rural area was spotted from the sky. Ground units were still trying to reach the location early this evening, officers said. There was not much left of the aircraft, witnesses said. Sheriff's Department dispatcher Roy Gore said the search began last night after the department received a message from the Federal Aviation Administration that it likely went down while trying to avoid a thunderstorm. The flight originated in Gadsden, Ala., and was headed to Somerset, Ky. The aircraft dropped off radar about 10 miles east of Livingston at 1907 hrs after being diverted to the Alpine area because of stormy weather, authorities said.

CRASH, PIE DE LA CUESTA AREA, MEXICO

London, Aug 23 -- A press report, dated Aug 22, states: A small plane crashed outside the Pacific coast resort of Acapulco, killing a civilian pilot and a Mexican Air Force pilot who went along for the ride, authorities and relatives confirmed.

The plane went down yesterday afternoon at El Migote beach near Pie de la Cuesta, just south of Acapulco, killing pilot Ruben Fajardo and Air Force pilot Victor Serrano, said Hector Lara, an agent of the district attorney's office for the nearby city of Coyuca de Benitez.

CRASH, SIMPLON MOUNTAIN PASS, SWITZERLAND

Geneva, Aug 23 -- Several people were believed to have died today when a light aircraft crashed near the Simplon mountain pass in south-central Switzerland, Swiss police said. "Witnesses said the aircraft went into a tail spin and that the pilot had probably lost control. Probably several people died, but we don't know exactly how many," Vincent Favre, police spokesman in the canton (state) of Valais, said. Police were trying to reach the crash site in the Alpine pass between Switzerland and Italy. -- Reuters.

London, Aug 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: A small plane carrying four people crashed in southern Switzerland yesterday, killing all on board. The plane crashed near the Simplon Pass close to Switzerland's border with Italy, police in the canton of Valais said. Police said they had no information on the victims' nationalities. "There are no survivors," police spokesman Renato Kalbermatten said from the crash site. "We still don't know the reason for the crash." Mr Kalbermatten said the plane was about the size of a Cessna, but he was unsure of the model or make. He ruled out the possibility of weather playing a role in the crash, saying visibility was "good". The plane took off at 2242 hrs, in the southern Swiss city of Locarno and was headed for Friedrichshafen, Germany, he said. It crashed in dense forest above the Simplon Pass road that connects southern Switzerland with northern Italy.

EMERGENCY LANDING, ATHENS, GREECE

London, Aug 25 -- A press report, dated Aug 24, states: An Olympic Airlines flight bound for Brussels with 132 people aboard made a successful emergency landing today at Athens International Airport after its landing gear jammed, officials said. Olympic Flight 147, a Boeing 737-300, took off at 1620 hrs and landed at 1755 hrs, after reporting the problem and being placed in a holding pattern over the island of Kythnos in the Aegean Sea. "The plane landed successfully and everyone is fine. There was a low level of alert at Athens International Airport, which has ended," airport spokeswoman Marina Papageorgiou said.

EMERGENCY LANDING, BREST, FRANCE

London, Aug 22 -- A press report, dated Aug 19, states: A British Boeing 737 packed with 144 holidaymakers heading to Leeds has been forced to make an emergency landing. The

British owned Astraeus plane was carrying passengers from Menorca when the pilot requested the landing at Brest-Guipavas airport in France. A spokesman for Leeds Bradford Airport said the request was made after an alarm in the cockpit alerted the pilot to a potential loss of cabin pressure. Oxygen masks were deployed in the cabin but all passengers are said to be fine. The AEU952 flight from Mahon was cruising at its normal altitude of 36,000ft when a technical fault within the aircraft's pressurisation system activated the alarm. The flight crew followed routine emergency drills which included donning their own oxygen masks as the cabin pressure fell and a rapid descent was initiated. At that time the plane was 60km west of Brest so the pilot made his request to land. "During this time as the cabin pressure levels fell, the passenger oxygen masks automatically deployed and passengers were directed by the cabin crew to use them," the spokesman said. The aircraft landed safely at Brest at 1830, BST. A replacement aircraft was sent to collect the passengers, which safely arrived at Leeds Bradford airport at 0045, BST. The original aircraft will remain at Brest until a full engineering examination has been carried out.

EMERGENCY LANDING, LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 22 -- A press report, dated Aug 21, states: A Delta Air Lines flight headed to Ontario, Calif., from Atlanta landed at Little Rock, after the airplane's windshield cracked. The airplane was at 34,000 feet during the flight yesterday when the crack occurred, airport spokesman T.J. Williams said. There were no injuries reported among the 180 passengers and six crew members. Williams said the cause of the crack was not immediately known, but he said the emergency landing was necessary because of concerns about a potential loss in cabin pressure. A second airplane took the passengers to California.

London, Aug 22 -- Delta Air Lines flight 275, Boeing B-757, struck frozen residue, at 1502, UTC, Aug 20, while at 34,000 feet, damaging the windshield. No reported injuries. The aircraft performed an emergency landing at Little Rock, Arkansas.

EMERGENCY LANDING, OSAKA, JAPAN

London, Aug 21 -- A press report, dated today, states: Nine people, including two Australians, were injured during the evacuation of a Qantas jet that landed in Osaka, central Japan, after a smoke sensor was activated in the aircraft's hold. A smoke alarm activated shortly after the Perth-bound Airbus A330 carrying 178 passengers and 13 crew took off from Tokyo. The pilot made an emergency landing at Kansai Airport about 0100, local time. The two Australians, six Japanese and one

Chinese citizen were slightly injured and one Japanese woman fractured her pelvis or hip as passengers used emergency chutes to escape the aircraft, Qantas said. "People bumped into each other in the mad rush to escape," one passenger told Japanese television. Qantas executive general manager for engineering and maintenance, David Cox, said the captain had ordered the immediate evacuation of the aircraft because an Osaka airport fire officer had reported seeing smoke. Despite the report of smoke from the aircraft, Mr Cox said the emergency had probably been caused by a faulty smoke alarm and ruled out the possibility the incident was terrorist-related. "At this stage there is no indication of anything other than a sensor issue," he said. A Qantas aircraft will be sent to Osaka and passengers could resume their journey to Perth as early as tomorrow. Japanese safety investigators quarantined the aircraft and Qantas engineers were on their way to assist in investigating the incident.

EMERGENCY LANDING, SHANNON AIRPORT, REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

London, Aug 19 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: An Aer Lingus aircraft carrying over 300 passengers made an emergency landing at Shannon Airport at 1650 hrs. The aircraft which had earlier departed from Shannon for New York returned to the airport because of concerns over the pressurisation in the cabin. Gardai from Shannon as well as fire units from Clare and ambulance personnel from Limerick were all alerted and put on stand-by, but the aircraft landed safely shortly before 1700 hrs. It is thought the aircraft returned as a precaution and engineers are currently examining the aircraft.

HK-4374X

Caracas, Aug 18 -- Prosecutors in Martinique prepared a manslaughter inquiry today into the crash of a West Caribbean Airways jet as French experts began identifying the remains of the 160 victims of the accident. The Colombian charter airliner was carrying tourists home to Martinique from Panama on Tuesday (Aug 16) when it reported failures in both engines and minutes later plunged into a remote farm in western Venezuela. Most of the 152 passengers on West Caribbean flight 708 were Martinique government officials who had been on holiday with their families. The eight crew members were Colombian. French investigators, experts and doctors arrived in Venezuela late yesterday along with mobile morgues to join the investigation and prepare for hundreds of family members who will travel to identify their relatives this week. Recovery workers scoured for the last bodies in the twisted fuselage, which lies scattered across water-logged fields near the Colombia frontier. Authorities said today they had only identified three bodies so far

and many corpses in the morgue were mutilated by the impact. As recovery workers picked through wreckage, prosecutors in Martinique were preparing to open a manslaughter inquiry into the crash with the agreement of French Justice Minister Pascal Clement, a French legal source said. West Caribbean's safety and aircraft maintenance record is now coming under increasing scrutiny. Colombian authorities said they had suspended the airline's flights while they reviewed previous West Caribbean inspections. The MD-82 airliner that crashed had passed a Colombian safety check on Monday (Aug 15) and cleared two inspections while on French territory. But the airline has been penalized for excessive weight and safety violations. An audit by Colombian authorities into West Caribbean, which operates two McDonnell Douglas MD-81s, two ATR42s and several smaller aircraft, found a lack of crew training, incorrect use of flight logs and maintenance problems. The audit also said the airline failed to properly check routes or register flights and crew time, and that it exceeded permitted flight times. Capt. Alberto Padilla, president of the Colombian Association of Civil Aviation, said there was a lack of qualified personnel to properly inspect aircraft in Colombia. "We have to be careful with air safety in Colombia. They are doing their best, but we must improve it," he said. Venezuelan civil aviation investigators are working with Colombian and French authorities to see if the flight data recorder, cockpit voice recorder and tests will establish how both engines of the MD-82 could have failed. Investigators will focus on the flight data recorder, which should be able to pinpoint engine performance. Failure of one engine is not unusual but it is rare for both to fail. Experts said that could point to fuel starvation, fuel quality problems, maintenance or crew handling of the engines. -- Reuters.

INCIDENT AT GUAM AIRPORT

London, Aug 19 -- A press report, dated today, states: The nose gear of a 747-200 aircraft made by Boeing Co. broke upon landing at Guam airport, causing light injuries to several people on board, Japan's transport ministry said. The incident involved Northwest Airlines Corp.'s flight NW74 to Guam from Tokyo's Narita airport, said ministry official Makoto Eguchi in Tokyo. A report by Agence France-Presse said 325 passengers and 16 crew members were on board the flight. Passengers used emergency chutes to vacate the aircraft and three people were taken to hospital with light injuries, the AFP said, without giving details. The cause of the incident was under investigation, the ministry said. The runway at Guam airport was closed after the incident, forcing Japan Airlines Corp.'s JALways unit to cancel six flights to and from Guam and divert two flights to Saipan, said the carrier's spokeswoman Yuko Takahashi.

N294T

London, Aug 22 -- A press report, dated Aug 21, states: A single-engine plane crashed into the Pacific Ocean this weekend, but the pilot survived. The plane went down in shallow water in Lunada Bay. The small plane crashed close to some exclusive homes in the Palos Verdes Estates yesterday, at about 1415 hrs. The pilot, identified as John Mailamo of San Diego, reported engine problems as he made his way south to Long Beach airport, according to Los Angeles County Fire Capt. Mark Savage. Mailamo may have tried to return to Torrance Airport but could not make it. Mailamo, 57, was towing a banner, which he dropped to lose weight and try to gain altitude. But the high-wing Piper PA-18 continued to descend, hitting the water nose-down before tipping over, landing upside-down in the rocky shallows at a winter surf spot known as "Longs," the Daily Breeze reported. Mailamo walked away from the crash with no serious injuries. Firefighters helped secure the plane overnight. It was unclear how much, if any, fuel and oil leaked into the ocean. The wreckage, near part of the hull of a freighter that hit the rocks in 1961, is expected to be taken to Palmdale, where investigators with the National Transportation Safety Board and Federal Aviation Administration will inspect it as part of the investigation, Savage said. The plane is registered to Van Wagner Aerial Media of Hollywood.

London, Aug 22 -- Piper PA-18 105, N294T, operated by Van Wagner Aerial Media LLC, during banner tow flight, with one person on board, experienced an engine failure and forced landed, at 2116, UTC, Aug 20, in water at Palos Verdes, California, United States.

N505DF

London, Aug 22 -- A press report, dated Aug 21, states: A single-engine airplane crashed just after take-off from Menomonie today, killing the pilot. The two-seat plane, an RV-8, took off around 1100 hrs, from Lee Score Memorial Airport. Witnesses saw the plane's right wing dive toward the ground and disappear into a cornfield. The pilot died in the crash, police said. His name has not been released. Federal Aviation Administration officials out of Minneapolis were on the scene, but FAA spokesman Tony Molinaro in Chicago said the National Transportation Safety Board would handle the investigation because of the fatality.

London, Aug 22 -- Home built Dale Kircher RV-8, N505DF, operated by Dale A. Kircher, with one person on board, crashed at 1530, UTC, Aug 21, at Menomonie, Wisconsin. The pilot was killed.

N7399Z

London, Aug 22 -- Piper PA-25-235 (Pawnee), N7399Z, operated by Damascus Dusting Inc, crashed at 2105, UTC, Aug 21, while crop

dusting, with one person on board, at Colquitt, Georgia, United States. The pilot was killed.

N90914

London, Aug 22 -- A press report, dated Aug 21, states: Two men were killed in a plane crash shortly after the two-seat aircraft took off from a private airstrip in Freeport, authorities said. Pilot Fred Bogle, 63, of Seagrove Beach died at the crash scene yesterday, while his passenger, Ruben Rios, 40, of Tallahassee died after being taken to a hospital, the Walton County Sheriff's Office said. Authorities were not sure whether the plane, a Champion Citabria, encountered any mechanical problems. The National Transportation Safety Board was expected to begin an investigation today.

London, Aug 22 -- Bellanca 7ECA, N90914, operated by Fred D. Bogle, with two persons on board, crashed at 2145, UTC, Aug 20, at Freeport, Florida, United States.

N9285R

London, Aug 23 -- A press report, dated Aug 22, states: Two people were killed today when a single-engine plane crashed while attempting to land at the Brandywine Airport in Chester County, Pa., authorities said. Officials said the pilot of the 1997 Piper Cherokee, Daniel T. Webster III, 66, of Saint Davids, was attempting to land when the plane began experiencing mechanical problems. He was killed, as was his female passenger. Her name was not released pending notification of relatives. Jay Zook, the airport's assistant manager, told the Associated Press that he radioed Webster to tell him the landing gear was not down. "But he was too low, the prop hit the runway," said David Nelson, a member of the airport's board of directors who saw the crash. "You could see 50 hash marks on the runway from where the propeller hit." The pilot went down in woods about 1100 hrs, in West Goshen Township. An Associated Press report said Webster was described by airport officials as an experienced pilot who owned a hangar at the airport. According to published reports, the pilot and the passenger were returning from a vacation in New England when the crash occurred. Federal Aviation Administration spokesman Jim Peters said the plane is owned by Webster Aircraft Corp. in St. Davids. The crash is being investigated by the National Transportation Safety Board.

London, Aug 23 -- Piper PA-32R-301 (Saratoga IIHP) N9285R crashed near Brandywine Airport, West Chester, Pennsylvania, at 1434, Aug 22, while on a flight to West Chester. The aircraft sustained substantial damage. The two persons on board were killed.

OB-1809P

Lima, Aug 24 -- A local press report states: A Boeing 737-200 (OB-1809P) has crashed in Peru's Amazon jungle killing at least 40 people and injuring

many more. The death toll could rise even further, with the country's President, Alejandro Toledo, saying 70 to 80 were dead. Reporters at the scene have said the dead include many children and those injured sustained burns and fractures. The Boeing 737-200 operated by the Tans airline was carrying about 100 people on an internal flight from the capital, Lima, when it went down in a storm. "There were between 20 and 30 survivors," Mr Toledo said. The crash happened at about 1620, local time, 35km from Pucallpa, which is 490km north-east of Lima. "It seems it was a matter of the weather. Ten minutes before we were to land in Pucallpa, the plane began to shake a lot," said passenger Tomas Ruiz. Another survivor, William Zea, who sustained a burned hand in the crash said "the plane had problems and we fell".

London, Aug 24 -- A press report, dated today, states: A Tans Boeing 737-200 (OB-1809P) has crashed in Peru's Amazon jungle, with at least 40 of the 100 on board now known to have died. The aircraft was on an internal flight from Lima to Pucallpa when it made an emergency landing in bad weather. The death toll had initially been put as high as 70, but local officials now say 40 bodies have been recovered. Sixteen foreigners, including 11 Americans, were on board when the plane crashed yesterday afternoon. Flight TJ204 had 92 passengers, including eight crew, 11 US citizens, two Italians, one Colombian and one Spaniard. The aircraft came down in a swamp just five kilometres from Pucallpa airport at 1506 hrs (2006, UTC). After a stop in Pucallpa the plane had been due to travel on to Iquitos in the northern jungle near the Colombian and Brazilian borders, a popular tourist destination. Although the cause of the crash is not yet known, a storm had just broken as the plane came in to land, witnesses said. A Tans spokesman said that "preliminary information" indicated that wind shear caused by violent crosswinds could be to blame. It is not yet known whether the pilot is among the survivors. The search of the crash site has now been abandoned for the night, and will resume early this morning. Police said that survivors suffered severe burns and broken limbs.

Lima, Aug 23 -- Rescue workers with machetes hacked through swamps today, to search for bodies in the wreckage of a TANS Boeing 737-200 (OB-1809P) that crashed in Peru's northern jungle, killing at least 41 people including foreign tourists. Police and firefighters knee-deep in water pulled five bodies from wreckage as the search restarted at daybreak. The airline said 57 people survived the crash but authorities did not expect to find more passengers alive. The TANS aircraft, carrying 92 passengers, came down in swamps 1.8 miles from Pucallpa Airport as it tried to land yesterday in heavy storms. The flight was due to fly on to the Amazon city of Iquitos, a popular tourist

destination. "We've also found five more survivors and that takes the number of survivors to 57. Two people are still missing and there are 41 dead," TANS executive Jorge Belevan said. TANS said 11 US citizens were on board, along with two Italians, a Colombian, an Australian and a Spanish woman. Local authorities said the death toll could still rise because of the difficult terrain for searchers near Pucallpa, 490 miles from Lima. An America Television reporter said the aircraft debris was scattered over a 5,300-square-foot area. "It's very inaccessible territory. The fuselage is totally shattered. We just have to keep looking," Luis Aldana, mayor of the nearby village of Portillo, said. Police said an Italian man died in the crash, but the Italian Foreign Ministry in Rome said it was not aware of an Italian who had died. RPP radio and police said an American man and a Colombian woman also died in the crash but TANS declined to comment. TANS said the aircraft, built in 1983 and leased from a South African company, made an emergency landing and did not crash. Experts said the harsh weather at the time of landing meant there was little the two pilots could have done to avoid the accident. About 10 minutes before landing, the aircraft was caught in a fierce storm that was unusual for the time of year, and it went down in flames, survivors said. "Those cross winds produce air currents that go up and down and a pilot simply cannot fly in such conditions," John Elliot, president of the Peruvian pilots association, said. The airline said its flights continued as normal on Wednesday. -- Reuters.

London, Aug 25 -- A press report, dated Aug 24, states: At least 58 people managed to escape a flaming Peruvian airliner that splintered as it crash-landed in the Amazon jungle, killing 37. One aviation expert called it a "miracle" that so many walked away. TANS airline said wind shear may have forced the pilot's emergency landing attempt. The Boeing 737-200 was carrying 98 people, including six crew members, on a domestic flight from the Peruvian capital of Lima to the Amazon city of Pucallpa, company spokesman Jorge Belevan said today. The plane's pilot was among the dead; of the crew, only two flight attendants survived. Belevan said three missing people might include survivors from Pucallpa who returned home after the crash without receiving medical assistance. Television images of the crash site showed mutilated bodies being retrieved from a marsh near the Pucallpa airport where the pilot had attempted an emergency landing. The fuselage was shattered and pieces strewn along a 1,640-foot path made by the plane as it crash-landed. "A plane is totally destroyed and more than 50 percent of the passengers have survived," John Elliot, an experienced Peruvian pilot and aviation expert, said in an interview with The Associated Press, calling it "a miracle." Jose Leandro Vivas, 43, a Peruvian-American from the Brooklyn

borough of New York, survived the crash along with his three daughters, his brother and his sister-in-law. "We jumped out the plane and unfortunately we were thigh deep in the marsh water. It was just mud," Vivas said Wednesday. "We had to practically crawl out of there and try to get to some high ground." Yuri Salas, 38, also walked to safety after crawling from the wreckage. "I felt a strong impact and a light and fire and felt I was in the middle of flames around the cabin, until I saw to my left a hole to escape through," he said. He said he heard another person shouting to him to keep advancing because the plane was going to explode. "The fire was fierce despite the storm," he said. "Hail was falling and the mud came up to my knees." The pilot began his approach to the airport in torrential rains and strong winds, which passengers said began rocking the plane 10 minutes before the scheduled landing yesterday afternoon. Four miles from the airstrip, he attempted to make an emergency landing, TANS said, after wind shear apparently pushed his plane close to the ground. The pilot apparently aimed for the marsh to soften the impact, but the aircraft broke apart in the landing, strewn pieces of fuselage as it skidded over the boggy ground. Belevan credited the expertise of the pilots and insisted the plane did not crash. "The plane made an emergency landing and the accident occurred during the emergency landing," he said. But Elliot and Victor Girao, a former president of Peru's Association of Pilots, said the crash appeared to be due to pilot error. Elliot said the pilot should have opted to avoid the storm and land at another airport. Both said the pilot was flying too close to the ground while making the approach to the airport from four miles out, making it difficult to control the aircraft against wind shear. "They were coming in very low, looking for the airstrip," Girao said. Search teams have recovered the plane's cockpit flight data recorder, said Pablo Arevalo, a prosecutor in Pucallpa. Among the dead were at least four foreigners - an American man and woman, a Spanish woman and a Colombian woman, said Manuel Rodriguez Rojas, a government identification expert sent to Pucallpa to help identify the dead. He identified the Americans as Stephen Michael Lotti, 28, through his boarding pass, and Sherra Young Gay through a visa card found on her body. Many bodies could not immediately be identified.

Space Vehicles



DISCOVERY (Space Shuttle)

London, Aug 19 -- A press report, dated Aug 18, states: The US space

shuttle fleet is to remain grounded until March at the earliest, Nasa officials have said. Engineers need to find a solution to the foam debris problem which re-emerged during Discovery's launch. Seven members of an oversight panel also say Nasa's latest shuttle efforts were tainted by some of the problems that caused the Columbia disaster. The official heading the team looking at the issue said it would take until early next year at least to find a fix. The shuttle fleet was grounded after a large piece of foam was shed from the shuttle's external fuel tank. "From an overall standpoint we think really March 4th is the time frame we are looking at," said Bill Gerstenmaier, Nasa's new head of space operations and the official overseeing the foam fix. "The teams are making very good progress. But we're still not complete by any stretch of the imagination." Space shuttle Atlantis was due to blast off in September, but Nasa engineers will now have to make modifications to the shuttle's external fuel tank, particularly to an area known as the Protuberance Air Load (Pal) ramp.

London, Aug 22 -- A press report, dated Aug 21, states: The space shuttle Discovery has arrived back at Florida's Kennedy Space Centre after travelling piggyback across the US on a modified Boeing 747. It left Edwards Air Force Base on Friday Aug 19, but more bad weather along the way delayed its arrival in Florida. The 3,591-km trip from California to Florida was expected to cost \$1m (£560,000). The shuttle and its carrier had been scheduled to stop in Louisiana for a night during its return journey, but they ended up staying two. Whilst in California, Discovery underwent maintenance and crews worked around the clock to purge it of hazardous substances and remove fuel from the on-board tanks. Technicians attached an aluminium tail cone to the shuttle to reduce drag during the flight across the US.

Product Recalls



BAMBOO TORCHES AND REPLACEMENT FUEL CANISTERS, UNITED STATES

London, Aug 23 -- A press report, dated Aug 22, states: The following recall has been announced: About 963,000 Tiki bamboo torches and about 18,000 replacement fuel canisters, manufactured by Lamplight Farms Inc., are being recalled, because metal flame guards found on the torches and canisters can catch fire, posing a risk of injuries and property damage. The manufacturer has received 33 reports of torches catching fire, including six reports of minor injuries and nine reports of minor property damage. The word "Tiki" is imprinted on the

flame guard, and model and manufacturer information can be found on a tag attached to the torch

or canister. Wal-Mart, The Home Depot, Lowes and other home and hardware stores sold the products

nationwide from December 2004 through to July 2005.

Port Delays

(Information received from BIMCO, Denmark and Indian Ports Association, New Delhi)

Country/Port	Date of report	No. of vessels waiting and/or days delay
Australia		
Abbot Point	24-Aug-2005	Coal: 1 vessel anchored; 9 vessels due by 10/9; up to 2 days berthing delay expected.
Brisbane	24-Aug-2005	Coal: Fisherman Island coal berth: 5 vessels due by 12/9; no delays expected.
Dalrymple Bay	24-Aug-2005	Coal: 2 vessels berthed and loading, 12 anchored; 37 vessels due by 17/9; 5-25 days berthing delay subject to cargo availability and berth congestion; waiting times vary greatly due to different stem supply issues
Dampier	24-Aug-2005	Iron ore: Shippers are experiencing some cargo grade shortages and stockpile problems; some vessels will berth out of turn and berthing may change at short notice. Parker Point: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 2 anchored; 11 vessels due by 8/9; there will be a maintenance shutdown ca. 23/8; up to 4 days berthing delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; shippers cannot guarantee that vessel will be able to load up to max. sailing draft available; East Intercourse Island: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 2 anchored; 10 vessels due by 31/8; 1-7 days berthing delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; a shift to a lay-by berth for loaded vessels is always a possibility; shippers cannot guarantee that vessel will be able to load up to max. sailing draft available.
Gladstone	24-Aug-2005	Coal: R.G. Tanna coal terminal: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 2 off port; 28 vessels due by 14/9; up to 7 days berthing delay expected subject to port congestion and cargo availability; there will be a 4 day shut down on shiploader No. 1 starting 29/8 for repairs and general maintenance; Barney Point: 4 vessels due by 15/9; no delays expected.
Hay Point	24-Aug-2005	Coal: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 2 anchored; 10 vessels due by 29/9; No. 1 berth closed for maintenance until 2/9; up to 4 days berthing delay expected; vessels berthing in order of cargo availability.
Newcastle	23-Aug-2005	Coal: Kooragang 4, 5 and 6: 2 vessel berthed and loading; 47 vessels due by 15/9; Dykes 4+5: 1 vessel loading; 26 vessels due by 15/9; 4-6 days berthing delay expected prior to berthing due to planned maintenance at Kooragang terminal, coal product problems with some shippers berthed congestion and cargo receipt. (Aug 24) Grain : 4 vessels due by 10/9, all to load wheat; up to 1 day's delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Port Adelaide	24-Aug-2005	Grain: No. 27 berth: 3 vessels due by 5/9, 1 to load faba beans, 2 wheat; up to 2 days delay expected due to berth congestion.
Port Hedland	23-Aug-2005	Iron ore: BHP Iron Ore Pty. Ltd., Mt. Newman (Nelson Point), "A" berth: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 2 anchored; 7 vessels due by 25/8; "B" berth: 1 vessel berthed and loading, 3 anchored; 6 vessels due by 24/8; BHP Iron Ore Pty. Ltd., Goldsworthy (Finucane Island) "C" berth: 1 vessel berthed and loading; 2 vessels due by 18/8; "D" berth: 1 vessel berthed and loading; 5 vessels due by 21/8; a 96 hour maintenance shutdown will start ca. 16/8; up to 5 day's berthing delay expected.
Port Kembla	23-Aug-2005	Coal: 13 vessels due by 25/11; up to 2 days berthing delay expected due to port congestion; CB-1: 2 vessels due by 25/9; no delays expected.
Port Walcott	23-Aug-2005	Iron ore: 2 vessels berthed and loading, 2 anchored; 15 vessels due by 12/9; Line-up expected to change at short notice. Cargo grade shortages and stockpile problems may result in vessels berthing out of turn..
Brazil		
Paranagua	23-Aug-2005	Fifteen vessels berthed of which 2 container dischargers, 6 fertiliser dischargers, 3 sugar loaders, 4 other loaders/dischargers; 11 vessels waiting in roads, of which 6 to load (1 pellets, 1 soya, 2 sugar, 2 other loaders), 5 to discharge (4 fertiliser, 1 other discharger); 53 vessels due over the next 7 days.
Rio Grande	23-Aug-2005	Four vessels berthed of which 2 fertiliser dischargers, 2 soya bean loaders; 17 vessels waiting in roads; 10 vessels due over the next 10 days.
Santos	23-Aug-2005	Twenty-two vessels berthed of which 9 sugar loaders, 3 bulk soya loaders, 1 fertiliser discharger, 3 chemical products dischargers, 1 oil loader, 2 Ro/Ro loaders/dischargers, 1 full container loader/discharger, 2 other loaders/dischargers; 31 vessels waiting in roads; 37 vessels due over the next 7 days; Private terminals: Terminal 37: 2 full container loaders/dischargers; Tecondi: no vessels; Termare: 1 bulk juice loader; Rodrimar: 2 full container loaders/dischargers; Cosipa: 1 fertiliser loader, 2 steel products loaders; Ultrafertil: 1 fertiliser discharger; Cargill: 1 bulk sugar loader, 1 bulk soya loader; Santos Brasil: 2 full container loaders/dischargers; Cutrale: 1 bulk juice loader; Dow: no vessels.
Sao Sebastiao	23-Aug-2005	Seven vessels berthed, 5 waiting in roads; 8 vessels due over the next 10 days.
Vitoria	23-Aug-2005	Five vessels berthed of which 2 sugar loaders, 1 granite loader, 1 pig-iron loaders, 1 wheat discharger; Terminal Vila Velha: 1 full container loader/discharger; Tubarao: 1 fertiliser discharger, 3 iron ore loaders; Praia Mole: 2 coal dischargers, 3 steel products loaders; Portocel: no vessels; Ubu: 1 iron ore loader, 1 cellulose loader; 37 vessels due over the next 7 days.
Bulgaria		
Bourgas	22-Aug-2005	Thirteen vessels in port operating, of which 7 loading (3 coils, 2 containers, 1 scrap, 1 lead), 6 discharging (2 containers, 1 coals, 1 salt, 1 benzene, 1 metals); 3 vessels waiting in roads, of which 1 to load coils, 1 to discharge billets, 1 for repairs; 14 vessels due, of which 8 to load (1 scrap, 1 barley, 2 steel sheets, 2 reinforced concrete, 1 profiles, 1 containers), 2 to discharge (1 billets, 1 containers), 4 passenger vessels.

Port Conditions

Varna	22-Aug-2005	Varna East, Varna West, Electrical Power Station, Balchik: Conditions August: 16-22: Fifty-three vessels in port operating of which 35 loading (9 bulk wheat, 1 packed hardboard/chipboard, 1 bagged kaolin, 6 scrap, 2 bulk barley, 1 timber, 8 soda, 1 bulk silica sand, 1 TSP, 1 TSP/bulk NP compound fertiliser, 2 bulk cement, 1 hydrochloric acid, 1 sulphuric acid), 8 discharging (1 glassware, 1 salt, 3 bulk coal, 2 bulk copper concentrate, 1 clay), 10 discharging/loading (8 containers, 1 bagged STTP/soda, 1 miscellaneous cargo/containers); no vessels waiting in roads.
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Chile

Antofagasta	22-Aug-2005	Three vessels berthed, 4 berths vacant; 11 vessels due this week to load/discharge concentrates, bulk copper, containers and general cargo
Arica	22-Aug-2005	Four vessels berthed, 3 berths vacant; 13 vessels due this week.
Iquique	22-Aug-2005	Three vessels berthed, 4 berths vacant; 12 vessels due this week.
Valparaiso	22-Aug-2005	Two vessels berthed, 6 berths vacant; 2 vessels anchored; 8 vessels due this week.

Egypt

Adabiya	22-Aug-2005	Eleven vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 5 general cargo, 4 bulk carriers, 1 tanker, 1 containers
Alexandria	22-Aug-2005	Thirty-three vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 19 general cargo, 8 bulk carriers, 4 tankers, 2 container vessels; 13 vessels dry-docked; 19 vessels at inner anchorage, 12 at outer anchorage.
Damietta	22-Aug-2005	Twenty-three vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 14 general cargo, 4 bulk carriers, 1 tanker, 4 containers; 4 vessels at outer anchorage, 1 at inner anchorage.
Dekheila	22-Aug-2005	Eleven vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 1 general cargo, 6 bulk carriers, 4 containers; 1 vessel at outer anchorage.
Port Said	22-Aug-2005	Five vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 1 general cargo, 4 containers.
Suez Canal	22-Aug-2005	Twenty-five vessels transiting Northbound, 22 Southbound.

Estonia

Tallinn	22-Aug-2005	Paljassaare (formerly Kopli): 2 vessels loading at berth, of which 1 coal, 1 wood granules; no vessels waiting at anchorage; 2 vessels due, with 5 days berthing delay expected.
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India

Kolkata	22-Aug-2005	4 vessels operating at berth of which 1 vessel loading General Cargo, 3 vessels discharging (Timber Logs-2, Steel); 2 vessels working at mid stream to discharge (Timber Logs, Steel); 1 vessel awaiting order to discharge; 1 vessel waiting at anchorage to discharge; 5 vessels under repair; 2 vessels due (Containers, General Cargo).
Haldia	22-Aug-2005	14 vessels operating at berth of which 4 loading (Iron ore-3, Thermal Coal), 7 vessels discharging (Crude, POL, Coking Coal, Rock Phosphate, Sulphur, Net Coke, Steel), 3 vessels loading and discharging Containers; 19 vessels awaiting berth (1 to discharge, 18 to load); 4 vessels due(Crude, LPG, Iron Ore-2).
Paradip	22-Aug-2005	3 vessels operating at berth of which 1 vessel loading Thermal Coal, 2 vessels discharging (Coking Coal, Furnace Oil); 2 vessels awaiting berth (1 to discharge, 1 load); 1 vessel waiting at anchorage to discharge.
Visakhapatnam	22-Aug-2005	9 vessels operating at berth of which 3 loading (Iron ore, B.F.Slag, Billets), 6 vessels discharging (Coking Coal, HSD, General Cargo, Steel Scrap, Steam Coal, Timber Logs); 11 vessels not ready to work and waiting at anchorage (7 to discharge, 4 to load); 1 vessel under repair; 26 vessels due (Iron Ore-9, Steel, Thermal Coal, Sand, Urea, Sulfuric Acid, Timber Logs, Coking Coal-7, Containers, POL Products-2, Styrene .
Chennai	22-Aug-2005	16 vessels operating at berth of which 5 loading (C.Stone, Granite Blocks, Furnace Oil, Iron ore, Steel Coil), 9 discharging (Raw Sugar-2, Scrap-2, Thermal Coal-2, S.Coal, Crude Oil, Vegetable Oil), 2 vessels loading and discharging (General Cargo, General Cargo/Granite Block); 2 vessels not ready to work and waiting at anchorage to load; 3 vessels due (Urea, Iron ore, General Cargo).
Tuticorin	22-Aug-2005	9 vessels operating at berth of which 4 vessels loading General Cargo, 5 vessels discharging (Timber Logs, Thermal Coal-2, Rock Phosphate, DAP); 1 vessel awaiting berth to discharge; 1 vessel not ready to work and waiting at anchorage to load.
Cochin	22-Aug-2005	4 vessels operating at berth of which 2 discharging (Steel Pipes, Sulphur), 1 vessel loading and discharging Containers, 1 vessel waiting to load General Cargo
New Mangalore	22-Aug-2005	9 vessels operating at berth of which 4 vessels loading (Iron Ore Fines-3, POL Product), 5 vessels discharging (MOP, Crude Palm Oil, Yellow peas, LPG, POL Crude); 5 vessels waiting at anchorage (1 to discharge, 4 to load); 8 vessels due (Iron Ore(F)-2, POL Crude-2, Granite Stone, POL Product, Timber, Methanol).
Mormugao	22-Aug-2005	3 vessels operating at berth of which 1 loading Alumina, 2 vessels discharging (Phosphoric Acid, C.P.Coke); 2 vessels working at mid stream and loading Iron ore; 6 vessels under repairs/dry docked; 4 vessels due(MOP, Met Coke-2, S.Scrap).
Mumbai	22-Aug-2005	16 vessels operating at berth of which 7 loading (Steel/General, Project Cargo, Steel/ Rice, SBM/General, HRC/CRC, POL-2), 8 vessels discharging (Rock Phosphate, Bulk Sulphur, Palm Oil Products-2, Containers, POL-3), 1 vessel loading and discharging General Cargo/Vehicle; 13 vessels under repairs/dry docked, 10 vessels under arrest, 23 vessels waiting (under laid up berths not required for cargo operations); 17 vessels due(Containers-3, Oil-3, General Cargo-11).
J.N.P.T.	22-Aug-2005	9 vessels operating at berth of which 2 discharging Edible Oil, 7 vessels loading and discharging Containers; 8 vessels awaiting berth (2 to discharge, 6 to load and discharge); 8 vessels due (Containers-6, MEG/MS, SKO/HSD).
Ennore	22-Aug-2005	1 vessel operating at berth and discharging Thermal Coal; 1 Iron Ore vessel due (MV Maritime Cuate).
Kandla	22-Aug-2005	17 vessels operating at berth of which 11 discharging (S.Plates, MOP, Scrap, Timber Logs-2, Naptha, Vegetable Oil-2, Chemical-2, CPO), 4 vessels loading (SBM. Cement, Salt, S.Pipes), 2 vessels loading and discharging (Containers, S.Cargo); 2 vessels awaiting berth (1 to discharge, 1 to load); 8 vessels not ready to work and waiting at anchorage (5 to discharge, 3 to load); 2 vessels under repairs/dry docked.

Port Conditions

Kazakhstan

Aktau 22-Aug-2005 Oil products: 1 vessel berthed, loading crude oil; 2 vessels in roads, both to load unknown cargoes; 2 vessels due by 22/8, both to load unknown cargoes.

Nigeria

Forcados Terminal 19-Aug-2005 One vessel loading at berth, 2 anchored, 3 due.

Qua Iboe terminal 19-Aug-2005 Production at Oso platform remains low. One vessel berthed, 1 anchored, 8 due. (Eket)

Russia

Novorossiysk 22-Aug-2005 Fifteen vessels in port operating, of which 14 loading (1 HBI, 1 bulk cement, 1 bulk NPK, 1 DRI, 3 wheat, 1 coils/pipes/steel billets, 1 copper, 1 pipes, 1 bulk urea, 1 steel billets, 1 barley, 1 scrap), 1 discharging non-ferrous metals; 10 vessels waiting in roads, all to load, of which 3 wheat, 1 scrap, 1 bulk cement, 1 bulk ammonium nitrate, 1 packed fertiliser, 2 diesel oil, 1 coils; 49 vessels due, of which 48 to load (3 slabs, 4 steel billets, 4 bulk NPK, 1 scrap, 3 aluminium, 1 tin plates/steel billets, 1 steel billets/pipes, 4 DRI, 1 UAN solution, 3 pig-iron, 4 coils, 2 copper, 1 bulk urea, 4 wheat, 1 bulk cement, 1 HBI, 2 WRIC, 2 pipes, 1 scrap/steel billets/coils, 2 steel billets, 2 diesel oil, 1 bulk ammonium nitrate), 1 to discharge/load containers; Oil terminal: no tankers berthed; 4 tankers in roads, all to load crude oil; 5 tankers due, all to load, of which 2 crude oil, 2 fuel oil, 1 diesel oil.

Slovenia

Koper 22-Aug-2005 Port working normally. Ten vessels berthed of which 1 discharging/loading containers, 3 bulk carriers discharging ore/coal/minerals, 3 vessels loading sawn timber/general cargo, 1 Ro/Ro loading general cargo, 2 tankers discharging mineral oils; 2 bulk carriers waiting at anchorage to discharge ore/minerals; 15 vessels due over the next 2 days of which 5 vessels to discharge/load containers, 1 bulk carrier to discharge ore, 5 bulk carriers to load coal/grain, 1 vessel to load steel products/sawn timber, 1 Ro/Ro to load cars/paper products, 1 reefer to discharge refrigerated goods, 1 passenger vessel.

Spain

Bilbao 23-Aug-2005 Twenty-four vessels operating (5 tankers, 19 others), of which 4 loading, 13 discharging, 7 loading/discharging.

Cadiz 23-Aug-2005 Seventeen vessels in port of which 8 operating (3 Ro/Ros, 3 containers, 1 cereals, (Aug 23)1 sand), 2 passenger vessels, 7 vessels under repair; no delays.

Sri Lanka

Colombo 22-Aug-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. Six container/feeder vessels loading at berth, 13 vessels discharging at berth (9 containers/feeders, 3 bulk cement, 1 bagged maize); 2 vessels waiting at anchorage, both to discharge bulk cement; 6 vessels dry-docked, 1 at new tanker berth; 9 container/feeder vessels due, with no delays expected.

Turkmenistan

Turkmenbashi 22-Aug-2005 Oil products: 2 vessels berthed, of which 1 loading gasoil, 1 completed loading crude oil; 4 vessels in roads, all to load, of which 2 gasoil, 1 fuel oil, 1 unknown cargo.

Ukraine

Ilichevsk 22-Aug-2005 Six vessels in port operating, of which 3 loading (2 steel products, 1 grain), 1 discharging steel products, 2 discharging/loading containers; 2 vessels in roads, both to load steel products; 18 vessels due, of which 12 to load (10 steel products, 1 ore, 1 wheat), 3 to discharge (2 iron ore, 1 oil), 3 to discharge/load containers.

Mariupol 22-Aug-2005 Eight vessels in port operating, all loading, of which 3 steel, 2 wheat, 1 fire-clay/containers, 1 coal, 1 fire-clay; 4 vessels in roads, all to load, of which 3 steel, 1 wheat; 68 vessels due, all to load, of which 29 steel, 15 coal, 16 fire-clay, 2 coke, 3 wheat, 1 barley, 1 sulphur, 1 kaolin.

Odessa 22-Aug-2005 Twelve vessels in port operating, of which 3 loading (2 metal, 1 wheat), 5 discharging (1 luggage, 1 sugar, 1 bananas, 2 wheat), 2 discharging/loading containers, 2 passenger vessels; 6 vessels in roads, of which 2 to load (1 metal, 1 barley), 1 to discharge sugar, 3 to load/discharge containers; 51 vessels due, of which 28 to load (19 metal, 1 scrap, 3 pig-iron, 4 wheat, 1 corn), 6 to discharge (1 luggage, 1 oil, 1 bananas, 1 sugar, 1 wheat, 1 sand), 19 to discharge/load containers.

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