

IMO seeks Security Council action on pirates

Attackers moving further afield, write David Osler, Marcus Hand and John McLaughlin — Tuesday November 08 2005

THE International Maritime Organization is to call on the United Nations security council for action on piracy in Somali waters after three incidents over the weekend.

The unprecedented step from the London-based UN agency underlines just how serious the situation has now become.

IMO sources say the secretariat has drafted a resolution on the issue for consideration at the biennial meeting of the IMO assembly later this month.

However, the exact wording is not being made public and it remains unclear just how toughly-worded the motion will prove.

The news comes after a flurry of media attention following an armed assault on Bahamas-flag Seabourn Spirit (9,975 gt, built 1989) at around 0220 UTC on Saturday, which included use of automatic weapons and rocket-propelled grenades.

The crew were able to take evasive action and used a loud acoustic bank to convince the attackers they were under fire.

At least three RPGs are thought to have hit the ship, while one seafarer was lightly injured as a result of the incident.

According to unconfirmed reports from industry sources, the attack occurred just 70 miles off the Somali coast and not 100 miles as reported elsewhere.

If either report is correct, it would seem the master did not know of, or ignored, a recent advisory note from the US Maritime Administration, which states: "All vessels are advised to remain at least 200 nautical miles from the east coast of Somalia."

The vessel's scheduled call in Mombasa has been cancelled and the cruise, which began in the Egyptian port of Alexandria, ended in the Seychelles yesterday.

Pursuit

According to the International Maritime Bureau, the industry anti-piracy watchdog, a second outrage occurred with 10-15 miles at 1200 UTC, in which an unnamed Hong Kong-flag bulk carrier was chased for two hours. According to the master of the bulker, the vessel in pursuit had a derrick. This implies it has the capacity to launch speedboats and that the pirates are using it as a mothership.

If so, then attacks are clearly becoming increasingly sophisticated and liable to take place further out to sea than ever before.

This theory holds currency at Genoa-based Ignazio Messina, whose Jolly Marrone (27,267 dwt, 1982) was fired upon off the coast of Somalia in July.

The attack was one of two on Italian-flag cargo ships in a matter of weeks that prompted the government to despatch an Italian naval frigate, with a helicopter, a crew of 185 and special forces capability, to the Gulf of Aden.

Messina director Andrea Gais said that one of his ships had also been shadowed by a speedboat that did not attempt an assault.

"This was 140 nautical miles from the coast, indicating that it had a support vessel in the area," he observed.

Last weekend's third attack occurred at 0648 UTC on Sunday, when an unnamed ro-ro also came under fire. Bridge windows reportedly sustained bullet damage.

All three incidents are thought to be the work of the same gang that hijacked general cargoship Semlow (918 dwt, built 1971) in June, holding crew and cargo hostage for three months.

Some 29 actual and attempted cases of piracy have now been reported off Somalia since March 15.

The IMB will, from today, increase the recommended minimum distance ships should keep from the Somali coast from 150 to 200 nautical miles, in line with Marad's stance.

This means an increased steaming time of one or two days.

Representatives of Seabourn were unavailable for comment as Lloyd's List went to press.

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

Vessel	Type	Flag	Class	GT	DWT	Bit	Casualty
AL-KAHFAIN	passenger	PAN	(HR)	4,269	1,389	1967	Fire in the engine-room near Hurghada Nov 1. Fifty eight escaped, but 31 persons injured, one missing.
ALFA ITALIA	crude oil tanker	BHS	NV	59,719	105,588	2002	Had rudder failure and grounded in the Elbe when departing Hamburg Oct 27. Refloated by three tugs same day. Escorted to Hamburg where minor damage found. Sailed Hamburg prev Oct 29.
BEACON 3	container	BLZ	RS	7,156	6,447	1975	Reported Oct 27 not under command due fire in the engine-room in lat 35 57N, long 26 08E, north-east of Crete. Reported Oct 28 fire extinguished and under tow of tug <i>Matsas Star</i> . Arrived Keratsini Oct 29.
DELAWARE	general	GEO	RS	3,952	5,170	1980	Ran aground in Dardanelles Strait about Oct 29. Salvage under way. No injuries.
DORIA	container	DEU	GL	10,811	13,464	1987	Grounded off Angola prev Oct 31 and returned to Durban with cargo intact and under its own steam, where it entered Eldock same day. Extensive bottom damage, repairs to taken 60 days. 80 tonnes oil spilled.
EIDER	bulker	HKG	AB ABS	22,792	37,193	2004	Ran aground near Antofagasta Oct 31. One of its fuel tanks broke and it was towed to sea. Petroleum spilled covering one kilometre. Undergoing preliminary repair of its plating.
KERA	chem tank	LVA	RS	4,182	7,141	1976	At Freeport, BHS, for engine repairs, broke from its moorings and was driven across the harbour and grounded in Hurricane "Wilma" 29 Oct 2005. Vessel sustained damage to its underwater appurtenances and will be dry-docked.
KOREX INCHEON	general	KOR	KR	2,658	4,581	1995	In collision with Panstar Dream in Kammon Strait Nov 3. No injuries. Minor damage.
MAR CARIBE	ro-ro	MHL	NV	15,375	9,410	1985	Broke from its moorings and driven across Freeport, BHS, Oct 29 in Hurricane "Wilma" and collided with <i>Hustler III</i> and workboat <i>Defender</i> . <i>Hustler</i> was almost cut in two.
PANSTAR DREAM	ferry	KOR	KR	9,690	4,104	1997	In collision with Korex Incheon in Kammon Strait Nov 3. Vessel sustained one metre hole.
RODINA	bulker	BGR	BK	30,596	52,975	1978	Grounded in Aarhus Bay Oct 25. Refloated same day and berthed at Aarhus. Divers inspecting. Bottom torn open by 110 x 14 metres. Discharging. Fredericia Shipyard signed contract to repair vessel. ETA Fredericia Nov 7 for repairs.
VERA 777	general	PAN	—	3,043	—	2005	Reported disabled due to steering failure in lat 14 59N, long 112 30E, Oct 31. Crew to abandon ship. Two merchant vessels standing by. Taken in tow Nov 2 and bound Sanya, ETA Nov 3.
WESTWOOD MARIANNE	bulk/ container	BHS	NV	28,805	45,295	1986	Vessel sustained engine trouble and tug will tow vessel via Nagoya Nov 3 to Kinjo wharf, ETA same day.

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The following reports are reprinted from Lloyd's List



ACTIVE (U.S.A.)

Seattle, Oct 31 -- Tugs Active and Legacy: Estimated lift attempt scheduled for Nov 2. -- Lloyd's Agents.

AFRICAN SKY (Panama)

London, Nov 3 -- General cargo African Sky arrived Takoradi Oct 28 and sailed Oct 29.

AIN TEMOUCHENT (Algeria)

London, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated Oct 26, states: Bulk Ain Temouchent (19084 gt, built 1982), heading for Argentina with 31-crew, has been rescued after 10 days on Nigerian waters last week, the Nigerian National Maritime Authority said today. The agency said in a statement it received a distress call from the vessel on Oct 21 and moved in until it was sighted close to the Lagos breakwaters. It attributed the cause of the distress to shortage of diesel following a dispute between the owners and agents of the vessel, which had discharged a consignment of rice brought from Thailand, in Douala, Cameroon before it developed the problems. According to the statement, tug Priye arrived on Oct 22 with diesel to bunker the vessel and after that it sailed out of the Lagos waters. (Note -- Ain Temouchent sailed Douala Oct 2 for Argentina.)

AL-KAHFAIN (Panama)

London, Nov 2 -- A press report, dated today, states: Fifty-eight crew members escaped a fire which raged on board Panamanian passenger ro/ro Al-Kahfain (4269 gt, built 1967) off Egypt's Red Sea coast. Fifty-eight crew members escaped into other vessels, a port official said. It was unclear what caused last night's fire, which quickly spread out of control through Al-Kahfain. No passengers were on board the vessel, which was heading from Suez to Saudi Arabia, but caught fire off the coast of Hurghada. Thirty crew members were rescued by other vessels while 28 escaped into liferafts. One crew member was injured and treated on board another ship.

London, Nov 2 -- A press report, dated today, states: Thirty people were injured and one crew member was missing after a fire on passenger ro/ro Al-Kahfain near the port of Hurghada, a source at the Red Sea Port Authority said today. Al-Kahfain, was returning with "57" crew from Hurghada to Jeddah when a fire started in the engine-room, the source said. No passengers were on board at the time.

ALFA ITALIA (Bahamas)

London, Oct 28 -- Following received from Kiel, dated today: Crude oil tanker Alfa Italia (59719 gt, built 2002) ran aground when departing

from Hamburg, to the North Sea, shortly past 1200 hrs, Oct 27. The vessel came to rest on the Elbe embankment close to the nuclear power station at Stade. It had lightered a load of crude oil in Hamburg Kattwyk. The tugs Bugsier 16, Bugsier 21 and Butzfleth got the vessel free in around two hours. The Alfa Italia was then escorted back to Hamburg where it was inspected in Blohm & Voss shipyard. The double hulled vessel sustained only minor damage. The cause of the grounding seems to have been a technical failure in the rudder or machinery.

London, Oct 28 -- Following received from Kiel, dated today: Crude oil tanker Alfa Italia had rudder failure at 1015 hrs and radioed that it drifted towards Stadersand. It went aground two minutes later. The tugs involved were tugs Bugsier 15, Bugsier 20 and Butzfleth. The vessel came free at 1230 hrs, was turned and brought back to Hamburg.

London, Nov 1 -- Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: Crude oil tanker Alfa Italia sailed Hamburg following an inspection and was reported off Rostock Oct 29, proceeding east.

ALLIANCE (Germany)

London, Nov 1 -- Salvage services rendered to research Alliance by Smit Salvage B.V. and Tito Neri LLPP SRL under LOF 2000, Oct 27.

ALPENA (U.S.A.)

Troy, Mich, Oct 27 -- At around 2230 hrs, on Monday night (Oct 24) cement Alpena returned to Alpena port after undergoing repairs in Sturgeon Bay, WI. The Alpena loaded cement for Milwaukee. -- Great lakes & Seaway Shipping News.

ASIAN FAVOUR (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Nov 2 -- Following received from Navigational Warning, dated today: Tug towing c.c. Asian Favour (4450 gt, built 2003) departs Mitajiri Nakanoseki at 0800, UTC, today to Chitose in lat 34 23N, long 133 18E, ETA 0300, UTC, Nov 3. Speed about 6.5 knots.

ASTERIX (Japan)

Yokohama, Oct 28 -- Lpg Asterix was towed to Kawasaki on Oct 23 and is still anchoring off Kawasaki. -- Lloyd's Agents.

BAHIA DE ESPIRITU SANTO (Mexico)

See "Hurricane "Wilma"" under "Weather & Navigation."

BALTIMAR VENUS (Bahamas)

London, Oct 27 -- General cargo Baltimar Venus passed through the Suez Canal on Oct 23. On Oct 26 it passed through the Dardanelles, bound for Ilichevsk.

BASKER SPIRIT (Bahamas)

London, Nov 3 -- Shuttle product tanker Basker Spirit (56020 gt, built

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

1992) was forced to port for repairs after bearings failed on the bow loading system. The tanker was attempting to connect to a single point mooring on Anzon Energy's Basker-Manta oilfield in the Bass Strait off southeast Australia when the bearings failed. The ship was forced to go back to Port Philip Bay for a seven- to-10-day repair programme. This has delayed Anzon's plans for an extended production test on the Basker 2 well using the Crystal Oceanfloating production storage and offloading vessel until the tanker returns. The first phase of Anzon's Basker development is now expected to begin late next week.

BEACON 3 (Belize)

London, Oct 28 -- Lloyd's Casualty representatives report: Iraklion Radio Navwarn: 1245 hrs. Oct 27: C.c. Beacon 3 (7156 gt, built 1975), V3JB, with 16 persons on board, not under command due fire in the engine room in position lat 35 57N, 26 08E, (north-east of Crete). Ships in the vicinity are kindly requested to keep radio contact on VHF Channel 16 and render assistance if necessary, reporting to JRCC Piraeus. (Note Beacon 3 was last reported sailing from Gioia Tauro on Oct 24, bound for Mersin and Beirut, and was due to arrive at Beirut yesterday (Oct 27).)

London, Oct 28 -- Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 0755, UTC: The fire on c.c. Beacon 3 has been extinguished. All the crew are safe. The vessel has been taken in tow by salvage tug Matsas Star and is being towed to Piraeus anchorage, where ETA 1100 hrs, tomorrow.

Piraeus, Nov 3 -- C.c. Beacon 3, Gioia to Mersin, laden voyage, became immobilised and drifting in lat 35 57N, long 26 08E, due to fire in the engine-room. Our salvage tug Matsus Star departed immediately from its salvage station at Lavrion to render assistance and upon arrival established towline connection. It towed casualty to Piraeus Roads where convoy arrived at 1500, local time, Oct 29. -- Loucas G. Matsas Salvage and Towage.

BUNGA PELANGI (Malaysia)

London, Nov 3 -- A press report, dated today, states: Eight hundred pink hippopotami, toy dogs and red legged turkeys have been washed up along the Sussex coast. Solent Coastguard was contacted by members of the public who spotted the toys - wrapped in plastic bags - at Selsey Bay and west Wittering. The cuddly toys are lost cargo from the c.c. Bunga Pelangi (53521 gt, built 1992) which shed four containers in rough seas on its way from Amsterdam to Southampton. A spokesman said: "It's been really surreal dealing with calls from people who have seen these hippos. "However there is a serious message because these toys are not their property and they must report finding them so we can get the receiver of the wreck involved and arrange for them to be recovered from

the finder." He added that many more of the items are expected to be washed up in the coming days. (Note -- Bunga Pelangi sailed Amsterdam Oct 30, arrived Southampton Oct 31 and sailed Nov 2.)

CAPTAIN DIAMANTIS (Greece)

See "Brittany, France" under "Pollution."

CAST PROSPERITY (Germany)

Montreal, Oct 31 -- C.c. Cast Prosperity: The permanent repairs were completed Oct 30 and it shifted to the loading berth in Montreal late the same day. Vessel now will resume its container liner service between Montreal and Europe. -- Lloyd's Agents.

CEDAR ISLAND (U.S.A.)

London, Nov 1 -- A Coast Guard Charleston, SC, press release, dated Oct 28, states: Coast Guard personnel rescued six people after their commercial yacht Cedar Island (150 gt, built 1993) began taking on water approximately 47-miles east off Winyah Bay, SC, at about 1515 today. Cedar Island, from Clinton, Ct, was headed to Fort Lauderdale, when the ship's propellers became caught on an unknown object. The crew of Cedar Island lost the ability to steer and began rapidly taking on water in the 10-foot seas. The crew called rescue coordinators at Sector Charleston's operation centre for help. Rescue coordinators diverted cutter Legare that was transiting in the area to assist the crew. A rescue and repair team from Legare was sent onboard Cedar Island to begin de-watering the vessel. Meanwhile, the rescue coordinators sent a helicopter from Coast Guard Air Facility Charleston and a helicopter from Air Station Savannah, Ga., to hoist the people from the yacht to safety onboard Legare. Rescue coordinators have sent cutter Yellowfin to relieve Legare, which was headed south for a Caribbean Sea patrol.

The yacht broke free of its obstruction at approximately 1615 hrs. Yellowfin should be there at about 1730 hrs. and will attempt to tow Cedar Island to safe waters.

London, Nov 1 -- Following received from Coast Guard Miami, timed 1820, UTC: Yacht Cedar Island was towed to Charleston, SC, where it is now under repair.

CHEM LIBRA (Marshall Islands)

Ponta Delgada, Oct 28 -- Acid tanker Chem Libra, with main engine damage, towed by tug Sao Miguel, arrived Ponta Delgada on Oct 27 and berthed safely alongside at the inner quay, in order to carry out repairs to the reported damaged turbo-charger. -- Lloyd's Agents.

CHENG HO (Singapore)

Singapore, Oct 31 -- Ferry Cheng Ho was a total wreck and was lifted and dumped after removal around the end September and the beginning of October this year. -- Lloyd's Agents.

CUMBRAE (U.K.)

London, Oct 28 -- Following received from Coastguard Humber MRSC, timed 0753, UTC: At 0318, UTC, tug Cumbrae (159 gt, built 1961), MSRS2, reported in lat 55 17.9N, long 01 24.36W, taking water, and requested assistance. Vessel had six persons on board. RAF helicopter R131 from Boulmer and Amble RNLI all-weather lifeboat tasked to proceed to the scene. Once the Amble lifeboat arrived on scene, the situation was re-assessed. R131 was released. Amble lifeboat escorted Cumbrae to the River Tyne, where the escort was passed over to the Tynemouth ALB. Cumbrae was safe on moorings in the River Tyne at 0648, UTC.

DORIA (Germany)

London, Nov 1 -- A press report, dated Oct 31, states: Ocean Africa Container Lines c.c. Doria (10811 gt, built 1987) grounded off Angola but was able to return safely to Durban with cargo intact and under its own "steam," where the ship entered the Eldock floating dock today. The work on assessing the damage to the vessel's hull and effecting repairs is expected to take at least a month.

London, Nov 1 -- A press report, dated today, states: A massive clean-up operation is under way in the Durban harbour after damaged c.c. Doria spilled about 80 tonnes of fuel oil at a repair dock. The National Ports Authority (NPA) has allayed fears of a threat of environmental pollution. By late this afternoon, the leak was stopped and the spill contained. Doria arrived in Durban's floating repair dock for repairs yesterday. It was apparently damaged when it ran aground off the coast of Angola, but was still able to sail past the Cape Coast for repairs in Durban. The extent of the damage was not known at the time. The spill happened when the floating dock was in the process of being raised. The oil is believed to have leaked from a ruptured fuel tank. The shipping repair company and the authorities said all precautions to avoid possible spillage were taken. The port authorities say four spillage contractors have been working round the clock. The clean-up operation is likely to last about three days. The South African Maritime Safety Authority has carried out an inspection and is keeping a close watch to make sure that environmental damage is limited.

London, Nov 2 -- A press report, dated Nov 1, states: A quantity of bunker fuel spilled into Durban harbour last night during docking operations for c.c. Doria. Because a boom was in place most of the spillage was fortunately contained. A port spokesperson said the accident occurred as the Eldock, floating dock, was in the process of being raised with Doria on board. It is common practice for the NPA Pollution department to place a boom in position in case of spillage, which in this event proved to be both necessary and fortuitous.

Doria has gone onto the dock for repairs to hull damage sustained when the Ocean Africa Container Lines vessel grounded in Angola recently. According to the NPA the spillage has been contained within the floating dock area and cleaning up operations are in progress with teams from the NPA, Drizit and Metro Services on hand.

Durban, Nov 3 -- C.c. Doria has sustained extensive bottom damage, and repairs are expected to take around 60 days. The oil spilled from the vessel has been cleaned up. -- Lloyd's Agents.

EIDER (Hong Kong)

London, Nov 2 -- A press report, dated Nov 1, states: A serious ecological disaster took place at dawn yesterday near Antofagasta, when bulk Eider (22792 gt, built 2004), with a Philippine crew, ran aground, generating the evacuation to the sea of a still indeterminate amount of petroleum that covered nearly a kilometre. The ship, that was retained by the authorities, carried out this emergency at dawn yesterday, for reasons to be determined by a summary investigation by the naval administrations, of the regional government of Antofagasta. For this reason, the vessel that originated the serious environmental emergency had to be towed out to sea, in front of the bay of Antofagasta, surrounded by insulating material. According to the specialists, this situation generates serious damage to the coastal sector of Antofagasta. (Note -- Eider had sailed Antofagasta 0400, Oct 31.)

London, Nov 2 -- A press report, dated today, states: Soldiers and sailors made an effort yesterday to contain a petroleum spill that has already contaminated more than three kilometres of sea and some beaches of Antofagasta, causing the death of birds, turtles and fish. The spill was caused by bulk Eider after grounding at dawn on Monday, which broke one of its fuel tanks. The navy and the army worked arduously to restrain the contamination that continued extending by the coast of Antofagasta.

Valparaiso, Nov 2 -- Bulk Eider ran aground Monday, Oct 31, near Antofagasta, spilling a still-undetermined quantity of fuel into the Pacific Ocean. As per information gathered from the authorities, the bottom cracked and six oil tanks leaked. Local radio "Digital" reported that the spill from the vessel was more than one kilometre long. The Chilean navy, meanwhile, said investigations were under way into how the vessel came to be stuck in the pre-dawn hours, when the crew signalled that they had an emergency situation. Authorities sent tugs to move Eider away from the coast, but the vessel had already begun leaking fuel, leaving a foul-smelling black sludge that coastal residents told Digital had already resulted in the death of marine life and was inducing severe headaches and dizziness among the

inhabitants. The vessel was in Chile to pick up a load of copper for delivery to Hong Kong. By late Monday, the spill from Eider was approaching the cove used as a base by Antofagasta's fishermen. Environmentalists from the university went to the spot in hopes of rescuing some turtles known to inhabit the inlet. The ecological disaster forced the authorities to decree "alerts early", with prohibition to bathe in beaches and to extract marine products. Navy recognized today that the hydrocarbon spill is outside control, although effective of the institution and the Army, of the regions of Tarapacá and Antofagasta, they work to mitigate and to contain the effects of the ecological disaster. In addition to the sanitary problems to the population that live in the zone, the oil slick already has caused the death of fish, turtles, lapas and species of seafood and crustaceans. ' ' It is already possible to be seen floating in the water some corpses of birds, in addition to numerous pelicans, pingüinos, gulls, cormoranes and piqueros with its pens stained with petroleum," affirmed to Carlos War, of the University of Antofagasta. In agreement with the experts of the Sernapesca, the fuel could arrive at five metres depth, causing serious effects on the marine life. The State Defence Council (CDE), today initiated the presentation of all the antecedents to ask for an indemnification by the caused damages. The vessel is under preliminary repairing of the damaged plating to avoid further oil leakage for securing it and then to be moved to "Fry (?dry) docking yard" for final repairs. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents.

London, Nov 3 -- A press report, dated today, states: Chilean legislators have called upon the government to declare the coast in the northern city of Antofagasta a catastrophe area following the oil spill by bulk Eider, which ran aground on Monday (Oct 31), and apparently seems out of control. "The oil spill in Antofagasta has become an ecological disaster and people are fearful of the environmental impact and consequences for the coastal fishing industry," said Senator Carmen Frei. So far there has been no official report as to the extent and volume of the spill, but the Antofagasta press reported that a five-kilometre-long trail along the coast which has reached some beaches famous for surfing can be easily seen. Senator Frei urged immediate aid for local coastal fishermen and resources to help begin clearing beaches and coves. The area is also rich in marine fauna including sea lions, sea gulls, pelicans, cormorants and turtles. When news of the accident broke, authorities sent tugs to pull the vessel away from the rocks, but the vessel had already begun leaking heavy fuel, leaving a foul-smelling black sludge, local residents reported. The vessel was in Chile to pick up a load of copper for delivery to Hong Kong. Volunteers from the Antofagasta University Environment and Biology Department managed to rescue

thirteen rare green turtles but there is concern about other marine birds which remain in the fuel-covered waters. Legal action has begun against the vessel's owners and master.

EMILY (North Korea)

See "Cyprus" under "Port State Control".

ERMINA (Greece)

Piraeus, Nov 2 -- General cargo Ermina sailed Preveza Oct 27 for Kavala. No repairs were reported. -- Lloyd's Agents.

FOSTRAUM (NIS)

Corunna, Nov 2 -- Chem.tank Fostrum (2470 gt, built 1991), Aveiro for Delfzijl, arrived La Corunna to go under minor repairs (gear box) alongside commercial pier, Oct 31. ETD Nov 11. -- Lloyd's Agents.

FREY (Malta)

Tallinn, Nov 3 -- General cargo Frey is currently undergoing repairs at Tallinn Shipyard and is expected to sail at the end of November. -- Lloyd's Agents.

GALINA (Cambodia)

Falmouth, Nov 3 -- General cargo Galina, Riga for Hadeka in ballast, was escorted into Falmouth today by tug/supply Anglian Princess following engine problems. The vessel berthed at Duchy Wharf at 0950 hrs. -- Lloyd's Agents.

GALINA (Georgia)

London, Nov 2 -- Following received from Coastguard Falmouth MRCC, timed 2344, UTC: General cargo Galina (257 gt, built 1976), bound Falmouth, in ballast, has reported it is not under command and drifting, unlit, without power, in lat 50 08N, long 04 44W. Master estimates vessel is drifting at one knot. Weather on scene: winds southerly, gale force. Vessel has 30 metres of anchor chain and is currently in seas with a depth of 60 metres. Coastguard has tasked tug/supply Anglian Princess, which will arrive on scene in approximately three hours. Galina has a crew of eight onboard.

London, Nov 3 -- Following received from Coastguard Falmouth MRCC, timed 0200, UTC: Falmouth lifeboat and Fowey lifeboat are alongside general cargo Galina. Falmouth lifeboat established a tow with the vessel at 0150, UTC. Vessels are currently 2.55 nautical miles off Dodman Point. Tug/supply Anglian Princess is due on scene at 0230, UTC.

London, Nov 3 -- Following received from Coastguard Falmouth MRCC, timed 0441, UTC: Tug/supply Anglian Princess commenced tow of general cargo Galina, which has engine and electrical failure, at 0347, UTC. Tow parted, then reconnected at 0407, UTC. Tug and tow now proceeding to Falmouth, with Falmouth lifeboat in company. Fowey lifeboat has been stood down and is returning to station. Galina was on passage from Riga to Falmouth at the time of breakdown.

GENMAR TRUST (Liberia)

Vigo, Nov 2 -- Bulk/oil GenMar Trust put into Vigo at 1400, Oct 31 in tow of salvage tug Fotiy Krylov which passed on tow at entrance of Vigo Bay to tugs Ibaizabal III, Pau Da Luz and Alejandro Jose. Now awaiting repairs at anchor in Vigo Bay which expected to take seven to fifteen days. -- Lloyd's Agents.

GLORIA (Estonia)

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

GULLHOLM (Panama)

London, Nov 3 -- General cargo Gullholm arrived Maaloy Oct 18 and sailed the same day.

HEATHER SPRIG (U.K.)

London, Oct 28 -- Following received from Aberdeen MRSC, timed 0837, UTC: At 1343, UTC, Oct 27, MRSC intercepted a message from fishing Heather Sprig (136 gt, built 1989) to fishing Tranquility, requesting a tow. Heather Sprig had broken-down in lat 58 02.02N, long 00 53.05W, 55 miles north-east of Fraserburgh and had four persons on board. MRCC contacted Heather Sprig and monitored the situation. Tranquility towed the Heather Sprig, into Fraserburgh Harbour, the vessels arriving safely at 0045, UTC, today. SAR Ops terminated at that time.

HEGEMONICA (Norway)

Narvik, Nov 1 -- Fishing Hegemonica sank in 43 metres of water. A decision has been made not to undertake any salvage operations, as the vessel does not represent any danger to shipping traffic or fishing activities. A Maritime Declaration was made at Alta Courthouse on Oct 28. -- Lloyd's Agents.

HOHEBANK (U.K.)

Malmo, Oct 24 -- General cargo Hohebank sailed Falkenberg Oct 22. -- Lloyd's Agents.

HUCKLEBERRY FINN (Sweden)

Helsingborg, Oct 31 -- Passenger ro/ro Huckleberry Finn is on Trelleborg-Rostock service, not Trelleborg-Travemunde service as we previously advised. -- Damco Survey AB.

Helsingborg, Nov 3 -- Passenger ro/ro Huckleberry Finn commenced repairs Oct 31 and is scheduled for completion Nov 8. -- Damco Survey AB.

IERAPETRA L. (Greece)

Piraeus, Nov 2 -- Ro/ro Ierapetra L. is currently under repair at Piraeus, ETC unknown. -- Lloyd's Agents.

ILONA-M (Germany)

London, Oct 28 -- Salvors BTS succeeded overnight in cutting the aft part of Ilona-M in two. The cargo section of the hull was then placed on a pontoon. This morning they made a start to lift the last part of the wreck, the aft ship with the engine-room. This will be the most difficult part of the salvage, because the weight has

increased with the amount of silt and sand in the wreckage. Today at even tide they will try to lift the last part of the vessel from the river bed.

ISIS V (platform)

London, Nov 2 -- Following Navigation Warning issued at 1448, UTC, Nov 1: Rig Isis V adrift in vicinity of lat 34 34.1N, long 12 31.8E.

IVS KWELA (Panama)

London, Oct 31 -- Bulk IVS Kwela (19872 gt, built 2002) struck the dock side and indented its bulbous bow at Gros Cacouna, Quebec, at 1240, EDST, Oct 27. (Note -- IVS Kwela arrived Gros Cacouna Oct 26 from Recife.)

JANGHO YOUNG (South Korea)

Yokohama, Oct 28 -- General cargo Jangho Young departed Shikama on Oct 19, bound for Masan. No information on the breakdown is available. -- Lloyd's Agents.

JIN XI (China)

London, Nov 3 -- Bulk Jin Xi arrived Port Moresby Oct 6.

JOSEPH AND CLARA SMALLWOOD (Canada)

London, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated today, states: The Transportation Safety Board of Canada says Marine Atlantic crews failed to follow safety procedures when a fire broke out on passenger ro/ro Joseph and Clara Smallwood in 2003. A report released today says ferry passengers were exposed to potential danger when they were evacuated from the vessel. The report concludes that crew members did not have proper equipment, and did not have adequate training to deal with the emergency. "The alarm was not sounded in passenger areas, the fire doors were not closed using the central control, passengers and crew were not accounted for, and passengers were not advised or updated regarding the situation," the report concludes. The fire started on May 12, 2003, on a tractor-trailer parked on Deck One of the ferry. The cause of the fire has not been determined. The vessel was close to Port aux Basques when it broke out. No one was seriously injured during the incident. One crew member was treated for minor smoke inhalation, while another suffered back strain. Both were treated and released at hospital. Two passengers were examined on the scene by paramedics and were released.

KAPITONAS MARCINKUS (Lithuania)

London, Nov 2 -- Following received from Coast Guard Cleveland, timed 1440, UTC: Bulk Kapitonas Marcinkus (9965 gt, built 1977), outbound from St Lawrence Seaway, cargo chrome ore, had scavenger fire in No 2 cylinder between Alexabdria Bay and Messina, on the Canadian side of the River St. Lawrence, at 1240, UTC. Position is very approximately lat 44 40N, long 75 30W.

London, Nov 2 -- Following received from Coast Guard Portsmouth (Va), timed 1450, UTC: Bulk Kapitonas Marcinkus is on voyage from Brockville, Ont. It has now anchored in the vicinity and is not blocking the Seaway as had earlier been feared.

Troy, Michigan, Nov 2 -- Situation at 0900 today: It has been reported that bulk Kapitonas Marcinkus had a fire on board while down bound in the Brockville Narrows. Local Coast Guard confirmed the incident. They stated the fire was in the engine-room. Update at 2100 today: Kapitonas Marcinkus was reported to be moving down bound in the Seaway. The fire must have been brought under control and the vessel then passed an inspection. -- Great Lakes & Seaway Shipping.

KIPEROUSA (Malta)

London, Oct 31 -- A SvitzerWijsmuller Salvage BV report, dated Oct 30, states: Bulk Kiperousa which grounded off the South African coast early June, has finally surrendered to the forces of the sea. Previously other salvors had spent almost two months attempting to refloat the vessel, which failed, after which the balance of the deck cargo was discharged by the same salvors using helicopters. Once that was finished the majority of the cargo of logs was still remaining in the holds of the heavily grounded and by then totally breached vessel. SvitzerWijsmuller Salvage was thereupon contracted by the underwriters to discharge to remaining cargo as per the instructions/permissions of the South African authorities. The discharge plan approved and chosen by the ship-owners/underwriters and prepared by the salvors, was based on using tug-barge combinations to move the huge logs out after they had been discharged from the stricken vessel's holds using her own gear. As a contingency actions were set in motion in anticipation of the cranes at a certain stage becoming in-operable due to the constant forces of the winter weather progressively breaking up the vessel. During the last few days of August, a severe winter storm had moved the vessel 160 metres further ashore and changed its heading by some 120 degrees to starboard. The vessel was now broken into four separate sections, still partially connected and lying more or less in line with each other. Log recovery operations continued until another fierce winter storm smashed open the portside side-shell sections of holds 1 and 2. Hold 1 and part of hold 2 at that stage had already been emptied of the logs, as such only the remaining logs in hold 2 were released. These were guided ashore by the salvors, if not washed ashore, where these were recovered by the SvitzerWijsmuller Salvage beach recovery teams. At that stage, the first few days of October, it was clear that the remaining sections of the casualty would not hold out much longer and plans were made in

combination with the owners and authorities to allow for a controlled release of the remaining cargo during favourable weather conditions to take the logs onto the beaches in the vicinity, rather than allow an uncontrolled release of the logs at the wrong moment in time, which may cause the logs to enter into the South Flowing current resulting in the logs being washed along the 600 nautical miles of coastline to Cape Agulhas. This would be executed by using explosive charges to break open the remaining two holds while prior to that the accommodation would be environmentally secured by having it burned clean. In the interim the recovery of logs from the cargo holds would continue when possible. On Oct 19 the accommodation subsequently was set alight to burn off all possible pollutants. The structural condition of the remaining vessel at that stage did not allow any cargo recovery operations to continue. Plans were set in motion, with a view to the forecasted weather conditions, to have a controlled release of the remaining cargo in No 3 and 4 holds by using explosive charges the following few days; the environmental conditions were right. Salvors then continually monitored the burning of the accommodation and the casualty during the approach of the next storm. Salvors returned to the accommodation the day after the burn to assess the results with all possible pollutants having been completely incinerated. The passage of this next storm on Oct 20 had in a natural way the effect the salvors wanted to achieve in the next few days using explosives; causing the release of the cargo by completely destroying the remaining structural integrity of the casualty, with the remaining sections collapsing and just the bow and stern section remaining visible. The release of the remaining entrapped logs were monitored by helicopters to ensure that the predicted path was maintained. Upon this collapse of the casualty actually first-hand being witnessed by the salvors from the helicopter, the authorities were informed immediately who in turn issued navigational warnings and closed the beaches to bathers. The SvitzerWijsmuller shore teams were further notified to be ready to recover the logs being washed up whilst zodiacs & ski-boats guided floating logs into the surf to have them washed up ashore. Operations to recover the logs continues and SvitzerWijsmuller salvors continue to monitor the casualty and, as per the requirement of the underwriters and the South African authorities, take any necessary action to further secure the remains of the vessel and possible cargo still entrapped within it.

KOREX INCHEON (South Korea)

London, Nov 3 -- A press report, dated today, states: General cargo Korex Incheon (2658 gt, built 1995), Mishima Kawano, Ehime Prefecture

for Busan, was in collision with ferry Panstar Dream (9690 gt, built 1997), Osaka for Busan, with six Japanese and 296 South Korean passengers, early today in the Kammon Strait between Japan's Honshu and Kyushu islands, Japan Coast Guard officials said. No one was injured in the collision, which occurred about 700 metres east of the Kammon suspension bridge linking Shimonoseki, Yamaguchi Prefecture, and Kitakyushu, Fukuoka Prefecture. No oil leaks were found, they said. According to the officials, the Korex Incheon, with 12 crew members on board, was in contact with the port side of the Panstar Dream around 0500 hrs. The collision caused a one-metre-long hole in the ferry but neither vessel is in danger of sinking. The weather was fair at the time, according to the Japanese officials.

LAURA ANN (U.K.)

London, Oct 27 -- C.c. Laura Ann was reported arriving at Klaipeda at 1010 hrs, Oct 25 and sailing on Oct 26.

LEGACY (U.S.A.)

See Active.

LINDSAY (South Africa)

See Ouro do Brasil.

LODBROK (Sweden)

Gothenburg, Nov 1 -- Crane barge Lodbrok is awaiting tenders for repair. The Road Company, Vaegverket inform yesterday that the repair of the road, Essingeleden, will take some months since the second lane from side where hit is damaged as well and also needs repair. There will be severe traffic jams and problems the entire winter period -- Westax Marine Services BV.

MAERSK ENSENADA (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Oct 31 -- Understand c.c. Maersk Ensenada is still aground with salvors on scene. (See issue of Oct 27.)

Havana, Nov 3 -- C.c. Maersk Ensenada: We have contacted the salvors, Antillana de Salvamento, who have informed us that the vessel has not yet been refloated due unfavourable weather conditions. Vessel is grounded in lat 23 00 05N, long 83 03 09W, about 200 meters from the shore. -- Lloyd's Agents.

MAMRY II (Panama)

Falmouth, Nov 2 -- The anchor lost from bulk Mamry II Oct 15 was recovered Nov 1 by tug/supply Anglian Princess and landed ashore at Falmouth Docks. -- Lloyd's Agents.

MAR CARIBE (Marshall Islands)

See "Hurricane "Wilma"" under "Weather & Navigation".

MARIANELA (Panama)

London, Oct 26 -- Reported that bulk Marianela arrived at Kingston, Jamaica on Oct 9. It sailed on Oct 10, for Port-au-Prince, where it arrived on Oct 11.

MAWASHI AL-GASSEEM (Kuwait)

Manila, Oct 31 -- After eight months of being stranded in Australia, the 69-man mostly-Filipino crew of livestock Mawashi Al-Gasseem have won their battle for back pay and repatriation amounting to US\$700,000, the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) reported. The vessel, owned and operated by Kuwaiti Saudi Livestock, was arrested at Adelaide in March, for failure to pay debts amounting to US\$600,000 to bunker supplier, OW Bunker. On Aug 18, the crew together with OW Bunker took their case to an Australian federal court. In early October, the court ruled that the crew be paid all outstanding wages and repatriations costs. Thirty-five of the crew were repatriated on 12 October at the expense of OW Bunker. The company will recoup the costs following the sale of the vessel. The remaining crew will stay on board until the vessel is officially transferred to its new owner at the end of October. It is expected that back wages will be paid in late November or early December. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

MYSTIC (Netherlands Antilles)

London, Oct 31 -- Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: Ref Mystic: Holds No.1 and No.2 were on fire, hold No.3 threatened too,

NIAGARA FALLS (U.S.A.)

London, Nov 3 -- A press report, dated today, states: After spending two days grounded off the coast of Palau, general cargo Niagara Falls was freed and arrived in Guam for inspection on Tuesday (Nov 1). The vessel ran aground Oct 27 while leaving Malakal Harbor in Palau. The cause of the mishap remains unknown and will be investigated while the vessel is in Guam, according to a US 7th Fleet news release. No injuries or leakage resulted from the grounding, the release said. Starting Nov 1, a team of US Navy divers will assess possible damage done to coral reef. Freeing the vessel took two days. Cargo and fuel was moved to reduce weight in the vessel's forward area. Then, during high tide on Saturday afternoon, the vessel was freed with the help of a local tug.

NIL DERYA (Turkey)

Messina, Nov 2 -- Understand general cargo Nil Derya was released by Customs on Oct 27 and will be broken up locally. -- Lloyd's Agents.

NORTHERN LINN (U.S.A.)

London, Oct 31 -- Following received from Coast Guard Boston, timed 1520, UTC: Fishing Northern Linn (134 gt, built 1985), five persons on board, was reported drifting, dead in the water, in lat 40 43N, long 67 04W, at 0920, UTC, today. Vessel is expected to be taken in tow around 1600, UTC.

London, Oct 31 -- Following received from Coast Guard Boston, timed 2030, UTC: Fishing Northern Linn is now under tow of Coast Guard vessel Tahoma which is expected to pass the

tow over to Coast Guard vessel Tybee at approximately 2300, UTC. Northern Linn will then be towed towards Woods Hole area where it will likely be passed to commercial tug Jaguar.

London, Nov 2 -- Following received from Coast Guard Boston, timed 1415, UTC: Fishing Northern Linn was taken in tow by Coast Guard vessel Tahoma following its initial breakdown and was then passed to tug Tybee, before stating that it had carried out temporary repairs which had fixed the problem. Vessel continued its passage under own power but then broke down in lat 40 01N, long 71 10W, at 0430, local time, today. Vessel is trying to fix problem itself but tug assistance may be required.

London, Nov 3 -- Following received from Coast Guard Boston, timed 1325, UTC: Fishing Northern Linn was safely towed into New London, Connecticut, around 0100, local time, today.

OURO DO BRASIL (Liberia)

London, Nov 2 -- A press report, dated today, states: The skipper of trawler Lindsay had gone to bed and there was no senior officer on watch when the fishing vessel and fruit juice tanker Ouro do Brasil collided off Port Elizabeth, killing 14 fishermen, a Court of Marine Inquiry heard yesterday. The long-awaited inquiry into the disaster held its first sitting at the Cape Milner Hotel in Cape Town yesterday. The inquiry is probing who was responsible for the collision. It is expected to focus on the vessel's positions and the extent to which the vessels had kept a proper lookout. Lindsay was hit just before midnight on May 8 by Ouro do Brasil while anchored nine miles off the coast near Sardinia Bay. Of the entire crew of Lindsay, only the skipper, Paul Landers of Mossel Bay, and one crewman, John Ehlers, of Cape Town, survived. In a statement by Ehlers read to the inquiry, the spare hand claimed he had been on deck with another junior crew member, Royden Koeries, to keep watch when they saw a red light heading towards them on the port side of their vessel. Ehlers claimed the skipper had gone to bed below deck and he and Koeries, who was in charge of watching for other vessels, had been left upstairs alone, without the supervision of a senior officer. "I told the deck-hand 'Oppas, be careful, the boat is approaching fast' but he said, 'Don't worry, it will pass us'. The next thing I knew, there was an impact, I was thrown off and rescued," Ehlers's evidence read. When Koeries realised they were in danger of being hit, he switched off the autopilot and unsuccessfully tried to alter course, Ehlers testified. The vessel capsized within 20 seconds of the collision and sank soon afterwards, Andrew Pike, prosecuting examiner for the transport department, told the inquiry. Ouro do Brasil was only slightly damaged and was detained at Port Elizabeth harbour under the Maritime Safety

Act. The inquiry -- chaired by retired magistrate Dickson Ncapayi, with two assessors -- heard the testimony of the two Lindsay survivors, the master of Ouro do Brasil and his second mate. Testimony was gathered in interviews and read at the meeting by Captain Nigel Campbell, chief investigator of the SA Maritime Safety Authority in Port Elizabeth. Campbell took statements from the tanker's master, the officer in charge of the watch and the lookouts of both vessels a day after the accident. The commission of inquiry was set up by the transport department in accordance with the marine accidents clause of the Merchant Shipping Act, said Andrew Mashangane, director of Maritime Bilateral Safety and Security. Proceedings will continue until Friday (Nov 4), and may continue next week, depending on when cross-examination by all parties is completed. Cross-examination would start within the next day or two, said Mashangane. According to Campbell, both Lindsay survivors had trouble dealing with the event after it happened and struggled to provide statements during the early stages of the investigation. They have therefore been subpoenaed to give evidence this week.

PACIFIC (Malta)

Genoa, Oct 31 -- Ro/ro Pacific arrived La Spezia Oct 29. -- Lloyd's Agents.

PANAGIA (Malta)

See "Somalia" under "Piracy".

PANSTAR DREAM (South Korea)

See Korex Incheon.

PATRICIA S

See "Hurricane 'Wilma' " under "Weather & Navigation."

PHILIPP ESSBERGER (Madeira)

London, Oct 27 -- At about 0930 hrs, today, when the incoming chemical/oil carrier Philipp Essberger, was off buoy SG 5 in the Oostgat near Westduin, it experienced an engine black-out and ran aground. The tugs Barracuda and Multratug 9 were soon in attendance and successfully refloated the tanker. The vessel was then towed to Flushing Anchorage where the river police held an investigation. Currently, the tanker is still anchored at Flushing Roads.

London, Oct 28 -- Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: Salvors from Multraship Salvage BV and URS Salvage & Maritime Contracting NV were involved in the salvage of chemical/oil carrier Philipp Essberger in the morning of Oct 27 on the Westerschelde. The vessel had a load of aethylen and soda products and came from Madeira. It went aground, after sustaining machinery problems, on a sandbar off Vlissingen at 0930, local time. Attempts to get free with own power had failed as the strong current pushed the ship back onto the sandbar. Tugs Barracuda and Braakman succeeded in getting the vessel free at 1015. Other tugs were on standby positions. Philipp Essberger was anchored on Vlissingen

roads afterwards and inspected by divers. Actually it is not yet known when the ship will proceed to its destination in the Braakmanhaven in Terneuzen.

PINEGLEN (Canada)

London, Oct 28 -- Bulk Pineglen was reported arriving at Quebec on/about Oct 25 and sailing on/about Oct 27, bound for Toledo(USA).

POCHARD (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Nov 1 -- Bulk Pochard arrived Altamira Oct 26 and sailed Oct 28.

PUERTO DE ALTAMIRA (Panama)

London, Oct 31 -- A SvitzerWijsmuller Salvage BV report, dated Oct 24, states: Cutter suction hopper dredger Puerto de Altamira was re-delivered back to its owners today. The vessel will be drydocked shortly for temporary repairs while up to that time a skeleton team of SvitzerWijsmuller Salvage and a selection of the salvage gear will remain in use to maintain control over the condition of the casualty. The remaining team and equipment will be demobilised back to their respective bases.

RAINBOW WARRIOR (Netherlands)

London, Nov 1 -- A press report, dated today, states: Environmental group Greenpeace has been fined almost £4,000 for damaging a coral reef at a World Heritage site in the Philippines. Their flagship yacht Rainbow Warrior (555 gt, built 1957) ran aground at Tubbataha Reef Marine Park, in the Sula Sea, 650km south-east of Manila. Park officials said almost 100 sqm of reef had been damaged. Greenpeace agreed to pay the fine, but blamed the accident on outdated maps provided by the Philippines government. "The chart indicated we were a mile and a half" from the coral reef when the vessel ran around, regional Greenpeace official Red Constantino told AFP news agency. "This accident could have been avoided if the chart was accurate," he said, adding, however, that Greenpeace felt "responsible" for the damage. The accident happened while the Rainbow Warrior was on a four-month tour of the Asia-Pacific region to promote environmentally-friendly energy sources. Greenpeace divers were at the Tubbataha park, off the coast of Palawan island, to inspect the effect of global warming on the coral reef. The vessel escaped serious damage and was towed into deeper water by its own rubber boats. Tubbataha park manager, Angelique Songco, praised the work Greenpeace was doing to protect the environment. "We also appreciate the immediate action they took to get the full assessment of the damage," she said.

RENUAR (Panama)

London, Oct 27 -- Bulk Renuar (38520 gt, built 1993) experienced main boiler problems and had to drop

anchor off Comeau Bay, Quebec, in lat 49 13.55N, long 68 05.W at 2355, local time, Oct 25. (Note -- Renuar sailed Le Havre Oct 10 for Comeau Bay.)

RODINA (Bulgaria)

London, Oct 28 -- Following received from Aarhus MRCC, timed 0944, UTC: Bulk Rodina (30596 gt, built 1978) grounded in Aarhus Bay Oct 25. The vessel refloated the same day and is now in port at Aarhus. No damage is reported, but the vessel will be inspected by divers.

Aarhus, Oct 28 -- Bulk Rodina grounded 14 nautical miles off Aarhus, at 1520, local time, Oct 24. Apparently the bottom is torn open by approximately 110x14 metres. The vessel is presently lying moored at Berth No.316 at the port of Aarhus undergoing diver examination, while being discharged. -- Lloyd's Agents.

ROYAL QUARRY (U.S.A.)

Portland, Or, Oct 31 -- According to a representative of Astoria Marine Shipyard, Astoria, fishing Royal Quarry was a Constructive Total Loss and has subsequently been scrapped. - - Lloyd's Agents.

RT.HON.PAUL J.MARTIN (Canada)

Montreal, Oct 28 -- Bulk Rt.Hon.Paul J.Martin is at the shipyard, Verreault, in Les Mechins, undergoing repairs. It is expected to be there for several weeks as the bow damage was extensive. This yard is 300km down river from Quebec city. -- Lloyd's Agents.

SAMHO BROTHER (South Korea)

London, Nov 1 -- A press report, dated Oct 31, states: The military has decided to withdraw temporarily from a mission to sink capsized chemical/oil carrier Samho Brother carrying a cargo of toxic benzene off Hsinchu, northern Taiwan after conducting inter-ministry consultations, Vice Minister of National Defense Huo Shou-yeh said today. The Environmental Protection Administration (EPA) is currently working to come up with a more feasible plan to handle the capsized ship and its toxic cargo, Huo said at the Legislative Yuan. The military will rejoin the EPA in the mission if requested to in the future and it is believed that military can successfully destroy the highly flammable benzene by setting it alight, Huo said. Samho Brother capsized Oct. 10 after a collision. After the mishap, the EPA decided that the benzene onboard the ship would have to be burnt to prevent it from polluting the adjacent sea area off Taiwan's northwest coast. Discounting media reports that the combat capability of the Republic of China Air Force and Army Aviation Force came under question after two F-16s jet fighters and one Army helicopter were sent to destroy the capsized ship last week but failed to accomplish their missions, Huo said that the four laser-guided missiles fired by the F-16s did hit the target, at

both the ship's bow and stern. The missiles failed, however, to ignite the benzene because it was carried in the hold under the deck, which the missiles did not hit, Huo said. Huo said that, even if the missiles had hit the cargo hold, the benzene might not have exploded because there might not have been enough benzene vapor in the hold to facilitate an explosion.

SEA HAWK-2 (Malta)

London, Oct 28 -- Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 1016, UTC: General cargo Sea Hawk-2 is still aground. Transhipment of the vessel's cargo is continuing, and a refloating attempt is planned for later today.

STAR LADY (Isle of Man)

Piraeus, Nov 2 -- Crude oil tanker Star Lady was inspected and sailed Kali limenes Oct 20. The vessel called at Piraeus Oct 24 and sailed Oct 25 for Tuzla. -- Lloyd's Agents.

STITCH HOPPER (Netherlands)

London, Nov 3 -- Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: C.c. Stitch Hopper, length 67 metres, sank in the Bruxelles-Scheldt sea canal on Oct 21. The 32 containers on board were removed and the vessel was raised Oct 30 by two floating cranes of URS and Nultra Shipping.

TALLINK AUTOEXPRESS 2 (Estonia)

Tallinn, Oct 31 -- Tallink, the owners of ferry Tallink Autoexpress 2, advised us that the ferry will continue its service until the winter holidays, ie the end of the navigational season. The owners have not yet decided where and when the repairs will be undertaken. -- Lloyd's Agents.

TINIAN EXPRESS (Panama)

Honolulu, Oct 27 -- Ferry Tinian Express ran aground on the cliff line of the Tinian Dump Coke area. As of yesterday, the vessel was still aground. The Saipan Tribune notes that (13) passengers suffered minor injuries. It was reported severe damage to its bow section, and salvage efforts were ongoing. --Lloyd's Agents.

TORGELOW (St. Vincent & Grenadines)

See "Somalia" under "Piracy".

VERA 777 (Panama)

London, Oct 31 -- Following notice to mariners broadcast at 0256, UTC, today: General cargo Vera 777 (3043 gt, built 2005), 15 persons on board, reported disabled vicinity lat 14 59N, long 112 30E at 0013, UTC, Oct 31. Crew preparing to abandon ship. Vessels in vicinity requested to keep a sharp lookout, assist if possible. Reports to MRCC Hong Kong.

London, Oct 31 -- Following received from Hong Kong MRCC, timed 2110, UTC: Vietnam RCC reported general cargo Vera 777 in distress with a typhoon in area. Sometime later it was ascertained the vessel had a steering failure. At 0126, local time, Nov 1 Vera 777 was in lat 15 39.2N, long 111

47.6E. Two merchant vessels are standing by and it was reported yesterday that a tug was proceeding and due on scene before noon, local time, today, but nothing further heard from or about the tug so far today. The vessel is too far out to provide helicopter assistance.

London, Nov 1 -- Following received from Hong Kong MRCC, timed 0408, UTC: General cargo Vera 777 is currently some five miles off the south-west corner of Paracel Island. The 15 person crew are still onboard. MRCC are trying to arrange for them to be evacuated by helicopter, but due to the distance involved, they are having to first arrange for a mid-point where the helicopter can refuel. Two merchant vessels are still on stand-by and MRCC have sent a message to both asking whether, if the weather conditions permit, either could secure a tow line to Vera 777.

London, Nov 1 -- Following received from Hong Kong MRCC, timed 1415, UTC: General cargo Vera 777 is still drifting. Crew remains on board the vessel. A tug is due on scene in two days.

London, Nov 2 -- Following received from Hong Kong MRCC, timed 0428, UTC: General cargo Vera 777 is still drifting. The crew remains on board the vessel. A tug, arranged by the owners, is due on scene at 1300 hrs, today and will tow the vessel back to Vietnam.

London, Nov 3 -- Following received from Hong Kong MRCC, timed 0356, UTC: General cargo Vera 777 was taken in tow yesterday and is being towed to the Chinese port of Sanya, where ETA 0730, UTC.

VILLA (Turkey)

London, Oct 27 -- Bulk Villa was reported sailing from San Lorenzo, Argentina, on Oct 8, bound for Iraq.

WESTWOOD MARIANNE (Bahamas)

London, Nov 2 -- Following Navigational Warning, dated today, states: Tug towing engine troubled vessel bulk/c.c. Westwood Marianne (28805 gt, built 1986) departs 0600, UTC, Nov 3, via Nagoya east passage, Kinjo wharf, estimated time of arrival 1500, JST, Nov 3. Speed about 5 knots. (Note -- Westwood Marianne sailed Osaka Nov 1 for Nagoya.)

WILSON MAR (Malta)

Poznan, Nov 2 -- Understand the shaft from general cargo Wilson Mar was sent to Germany for inspection. If it can be repaired, the vessel should be ready to sail in two to three weeks. If a new shaft is ordered, repairs will take about two months. -- Lloyd's Agents.

WITH JUNIOR (Norway)

Trondheim, Oct 28 -- Owners of general cargo With Junior (1791 gt, built 1998) have advised that the vessel touched bottom near Maaloy at about 2200 hrs, Oct 26, while in a loaded condition. Understand there was damage to the vessel's bulbous

bow. The cargo was taken ashore at Vestnes yesterday. The vessel arrived at Vegsund Yard, near Aalesund, this morning. -- Lloyd's Agents.

trondheim, Nov 1 -- General cargo With Junior completed temporary repairs at Vegsund Yard, near Aalesund, Oct 28. The vessel left the yard the same evening for Vestnes, where it reloaded the cargo previously taken ashore and is now proceeding to Tromso. Permanent repairs must be carried out within six months. -- Lloyd's Agents.

YEMEN STAR 3 (Yemen)

London, Oct 28 -- A press release, dated Oct 27, states: Non specific tanker Yemen Star 3, carrying 1000 tones of fuel ran aground near Hullaf beach, in Socotra, on Monday (Oct 24) evening, missing the entrance to the port (Jetty). An informed source from the Socotra Archipelago Conservation and Development Program (SCDP) told the Yemen Observer that no oil was believed to have leaked from the vessel. "The rescue operation began shortly before low tide to force water out of the bottom of the ship," said the source. "Local authorities have been informed of the danger of the incident." "The SCDP team carried out a full diving survey to assess damage to the ship's hull, but were unable to ascertain the status of the vessel's stability," he added. "Recommendations were made to the crew not to disturb the ship or attempt to use towing vessels from Socotra." Socotra has tugboats, but they are not sufficiently powerful to carry out the operation. "Their use might increase friction with the seabed, which could further damage the ship and possibly cause an oil leak and a potential environmental disaster," he explained. Supervised and guided by the SCDP team with the help of the army, the vessel began on Wednesday (Oct 26) discharging its oil cargo through 3-inch pipes into on-land oil reservoirs located 200 metres from the vessel. "The operation is now under control and we hope to have the entire cargo of oil completely discharged within the next week, allowing the salvage operation of the ship to start," he concluded.

YEMEN STAR 3(Yemen)

Aden, Oct 28 -- Understand that non specific tanker Yemen Star 3 first anchored offshore, reportedly too close, in the opinion of some observers. The vessel apparently struck the shore, breaching the hull at the stern. It was then beached to prevent it sinking and the cargo pumped to road tankers. During these operations it is understood that one crewmember, of Indian nationality, had an accident and lost his life. Understand that his remains are being flown home. -- Lloyd's Agents.

YICK LEE (Panama)

St. John's, Newfoundland, Oct 28 -- Bulk Yick Lee at Stephenville: Starboard side: Small fracture in shell plating in way of No.1 cargo hold.

Shell set-in in way of No.1 & 4 cargo holds and engine-room. Temporary repairs completed and now awaiting weather to continue loading, Permanent repairs to be carried out after discharge of cargo. -- Lloyd's Agents.

St. John's, NF, Oct 31 -- Bulk Yick Lee completed temporary repairs on Oct 27, returned to Lower Cove to complete loading on Oct 29, completed loading and sailed that night. Vessel now en route to Venezuelan discharge port after which it is to go for permanent repairs. -- Lloyd's Sub-agents.



SOMALIA

London, Nov 3 -- A press report, dated today, states: General cargo Torgelow that was hijacked early last month by Somali pirates has been found, its owners in Mombasa said yesterday. They spoke as hopes grew that the vessel might be released by tomorrow. On board is a crew of 10. Mr Karim Kudrati, the Motaku Shipping Agencies managing director who owns the vessel, said that it had been located at Eyle, 100 nautical miles north of Haradhere, in northern Somalia. In the same location is general cargo Panagia, a Ukrainian vessel hijacked on Oct 19. Other sources said the gunmen were demanding Sh52 million (\$700,000) as ransom to release the cargo and crew, but Mr Kudrati denied the report, saying: "We have information that all is going well and it is just a matter of time that the vessel and its crew are released. Hope has never been this high. I have personally not received any ransom demand from any quarter and neither do I have any knowledge of any demand on the same," he said. Mr Kudrati said they had been in contact with the cargo owners who were negotiating with the hijackers' mediators. However, he said that there had been no contact with the crew. He maintained that they had information that the ship and crew could be released by tomorrow. "That is the information we have and we hope that all goes well to have the crew safe back home and mark their Idd-ul- Fitr out of captivity," he said. Five of the crew-members are Muslims.



CYPRUS

Limassol, Nov 2 -- General cargo Emily (1094 gt, built 1979), which

arrived Limassol Oct 27, was detained by the Cyprus Port Authority. The vessel sailed Nov 1 for open sea. -- Lloyd's Agents.

UNITED KINGDOM

Hull, Nov 1 -- General cargo Gloria is still at the port of Tyne. Understand the vessel has been abandoned by its owners and, as money is owed to the port of Tyne, they have taken ownership. -- Lloyd's Agents.



BALTIC KRISTINA (Latvia)

See "Riga Sea Lines."

BALTIC MELODY (Liberia)

St.Petersburg, Nov 2 -- Ref Baltic Melody (10424 gt, built 1980) arrived St.Petersburg from Ecuador Oct 3, was arrested by Federal Security Service. On Oct 10 in the course of personal customs control of crew members, officers of Baltic customs found 4.266 kg of cocaine under clothes of two seamen. Seamen are under arrest. -- Lloyd's Agents.

HEYDAR ALIYEV (Malta)

Beirut, Nov 1 -- General cargo Heydar Aliyev sailed Oct 31 for Taganrog, after paying a fine equivalent to US\$10,000. -- Lloyd's Agents.

MAZNAH (Indonesia)

Manila, Oct 31 -- The 21-man crew of general cargo Maznah are still refusing to leave the port of Tawau in Sabah, Malaysia, until their backwages for the past six months are paid. The crew and their vessel have been stranded at port since Jun 5 when the Kota Kinabalu High Court ordered their vessel arrested following an order for detention obtained by Singapore-based, Gulf and Continental Bunker Fuels Co Ltd. The bunker supplier claimed that the vessel's managers, Singapore-based E-Maritime Pte Ltd, owed it US\$177,592. Master Silas Zola Makalew told the Malaysian press that, since the detention, they had been abandoned by the vessel's owner and had depended on Malaysian trade unions and the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) for survival. In September, the high court lifted its arrest order after payment was made to Gulf and Continental Bunker Fuels. Following the release, the vessel's owners, believed to be Dosowo Lloyd, based in Makassar, Indonesia, have offered to pay one month's salary home allotment to the crew. The Malaysian Trades Union Congress, which has been brokering between the two parties, said that this was conditional

on the crew agreeing to collecting a timber consignment from Sandakan to be transported to China and another cargo load from China to Indonesia after which the crew would all sign off in Indonesia. The crew, however, has refused the offer and are insisting they be immediately paid their full backwages amounting to US\$300,000 and be repatriated back to Indonesia, Capt Silas said. At present, no payment has been paid and it is likely that the case will be brought to court, he added. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

MICRONESIAN NAVIGATOR (Marshall Islands)

London, Oct 27 -- C.c. Micronesian Navigator sailed from Honolulu on Oct 23, bound for Barbers Point, where it arrived later on Oct 23.

NIL DERYA (Turkey)

See under "Marine."

RIGA SEA LINES

Riga, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated Oct 26, states: Riga Sea Lines filed for bankruptcy this week in what company officials said was the "only realistic alternative" given the mounting claims against the company. An administrator is likely to be invited in to oversee interim management, though the company's situation looked increasingly dire. Last week Rigas Pasazieru Terminals (Riga Passenger Terminal) joined the list of creditors turning to arbitration to demand its money, while employees remained on board passenger ro/ro Baltic Kristina to demand back wages. Valerijs Barjers, head of Riga Passenger Terminal, said that Riga Sea Lines' debt to the terminal amounted to 175,000 lats (249,000 euros). He said the terminal issued a warning to the shipper in the spring, and then again on Sep 20, but Riga Sea Lines managers responded by saying that their bank accounts had been arrested. The terminal now joins Parex Bank, which is trying to wrest back a \$7.7 million loan from the passenger carrier, and fuel suppliers, who are owed some 700,000 lats. Given the relative small size of the terminal's claim, Barjers is not holding out hope. "Chances are small," he said, commenting on his chance to see any money. Barjers added that the terminal expected the arbitration court to rule on the confiscation of the shipping company's property as soon as possible. Riga Sea Lines' woes began after shareholders, including Riga Free Port and the Riga City Council, refused to raise capital after a court had upheld Parex's claim. The company's accounts were seized and the Baltic Kristina was forbidden to set sail on Oct 15, leaving passengers stranded in line at the terminal. The terminal ordered the ferry to stay docked and then demanded a repayment of arrears. On Oct 19, the Riga Regional Court satisfied the

terminal's request to seize RJL movable property, including the Baltic Kristina. Riga Free Port, which holds a 19.72% stake, earlier decided not to inject fresh capital in the shipper since the Riga International Arbitration Court had ruled in favor of Parex Bank. The loan is guaranteed by Riga Port, and port spokesman Karlis Leiskalns said that the port's board had instructed management to ensure that the ferry pledged to Parex was transferred to the port. Meanwhile, about 80 crew members of the Baltic Kristina have refused to leave the vessel since they haven't been paid their salaries. Riga Sea Lines Chairman Janis Butnors said that part of the shipper's employees had not been paid salaries since mid-September when the company's accounts were arrested. He said that the staff must be paid but could not say when. The crew has even threatened to go on a hunger strike if not paid, RadioSWH reported on Oct 20. Council Chairman Vladimirs Makarovs said last week that the council had instructed the board to lay off the crew until a final decision on the company's fate was made. Ferry workers are afraid that, if they leave the vessel, they will be accused by managers of violating contractual rules and then denied their back wages. -- Lars Krogius Baltic Ltd.

London, Nov 2 -- A press report, dated today, states: Conditions on board passenger ro/ro Baltic Kristina are now worse than in a jail; there is no heat and no electricity on board, a representative from the vessel's crew told LETA. Around 70-80 people have been refusing to disembark for the last 18 days, demanding that their salaries be paid. One of the protesters said the vessel had its electricity and heat cut off yesterday evening. As a result, there was no light on board and temperatures started falling rapidly. Only evacuation lights were on during the night, and it was extremely cold. The people on the ship have also run out of food and water. Regardless of the vessel owner's requests that crew members leave the vessel, the crew and stewards refuse to do so and are even ready to stage a hunger strike, if necessary. The Riga City Council has reportedly decided to grant one-off Lat 200 payments to the crew members and other employees at the joint-stock ferry company "Rigas Juras linija." Some 200 RJL employees are expected receive the money. Riga City Council will allot the funds from its reserve fund. According to RJL chairman of the board Janis Butnors, RJL employees have not been paid some Lat 50,000 overall. RJL has filed for insolvency in Riga Regional Court.

YM XINGANG I (Germany)

London, Nov 2 -- C.c. YM Xingang I arrived Hong Kong Oct 31 and sailed Nov 1.

Manila, Nov 3 -- C.c. YM Xingang I departed from Manila on Oct 29. -- Lloyd's Agents.



PIPELINE ACCIDENTS

GUDDU BARRAGE AREA, PAKISTAN

Karachi, Nov 2 -- Pakistan Water and power Development Authority and Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Ltd said that a 20-inch diameter pipeline supplying Sui gas to the Guddu thermal power station from the Mari gas field burst last night. As a result, the gas supply to the power plant was suspended after the pipeline passing through the Guddu Barrage burst between spans 20 and 21. The disruption will cause a shortfall of 250 megawatts of electricity per day, according to the Water and Power Development Authority. "We will not suspend power supplies to any area and we will make up the deficiency from other power stations," Chaudhry Mohammad Khalid, a senior WAPDA official told private television. He said that repair work may be completed soon. A bomb disposal squad was called in from Sukkur, but police sources said the pipeline had burst due to high pressure. They said that the old pipeline had weakened and could not withstand the high gas pressure. They ruled out any possibility of sabotage. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

London, Nov 3 -- A press report, dated Nov 2, states: Gas supply to the Guddu Thermal Power Station and adjoining areas, through the main lifeline which burst yesterday night, will not be restored until this evening. However, an alternative arrangement was made to provide gas to the power station from Sui and Zam Zam gas fields. A team sent by the Sui Northern Gas Company is engaged in repairing the 16-inch diameter pipeline which burst with a loud explosion. According to company sources, the explosion was an act of sabotage, but police sources insisted that the old pipeline had burst due to high pressure of gas. Meanwhile, Guddu Barrage remained closed to traffic and a heavy contingent of police and rangers guarded its both ends.



POLLUTION

BRITTANY, FRANCE

London, Oct 28 -- A press report, dated today, states: The master and owner of bulk Captain Diamantis, which refused the orders of a French prosecutor to come into port after a pollution incident, have been ordered

to share a €300,000, \$390,000, fine. A court in Brest indicated that it was imposing a fine of Euro200,000 for the vessel's pollution offence and the remaining Euro100,000 for its refusal to come into port after the incident. Diamlemos Shipping of Piraeus was ordered to pay 90% of the fine and the master the remaining 10%. The fine was nevertheless less than the Euro500,000 bail payment imposed on the vessel when it finally surrendered itself to the French authorities in January, nearly six months after the pollution incident in which it was involved off the western tip of Brittany. Captain Diamantis was spotted by a French navy aircraft at the head of a three-kilometre slick of discoloured water in July last year. However, after attempts to negotiate with the French authorities it continued on its route to Jorf Lasfar in Morocco rather than come into port as it had been ordered. The French authorities warned that they would be tracking the vessel, ready to arrest if it returned to French waters. Finally, following discussions between its owner and the French judicial authorities it presented itself voluntarily in the port of Marseilles in January. Diamlemos denied that it had sought to escape arrest, arguing that the vessel waited for 30 hours for the outcome of discussions between French and Greek authorities before resuming its journey to Jorf Lasfar, where its cargo was awaited urgently. The company claimed at the time that the pollution had been caused by a bilge leak which had lasted eight minutes. Diamlemos also accused the French authorities of making too much of a "small accident."

PALAWAN ISLAND, PHILIPPINES

Manila, Oct 27 -- The Philippine Coast Guard today reported the presence of an oil slick off Palawan island in the central Philippines. The oil slick, which is about four miles long, was located some 7.9 miles north-west of Lalutaya Island. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

London, Oct 28 -- Following received from Shell Philippines Exploration BV, Manila, dated today: SC38 developer and operator Shell Philippines Exploration BV (SPEX) today stated that the Malampaya production platform had not experienced any disruption in operations that could lead to any gas leak or a reported oil slick. The company likewise clarified that Malampaya produces only natural gas and condensate. SPEX External Affairs Manager and spokesman Ding Roco conveyed that the Malampaya platform has been operating normally the past week with no reported incidents. There have likewise been no sightings of an oil slick within the vicinity of the platform as described in reports.



AUSTRALIA

London, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated today, states: Severe storms have swept through south-east Queensland this evening bringing heavy rain to regions from Gayndah to the Gold Coast. There has been localised flooding - but few reports of damage at this stage. More than 14,000 homes were blacked out in Brisbane, the Gold Coast, Ipswich, the Lockyer and Fassifern Valleys and Toowoomba. Mike Swanston from Energex says repair crews are out in the field. "Most of the damage on the network has been caused by lightning strikes," he said. "In fact, we've recorded about 400 lightning strikes in the Energex area in the last hour and a half. "We do hope to get supply back to most of those 11,500 customers by midnight."

London, Oct 28 -- A press report, dated today, states: Lightning struck more than 400 times across Queensland's south-east last night, as a large storm blacked out around 15,000 homes. The storm cell moved in at around 1900, AEST, last night, affecting Brisbane, especially the northern suburbs, the Gold Coast and Ipswich. A spokeswoman for electricity supplier Energex said most of the outages were due to the intense lightning activity. "The most outages we had was around 12,000 at one time, just before 2200, AEST," the spokeswoman said. "All electricity was restored by 0300, AEST."

AZORES

London, Nov 1 -- A press report, dated Oct 31, states: Portuguese airline SATA cancelled several flights today within Portugal's mid-Atlantic Azores archipelago, as strong winds and heavy rain were lashing the islands, an airline spokesman said. More than 300 passengers were stranded as the carrier was only able to provide flights between Sao Miguel, Santa Maria, Terceira and Pico, four of the nine volcanic islands that make up the archipelago located some 1,500 kilometres off the coast of Portugal, the spokesman added. The national weather office forecasts the heavy rain combined with winds of up to 100 kilometres an hour will continue overnight.

HONDURAS

Tegucigalpa, Nov 2 -- Still reeling from hurricanes "Stan", "Wilma" and "Beta" last month, Honduras evacuated hundreds of people from its Atlantic coast today as intense rains caused more flooding in the area. As rivers again burst their banks, the government declared a "red alert." Local television showed people wading

through waist-high floodwater with children clinging to their backs and their arms loaded with food supplies. "We have started the evacuation of several hundred people due to the risk of flooding and of rivers overflowing their banks," said Jose Salinas, an official at national disaster commission Copeco. Today, rain and wind triggered by a band of low pressure off the Atlantic coast threatened to keep pounding northern Honduras for at least another day, authorities said. An alert was issued for the Atlantic coast departments of Atlantida, Colon and Gracias a Dios, as well as the Islas de la Bahia -- a cluster of coral-fringed islands popular with tourists and scuba divers. -- Reuters.

HURRICANE "BETA"

London, Nov 1 -- A press report, dated Oct 31, states: Thousands of people remained in shelters in Nicaragua and Honduras today after hurricane "Beta" swept across the Central American nations, flooding rivers, downing trees and destroying houses, churches, medical centres and schools. The remnants of "Beta" drifted over the eastern Pacific today, and forecasters said there was a slight chance the storm could reform over the ocean. Packing winds up to 105 mph, the storm dumped as much as 15 inches of rain in Nicaragua and neighbouring Honduras, where its outer bands of rain caused four rivers to overflow, isolated communities and damaged crops. The record 13th hurricane of this year's Atlantic storm season made landfall yesterday on Nicaragua's central coast, about 200 miles north-east of Managua, as a Category 2 hurricane before quickly weakening to a tropical storm and eventually becoming a tropical depression before beginning to dissipate. Nicaraguan Civil Defence Chief Col Mario Perez Cassar said 80% of the buildings on the central coast were heavily damaged or destroyed. "But miraculously, only four people were reported missing and only one was injured," Perez said. No serious injuries or deaths were reported in Honduras. Although the worst of the storm was over, thousands of people remained in shelters in both Nicaragua and Honduras as officials began the task of reconstruction. Perez said an initial damage assessment would be followed by a more thorough review along the 60-mile Rio Grande of Matagalpa, where the hurricane made landfall at the river's mouth. Forecasters had predicted it would touch down in far north-eastern Nicaragua, prompting authorities to evacuate thousands of people from the coastal port of Cabo de Gracias a Dios and along the River Coco, both on the Honduras border. However, the hurricane took an unexpected turn south early yesterday and headed for Nicaragua's central coastline. In Honduras, "Beta" left 50 communities isolated and damaged bridges in the north-eastern provinces of Gracias a Dios, Atlantida and Colon

on the Atlantic coast, President Ricardo Maduro told reporters today. Another 80 communities were cut off after the Wampu River rose beyond its normal levels, army spokesman Capt Victor Gomez said. The storm caused four rivers to overflow and damaged crops. Although the storm had moved out to sea, lingering rains from the storm continued to fall on Nicaragua and Honduras today.

London, Nov 3 -- A press report, dated Nov 2, states: Steady rains have prevented emergency aid from reaching hurricane "Beta" victims on Honduras' Atlantic coast, keeping thousands in shelters there and in neighboring Nicaragua, authorities said today. Beta made landfall on Sunday (Oct 30) on Nicaragua's central coast, dumping up to 15 inches of rain there and in neighbouring Honduras. No deaths or serious injuries were reported in either country but the storm flooded dozens of communities, damaged hundreds of buildings, and destroyed crops throughout the region. Thousands of people remained in shelters in both Nicaragua and Honduras. Rains sent rivers overflowing, destroying roads and bridges and keeping five provinces in northern Honduras isolated, said Jose Molina, a civil defence spokesman. The rains blocked efforts to send boats and aircraft loaded with food, blankets and medical help to the battered region, with rains expected to continue the next couple of days, Molina said. "There could be many Hondurans who are cold and hungry, and due to the weather we can't get them help," said President Ricardo Maduro. In Nicaragua, at least 40 communities near the border with Honduras were still flooded and isolated today, said Gustavo Ramos, a regional civil defence director. At least 5,000 people were taken to shelters and they were demanding food and medicine, Ramos said. Nicaraguan officials estimate about 7,000 people were affected by the hurricane, many left without a home. In the city of Laguna de Perlas, about 190 miles east of Managua, all crops were destroyed and food for 17 communities could run out in the next two weeks, according to a report by Nicaragua's Civil Defence Department.

HURRICANE "KATRINA"

Washington, Oct 27 -- Repairing all the hurricane-damaged rigs and platforms and pipes in the Gulf of Mexico will take up to a year, and crude oil output will not return to normal "for many months," US Interior Secretary Gale Norton said today. "Recovery is dependent on repairs to onshore facilities, offshore and onshore pipelines transportation systems, and offshore platforms," Norton said in written testimony prepared for a Senate Energy committee hearing on damage from hurricanes "Katrina" and "Rita". About 45 percent of oil and gas pipelines in the Gulf are operating, while 30 percent need repair, Norton said. Another 25 percent of pipelines

are undamaged but cannot be used due to "downstream problems," she said. Testing and repair of energy onshore facilities, pipelines and platforms will take up to one year, based on industry estimates, she said. Some 16 natural gas processing plants, which purify natural gas before it can be shipped to customers, remain closed from the hurricanes, Norton said. Energy Secretary Sam Bodman was also scheduled to testify at the hearing. Hurricane "Katrina" slammed into Louisiana and Mississippi on Aug 29, shutting eight major refineries and halting crude and gas output in the Gulf of Mexico. One month later, Hurricane "Rita" hit the Texas-Louisiana border, closing more refineries and natural gas processing plants. At one point, 25 percent of US refining capacity was offline due to both storms. Earlier on Thursday, Royal Dutch Shell Plc said production from its Mars platform in the Gulf would not resume until the second half of 2006 because of damage from "Katrina". Another big platform, BP's Thunder Horse, was originally scheduled to come onstream in 2005 but will not begin producing oil and gas until late 2006 because of the hurricanes. Some 68 percent of the total 1.5 million barrel per day crude oil production in the US Gulf remained shut in yesterday, according to government data. About 55 percent of the region's 10 billion cubic feet per day of natural gas also remained offline. -- Reuters. (See "Hurricane "Katrina"" in issue of Oct 28 and "Hurricane "Rita"" in issue of Oct 20.)

London, Oct 28 -- A press report, dated today, states: At least three oil refineries in the U.S. Gulf of Mexico region remain shut down as a result of damage sustained from hurricanes "Katrina" and "Rita." Continued storm activity in the Gulf has further disrupted the energy industry, but, gasoline prices have eased a little in recent weeks. Gasoline prices at the pump have fallen about 16% in the past month, according to the AAA Travel Club. But fuel prices are still about 15 cents-a-liter higher than a year ago. The high price has caused some motorists to curtail their time on the road and that, combined with the seasonal slowdown in driving that always comes at summer's end, has helped keep the prices falling. But prices are unlikely to fall much further. Crude oil, which counts for more than 40% of the price of gasoline, remains above \$60 a barrel and supplies of gasoline remain somewhat tight because of the refinery shutdowns. Bob Tippee, editor of Oil and Gas Journal, says most refineries in Louisiana and Texas affected by the hurricanes are now either back online or close to being back. But, he says, facilities that suffered heavy damage will take longer to recover. "In many cases with 'Katrina' the problem was flooding, which flooded electric motors, of which there are many in a refinery. In many cases, those have to be replaced and that takes a while. Also, with both these storms, you had

workers who were scattered and evacuated and it takes some time to get them back," he said. Mr. Tippee says energy companies estimate the refineries closed by the hurricanes will all be back online by sometime in December. In the meantime, he says, many U.S. motorists are using gasoline shipped over by tankers from refineries in Europe. "Europe does have a significant amount of gasoline available for export and a lot of that does come to the United States whenever the price is high here relative to there and that certainly is the case now as a result of the storms. So that is a comfortable buffer supply of gasoline," he said. During the worst part of the hurricane disasters, as much as 25% of U.S. refining capacity was closed down. The refineries that remain closed today account for only about six percent of the nation's capacity. Crude oil production in the Gulf of Mexico has also slowed as a result of the storms. Hurricanes "Katrina" and "Rita" destroyed 113 oil and gas production platforms in the Texas-Louisiana coastal region.

London, Oct 28 -- A press report, dated Oct 27, states: Murphy Oil Company has set up five adjustment centres in south-east Louisiana for property owners affected by an oil spill after Hurricane "Katrina". One and a half million gallons spilled out of the Meraux refinery on the Mississippi River south-east of New Orleans. The coast guard blames Murphy. The company hopes to avert a class action lawsuit by settling with as many residents possible. A federal judge will decide next week if the oil company has a right to contact affected residents directly to discuss settlement options.

London, Nov 2 -- A press report, dated Nov 1, states: Lamar Advertising Company says it sustained \$14 million in hurricane damage to its billboards in Louisiana and Mississippi. But the company's chief financial officer said new designs will cut future storm repair costs. C-F-O Keith Istre said the storms will allow the company to replace existing inventory with wind-resistant structures that are much more durable and have a much higher wind-resistance rating. Istre says some of the existing billboards could withstand winds of up to 110 miles-per-hour. The new designs will be able to handle winds as high as 140 to 150 miles-per-hour. Instead of having a solid face, the new billboards will be like a frame to which vinyl sheets of advertisement copy will be strapped. The company expects its billboards in Mississippi and Louisiana to be repaired by early next year. Istre says the company does not know how long it will be before its business in the hurricane zones returns to normal.

HURRICANE "RITA"

See "Hurricane "Katrina.""

HURRICANE "STAN"

Guatemala City, Nov 2 -- Hurricane "Stan" hit the west coast of Mexico

and then turned south as a tropical storm. The storm hit Guatemala from Oct 7 and 10 and caused heavy rains for approximately four days on a large part of the country but affecting mainly the Pacific coast and highlands of the country, causing many landslides, mudslides and flooding. The events washed out many roads and bridges, damaging approximately 25% of all paved roads in the country and 50% of all unpaved roads. The death toll has still not been confirmed but the last count was in the region of 700 people but another 800 are still missing and left thousands of families homeless -- said to be somewhere around 9,000 -- and there are still areas of the country that have not been accessible to rescue crews. Damages to urban areas are minimal but, as mentioned, extensive damages were caused to roads, crops and large areas of mountainous regions in which very low income communities reside. The value of the losses are not yet confirmed but a figure of US\$326 million has been stated to be the cost of reconstruction and this is assumed to be on road infrastructure alone. -- Lloyd's Agents.

HURRICANE "WILMA"

Veracruz, Oct 27 -- Televised news states that ferry Bahia de Espiritu Santo became stranded at Puerto Juarez, Mexico, understand during Hurricane "Wilma", about Oct 22. -- Lloyd's Agents.

London, Oct 28 -- A press report, dated today, states: Last week, oil rigs in the eastern Gulf area were evacuated when Hurricane "Wilma" passed through on its way to Florida. As of Monday, storm-related problems had closed down nearly 68% of the Gulf of Mexico's crude production capacity. More than half the region's natural gas production was also shut down. Energy analysts say natural gas and heating oil prices in the United States are likely to rise as winter weather arrives in the northern part of the country. They say any relief from high gasoline prices could be more than offset by the higher cost of heating homes.

London, Oct 28 -- A press report, dated Oct 27, states: President George W. Bush checked on relief efforts for victims of Hurricane "Wilma" today to ensure federal assistance is provided. Bush visited hard-hit south Florida and the National Hurricane Center in Miami in a show of solidarity with "Wilma" victims and those working to help the millions without electricity and thousands who are short on other necessities. Hurricane "Wilma" struck south Florida and killed 14 people and left more than six million without electricity. About 4.4 million were still without power today. Risk analysts say the storm's damage could reach \$10 billion in Florida. "Wilma" killed 18 others in Haiti, Mexico and the Bahamas. Florida Power & Light said it had restored electricity to 1.1 million customers, but 2.1 million customers, or more than 4 million people, were still without power. The

utility said it hoped to restore power to most by Nov 8. All three of south Florida's major airports, in Miami, Fort Lauderdale and West Palm Beach, were open. Curfews were in effect in many south Florida cities. Most courts and government offices were closed and schools were not expected to reopen until next week. Traffic in Miami was chaotic and officials were advising people to carpool, take public transit or stay at home. Only 781 of the county's 2,600 traffic lights were working, up from just 18 two days ago. Miami's elevated transit trains resumed operation today. Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos Alvarez said police had arrested 87 people for curfew violations in recent days.

London, Nov 1 -- A press report, dated Oct 31, states: Hurricane "Wilma" has wiped out half of Florida's grapefruit crop and decimated its orange crop, citrus growers estimated today. The damage could make Florida grapefruit scarce in stores and cause a slight rise in the price of orange juice this winter, commodities analysts said. Florida Citrus Mutual said the storm last week knocked 17 percent of the citrus crop off the trees, causing a loss of \$180 million worth of fruit. The estimate is for fruit only and does not include tree losses and damage to barns, equipment and processing and packing facilities. "This is a very preliminary figure that could increase as additional damage is discovered and industry losses are calculated," said Andy LaVigne, Florida Citrus Mutual's executive vice president. The growers predicted a loss of 24.4 million boxes of oranges, or 13 percent of the state's crop, and 11.3 million boxes of grapefruit, 47 percent of the crop. Commodities analysts Boyd Cruel of Alaron Trading and Kevin Sharpe of Basic Commodities predicted orange juice prices for U.S. consumers will probably increase over the next several months by five percent to 10 percent, much as prices did last year after three hurricanes hit Florida's citrus areas. "You have a crop that just got diminished right as harvest was coming around here," Sharpe said. "You have quite a bit of fruit that was supposed to be harvested on the ground." The expected size of this year's grapefruit crop after "Wilma" may make fresh grapefruit scarce in U.S. grocery stores for another year. Fresh Florida grapefruit also is a popular export, especially to Japan.

London, Nov 2 -- A press report, dated today, states: During the passing of Wilma, the Bahamas Oil Refining Company International, Limited (BORCO) sustained substantive damages to its jetties and sea-island. The total extent of the damages is still to be assessed. While minimum damages affected the buildings and training centre, all remaining cat walks at the jetties and the entire old jetty are now below water, including a new transformer that supplied power to the larger new

jetty, rendering that facility non-operational. BORCO is pleased to note that only a small quantity of oil, 20-25 barrels, that was in the line of the small jetty when it was destroyed, escaped. This was quickly cleaned-up without incident to any beach or surrounding areas by BORCO's staff. The Hurricane imposed no significant damages to BORCO's Dock I, however, the engine-room of the tug Patricia S was flooded and there was minor damage to the handrails. The other two tugs are operational with no apparent damages. Several holding tanks under construction experienced damage, with one tank being totally destroyed and four others with some indentation to the shell. None of these tanks held any products, and therefore there was no spillage. BORCO has advised its clients of the challenges and informed them that there will be no operations until the assessment and a thorough evaluation of the facility is complete.

London, Nov 3 -- Ro/ro Mar Caribe arrived Jacksonville Oct 29 and sailed Oct 31.

INDIA

London, Oct 28 -- A press report, dated today, states: Thousands of people in low-lying areas along the south-east Indian coast have been evacuated ahead of a cyclone that is expected to make landfall today. Winds of 70-100km/h and heavy rains are already severely disrupting life in the area. Air and rail transport has been badly affected. Fishermen have been warned not to go to sea until Sunday (Oct 30). More than 100 people have died in several days of heavy rain in the states of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. India's technology hub, Bangalore, is battling floods after three major lakes breached their banks. The city accounts for one-third of India's annual export revenue of \$17.2bn in software and back-office outsourcing. The cyclone, triggered by a depression in the Bay of Bengal, is expected to hit somewhere along the coast of Andhra Pradesh state. "High winds and heavy rains are hampering our evacuations," B Udaya Lakshmi, an official in Andhra Pradesh, told Reuters. Rain and landslides have cut links to some coastal areas. In Tamil Nadu, schools and colleges have been shut and many state-run schools converted into temporary shelters. Several trains passing through the state capital, Madras (Chennai), have been cancelled because rail tracks are under water. Tens of thousands of people have been stranded at railway stations and airports across the region and the weather has hit the travel plans of many more during the holiday season which coincides with the Hindu festival of light, or Diwali. In the past few days, more than 50,000 people have been evacuated from their homes in affected areas of Tamil Nadu. Heavy rains in the neighbouring state of Karnataka have led to the flooding of the Cauvery river, which flows into Tamil Nadu.

NEW ZEALAND

London, Oct 28 -- A press report, dated today, states: Growers face a \$5 million loss after 3000ha of crops and prepared land were wiped out in the flood that swept through the Gisborne region a week ago. The provisional figures were announced today and could rise. District civil defence officer Richard Steele said the figures included land at both Tolaga Bay and the Poverty Bay Flats and was substantially more than initial estimates. The figures came from growers who estimated their losses on forms submitted to the flood recovery team earlier this week.

ROMANIA

Bucharest, Nov 2 -- The Sulina Channel was re-opened at 1000, Nov 1. -- Lloyd's Agents.

TROPICAL STORM "BETA"

London, Oct 28 -- A press report, dated Oct 27, states: Tropical Storm "Beta" has strengthened since developing in the south-western Caribbean late yesterday. The U.S. National Hurricane Center says "Beta" is expected to dump up to 25 cm of rain across western Panama, Costa Rica, north-eastern Honduras, Nicaragua, and the Colombian islands of San Andres and Providencia. At last report the storm was located 115 km south-south-east of San Andres Island and about 260 km east of Bluefields, Nicaragua. Forecasters say "Beta" is expected to continue slowly drifting north, bringing its center near San Andres tomorrow. Colombia has issued a hurricane warning for San Andres and Providencia. A hurricane watch is in effect for Nicaragua's entire Caribbean coast.

London, Oct 28 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0900, UTC, tropical storm "Beta" is getting closer to San Andres and Providencia as it continues to move slowly northward. A hurricane warning remains in effect for the islands of San Andres and Providencia. A tropical storm warning and a hurricane watch remain in effect for the entire Caribbean coast of Nicaragua from the border with Costa Rica northward to Cabo Gracias a Dios near the Nicaragua/Honduras border and adjacent islands. Hurricane warnings will likely be required for portions of the coast of Nicaragua later today. At 0900, UTC, the centre of tropical storm "Beta" was located near lat 12.3N, long 81.2W, or about 35 miles east-south-east of San Andres island and about 175 miles east of Bluefields, Nicaragua. "Beta" is moving toward the north near three mph. A slow motion toward the north or north-northwest is expected during the next 24 hours, with a possible turn toward the northwest thereafter. Maximum sustained winds are near 65 mph, with higher gusts. Some strengthening is forecast during the next 24 hours and "Beta" could become a hurricane later today. Tropical storm force winds extend outward up to 45 miles from the centre. The estimated

minimum central pressure is 994 mb. Storm surge flooding of four to seven feet above normal tide levels can be expected on San Andres and Providencia as the centre of "Beta" passes nearby. Tropical storm "Beta" is expected to produce rainfall totals of 10 to 15 inches across northeastern Honduras, Nicaragua, San Andres and Providencia, with isolated maximum amounts of 20 inches possible.

TYPHOON "KAI-TAK"

London, Nov 1 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office: Typhoon "Kai-Tak" near lat 15.8N, long 108.9E, at 0600, UTC, Nov 1. Movement past six hours 305 deg at 11 knots. Position accurate to within 40 nautical miles, based on centre located by satellite. Maximum sustained winds 65 knots with gusts to 80 knots. Radius of 50-knot winds 25 nautical miles east semicircle, 20 nautical miles elsewhere. Radius of 34-knot winds 100 nautical miles north-east quadrant, 90 nautical miles north-west quadrant, 80 nautical miles elsewhere. Forecast for 0600, UTC, Nov 2: Position lat 17.9N, long 106.1E. Maximum sustained winds 45 knots with gusts to 55 knots. Dissipating as a significant tropical cyclone over land.

London, Nov 2 -- A press report, dated today, states: At least nine people were killed in Vietnam as typhoon "Kai Tak" approached the country's central coast, officials said today. "Heavy rain hit several provinces. Thousands of houses were flooded," said Nguyen Van Hung, an official from the flood and storm committee in the central city of Danang. Seven people were killed in Quang Ngai province and two in Thua Thien Hue. "The typhoon was about 250 kilometres off the coast of Quang Ngai this morning and was moving around 10-15 kilometers per hour. It is difficult to say where it will hit the country in the hours to come," Hung told the AFP. In Hoi An, a seaside resort with a vast beach and a traditional village, more than 3,000 people had been evacuated. The industrial port of Danang spent a few hours yesterday without electricity. Most flights to Danang airport were cancelled and Chinese President Hu Jintao, expected to visit the central region, shortened his stay in Vietnam and was to leave the country early today. In Quang Nam province about 15,000 people had been displaced. Thousands of soldiers and police have been mobilised, Hung said.

Hanoi, Nov 2 -- At least 10 people drowned and a Filipino was missing in central Vietnam as a typhoon nearing the coast dumped heavy rains on a region where bad weather has killed nearly 30 people in the past two weeks. The National Hydro Meteorology Forecast Centre said today that 740 mm of rain drenched Quang Ngai province, where six people died, even though typhoon "Kai-Tak" weakened as it neared the coast. Heavy rains knocked down hundreds of trees, causing blackouts and

blocking roads in Danang, 760 km south of Hanoi, prompting Chinese President Hu Jintao to cancel a trip to the area during an official visit to Vietnam. Three Vietnamese and a 49-year-old Filipino were swept away yesterday at the Bong Mieu Gold Property mine in Quang Nam province, but the three Vietnamese were rescued, a company official said. "We are still searching for the missing man," she said. The mine is owned by Canada's Olympus Pacific Minerals Inc. Four people drowned in Thua Thien-Hue province, where flooding of up to 0.7 metres swamped Hue, including the old citadel, a UN-listed World Heritage Site, state-run Vietnam Television reported. "The rains were terribly heavy yesterday and people had to use boats inside the citadel area," said a Hue resident who added that rains had stopped but floods had not receded. However, floods did not hit the ancient town of Hoi An, another UN-listed World Heritage site just to the south, another resident said. Winds at the centre of the storm weakened to 74 kph as "Kai-Tak" moved north-west, nearing the coast of Ha Tinh and Quang Binh provinces today, a weather bulletin said. Sections of railway line and the north-south Highway One were blocked by floods. The government's committee on floods and storm prevention urged authorities in four central provinces to stay on alert for flash floods and landslides. Prime Minister Phan Van Khai has ordered the release of 450 tonnes of rice from national food reserves to help people in the central region, where 67,000 people were evacuated as 29 people died in floods in late October. Typhoon "Kai-Tak" did not affect Vietnam's key coffee and rice growing regions, which lie further to the south. -- Reuters.

London, Nov 2 -- Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: Tropical storm "Kai-tak" near lat 18.9N, long 105.8E at 0600, UTC, Nov 2. Movement for the past six hours 325 degrees at 13 knots. Position accurate to within 60 nautical miles. Maximum sustained winds 45 knots, gusts 55 knots. Forecast position lat 20.4N, long 104.8E at 1800, UTC, today. Maximum sustained winds 30 knots, gusts 40 knots. Forecast position lat 21.9N, long 103.8E at 0600, UTC, Nov 3. Maximum sustained winds 20 knots, gusts 30 knots.

Hanoi, Nov 3 -- Powerful typhoon "Kai-Tak" killed 20 people in Vietnam's central region and a Filipino swept away at a gold mine is still missing, officials said today. The national weather centre said 720 mm of rain fell on Quang Nam province, triggering flash floods and killing eight people before "Kai-Tak" moved north and weakened into a low pressure system. A 49-year-old Filipino swept away at the Bong Mieu gold mine in Quang Nam on Tuesday (Nov 1) remained missing, a company official said. Workers were clearing hundreds of trees blown across roads

by strong winds, and electricity supply was restored yesterday in Danang, 760 km south of Hanoi. Seven people died in Quang Ngai province, four drowned in Thua Thien-Hue and one was killed by a fallen tree in Danang. The low pressure system moved northward along the coastline off the northern province of Thanh Hoa and disappeared yesterday night, but heavy rains hit 10 central provinces, the weather centre said in its last report on the typhoon. The government has ordered 450 tonnes of rice from national reserves to help people in the central region, where the first groups of more than 120,000 people evacuated from the typhoon started returning home today. Typhoon "Kai-Tak" did not affect its key coffee and rice growing regions or the crude oil production, which are located further to the south. -- Reuters.

UNITED KINGDOM

London, Nov 3 -- A press report, dated today, states: Heavy rain and gusts of nearly 70mph have battered the South and South West coasts of England. In Uplyme, fire crews from Devon and Dorset saved a woman trapped by floods. The weather cancelled the Torpoint ferry service across the River Tamar between Devon and Cornwall. Flood warnings have been issued for Hamble near Southampton and Christchurch in Dorset. Winds have been gusting to nearly 70mph on the Isle of Wight overnight which is storm force, Solent Coastguard said. Heavy rain has been blamed for a landslide at Crewkerne in Somerset which disrupted train services to London. Flooding, debris and fallen trees are continuing to make driving conditions hazardous in many parts of the region, and motorists are being warned to take extreme care. In Plymouth, the Torpoint ferries were cancelled due to high tides and exceptional winds. One of the vessels collided with a lamp post. One ferry was put back into service later in the morning.

Earthquakes



PAKISTAN

Karachi, Oct 28 -- The latest press news states that key emergency aid operations for Pakistani earthquake survivors are still vastly underfunded a day after donor nations promised about half a billion dollars more in overall assistance, UN data indicated yesterday. A UN-coordinated appeal has received just two per cent (\$1.5 million) of the \$95 million needed for shelter and non-food supplies, the latest financial tracking information from the Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) showed. President General Pervez Musharraf yesterday ordered the

immediate release of Rs2 billion for reconstruction of houses in the quake-hit NWFP and Azad Kashmir and asked the authorities concerned to make all-out efforts to provide relief to areas that had not yet been accessed. He was presiding over the first meeting of the Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (Erra). The meeting was attended by the AJK president and prime minister and the chief minister of the NWFP. India said yesterday it had offered an assistance of \$25 million to Pakistan for relief and rehabilitation of earthquake victims. An Indian foreign ministry spokesman said the commitment was made by Junior Indian Minister Oscar Fernandes in Geneva on Wednesday (Oct 26). Mr Fernandes represented India at a meeting for earthquake relief to Pakistan organized by the UN Office of the Co-ordinator for Humanitarian Affairs at Geneva. Authorities in Battagram said yesterday they were still awaiting orders from the NWFP government to evacuate an estimated 100,000 people as a second team of geologists reached the area to look into reports of volcanic activity in the area. A senior police official in the northern Frontier district, one of the five severely affected by this month's devastating earthquake, told the press they had submitted an evacuation plan to the provincial government and were awaiting orders. U.S. President George W. Bush said yesterday that executives from some of the world's best-known firms would spearhead efforts to raise private-sector aid for victims of the massive earthquake in Pakistan. In the coming days, they will ask Americans to donate directly to a fund set up to provide help to the earthquake victims, Mr Bush said in a statement released by the White House. Pakistan will have to initially raise minimum Rs300 billion for the rebuilding of earthquake-hit areas following a "poor response" at the Geneva conference where donors pledged only \$580 million against a requirement of \$5 billion. Sources in the local United Nations office told the press yesterday that both Pakistan and the UN authorities were disappointed over the outcome of the donor conference. A mobile headquarters of the Nato force sent to assist the relief work became "fully operational" yesterday. Vice Admiral John Stufflebeem, commander of the mission, said on the occasion that the Deployed Joint Task Force (DJTF) of Nato "is solely focused on supporting Pakistani authorities and those bringing relief supplies and aid capabilities to the affected regions". Twenty two quake victims have died from tetanus and one person has died from measles since the earthquake disaster struck Pakistan on Oct 8, the World Health Organisation (WHO) said yesterday. A total of 111 people suffering from potentially deadly tetanus were being treated in hospitals, it said, as health workers continued to vaccinate thousands of

people against both diseases. Initial feedback of the relief operation so far has revealed inequitable distribution of aid and overlapping of roles because of lack of co-ordination between relief agencies working on the ground. A United Nations Joint Logistic Centre (UNJLC) bulletin yesterday said lack of co-ordination was evident with many easy-to-reach areas being over-served when other localities were overlooked altogether. Several US and Middle East-based Pakistani professionals have joined hands to launch an initiative for conceptualizing cost-effective, indigenous and community-friendly quake-resistant community centres in northern areas of Pakistan. The Jeevey Initiative was launched on Wednesday at a press conference here by Irshad Salim, president of Mamosa Solutions, a New Jersey-based firm. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Islamabad, Nov 1 -- More than 57,000 people have been confirmed killed by the devastating earthquake that struck northern Pakistan on Oct 8, Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz said today. Aziz told the National Assembly that thousands of people had been injured and hundreds of thousands left homeless by the quake, which devastated wide areas of Pakistani Kashmir and adjoining North West Frontier Province. The government previously gave a death toll of more than 55,000, with 78,000 injured. Another 1,309 people have been confirmed killed and 6,622 injured in neighbouring Indian-ruled Kashmir. Pakistani regional officials say the total death toll in Pakistan will be much higher because data has yet to be compiled from remote mountainous regions cut off by landslides. -- Reuters.

Volcanic Activity



SIERRA NEGRA, GALAPAGOS ISLANDS

London, Oct 26 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: A volcano on the largest of the Galapagos Islands erupted for the third straight day today, but experts said it didn't threaten villagers on the island or the tortoises that gave the remote archipelago its name. Oscar Carvajal, chief technician of the Galapagos National Park on Isabela island, said tortoises and land iguanas were not threatened because the lava flows were down the north-east slopes of Sierra Negra volcano where there were no animal populations. "The lava flows have not affected the species because they are on the other side. There are no problems with tortoises or land iguanas. Only a small amount of vegetation has been burned in the interior of the caldron and on the flanks," Carvajal said. The 4,920-foot high Sierra Negra volcano began

erupting late Saturday (Oct 22), sending three rivers of spectacular lava flow down its north-eastern slopes. Carvajal said the lava expelled today was considerably less. He said most of the lava was flowing from a fissure at the top of the volcano back into the interior. Park and local authorities say Puerto Villamil, the island's only village with 2,000 inhabitants, is also out of danger because it is located south of the volcano.

Political & Civil Unrest



AFGHANISTAN

London, Oct 29 -- A press report, dated today, states: A British soldier has been killed and five others injured in a gun attack in northern Afghanistan, the Ministry of Defence has confirmed. The troops came under fire as they travelled between bases in the city of Mazar-e-Sharif, said the MoD. More details would be released in due course, said a spokesman. He said there would be an investigation into who had shot at the troops. "We are treating it as a hostile incident rather than friendly fire," he confirmed. The MoD said security forces had sealed off the area in which the troops were attacked and arrested one suspect. A spokesman said the troops had been travelling from the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) base which houses international military and civilian personnel helping the Afghan government develop democratic institutions and disarming militias.

ALGERIA

Algiers, Oct 29 -- Algerian Islamic militants with suspected links to al Qaeda have killed four people, including one soldier, in the latest attacks during the holy month of Ramadan, newspapers reported today. Rebels, believed to be members of al Qaeda-aligned Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), killed a soldier in an ambush late on Wednesday (Oct 26) in Skikda province, some 500 km east of the capital, Algiers, national dailies, including Liberte and El Khabar, said. Two civilians were killed two hours later when their car drove over a bomb planted by the same militants, who apparently targeted a military convoy, newspapers said. In a separate attack, rebels killed a 70-year-old shepherd in the neighbouring province of Batna. -- Reuters.

COLOMBIA

Bogota, Oct 27 -- About 80 right-wing paramilitaries and Marxist rebels died in battle over lucrative cocaine-producing land in western Colombia, a local official said today, a day after the morning to night gunfight. "There was combat all day, from five in the morning to nine at night. The

confrontations left 40 paramilitaries dead and an equal number of guerrillas," Federico Cuellar, a local official in the jungle town of San Jose del Palmar in Choco province told Reuters. He said he got the information from fighters evacuated to the town after the battle in an nearby area that is home to large plantations of coca plants used in the production of cocaine. Police and army officials confirmed there was fighting in the area but did not provide casualty numbers. -- Reuters.

Bogota, Oct 30 -- Colombia captured a top cocaine trafficker wanted for extradition by the United States in a jungle commando raid today after a firefight with his paramilitary bodyguards, police said. John Eidelber Cano, a leader of the violent Norte del Valle cartel which is accused of smuggling thousands of kilograms of cocaine to the United States, was arrested near the town of Cauasia in Antioquia province, Colombia's national police said in a statement. Cano, who has a \$5 million government reward on his head, was captured when helicopters and assault troops swooped on his jungle hiding place where he was guarded by about 20 members of a right-wing paramilitary. All the guards, escaped after a short gunfight, the statement said. Police said they had been following Cano, wanted in New York for drug trafficking and money laundering, for six months and captured him with the help of an informant who will receive the reward. Norte del Valle is this Andean country's biggest cocaine cartel. Police say it has smuggled billions of dollars of the drug to the United States and has assassinated hundreds of people in central and southwest Colombia where it operates. -- Reuters.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

London, Nov 1 -- A press report, dated Oct 31, states: Hundreds of government troops backed by U.N. peacekeepers began flushing heavily armed Rwandan rebels from eastern Congo today, destroying insurgent camps and sending smoke rising above the restive region. The operation in North Kivu province involving 2,000 Congolese troops and 500 peacekeepers was the first time Congo's government has used force against the Hutu rebels since a deadline for the departure of all foreign armed groups expired a month ago. At least a dozen rebels were captured. Residents in eastern Congo lauded the mission, saying the foreign fighters had stolen from locals and harassed them. "The Rwandans attacked us every day. They stole our sweet potatoes, peanuts and bananas. They even took our women," said Semikore Sebagabo, a 44-year old father of six. "My children have seen too much war, too much fighting, death and killing. It is time for it to end. We want peace now." Thousands of ethnic Hutus from neighbouring Rwanda fled to eastern Congo after

taking part in the 1994 genocide of more than 500,000 people, most of them ethnic Tutsis. They then took up arms against the Tutsi-dominated government that took over in Rwanda and began fighting from Congolese bases. Rwanda has twice invaded Congo to hunt down the rebels, and in 1998 sparked a five-year war in Congo that involved six African nations and killed an estimated 4 million people. The Congolese and U.N. troops will move through Virunga National Park over the next two weeks to clear out as many as 5,000 Rwandans that still control its nearly impenetrable interior, said Col. Mayank Awasthi, the U.N. military spokesman in the North Kivu province. An estimated 15,000 total Rwandan Hutu rebels still remain in Congo along with 30,000 dependents, mostly their wives and children. Poorly paid Congolese soldiers have repeatedly failed to hunt them down. Today, Congolese troops fought brief gunbattles with rebels who then fled into the forests, U.N. officials said. At least five insurgent camps were dismantled and smoke could be seen rising from their direction. There were no immediate reports of casualties, the U.N. said. A voluntary disarmament and repatriation program meant to get the Rwandans out has had little success. Some of the Rwandans fear reprisals if they return to their homeland. Thinly spread U.N. troops have been trying to help President Kabila's transitional government control the lawless east, once the bastion of Congolese rebel groups. Though the 16,700-strong peacekeeping mission in Congo is the U.N.'s largest, progress has been slow in securing a country the size of western Europe. "We have only one U.N. soldier for every 250 square kilometers of territory," said Thierry Provendier, chief military spokesman for the U.N. in Congo. Troops are also seeking to oust about 300 Congolese militia from Virunga. The militiamen have refused to surrender their arms under a national program that gives former rebels a chance to train to join the army or re-enter civilian life.

ETHIOPIA

Addis Ababa, Oct 31 -- Rebels in southwestern Ethiopia killed four policemen including a regional police chief in an attack on a police station, the pro-government Walta Information Centre news agency said today. Six policemen were wounded in the attack yesterday in Gambella town, capital of remote, politically volatile Gambella state, the agency quoted a regional security officer as saying, adding that one of the four killed was the state's police chief. "Anti-peace forces attacked yesterday a police station in Gambella town and killed four members of the police, including the state police commissioner," the agency said. The agency gave no word on the suspected identity of the attackers. Police and security sources in Addis Ababa could not immediately be reached for comment on the Walta report. -- Reuters.

Addis Ababa, Nov 2 -- Six people were killed in clashes in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa today, a hospital source said, as police confronted stone-throwing youths in a second day of anti-government protests. Security forces fired teargas and shot in the air to disperse hundreds of demonstrators who formed makeshift barricades, hurled rocks and smashed windscreens in protest against a May poll the opposition says was rigged. "We have received today six dead and 17 wounded," a source at the Black Lion hospital told reporters. Yesterday, eight people were killed in the violence. A Reuters reporter saw police round up dozens of people and bundle them into two pickup trucks. Six protesters and two policemen were killed in yesterday's violence, which came three days after the main opposition group, the Coalition for Democracy and Unity (CUD), called for fresh protests. In the hours after yesterday's clashes security forces arrested the CUD leadership, saying it orchestrated the violence. -- Reuters.

London, Nov 3 -- A press report, dated Nov 2, states: Riot police deployed across the Ethiopian capital firing guns and lobbing grenades today to quell a second day of protests over disputed parliamentary elections. At least 23 people were killed and 150 wounded, including children, doctors and hospital workers said. One man said police broke into his family's housing compound firing guns indiscriminately in their search for stone-throwing demonstrators. However, government Information Minister Berhan Hailu said the casualty figures had been exaggerated and put the death toll at 11 civilians and one police officer. He said 54 officers and 28 civilians were injured. The killing of civilians was a political setback for Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, touted by the Bush administration as a progressive African leader and a key partner in the war on terror. The May 15 vote, which gave his ruling Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front control of 60% of parliament, had been seen as a key test of Meles' commitment to reform. Opposition parties say the vote and ballot-counting were marred by fraud, intimidation and violence, and accuse the ruling party of rigging the elections. Machine-gun fire and explosions rocked the capital today, and armoured personnel carriers carrying special forces troops charged down streets littered with burning tyres and broken glass. The violence spread across the city of three million people, reaching the doorsteps of the British, French, Kenyan and Belgian embassies -- all located in different parts of the capital. Workers at UN headquarters were told not to leave their offices. Doctors at five hospitals said the bodies of 23 people killed in the clashes were brought to emergency rooms and at least 150 people were treated for injuries, including a seven-year-old boy who was shot in the hip. The violence followed clashes

yesterday between protesters and police that killed eight people and wounded 43. The protests erupted after 30 taxi drivers were arrested on Monday (Oct 31) for participating in demonstrations against the parliamentary elections. Today's clashes came hours after security officials arrested opposition leaders. All 15 members of the Coalition for Unity and Democracy's central committee and about 1,000 supporters were taken into custody, a lawyer who works for the opposition party said. The opposition says hundreds of their supporters and members have been arrested in the past two months. At least 42 people were killed by police during protests in June, according to human rights groups. Opposition spokesman Gizachew Shiferaw accused police of using excessive force. The Chairman of the African Union Commission Alpha Oumar Konare condemned the escalating violence and loss of lives. He appealed for restraint and urged both sides to address problems "through peaceful means and dialogue within the framework of the constitution and the law of the country." Berhan said the government was "sorry and sad" for the violence, which he blamed on the main opposition party. He said demonstrators burned several buses and destroyed four houses, but that calm was returning to the capital later today.

FRANCE

London, Nov 2 -- A press report, dated Nov 1, states: Violence erupted for a sixth night tonight in the troubled suburbs northeast of Paris with police firing rubber bullets and tear gas as they faced down gangs of youths in Aulnay-sous-Bois, according to witnesses. A store was set afire in the nearby suburb of Bondy, France-Info radio reported. No trouble was immediately reported in Clichy-sous-Bois, where rioting began last Thursday (Oct 27) following the accidental deaths of two teenagers. The latest violence broke out as Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy met in Paris with youths and officials from Clichy-sous-Bois. An Associated Press Television news team reported confrontations between about 20 police and 40 youths in Aulnay-sous-Bois with police firing tear gas and rubber bullets. France-Info said that about 100 fires were burning in numerous suburbs of the Seine-Saint-Denis region, an area of soaring unemployment, delinquency and other urban ills. A carpet store in the town of Bondy was set afire, and cars were burning in Bondy and Sevran, France-Info reported. Police said 13 people were jailed following rioting late yesterday and early today in Clichy-sous-Bois and three other suburbs. A total of 68 cars were torched in a handful of suburbs, LCI television reported, while police said 21 cars -- two of them police vehicles -- were set on fire in Clichy-sous-Bois yesterday night. The mayor of Sevran said youths set two rooms of a primary

school on fire yesterday night along with several cars. Police said three officers there were slightly injured. "These acts have a direct link to the events in Clichy-sous-Bois," Sevran Mayor Stephane Gagnon said in a statement. Suburbs that ring France's big cities, home to immigrant communities often from Muslim North Africa, suffer soaring unemployment and discrimination. Disenchantment and anger thrive in the tall cinderblock towers and long "bars" that make up the projects. The troubles were triggered by the deaths of two teenagers electrocuted in a power substation where they hid to escape police whom they thought were chasing them. A third was injured but survived. Officials have said police were not pursuing the boys, aged 15 and 17. Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin met today with the parents of the three families who a day earlier had refused an invitation to meet the interior minister -- blamed by many for fanning anger with his tough talk and tactics. Sarkozy met tonight with some of the victims' relatives, other youths, a police representative and officials from Clichy-sous-Bois, according to the Interior Ministry said, which gave no details of what was said at the meeting. In Clichy-sous-Bois, the head of the Paris mosque, Dalil Boubakeur, visiting Muslim leaders there, was forced to leave abruptly after his car was pelted with stones, LCI reported. A tear gas grenade that landed in the mosque Sunday fed anger. It was unclear who fired the tear gas. A growing number of politicians and anti-racism groups claimed Sarkozy was inflaming the tense atmosphere. Sarkozy recently referred to the troublemakers as "scum" or "riffraff," and in the past vowed to "clean out" the suburbs. Even within the conservative government, there were critics. Such "warlike" words would not bring calm, Equal Opportunities Minister Azouz Begag said in an interview published in the daily Liberation. He told the paper that he "contests this method of becoming submerged by imprecise, warlike semantics." While re-establishing order demands firmness, "it is in fighting the discrimination that victimizes youths that order is re-established, the order of equality," said Begag, raised in a low-income suburb of Lyon. The president of SOS-Racism, an anti-racism group, called today for a "massive investment plan" to cure suburban ills.

Paris, Nov 2 -- Dozens of vehicles were set ablaze in a sixth night of rioting in poor Paris suburbs, officials said today, as youth unrest caused mounting strains within France's conservative government. A heavy police presence kept a tense order in Clichy-sous-Bois, where the clashes broke out last week after two teenagers of African origin were electrocuted while apparently fleeing the police. However, the street fighting spread to other parts of the poor suburbs ringing the eastern side of the capital, police said. A total of 34

people were detained by police overnight, Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy told Europe 1 radio. Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin urged a return to calm yesterday evening after meeting families of the two youths along with Sarkozy, his main political rival now under heavy fire for his tough line against the rioters. Villepin delayed for several hours his planned departure for a visit to Canada today, officials said, and French media reported President Jacques Chirac was expected to make a statement about the unrest at a cabinet meeting today. The unrest in the eastern suburbs, heavily populated by North African and black African minorities, was sparked by youths' frustration at their failure to get jobs and recognition in French society. A tear gas attack on a mosque further inflamed emotions. The Clichy unrest was the latest in a series of incidents in the Paris suburbs that have attracted the attention of Sarkozy and become the target of his vow to get tough on crime. -- Reuters.

London, Nov 3 -- A press report, dated today, states: Violence has flared for a seventh night in immigrant communities to the north-east of Paris. Youths in several areas have been roaming the streets with sticks, as buildings have been vandalised and dozens of vehicles set alight. The unrest came after ministers held crisis talks on the situation and the president appealed for calm. Over night police clashed with youths in nine areas of the Seine-Saint-Denis department -- where the violence began last week. A police station was briefly besieged in Aulnay-sous-Bois, and a total of about 40 cars were burnt. Two primary schools, a post office and a shopping centre were damaged and a large car showroom set ablaze in the impoverished neighbourhoods. The situation also remained tense in the original flashpoint of Clichy-sous-Bois. The prime minister and interior minister have delayed trips abroad to try to calm the unrest. Yesterday Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin summoned ministers to a meeting, from which no details have emerged. However, he told parliament a disruptive minority should not be confused with the majority of youngsters, who want to integrate. Correspondents say Mr de Villepin's comments were a rebuke to his political rival, Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy, who has called the rioters "scum." Mr Chirac warned earlier of a "dangerous situation." Dozens of vehicles have been torched and more than 30 arrests have been made since the violence began last week.

INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 30 -- Indian police combed the sites of three powerful blasts in New Delhi today for clues to who carried out co-ordinated attacks that killed at least 55 people, just days before major Hindu and Muslim festivals. Prime Minister Manmohan

Singh, who cut short a visit to Kolkata to rush back to the capital, blamed last night's attacks in crowded pre-holiday bazaars on terrorists, but said it was too early to speculate who was behind the blasts. New Delhi's chief minister appealed for people to stay away from public areas for the next few days ahead of the major Hindu celebration of Diwali, or the festival of lights, on Tuesday (Nov 1) and the Islamic Eid al-Fitr a few days later. In Delhi, extra armed police manned new barricades on the streets and the turnout at some temples and mosques was lower than normal in the cool, clear autumn morning. "There is some sense of fear, obviously," said 40-year-old Mohammad Salim. The financial capital of Mumbai, hit by major bombings in 2003 and 1993, and other cities were on alert and security was stepped up at airports and rail and bus stations across India. The blasts came as Indian and Pakistani officials meeting in Islamabad agreed to open their Kashmir frontier to help victims of the South Asia earthquake, the latest step in a peace process opposed by some Islamic Kashmiri separatists. Hospital officials said at least 55 people were confirmed dead in the blasts and more than 110 were still in hospital, many of them critically injured, some with severe burns. Some local media put the death toll as high as 70. Media said 10 people had been held for questioning, but this was not confirmed by police. Many of the dead have yet to be identified and anguished relatives waited outside major hospitals through the night. The blasts struck two markets and near a bus at another as dusk fell across the capital of 14 million people, a time when bazaars were packed with people shopping for special sweets and last minute presents for the coming festivals. Singh appealed for calm. "These terrorists wish to spread a sense of fear and suspicion among our peace-loving people," he told reporters after returning to Delhi. "These blasts have been timed to create disaffection during the festive season when people of all communities are celebrating our national festivals. We shall defeat their nefarious designs." Pakistan, the United Nations and other countries condemned the attacks, especially coming at such a sensitive time. The United States recently warned its citizens of a possible terrorist attack on US interests in Delhi and elsewhere, and Indian authorities are hunting a suspected al Qaeda operative. -- Reuters.

London, Oct 31 -- A press report, dated Oct 30, states: A little-known group that police say has ties to Kashmir's most feared militants today claimed responsibility for a series of terrorist bombings that killed 59 people in New Delhi. Authorities said they had already gathered useful clues about the near-simultaneous blasts last night that ripped through a bus and two markets crowded with people preparing for the Hindu festival of Diwali. Investigators reportedly raided dozens of small hotels across

India's capital looking for possible suspects, and police said "numerous" people were being questioned. The attacks came at particularly sensitive time as India and Pakistan were hashing out an unprecedented agreement to partially open the heavily militarised frontier that divides the disputed territory of Kashmir to speed relief to victims of a massive earthquake earlier this month. The agreement was finalised early today, and Indian officials appeared hesitant to quickly put the blame for the bombings on Pakistan-based militants, unlike in previous terror attacks during a 16-year-old insurgency by Islamic separatists in India's part of Kashmir. The United States "strongly condemns the heinous terrorist attacks in India," said White House Press Secretary Scott McClellan. "By targeting innocent civilians making final preparations for holiday celebrations, terrorists have demonstrated yet again that they are enemies of humanity and contemptuous of the values all in the civilised world share," McClellan said in a statement. India's accusations of Pakistani involvement in a 2001 attack on parliament put the two nuclear-armed rivals on the brink of a fourth war. But they pulled back and, after pursuing peace efforts since early last year, both appeared intent on keeping the atmosphere calm. "We have lots of information but it is not proper to disclose it yet," Indian Home Minister Shivraj Patil said after an emergency meeting of the Cabinet called to discuss the attacks. "Our people are making good progress. The investigation is going well." A man called a local news agency in Indian Kashmir to say the militant Islamic Inquilab Mahaz, or Front for Islamic Uprising, staged the bombings, which police said killed 59 people and wounded 210. The caller, who identified himself as Ahmed Yaar Ghaznavi, said the bombings were "meant as a rebuff to the claims of Indian security groups" that militants had been wiped out by security crackdowns and the Oct 8 earthquake that devastated the insurgents' heartland in the mountains of Kashmir. A senior police officer in India's Jammu-Kashmir state said the caller's name was not familiar to intelligence agencies, and New Delhi's deputy police chief, Karnail Singh, said the group had not been very active since 1996. However, while Singh refused to comment on the claim of responsibility, he said the group is linked to the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Tayyaba, the most feared of the dozens of Kashmiri militant groups. A leading anti-terrorism expert said earlier that the timing and nature of the blasts appeared to indicate the work of Lashkar. "It looks like Lashkar. They are the most active group here," said Vikram Sood, the former head of the Research and Analysis Wing, India's foreign intelligence agency. Lashkar and some other Kashmiri groups are known to have expertise in using the powerful

explosive RDX, and a police officer with knowledge of the investigation said forensic experts were studying whether RDX was used in the attack. He said witnesses reported that the biggest explosion created a huge ball of fire like that usually caused by RDX. Police said they also were looking for a man in his 20s who refused to buy a ticket on a bus and got off in the Govindpuri neighborhood, leaving behind a large black bag. When some of the 40 passengers raised an alarm, the driver and conductor examined it and threw it out just as the blast occurred, injuring them both along with seven others. Several Indian television stations said dozens of hotels in New Delhi had been raided after the bombings and suspects were detained. After the attacks, the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party - India's main opposition party - called on the government to review what it called the "soft border" policy agreed to with Pakistan. The deal reached early today will allow people to cross the frontier in Kashmir at five points starting Nov 7 to help get food, shelter and medical aid to victims of the quake, which killed about 80,000 people and left three million homeless, most in Pakistan. Opening the border is a touchy issue in India because of the uprising by Islamic militants who are fighting to make India's part of Kashmir independent or unite it with Pakistan. Pakistan's government has been quick to condemn the bombings, which drew worldwide condemnation.

London, Nov 3 -- A press report, dated Nov 2, states: A suicide car bomb targeting the new leader of Indian-administered Kashmir has killed four people and the bomber, police say. At least 14 people were injured in the attack, hours ahead of the swearing-in of Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad. Police said the bomber was heading for Mr Azad's home but set off the bomb early when stopped by police. A Pakistan-based Islamic militant group, Jaish-e-Mohammad, has said it carried out the attack. India has indicated that deadly bombs in its capital, Delhi, on Saturday (Oct 29) may be linked to Pakistan-based militants. Jaish-e-Mohammad has been blamed for a number of attacks in Indian-administered Kashmir. Police say the bomber detonated the device two kilometres from the home of the new chief minister when stopped at a checkpoint. One policeman and three civilians were killed. Police say the death toll may rise as some of the injured are in a critical condition. Later today Ghulam Nabi Azad of the Congress Party was sworn-in as the new chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir, the first state leader from the Jammu region.

INDONESIA

London, Oct 29 -- A press report, dated today, states: Unidentified assailants attacked a group of high school girls today in Indonesia's tense province of Central Sulawesi,

beheading three and seriously wounding a fourth, police said. The students from a private Christian high school were ambushed while walking through a cocoa plantation in Poso Kota subdistrict on their way to class, police Maj. Riky Naldo said. The rural area is close to the provincial capital of Poso, about 1,000 miles northeast of the Indonesian capital Jakarta. He said the heads of the three dead girls were found several miles from their bodies.

IRAQ

London, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated today, states: At least 21 Shiite militia fighters and two policemen have been killed in a clash with Sunni Arab insurgents south-east of Baghdad, an Interior Ministry official said. Another five policemen and 12 members of the Mehdi army loyal to nationalist Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr were wounded in the battle, which erupted after they tried to rescue a Mehdi Army member who was being held hostage, the official said. "At least 21 members of the Mehdi Army were killed in the fight," a source in Sadr's office said. There was no immediate information on insurgent casualties in the battle in Nahrawan, south-east of Baghdad, an area with a mixed Sunni and Shiite population.

London, Oct 29 -- A press report, dated today, states: Insurgents killed three U.S. soldiers and wounded four in Iraq today, and a bomb hidden in a truck exploded in the center of a Shiite village north of Baghdad, killing 20 people and wounding 30. Also today, a drive-by shooting killed an oil-well manager in the northern city of Kirkuk, and American ground and air forces attacked two towns near the Syrian border, killing at least 10 militants, the military said. Witnesses said some of the victims were civilians. In Baghdad, the campaign for Iraq's December 15 election effectively began as several of the 18 coalitions started holding news conferences to unveil their tickets for the 275-member, four-term parliament. Former Prime Minister Ayad Allawi, a secular Shiite and the leader of a broad coalition, said his group's candidates would "treat all Iraqi people equally and bring stability, security and a strong leadership" to the country. A Sunni Arab coalition also submitted its list of candidates by the Friday deadline, joining other political factions in the race and signaling greater Sunni participation in a process Washington hopes will help speed the day when U.S. troops can go home. Early today, a land mine killed one U.S. soldier and wounded four early today near Beiji, 155 miles north of Baghdad. Two other U.S. Army soldiers died in south Baghdad today when their patrol struck a roadside bomb, the military said. The latest deaths bring to 2,015 the number of U.S. service members who have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to a Associated Press count. The bomb

hidden in a truck carrying dates exploded in Huweder, a Shiite village near Baqouba 35 miles northeast of Baghdad. Police said 30 people were wounded. It exploded near a mosque and several cafes just before sunset when Muslims would have been breaking their daily Ramadan fast. In western Iraq, U.S. warplanes used precision-guided bombs to attack insurgent "safe houses" in the town of Karabilha near the Syrian border yesterday, the military said. It provided no information about casualties, but Associated Press Television News footage showed the bodies of at least four people, including a woman. Residents using a bulldozer to clear the wreckage of several brick homes said the people who died in the attacks included civilians with no ties to insurgent groups. Also, American ground forces raided suspected insurgent safe houses in the nearby town of Husaybah, killing at least 10 militants. Gun battles broke out with insurgents, and U.S. warplanes attacked them with precision-guided munitions, the U.S. command said. It said one air attack hit a house where Abu Mahmud, a senior al-Qaida in Iraq militant, was meeting with other insurgents, but it was not known if casualties resulted. In Kirkuk, 180 miles north of Baghdad, Mikhail Eros, deputy director general for oil wells, was shot and killed in front of his home, said police Capt. Ferhad Talbani. Insurgents often attack pipelines in the region to interrupt the shipment of oil from wells to refineries in the oil-rich city. Also in Kirkuk, two police officers died when their patrol hit a roadside bomb, said police Brig. Sarhad Qader. In the capital, a drive-by shooting in the Dora neighbourhood killed a police officer. In a town near Baqouba, 35 miles northeast of Baghdad, gunmen opened fire on an Iraqi army checkpoint, touching off fighting that killed three Iraqi soldiers and three militants, police said. Seven Iraqi soldiers also were wounded. At least seven Iraqis were killed in other insurgent attacks today.

London, Oct 31 -- A press report, dated Oct 30, states: Gunmen killed the brother of Iraq's Shiite vice president today and a top trade ministry official escaped assassination in another part of the capital, while the death toll in a major truck bombing the day before rose to 30. A U.S. Marine was fatally injured in another bombing. Ghalib Abdul-Mahdi, brother of Vice President Adil Abdul-Mahdi, died along with his driver when a vehicle pulled alongside their car on bustling Palestine Street about 0745 hrs and gunmen inside opened fire. Ghalib Abdul-Mahdi was en route to Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari's office, where he served as an adviser, two aides to the vice president said. Later today, a top official in the Ministry of Trade, Qais Dawood Hasan, was wounded and two of his bodyguards were killed when gunmen ambushed their convoy in the upscale Baghdad neighbourhood of Mansour,

scene of several high-profile kidnappings and armed attacks on government officials and foreigners. Five other bodyguards and a bystander were injured, police said. The U.S. command also announced today that a Marine died of injuries suffered the day before in a roadside bombing near Baghdad. Elsewhere, an Iraqi border guard was killed and seven other Iraqi security personnel were wounded when a suicide bomber detonated his vehicle at a checkpoint in Sinjar near the border with Syria, Dr. Fadhil Abdul-Kareem said. A roadside bomb destroyed one of several oil tanker trucks today on a main road south of Baghdad, sending a fire ball up over the area and killing the two men inside, police Capt. Ibrahim Abdul-Ridha said. Four civilian passers-by were wounded. A roadside bomb killed a farmer on his tractor and seriously wounded two other civilians in Samarra, 60 miles north of Baghdad, police Capt. Laith Mohammed said. Another drive-by shooting in the capital killed two construction workers and wounded three. A statement posted on an Islamic Web site claimed responsibility for the slaying of the vice president's brother in the name of Iraq's most dreaded terror group, al-Qaida in Iraq. The claim could not be verified. There was no claim for the attack on the trade ministry official. Sectarian hatred appeared to be behind yesterday's brutal truck bomb attack against Shiite civilians in the farming village of Huweder about 45 miles northeast of Baghdad. The blast occurred about sundown when a bomb hidden in a truck packed with dates exploded in the centre of the village. The death toll from the attack rose Sunday to 30 when four more victims died of their injuries, according to Dr. Ahmed Fouad of the Baqouba General Hospital. Forty-one people remained hospitalized, he said. In a statement Sunday, the Iraqi Islamic Party, a mostly Sunni Arab group, condemned the Huweder bombing, saying such bloodshed could trigger sectarian civil war. But the statement also alleged that a radical Shiite militia had been staging attacks against Sunnis in the same area, kidnapping dozens of Sunnis in recent days. "The Iraqi Islamic Party condemns these acts and calls for national dialogue to thwart the attempts to cause sedition," the statement said. As insurgents stepped up their attacks, U.S. aircraft went into action in insurgency hotspots north and west of the capital. Late yesterday, U.S. forces spotted insurgents moving in the darkness to set up an ambush near the giant U.S. air base of Taji, 12 miles north of Baghdad, the military said in a statement. The insurgents fired on Apache attack helicopters that were conducting reconnaissance. The helicopters fired back and the insurgents retreated. When they tried to regroup, an Air Force F-15E jet dropped a 500-pound bomb on them, the military said. Six insurgents were killed and five were wounded and

captured, the statement said. Elsewhere, a Marine Harrier jet killed three insurgents who were planting roadside bombs late yesterday in the north of Ramadi, an insurgent stronghold 70 miles west of Baghdad, the military said. In an interview yesterday with FOX News, Iraqi President Jalal Talabani complained that American commanders were stalling on giving Iraqi forces a bigger role in battling the insurgents. "We ask them for things to change, they agree, and then nothing happens," Talabani said. He said the Iraqis would prefer for coalition forces to concentrate on protecting oil pipelines and other key infrastructure. Fox said the U.S. military declined comment on Talabani's remarks.

London, Nov 1 -- A press report, dated Oct 31, states: Capping the bloodiest month for American troops since January, the U.S. military reported today that seven more U.S. service members were killed - all victims of increasingly sophisticated bombs that have become the deadliest weapon in the insurgents' arsenal. Bombs also claimed a toll today among civilians in Basra. A large car bomb exploded along a bustling street packed with shops and restaurants as people were enjoying an evening out after the daily Ramadan fast. At least 20 were killed and about 40 wounded, police Lt. Col. Karim al-Zaidi said. Military commanders have warned that Sunni insurgents will step up their attacks in the run-up to the Dec. 15 election, when Iraqis will choose their first full-term parliament since the collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime in 2003. To guard against such attacks, the military has raised the number of American troops in Iraq to 157,000 - among the highest levels of the Iraq conflict. Today's attack against U.S. service members came in an area known as the "triangle of death." Four soldiers from the U.S. Army's Task Force Baghdad died when their patrol struck a roadside bomb in Youssifiyah, 12 miles south of Baghdad. Two other soldiers from the Army's 29th Brigade Combat Team were also killed in a bombing today near Balad, 50 miles north of the capital. The U.S. military also reported that a Marine died the day before in a roadside bombing near Amiriyah, an insurgent hotspot 25 miles west of Baghdad. The U.S. military death toll for October is now at least 92, the highest monthly total since January, when 106 American service members died - more than 30 of them in a helicopter crash that was ruled an accident. Public safety has deteriorated in recent months in Basra largely because of feuding among rival Shiite extremist groups that have infiltrated the police and security services. The city had previously been much more peaceful than Baghdad or cities within the volatile central, northern and western areas of the country where the Sunni Arab-led insurgency rages. Earlier today near the Syrian border, Marines backed by jets attacked insurgent targets in a

cluster of towns and villages near the Syrian border. The raid was part of an ongoing operation in an area believed heavily infiltrated by al-Qaida in Iraq and foreign fighters. A Marine statement said U.S. aircraft fired precision weapons, destroying two safe houses believed used by al-Qaida figures. The statement made no mention of casualties, but Associated Press Television News video from the scene showed residents wailing over the bodies of about six people, including at least three children. At the local hospital, Dr. Ahmed al-Ani claimed 40 Iraqis, including 12 children, were killed in the attack. But the claim could not be independently verified, and figures from the area have sometimes proven exaggerated.

Baghdad, Nov 2 -- Eleven Iraqis were killed in three separate attacks in Baghdad today and US airstrikes destroyed three houses the military said were used by al Qaeda militants in western Iraq near the Syrian border. One of the Baghdad bombs was aimed at an Iraqi army patrol in the south-east of the capital and five soldiers were killed, police said. A second bomb in the east of the city hit a civilian van, killing five civilians and wounding several more, the US military and Iraqi police said. Another bomb wounded five civilians near a vegetable market in the southern Doura district of the city, police said, and an Iraqi police patrol came under fire in western Baghdad, leaving one policeman dead and five wounded. The latest attacks kept Iraqis on edge as they prepared for the Eid holiday marking the end of the Ramadan month of fasting, which is expected to start around tomorrow. The Shi'ite and Kurdish-led government and its US backers are battling a Sunni Arab insurgency that shows no sign of let-up and which US commanders have warned may increase in the run-up to Dec 15 parliamentary elections. US forces have conducted a series of offensives in western Iraq to choke off what they say is a supply route for foreign fighters coming from Syria into Iraq to fuel the insurgency. In the latest airstrikes, the military said coalition air forces had bombed three al Qaeda safe houses in the area of Husayba, which is near the Syrian border. "Sources indicated that, following the air strikes, surviving terrorists from neighbouring houses retrieved the bodies of six terrorists killed during the attack," the military statement said, adding that the use of precision guided bombs had "mitigated the risk to civilians in the local area." US aircraft conducted similar pre-dawn raids aimed at al Qaeda targets in the area on Monday (Oct 31). On that occasion local hospital officials reported some 40 civilian deaths. There was no independent confirmation of the casualties. US officers accuse local doctors of inflating casualty figures and describing dead guerrilla fighters as civilians. -- Reuters.

London, Nov 3 -- A press report, dated Nov 2, states: A suicide bomber

detonated a minibus today in an outdoor market packed with shoppers ahead of a Muslim festival, killing about 20 people and wounding more than 60 in a Shiite town south of Baghdad. Six U.S. troops were killed, two in a helicopter crash west of the capital. Also today, the U.S. command confirmed moves to step up training on how to combat roadside bombs - now the biggest killers of American troops in Iraq. At least 2,035 U.S. military service members have died since the Iraq conflict began in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. The suicide bombing occurred about 1700 hrs, in the centre of Musayyib, a Euphrates River town 40 miles from Baghdad. The town police chief, Lt. Col. Ahmed Mijwil, said 22 people were killed and 61 wounded. But officials warned the figures could change as rescuers frantically searched the area of meat and vegetable stalls, shops and cafes. Elsewhere, fighting flared between U.S. troops and Sunni Arab insurgents in Ramadi, capital of Anbar province 70 miles west of Baghdad. Late yesterday, a U.S. Marine and sailor were killed when a roadside bomb exploded near their vehicle in Ramadi. Sporadic clashes occurred throughout the night and into today, residents said. Associated Press Television News video from the city showed a burning civilian vehicle and what appeared to be a destroyed U.S. Humvee. Later today, a Marine AH-1W Super Cobra attack helicopter crashed just north of Ramadi, killing its two Marine crew members, the military said. A U.S. statement said the cause of the crash was under investigation. But APTN quoted an Iraqi resident as saying the helicopter was shot down. Hours after the crash, a Marine Corps F-18D fighter jet dropped two 500-pound bombs on what the U.S. military described as an "insurgent command centre" about 400 yards from where the helicopter went down. There was no report of casualties in the airstrike. In Balad, 50 miles north of Baghdad, a U.S. soldier was mortally wounded when his patrol came under small arms fire today, the military said. One insurgent was killed when the American patrol returned fire and another died when a U.S. Air Force jet blasted the building where he had taken refuge, the military added. The sixth fatality was a soldier from the Army's Task Force Baghdad who was killed by a roadside bomb today in a southern district of the capital, the military said. Most of the insurgents are Sunni Arabs, and in an overt move to that community Iraq's defense minister today invited some officers in Saddam Hussein's former army to enlist in the new force. The U.S. decision to disband Saddam's 400,000-member army soon after he was ousted in April 2003 has been widely seen as a major contributor to the growth of the insurgency, which is fuelled by Sunni ex-soldiers. The U.S. command said it is accelerating counterinsurgency training for newly arrived officers, including the best

ways to protect their troops against roadside bombs. Lt. Col. Steve Boylan, the U.S. military spokesman in Baghdad, said the U.S. command will soon open the training school at Taji, an air base 12 miles north of Baghdad. U.S. troops undergo counterinsurgency training before heading to Iraq, but the command wants newcomers to become familiar with the latest insurgent tactics. There was no claim of responsibility for the Musayyib attack - the third major vehicle bombing in a predominantly Shiite area of Iraq within the last five days. A total of 50 people had already been killed since Saturday (Oct 29) in car bombings in Basra and a Shiite village in central Diyala province. Those attacks have fuelled fears of more sectarian tension between the majority Shiites and minority Sunni Arabs. The leader of al-Qaida in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, has urged his followers to attack Shiites, whom he considers heretics and collaborators with the U.S.-led coalition. The bloodshed persists despite progress in promoting a political process, which the Bush administration hopes will in time lure Sunni Arabs away from the insurgency and enable the Americans and their coalition partners to begin sending their troops home. After voters overwhelmingly approved the constitution in an October 15 referendum, attention has focused on the December 15 parliamentary elections. Many Sunni Arab candidates have joined the race; most of their community boycotted the last election in January. In other violence today, at least 13 Iraqis were killed and 25 wounded in scattered shootings and other bombings around the country.

ISRAEL

London, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated today, states: Israeli troops fired missiles at the Gaza Strip and raided a West Bank town, killing two Islamic Jihad militants and arresting one of the group's top leaders in retaliation for a suicide bombing that killed five Israelis. The attacks, which killed a total of seven Palestinians, came hours after Prime Minister Ariel Sharon declared a "broad and nonstop" offensive against the Palestinian militant group. Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for yesterday's bombing in the central Israeli town of Hadera, calling it revenge for Israeli's killing of one of its West Bank leaders last week. The escalating violence has all but dashed hopes for resumed peace efforts after Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and increased pressure on Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas to confront militants. Abbas has refused to crack down on armed groups such as Islamic Jihad, fearing civil war. Israel launched its operation with four airstrikes in Gaza early today, targeting open fields used by militants to fire rockets, the army said. In the afternoon, about 35 jeeps, backed by Apache helicopters, entered Jenin and troops surrounded the home

of Abdel Khalim Izzadin. After a brief standoff, Izzadin and three other men surrendered, witnesses said. Later today, Israel fired missiles at the Jebaliya refugee camp near Gaza City as people were returning home from evening prayers. Witnesses said the target was a white Subaru car. Shadi Mohanna, the Islamic Jihad field commander for northern Gaza, was killed along with his assistant, Mohammed Ghazaineh, according to Islamic Jihad. A reporter saw two charred bodies. Palestinian Health Ministry official Dr. Moaiya Hassanain said seven people were killed, the militants and five bystanders. Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat said, "We want to condemn this attack and warn about the consequences of this escalation." In a text message Islamic Jihad vowed retaliation: "This massacre will escalate the revenge and the action and reaction and God willing there will be a painful immediate response for tonight's crime." Israel's airstrikes targeted northern Gaza, where militants have been firing some rockets at Israel. (See issue of Oct 28.)

London, Oct 28 -- A press report, dated today, states: Israel has launched missile strikes on Gaza, killing eight Palestinians, hours after Prime Minister Ariel Sharon vowed to retaliate for a suicide bombing. A leading member of Islamic Jihad and three other members of the militant group were among those killed. Israel later fired missiles into an area which the army said was used by militants to launch rockets. Five Israelis were killed in a suicide bombing in Hadera on Wednesday (Oct 26). Islamic Jihad said it carried out the attack. Palestinian officials have condemned Israel for the air raid on the Gaza Strip, saying there would be serious repercussions for all sides if such attacks continued. Israeli Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz has told an Israeli newspaper that he doubts whether Israel can reach a comprehensive peace settlement with the current Palestinian leadership. In an interview with Yediot Aharonot, Mr Mofaz said it would be necessary to wait for the next generation to emerge. In Gaza, witnesses said Israeli missiles struck a white Subaru car that was travelling between the northern refugee camp of Jabaliya and the town of Beit Lahiya. Islamic Jihad's field commander in northern Gaza, Shadi Mohanna, died along with his assistant, Mohammed Ghazaineh. Four bystanders were killed and 15 others hurt. The attack came just after special prayers for the holy month of Ramadan had ended and the street was crowded with people. "The explosion was very powerful, and flying metal from the car and the missile wounded many of the people walking in the street," said a witness who gave his name as Nidal.

London, Oct 29 -- A press report, dated today, states: Israeli aircraft fired missiles on Gaza early today, hours after an attack in the northern town of Beit Hanoun killed a

Palestinian militant. The surge in violence has dimmed the prospects for peacemaking following Israel's pullout from the coastal strip. Israeli Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz issued a pessimistic outlook yesterday for reaching a peace deal with Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas, saying in published comments that Abbas was too weak to negotiate a permanent accord. Palestinians accused Mofaz of giving voice to an Israeli policy that favors occupation. The Israeli military said its aircraft targeted the white Subaru in Beit Hanoun because the militants inside were on a mission to fire rockets at the southern Israeli town of Sderot. No hits were reported in Sderot, but the Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, a group affiliated with Abbas' governing Fatah party, said an Israeli drone targeted its members after the rockets were already fired. Besides the man killed, another was injured, and a third escaped, witnesses said. An Al Aqsa spokesman, using the code name Abu Ahmed, said Israel would "pay a heavy price for this crime." Renewing air strikes early today, Israeli jet fighters bombarded three sites in northern Gaza. About three hours later, an additional 11 missiles were fired, also in that border area, witnesses said. The attacks damaged water and sewage lines and knocked out electricity when the main transformer was hit, they said. The military confirmed two strikes, saying it aimed at sites and roads Palestinian militants used to launch rockets at southern Israel. A week of bloodshed began on Monday (Oct 24) when Israeli troops killed the top gunman from the Islamic Jihad militant group in the West Bank. An Islamic Jihad revenge suicide bombing on Wednesday killed five Israelis in the central Israeli town of Hadera. In response, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon threatened a "broad and relentless" offensive against militants, including mass arrests and air strikes, and declared he would not meet Abbas until the Palestinian leader took "serious and tangible action" to crack down on militants. The two men have not met since Israel's Gaza pullout last month because of violent confrontations between the two sides. On Thursday evening in Gaza's Jebaliya refugee camp, Israeli aircraft fired missiles at a car carrying four Islamic Jihad members, killing them and three bystanders. Among those killed was Shadi Mohanna, Islamic Jihad's field commander for northern Gaza. About 20,000 mourners, including hundreds of masked gunmen, turned out for the victims' funeral yesterday, parading the bodies on stretchers from a mosque near Jebaliya. Israeli helicopters repeatedly fired missiles at rocket-launching areas in northern Gaza late Thursday and early yesterday, and Palestinian militants fired a rocket, a mortar and an anti-tank missile from Gaza into southern Israel. No fatalities were reported in any of the incidents. Since Israel pulled its settlers and troops

out of Gaza in an operation completed last month, it has pledged not to tolerate any attacks from Gaza. In comments published in Israel's Yediot Ahronot daily on Friday, Mofaz said Abbas, widely known as Abu Mazen, did not have the power to conclude a final peace deal. Without international intervention, peace talks on the basis of the US-backed "road map" peace plan will remain stalled, as they have been in the more than two years since the plan was accepted by both sides, Palestinian Planning Minister Ghassan Khatib said.

London, Oct 31 -- A press report, dated Oct 30, states: Israeli soldiers have killed two Islamic Jihad militants in a shootout near the West Bank city of Jenin, Palestinian security sources have said. The shooting came hours after Islamic Jihad said it would end an exchange of fire in the Gaza Strip if Israel did the same. The shootout took place in Qabatiya, the home town of a suicide bomber who killed five Israelis on Wednesday (Oct 26). A week of violence has now also left 12 Palestinians dead. The Palestinian security sources said Israeli troops surrounded the hideout of an Islamic Jihad militant in Qabatiya at sunset. Witnesses described an Israeli force including jeeps, tanks and helicopters, and a prolonged firefight. Israel has not yet commented on the incident. The shootout came just as efforts to calm a week of violence seemed to be bearing fruit. Earlier in the day, it appeared a tenuous agreement had been reached to end rocket attacks from Gaza on Israel. A leader of Islamic Jihad, Khaled al-Batsh, said the group would stop firing if Israel stopped what he called its aggression. That must be thrown into question, and already one senior figure in Islamic Jihad has threatened revenge. Israel had not responded officially to the ceasefire but there had been no exchange of fire in Gaza since yesterday.

London, Nov 2 -- A press report, dated Nov 1, states: Israel killed two top Palestinian fugitives today in a missile attack on their cars, triggering threats of revenge by militants that could further erode the fragile truce between the two sides. Even as tensions rose, however, Israeli and Palestinian negotiators were trying to resolve remaining disputes over new security arrangements on the Gaza-Egypt border. Earlier in the day, Israeli Cabinet ministers approved the deployment of European inspectors at the border, a breakthrough after weeks of slow-moving talks and a major step toward giving the Palestinians freedom of movement without Israeli controls for the first time in four decades. But Palestinian negotiators complained that Israel is stalling on other key issues linked to its pullout from the Gaza Strip in September, including creating a passage between the West Bank and Gaza and speeding up the movement of cargo and workers from Gaza to Israel. In today's airstrike, missiles

slammed into a car carrying the fugitives - Hassan Madhoun of the Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades and Fawzi Abu Kara of Hamas. The car was driving on a main road next to the Jebaliya refugee camp when it was hit. Madhoun had been involved in rocket attacks on Israel, serving as a co-ordinator with other militant groups, including Hamas and Islamic Jihad, Israeli officials said. He also helped plan three bombing attacks in the past two years that killed 20 Israelis, including a blast in Israel's Ashdod port, the army said. Hamas officials said Abu Kara was an expert in making homemade rockets. Military officials said Madhoun was the main target of the attack. Nine bystanders were wounded. Hamas and Al Aqsa, a violent offshoot of Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas' ruling Fatah movement, threatened revenge. "This is an open war," said Hamas spokesman Mushir al-Masri. "(The Israelis) are going to pay a heavy price for their crimes." Hamas and Al Aqsa did not say an informal nine-month-old truce was off, but they have insisted on the right to respond to Israeli strikes, a position Abbas has dismissed as unacceptable. Since the truce deal, Hamas and Al Aqsa have refrained from carrying out attacks on Israel, while Islamic Jihad has been responsible for four suicide attacks. International mediators, meanwhile, tried to wrap up a deal on reopening the Rafah terminal on the Gaza-Egypt border, the Gazans' gate to the world. Israel closed Rafah before withdrawing, and Abbas agreed he would only reopen the border with Israeli agreement. Israel's Security Cabinet agreed today to deploy European inspectors to replace Israeli border personnel, who had controlled Palestinian movement in and out of Gaza since capturing the territory in the 1967 Mideast war. However, Israel and the Palestinians disagree over how much authority the inspectors should have - the Palestinians consider them to be advisers, while Israel wants them to be in charge. Israel also wants to be able to monitor Rafah traffic via closed-circuit TV, a demand the Palestinians reject. "The third party is there for a reason, to monitor that we carry out our obligations," said Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat. "There should be no camera linkage to Israel." Israel, meanwhile, would operate an alternate crossing, Kerem Shalom, several miles away at the junction point between Egypt, Gaza and Israel. The crossing would handle goods and foreign tourists entering Gaza. Palestinians say outgoing goods should move through Rafah, not Kerem Shalom - another point of dispute. Erekat said he hopes Rafah will reopen as early as mid-November. A reopening of the border could give Abbas a badly needed boost as he heads into January 25 parliamentary elections. Hamas is expected to pose a strong challenge, and until now, Gazans have seen few real benefits from the Israeli departure. Since the

pullout, Israel has closed two Gaza crossings - Karni for cargo and Erez for workers - for extended periods because of security alerts, leaving the coastal strip virtually cut off from the world.

Jerusalem, Nov 2 -- Palestinian gunmen today killed an Israeli soldier in a gun battle during an arrest raid in the occupied West Bank, the Israeli army said. It was Israel's first military fatality in action since the Jewish state pulled out of the Gaza strip in September, following 38 years of occupation. Israel regularly carries out arrests in the West Bank and has killed several militants during the raids. "The soldier was killed after an Islamic Jihad operative surrendered without resistance in the northern West Bank village of Yirka. He was shot during a gunbattle afterwards and died on his way to hospital," an Israeli army spokesman said. Over the past week, Israel has carried out numerous strikes against militants in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, killing 13 Palestinians, mostly gunmen. The northern West Bank has been a focus for military arrest raids since Israel's Gaza pullout. The Israeli attacks followed an Islamic Jihad suicide bombing in an Israeli coastal town and cross-border rocket fire by the group, which said it was avenging Israel's killing of a West Bank commander on Oct 24. The incident came a day after Israel killed two Palestinian militant commanders in a missile strike in the Gaza Strip, triggering vows to "open the gates of hell" for revenge attacks against the Jewish state. A week of bloodshed, including the killing of five Israelis in a suicide bombing last Wednesday, has deflated hopes that the Gaza pullout in September would revive peacemaking. -- Reuters.

Jerusalem, Nov 3 -- Israel killed a Palestinian gunman in the West Bank after a soldier was shot dead and militants fired rockets into Israel yesterday in the worst week of violence to threaten a truce deal since a Gaza pullout. The Hamas militant group threatened to completely abandon the cease-fire when it expires at the year's end, accusing Israel of failing to reciprocate by targeting militants. The soldier's death followed militant vows for revenge after Israel killed two militant leaders in Gaza on Tuesday (Nov 1) and was Israel's first military fatality in action since Israel withdrew from the coastal strip after 38 years of occupation. An army spokesman said the soldier, on an operation to arrest militants near the West Bank city of Jenin, was killed by gunmen as the Israeli force was leaving the area. Hours later, Israeli soldiers exchanged fire with gunmen in a separate raid near Jenin, critically wounding a militant of the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, an armed wing of the ruling Fatah movement. He died later in hospital, medics said. After the West Bank firefight, a rocket fired from Gaza slammed into Netiv Haasara, a community in southern Israel, cutting power and injuring a

woman, a rescue service and television reports said. The Israeli residents were ordered to take shelter in security rooms made of reinforced concrete. Palestinians have fired mortars and rockets in response to Israeli air raids in the past week, but none before yesterday had caused any damage or injury. Israel, which has vowed to respond harshly to rocket strikes, pounded launch sites in the northern Gaza Strip with artillery, the army said. Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom said there would be no let-up in raids and strikes against militant targets in Gaza as long as the Palestinian Authority did not rein in gunmen. "If Abu Mazen takes the strategic decision which he still refuses to take and acts against the infrastructure of terror, our activity in Gaza will end the same day," Shalom, using a nickname for Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, told Israel Radio. In Gaza, Hamas spokesman Mushir al-Masri said Israel's targeting of militants would kill chances of renewing a truce due to expire at year's end. "The enemy is not abiding by any of its commitments," Masri said as 15,000 Palestinians attended the funerals of two militant commanders killed in an Israeli air strike on Tuesday. "It remains a one-sided calm, and it was supposed to be reciprocal. As a result, no one should dream another calm is coming," said Masri, whose group seeks Israel's destruction. Armed Palestinian groups agreed to a "period of calm" until the end of the year after Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon declared a truce in February. But more than a week of bloodshed, the worst flareup since the cease-fire was agreed, has hit hopes the truce would last and that Israel's Gaza pullout in September would revive peacemaking after more than five years of violence. Israel has killed 14 Palestinians, mostly gunmen in raids since an Oct 26 suicide bombing killed five Israelis in a market in central Israel. Islamic Jihad said that bombing was to avenge Israel's killing of one of its West Bank commanders. - - Reuters.

IVORY COAST

London, Oct 31 -- A press report, dated Oct 30, states: Security forces in Ivory Coast fired into the air and hurled tear gas canisters today at thousands of unarmed opposition militants protesting a bitterly disputed one-year extension of President Laurent Gbagbo's mandate. Hordes of young men spilled from a packed soccer stadium rally into a nearby six-lane highway, turning back vehicles at roadblocks made from overturned tables, burning tyres and debris that sent small columns of acrid black smoke into the sky. Elections were to be held today but Gbagbo cancelled the vote, saying the civil war-riven country isn't ready. Rebels and opposition supporters agreed, but rejected Gbagbo's claim that the constitution allows him to stay in power until a ballot is held. "Gbagbo is

no longer president, that's why we're here today," said Adama Karamoko, an official of one of the political blocs organizing the rally. "He's incapable of organizing elections so he can't sit there any longer." There were no immediate reports of major violence or fatalities at the rally. Outside the stadium, though, an angry crowd bludgeoned a man in civilian clothes they claimed was an undercover intelligence officer. In a neighbourhood near the airport, attackers swinging machetes and clubs smashed windows of a bus carrying opposition supporters on their way to the stadium, slashing the arm of one passenger, said Ali Sadia, who was on the bus. After nearly eight hours under the scorching sun, the rally dispersed and thousands of people poured into the highway, joining others who had already set up roadblocks there. Riot police fired warning shots, dispersing the mobs into side streets and taking back control of the freeway, which was empty except for security forces and scattered fires. The rest of Abidjan was calm, though security forces blocked roads and a roundabout in the city center leading to the presidential palace. Similar protests were held in the rebel-held north, with thousands in the streets of the cities of Bouake and Korhogo. Opposition parties and rebels say Gbagbo's objective is to stay in office by any means. Gbagbo says he only wants to arrange elections, and says the constitution gives him the right to do so - a claim his opponents dispute. Gbagbo's opponents, including half a dozen Cabinet ministers, say they won't recognize his authority after today. They also claim he no longer has the right to command the army, which has remained loyal so far despite rumors of a possible coup. Secretary-General Kofi Annan appealed for calm, urging "all the Ivorian parties and their followers to refrain from any actions that might create tensions." The U.N. Security Council has issued a resolution backing an extension of Gbagbo's mandate for a year and calling for the appointment of a new prime minister to lead Ivory Coast toward elections by Oct. 30, 2006. The incumbent, Seydou Diarra, is seen as weak and ineffectual. It was not clear who would choose the new premier or when that would happen. Rebels are demanding they fill the post.

KENYA

London, Oct 30 -- A press report, dated today, states: At least three people, including a school boy, were shot dead and dozens wounded in western Kenya today as security forces tackled a riot over the country's bitterly disputed proposed constitution. Riot police opened fire on the disturbance in Kisumu on the shores of Lake Victoria while dispersing hundreds of youths who had attempted to stop a rally by four cabinet ministers who support the draft, police and medical sources said today.

NEPAL

London, Oct 28 -- A press report, dated today, states: A general strike to protest laws restricting the media shut down schools, businesses and transportation in Nepal's capital, Katmandu. Nepal's seven major political parties called the strike to oppose new regulations that let authorities shut down newspapers and radio stations, and jail journalists. The new laws, imposed on October 9, make publishing or broadcasting criticism of Nepal's king punishable by up to two years in prison. They also raise the maximum fine for newspapers or journalists who criticise the royal government by 10 times to 500,000 rupees, and give authorities the power to revoke journalists' credentials. Hundreds of police patrolled Katmandu's streets as journalists and activists planned to hold a mass protest rally in the city.

PAKISTAN

London, Oct 30 -- A press report, dated today, states: A bomb blast blew up a gas pipeline near Sibi yesterday, temporarily suspending the supply of gas in Quetta and its adjoining areas. Official sources said that unidentified men blew up the 12-inch pipeline at midnight near Sibi, approximately 150 kilometres south-east of the provincial capital. No group has claimed responsibility for the blast so far. In a separate incident, a paramilitary check post was attacked by armed men in the Turbat area of the Makran division on Friday (Oct 28). The paramilitary forces retaliated to the attack and arrested some suspects. In another incident, a homemade bomb exploded on a railway track connecting Quetta with the rest of the country on Saturday, damaging a small section of the railroad but causing no injuries, police said. No one claimed responsibility.

SOMALIA

London, Oct 29 -- A press report, dated Oct 28, states: Somali warlord Muse Sudi Yalahow has threatened to shoot down any plane flying over the capital, Mogadishu, known to be diverted to other towns. This follows a deal reached by the prime minister with Kenya to close airstrips controlled by the warlords. Flights from Kenya would have to fly over Mogadishu to reach his government faction based in Jowhar town. The airstrips been an important source of revenue to rival warlords since the central government collapsed in 1991. Some 10 plane loads of the mild narcotic leaf, khat, arrive in Mogadishu every day. Prime Minister Ali Mohammed Ghedi said the decision to close the airstrips had been taken to bring law and order to Somalia. The country has been without a functioning national government for 14 years and a transitional parliament and government, sworn in last year, has failed to end the anarchy. Mr Ghedi and the president have made Jowhar, 90km north of Mogadishu, the

temporary capital for their government as they say Mogadishu is unsafe. But the speaker of parliament has set up operations in the capital, along with former Mogadishu warlords, including Mr Yalahow who is also the trade minister in new the government.

SUDAN

Khartoum, Oct 31 -- Two deminers were ambushed and killed in southern Sudan today by suspected Ugandan rebels who take refuge in the lawless, war-devastated area, the United Nations said. The deminers, from the Swiss Foundation for Mine Action (FSD), were travelling in a convoy towards the Ugandan border, the United Nations said in a statement. Their nationalities were not made known. "The victims of the attack were in the lead vehicle when they were stopped by armed men, taken out of the truck and killed," the statement said. The occupants of the other vehicles took refuge in a Sudanese army camp. Initial reports indicated two Sudanese soldiers were also wounded in the attack, which the United Nations said appeared to be the work of the Ugandan Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). In Geneva, FSD spokesman Ian Clarke confirmed the two deaths but said no information on their nationalities would be released until their next of kin had been informed. The International Criminal Court (ICC), investigating war crimes committed during 19 years of conflict in northern Uganda, this month issued its first arrest warrants for five LRA commanders, including the elusive leader Joseph Kony. Kony is thought to be hiding somewhere in southern Sudan. Southern Sudanese rebels signed a peace agreement with the Khartoum government in January to end more than two decades of civil war in Sudan. While the vast south has not been heavily mined, heavy rains, hostile terrain and a lack of maps, have made locating them next to impossible. -- Reuters.

THAILAND

London, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated Oct 28, states: Militants stepped up their assaults yesterday, derailing a northbound passenger train with powerful explosives less than a day after launching raids in 63 locations and stealing at least 92 government-issued weapons. Miraculously, the derailing injured only one of the 100-plus passengers. Explosives have been planted on rail tracks before but yesterday's incident marks the first time a bomb has targeted a moving train. The incident came as a shock to security agencies and set off growing fears that more public places would be targeted in the future. The train had just departed Sungai Kolok station and was slowly picking up speed when two of the four bombs exploded simultaneously, authorities said. The other two failed to go off. Panicking passengers were said to have jumped from the train. The rail link, which will take at least a day to repair, is the

main transport route connecting the deep South to the rest of the country. Director of the Southern Region's Rail Authority of Thailand, Thanongsak Phongprasert, said the train service would not resume until bomb squads and the military have thoroughly swept the area. Unlike other bomb attacks in the region, the two simultaneous explosions were believed to have been set off by detonators linked to the bombs by wires, officials said. The incident came less than a day after scores of insurgents launched coordinated attacks across some 20 districts in the three southernmost provinces. At least five people, including one of the insurgents, were killed during Wednesday night's (Oct 26) offensive. Defence Minister Thamarak Isarangura said an intelligence report indicated that the insurgents were planning to step up their activities at the end of Ramadan. Meanwhile, in Tak Bai district, two young men were injured in a roadside attack that took place yesterday. Police believe insurgents are behind the attack.

TURKEY

Diyabakir, Nov 1 -- Two Turkish soldiers and a state-sponsored village guard were killed in a clash with Kurdish rebels in south-east Turkey overnight, the local governor's office said today. One militant from the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) was also killed in the fighting in Sirkak province near the border with Iraq when the guerrillas attacked a hillside army post. The Sirkak governor's office said in a statement four soldiers were wounded in the firefight. -- Reuters.

Labour Disputes**CANADA**

London, Nov 1 -- A press report, dated Oct 31, states: Canadian mining firm Falconbridge has reached agreement with workers at its Kidd Creek copper facility, ending a four-week strike that had hit output. The workers had walked out after they failed to agree the terms of a new, three-year contract. They will return to work tomorrow after four fifths of the workforce voted to accept an improved offer. Earlier this month, Falconbridge agreed to a friendly 12.5bn Canadian dollars (£6bn) takeover by rival Inco. Workers had complained that the initial pay deal did not reflect a surge in commodity prices, and was less than their previous agreement. As part of the new deal, workers will get a two percent wage increase in the first year, followed by two percent in the second and one percent in the third. They also will get a cost of living allowance, and a one-off payment of C\$1,500. Falconbridge has also agreed to

continue with the "present benefit coverage" and use its own workers before contractors. "The bottom line is that we have made progress in virtually every area of the collective agreement," said Bob Chernecki, an official of the Canadian Auto Workers union, which had been representing the strikers. Commodity firms have been enjoying solid times as prices for metals such as copper have been driven to new highs by demand in developing economies like China. The Kidd Creek operation in northern Ontario produces copper and zinc, and has one of the world's largest smelting operations.

NETHERLANDS

Amsterdam, Oct 31 -- Workers at Europe's biggest oil refinery, Royal Dutch Shell's Pernis plant, launched a strike today in a protest over pensions and have started to scale down production at some refinery's units. The strike, that could threaten fuel supplies in Europe ahead of winter, will not completely shut down production at Shell's 418,000 barrel-per-day (bpd) refinery today because of safety measures, the Dutch biggest trade union FNV has said. It could take two weeks for the Rotterdam refinery to be brought to a standstill, FNV says. "The ultimatum (to meet workers' demand) expired at 1800 hrs, which means a process has started to scale down production units at the refinery," a Shell spokesman in the Hague said. "We assume that the unions and their members/supporters will start the scaling down of the unit(s) in a safe and responsible manner," Shell said in a statement. "Of course this will take place in a phased situation and it is too early to speculate on this procedure." Workers at Shell's 900,000 tonnes per year Dutch petrochemical cracker in Moerdijk also started a strike, FNV trade union said. Disruption to the refinery's operations would not immediately create a fuel shortage, but if it drags on it could bite into stocks and hit supplies of winter heating oil and gasoline, traders said. "Most refiners are already running as much as they can. There is a surplus at the moment," said one European refiner, who asked not to be named. Trade unions at Pernis say they want no change to the company's present pension scheme, while Shell plans to raise the retirement age to 65 from 60 and force workers to contribute to their pensions. "We are still quite surprised about the position of the unions, regarding the new pension scheme, as this scheme will remain one of the best in The Netherlands," Shell said. -- Reuters.

SPAIN

London, Oct 28 -- A press report, dated today, states: Spanish fishermen yesterday reached an agreement with the central government and began lifting blockades at key ports around the country. Since late Sunday (Oct 23) night, the fishermen had blocked the entrance to major ports on Spain's

Mediterranean and Atlantic seaboard in protest at the crippling effect of high fuel prices. Dozens of merchant ships were trapped at their berths, while other ships queued at anchorage or diverted to nearby ports to avoid the blockades altogether. The agreement reached yesterday followed a marathon 18-hour negotiation with the agriculture minister, Elena Espinosa. Fishermen will receive a subsidy of nearly 10 cents per litre of fuel, up to a maximum per shipowner of Euro3,000 in a three-year period. Late yesterday afternoon, the worst-hit ports were getting back to normal, a process that is likely to take a few days.

Bilbao, Oct 27 -- Due to the fishermen strike, over bunker prices, the port of Bilbao, as well as other Spanish ports, is blocked by fishing vessels preventing the arrival and sailing of vessels at/from the port. The vessels trying to enter Bilbao remain anchored at the port roads. The blockade commenced yesterday and has continued today. -- Lloyd's Agents.

Bilbao, Oct 28 -- Fishing vessels have returned to their berthing places and the blockade is over. As of today vessels may enter and sail normally in and out of the port of Bilbao. -- Lloyd's Agents.

UNITED KINGDOM

London, Nov 2 -- A press report, dated today, states: Dairy farmers across the country began a three-day strike today in protest at falling prices paid by supermarkets which they say are driving them out of business. Almost 4,000 farmers are expected to halt supplies of milk to dairies for the rest of the week and instead give away or dump hundreds of thousands of pints of milk. Farmers will also stop taking livestock, poultry and vegetables to market. David Handley, chairman of Farmers for Action, a militant campaign group organising the protest, said farmers were being bankrupted by supermarkets forcing down wholesale prices. Unless retailers and the Government signalled they were listening to the protests, the group threatened week-long strikes in the approach to Christmas. Mr Handley advised consumers to stock up on perishable food. Farmers' growing militancy is in response to a squeeze on prices by the big store chains. Competitive tendering for supermarket contracts has prompted the leading dairy processors - Arla, Dairy Crest and Robert Wiseman - to offer ever cheaper milk. Margins have been maintained by slashing the price to farmers. The Milk Development Council says that farmers now receive about 18p for a litre of milk - about 1p less than the cost of production. Ten years ago they were receiving about 25p. Meanwhile, supermarkets are taking 10 times as much money from a litre of milk as they were a decade ago. Mr Handley, a dairy farmer in Monmouthshire, said that until 1998 the three sides in the dairy business - the farmer, the processor and the retailer - were

making a "fair living". According to the Milk Development Council, about 1,000 dairy farmers are quitting the business every year. Ian Potter, a businessman who trades EU milk quotas that authorise dairy farming, said morale in the dairy industry had sunk to dangerously low levels. "The strike is an indication of how desperate and frustrated dairy farmers are," Mr Potter said. "It's not something any of them wish to take part in but they just think all other means are failing them." The NFU, the farmers' union, is urging its members not to break commercial contracts by joining the strike, though it agrees that many dairy farmers receive "pitifully low wages".

Awards & Settlements



ACCOUNTING FRAUD, UNITED STATES

London, Nov 2 -- A press report, dated Nov 1, states: Qwest Communications International Inc., the No. 4 U.S. local-phone company, agreed to pay \$400 million to settle shareholder lawsuits stemming from the company's \$3.8 billion accounting fraud. Qwest will make payments in three installments and the company's former accountant, Arthur Andersen LLP, will contribute \$10 million, the company said in a statement today. Denver-based Qwest also posted a narrower third-quarter loss as sales increased for the second straight period after 15 quarters of declines. The company has now agreed to spend at least \$650 million to settle claims related to bogus sales from 1999 to 2002. The shares soared 12-fold as Qwest reported surging sales, and slumped once the fraud was uncovered. The carrier faces nine other shareholder suits, including one brought by the California State Teachers Retirement System. "If they could settle this, then that would give them a template to get the rest of the suits settled," Janco Partners analyst Donna Jaegers in Denver said. The company's shares fell 13 cents to \$4.23 at 9:53 a.m. in New York Stock Exchange composite trading. In March 2000, they traded at \$66. The settlement is with a group of investors represented by law firm Lerach Coughlin Stoia Geller Rudman & Robbins that bought shares between May 24, 1999, and July 28, 2002. The deal requires court approval, and the first payment of \$100 million will come within 30 days of the preliminary approval. The full payments, including interest, will be made by Jan. 15, 2007, Qwest said. In Qwest's annual report for last year, the company said the class action included 12 lawsuits filed starting July 2001 and later lumped together. They were brought by investors including the New England Health

Care Employees Pension Fund. The settlement excludes Joseph Nacchio, who was CEO from 1997 to 2002, and former Chief Financial Officer Robert Woodruff. Qwest also is paying \$250 million to settle a Securities and Exchange Commission accounting probe. During Nacchio's tenure, Qwest struck sham transactions for fiber-optic network capacity to mask declining demand, the SEC said in a complaint last October. The commission accused Nacchio of fraud in March. The Justice Department is investigating Qwest's accounting irregularities. Qwest didn't admit or deny wrongdoing when it settled the SEC case. The SEC at the time said "Qwest engaged in a massive financial fraud," and likened the company's reliance on bogus transactions to meet Wall Street estimates to a drug addiction.

CLASS-ACTION SETTLEMENT, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 26 -- A press report, dated Oct 25, states: Investors in a failed Metropolitan Mortgage affiliate would get back \$7.25 million in a proposed settlement that would also release most board members from legal liability. If approved by creditors, class-action plaintiffs and federal bankruptcy and district court judges, Summit Securities would pay the investors from an insurance pool that is used to pay legal costs for former Metropolitan Mortgage and Securities officials. The agreement proposed yesterday would split the money among a trust set up to recover and repay money to creditors in the bankruptcy case, and investors who filed a class action lawsuit against the company and its officials. Met Mortgage and its subsidiary Summit filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in February. The collapse of Met Mortgage, once a \$2.7 billion conglomerate of insurance companies and investment services, cost more than 10,000 investors some \$450 million. The proposed settlement would include most former Summit Securities board members, who would be dropped as defendants in the fraud lawsuit. Former company President Tom Turner would be excluded. He was indicted last month on seven felony counts of misleading auditors of the company. Metropolitan board members, along with executives and other key employees, are still named in lawsuits.

CLASS-ACTION SETTLEMENTS, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 28 -- A press report, dated Oct 27, states: A group of investment banks and other defendants agreed today to pay a combined \$651 million to a coalition of institutional investors that lost money in WorldCom's collapse. The lawsuits brought by the funds, which decided to forego a broader class-action settlement involving other WorldCom investors, were among the last pieces of the web of litigation stemming from the \$11 billion accounting fraud at

WorldCom that led to the telecommunication company's bankruptcy three years ago. More than 65 institutional investors are part of the new pact, including the largest U.S. pension fund, the California Public Employees' Retirement System. The California State Teachers' Retirement System and pension funds in Illinois, Washington state and Tennessee are among the other large investors set to get payments. The settlement will be paid primarily by WorldCom's former investment banks, including Citigroup and JP Morgan Chase & Co, that underwrote WorldCom Inc. securities, according to a law firm for the funds, Lerach Coughlin Stoia Geller Rudman & Robbins of San Diego. The lawsuit was aimed at compensating the investors for losses on purchases of WorldCom stocks and bonds spanning from 1998 to 2001. "This is one of the last remaining pieces of the very complex puzzle" of WorldCom litigation, said Michael Missal, a partner at law firm Kirkpatrick & Lockhart in Washington who is not involved in the case. Many of the investment banks that agreed to settle "do want to put it behind them and move forward certainly," he said. Other defendants in the case included former WorldCom board members and officers and the company's former auditors at Arthur Andersen. Citigroup spokeswoman Christina Pretto said, "we're pleased to see the matter resolved." A JPMorgan representative was not immediately available to comment. Citigroup previously agreed to pay \$2.6 billion as part of a class-action settlement stemming from investor losses in WorldCom's collapse, while JPMorgan settled that case for \$2 billion. The total recovery for investors in the class-action case, led by the New York State Common Retirement Fund, stands at more than \$6.1 billion. The California Public Employees' Retirement System, known as Calpers, and other WorldCom stock and bond holders opted out of the class-action settlement to pursue their own lawsuits. WorldCom, which now operates as MCI Inc., agreed earlier this year to be bought by Verizon Communications for \$8.6 billion. Former WorldCom Chief Executive Bernard Ebbers was found guilty earlier this year of overseeing the accounting fraud at WorldCom and faces 25 years in federal prison, although he is appealing his case. Other top executives, including former finance chief Scott Sullivan, also face prison time after pleading guilty to participating in the wrongdoing.

HARASSMENT & RETALIATION, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 26 -- A press report, dated Oct 25, states: The city of Walnut Creek agreed yesterday to pay \$1.1 million in a settlement with six former employees at the Dean Lesher Regional Center for the Arts who alleged harassment and retaliation by centre manager Scott Denison. Five of

the employees alleged Denison made their work environment unbearable after they blew the whistle on possible mismanagement at the centre. The sixth said Denison harassed him after he stood up for the others. Denison still runs the centre in downtown Walnut Creek. The lawsuit also alleged the city and Gary Pokorny, director of Arts, Recreation and Community Services, failed to protect the employees from verbal abuse and intimidation. The lawsuit was filed in federal court last year. "We don't admit liability," said assistant city attorney Margaret Kotzebue. "These things are expensive and the cost of trial was going to be enormous. It was a business decision." Both parties agreed to a "non-disparagement" clause in the settlement, meaning they won't comment in a negative fashion about the other side, Kotzebue said. Attorney Stan Casper, who represented the plaintiffs, said his clients stand by their original concerns, but he has instructed them not to talk about the case to the media. Four of the employees resigned before the settlement was reached and the remaining two resigned Oct 4, the day both sides struck a tentative deal during mediation, Kotzebue said. A written agreement, unanimously approved by the City Council, was finalized yesterday. Plaintiffs will be paid different amounts, according to an undisclosed formula based on years of service and other factors, including incidents they experienced, Casper said. Walnut Creek's insurance pool will pay about \$800,000 of the settlement, with the city putting up about \$300,000 for legal costs, Kotzebue said.

MEDICAL CHARGES, UNITED STATES

London, Nov 2 -- A press report, dated Nov 1, states: A settlement was reached today in a closely watched class-action lawsuit filed on behalf of uninsured patients who claim a major nonprofit hospital system overcharged them. The complaint alleges that Providence Hospital System contradicted its stated mission of providing universal access to health care by charging uninsured patients higher rates for the same services than other patients. The agreement, if approved by the court, will affect tens of thousands of low-income Oregonians, attorneys say. "This is a historic agreement and it will stick," said Brian Campf, an attorney representing uninsured patients. Similar lawsuits have been filed against hundreds of hospitals in at least 27 states, alleging that tax-exempt non profit hospitals charge higher prices to uninsured patients than insured patients. The settlement covers medical charges to uninsured patients at seven Providence hospitals in Oregon over a six-year period, going back four years and the next two years. All charges will be recalculated. Greg Van Pelt, senior vice president for Providence Health System, said the hospital system disagrees with

many of the allegations made by the plaintiffs, but it was cheaper to settle for all concerned. "Quite frankly the cost of litigation is so great it was in the patients' best interest and the hospital's to get this resolved, and this seemed the best way to do that," Van Pelt said. The lawsuit is part of a national campaign headed by Richard Scruggs, a Mississippi attorney who helped win multibillion-dollar settlements with the tobacco industry in the 1990s to pay states for smoking-related health care costs. "Other hospitals around the country should take a hard look at this" settlement, said Sid Backstrom, spokesman for the Scruggs law firm. One of the lead plaintiffs is Gerry Hugo of Medford, a retired construction worker who was billed about \$13,000 for a routine hernia operation at a Providence hospital. He took out a home equity loan after a collection agency hired by the hospital threatened to place a lien on his property. If the settlement is approved, attorneys said, Hugo will receive a \$7,300 refund. Hugo said the settlement levels the playing field for poor people struggling to cope with corporate health care providers.

MEDICAL MALPRACTICE, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 25 -- A press report, dated Oct 22, states: A Circuit Court jury has found \$2.7 million in damages for a man who lost sensation below his waist. The jury in the courtroom of Judge Sam Payne deliberated for two and a half days before making the monetary finding and also apportioning fault in the case. Plaintiff in the case was Mike Woodard, 43, who formerly lived in Chattanooga but now resides in St. Petersburg, Fla. He had gone to the emergency room at Memorial Northpark Hospital early Nov 16, 2001, with a herniated disc. He did not receive an operation until four days later, then the wrong disc was operated on, attorney Jim Neal of the firm of Summers and Wyatt said. Mr. Woodard suffered from Cauda Equina Syndrome. Mr. Neal said he wound up incontinent and losing his sexual function. He can walk, but only with difficulty. The jury found liability as 14 percent against the plaintiff, 7 percent against Memorial Northpark Hospital, 46 percent against the surgeon who operated on the wrong disc and 33 percent against the two physicians at the hospital's emergency room who sent him home without an operation.

London, Oct 26 -- A press report, dated Oct 25, states: A teenager with Down's Syndrome who was left brain damaged after a heart operation has been awarded more than £3m in compensation. Philip Revett, now 19, of Martlesham, Suffolk, suffered a rare complication during surgery as a two-year-old. The High Court heard Guy's Hospital had agreed to settle the case after admitting liability. Mr Revett's solicitor, Sharon Cutts, said: "The problems associated with Philip's original Down's Syndrome condition would have handicapped him through life, and the heart defect which he

developed is quite common among Down's Syndrome sufferers, but the mistakes in his treatment for that defect dramatically and catastrophically reduced the quality of life he and his family might have expected for him. The money agreed for his care can never put any of those misfortunes right, of course, but in the circumstances we can at least be thankful that he will now have all the specialist care he needs for the rest of his life." A spokesman for Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust said managers wished "to extend its sympathy to Philip Revett and his family for the injuries he experienced following surgery at Guy's Hospital in 1987". He said: "These events predate the formation of Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital NHS Trust in 1992. "As Guy's Hospital was a directly managed unit of the Health Authority at the time, South East London Strategic Health Authority is the successor authority responsible in this case. The Trust is pleased to hear that a settlement has now been agreed between the parties concerned."

MEDICAL NEGLIGENCE, JAMAICA

London, Oct 29 -- A press report, dated Oct 27, states: The government is to pay millions of dollars in damages to the parents of a teenage boy who became HIV-positive after a blood transfusion in May 2002 when he was 10 years old. According to legal sources the sum is the highest awarded so far for such negligence. The last award was in the region of \$10 million. The boy's parents had sued the government to recover damages for negligence. The boy, a haemophiliac, had gone to the Bustamante Hospital for Children in May 2002 for a blood transfusion. A donor's blood was tested and found to be HIV-positive. The blood should have been labelled 'positive' but was mistakenly labelled 'negative'. The boy was given that blood through the negligence of Government employees.

PATENT INFRINGEMENT, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 26 -- A press report, dated Oct 25, states: Internet retailer Amazon.com Inc. said today that third-quarter profit fell 44%, in large part because of the settlement of a patent-infringement lawsuit. In a report released after the markets closed, the Seattle-based company said its net earnings were \$30 million, or seven cents a share, for the three months ended Sep 30, down from \$54 million, or 13 cents a share, a year earlier. Excluding an unanticipated one-time \$40 million legal charge, Amazon said its net income would have been \$50 million, or 12 cents per share. In August, Amazon announced it would pay \$40 million to Sovereign Software LLC to settle a patent-infringement lawsuit. Chicago-based Sovereign had alleged that Amazon's Web site infringed several Sovereign patents on network sales systems and Internet server access control and monitoring systems.

SEXUAL ABUSE, UNITED STATES

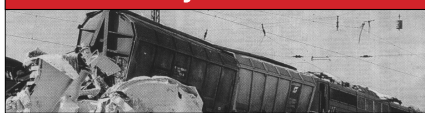
London, Nov 1 -- A press report, dated Oct 31, states: The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Hartford, Connecticut, agreed today to pay \$22 million to 43 people who said they were molested by priests. The alleged abuse dates back as far as the 1960s and involved 14 priests or retired priests. Parents tried to bring it to the attention of Archbishop John Francis Whealon in 1983 but were threatened with legal action by the archdiocese, said attorney Jason Tremont, a lawyer for the 43 people. A spokesman for the archdiocese, the Rev. John Gatzak, said the settlement will be paid for with long-term savings and insurance policies. "The archbishop wants to begin the healing process for those whose lives have been seriously harmed by sexual abuse, and for the church itself," Gatzak said. "We must acknowledge and deal with what has been done with justice and compassion." The archdiocese said six of the priests are dead and four are retired. Three others are no longer active in ministry. One remains active, and a sexual abuse review panel determined allegations against him were not credible, the diocese said.

UNLAWFUL ARREST, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 31 -- A press report, dated Oct 30, states: The Colorado State Patrol says it is working with the state attorney general's office to determine how to react to a federal jury's decision to award \$1 million to a municipal judge it held was wrongly arrested on a drunken-driving charge. Jurors found Friday (Oct 28) that trooper Cpl. Kevin P. Turner did not have probable cause to arrest John S. Wilder of Monte Vista for drunken driving or prohibited use of a weapon, and did not qualify for immunity from a lawsuit as a public employee. It was the second time the case had gone to trial. Wilder lost in 2004 but was granted a new trial. Wilder said he had tried to settle the case, unsuccessfully offering to drop the case without receiving any money if the patrol revised its arrest procedures. "The Colorado State Patrol is shocked and disappointed in the decision reached in this case and we are working very closely with the state attorney general's office in determining the most appropriate steps to take. The trooper involved in case, who is now a corporal, is a nine-year officer with a solid reputation," said Maj. Jim Wolfenbarger, a State Patrol spokesman. Kristin Hubbell, spokeswoman for the state attorney general, said, "We're going to look at our options," Hubbell said. "However, we believe the trooper acted properly and we presented a strong case." Turner stopped Wilder in November of 2001 and said the judge smelled of alcohol and his eyes were watery. In court documents the judge said he had drunk one glass of wine 10 minutes before he was stopped. The judge told the trooper that he had a handgun in the car and that he had a license to

carry it. After Wilder refused a roadside sobriety test he was arrested. He also was charged with prohibited use of a weapon because state law bans carrying a gun while drunk.

Railway Accidents



DE AAR AREA, SOUTH AFRICA

London, Oct 28 -- A press report, dated today, states: The Railway Safety Regulator (RSR) has appointed eight technical experts to probe the crash between the Blue Train and the Shosholza Meyl in the Northern Cape on Wednesday (Oct 26) night. Herman Bruwer, the regulatory body's general manager for safety assurance, said today the RSR was finalising the terms of reference of an independent board of inquiry. The team of experts would include railway expert Chris Dutton as the lead investigator and George Negoda would chair the inquiry, he said. "We have done the preliminary investigations, but cannot release the results. We don't want to jeopardise the entire investigation," he said. An official from Spoornet, one of Transnet's divisions, said Spoornet and Transnet had also launched a joint investigation into the accident. The railway line, which was closed between De Aar and Beaufort West, was now open and the wreckage removed from the scene, Michael Asefowitz, a Spoornet spokesperson said. The four critically injured people - three were airlifted to Bloemfontein and one was flown to the Cape Town Medi-Clinic - were all in a stable condition, Europ Assist's Dian Sharp said. The Blue Train had been ahead of schedule and was waiting on a loop track waiting for the Trans-Karoo Express to pass. Investigators will try to find out how they came to be on the same track, and crashed.

GROOT MARICO AREA, SOUTH AFRICA

London, Nov 1 -- A press report, dated Oct 31, states: A train driver, who was trapped in a train engine for several hours after a derailment this morning between Groot Marico and Swartruggens in the North West (of South Africa), has died. Police spokesperson Inspector Erica Roos said the man was freed from the engine around 1000 hrs. He was airlifted to a hospital in Pretoria, but died on the way. The assistant driver, a woman, managed to escape with only minor injuries. She was being treated in a hospital in Zeerust. The derailment happened around 0500 hrs when 12 of the 42 wagons of the freight train derailed on a bend. The cause of the accident was not yet known. Roos said Spoornet and Transnet officials were at the scene this afternoon to investigate the accident. The train was on its way from Krugersdorp on the West Rand to Mafikeng.

SUNGAI KOLOK AREA, THAILAND

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

Miscellaneous



GAO ZHOU HAI (China)

Turku, Nov 2 -- Bulk Gao Zhou Hai (38712 gt, built 1994) was put on embargo at port of Kokkola by FSU (Finnish Seamen's Union) due to unpaid salaries. The vessel arrived Kokkola Oct 27 from Falmouth and sailed Nov 1 in half load. -- Lloyd's Agents.

GAS LEAK AT COAL MINE, SHANXI PROVINCE, CHINA

Beijing, Nov 2 -- A Chinese coal mine gas leak has killed 17 people, the latest in a series of fatal accidents. The accident happened on Monday (Oct 31) in the city of Xinzhou in northern Shanxi province, killing 13 miners working underground. "Management immediately sent a team of six rescuers down the pit, but two of them suffocated," Xinhua news agency said. Two other miners in a neighbouring pit were also killed, it added. The Fenhema Coal Mine's business certificate and production permit had both expired, Xinhua said, quoting officials with the Shanxi provincial coal mine safety supervision bureau. -- Reuters.

OUTBREAK OF "BIRD FLU"

Beijing, Oct 26 -- China reported another outbreak of avian flu in poultry, Croatia confirmed it in wild swans and India tested blood samples from 10 dead migratory birds. Croatia said today tests confirmed the H5N1 bird flu virus in swans found dead last week, taking further into Europe the lethal strain that surfaced in South Korea two years ago and most recently spread west to Turkey, Romania and Russia. Germany and Greece were also testing dead birds. There has been a spate of fresh cases in Asia too, where 62 people have died after close contact with birds, ahead of the northern winter when H5N1 seems to thrive, experts say. Scientists believe migratory birds escaping south are spreading it and governments around the world are monitoring borders and testing arriving wild birds. In China's third case of H5N1 since last week, hundreds of chickens and ducks died in a village in central Hunan province. Beijing had notified the United Nations yesterday, according to a notice on the Web site of the World Organisation for Animal Health. "Although bird flu cases have been found in some villages in five provinces because of the spread of migratory birds, the whole situation is under control. There are no human cases," Xinhua news agency quoted Health Minister Gao Qiang as saying. China reported another outbreak

among farm geese in the eastern province of Anhui yesterday and said it, too, had been brought under control with no reported human infections. Gao said the world's most populous nation, where billions of poultry live close to farmers' homes, was monitoring effectively, reporting transparently and had adopted strict quarantine measures. Massive culls of birds in affected areas is one preventative measure. Croatia has now killed at least 27,000 poultry. The World Health Organisation says H5N1 has so far infected 121 people in four south-east Asian nations, killing one in two. Most catch it by handling sick birds or their droppings. Scientists' greatest fear is that H5N1 will mutate into a form that will pass easily among people, sparking a pandemic that could kill millions and hamper the global economy. So far, there has been no such mutation and H5N1 is hard to catch. The European Union's executive said consumers faced no risk from eggs or poultry after flu fears slashed demand. In India, officials were trying to find out what killed 10 dead migratory birds in West Bengal. Forest officials said around 40 dead open-bill stork chicks had been found in one of the state's five bird sanctuaries but could have died after falling from their nests during a storm. Health Minister Anbumani Ramadoss said India had no known cases of bird flu and 10,000 tests so far had come up negative. With thousands of migratory birds -- some from China -- due in coming weeks, New Delhi is bracing for cases and will stockpile Tamiflu, he said, but added India could force domestic companies to make the antiviral avian flu drug in an emergency. If migratory birds are spreading the virus, Africa and the Americas can expect cases. Experts say detecting and controlling the virus could prove a major task in Africa, a continent with poor infrastructure and limited resources. In Thailand, where 13 people have died of bird flu, the government has reactivated a network of almost a million health monitors to try to halt the spread of the disease after new outbreaks in poultry were confirmed in five provinces. As the virus spreads, world governments are refining plans to tackle a pandemic and cope with the huge potential costs in human lives, trade and economic output. The Asian Development Bank says even a relatively mild pandemic could cost Asia up to \$110 billion from the effects of reduced consumption, investment and trade. -- Reuters.

London, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated today, states: A new bird flu outbreak has been recorded in a Siberian region that was hit by the disease last summer, officials said today. About 90 chicken and ducks have died in the village of Rotovka in the Omsk region, and tests showed the birds had the same H5N1 strain of avian flu, said Boris Mishkin, the head of the regional branch of Russia's veterinary service. Local authorities have imposed a quarantine in the village located 1,550 miles east

of Moscow and were considering whether to kill all of 3,300 birds there, Mishkin said.

Ljubljana, Oct 28 -- A wild swan found dead in a river in northeastern Slovenia this week did not have the avian flu virus, a source close to the state veterinary service said today. Official results of the tests were due later today but a the source told Reuters the swan had tested negative. The swan, caught in a fisherman's net in the Drava river near Maribor on Monday (Oct 24), probably drowned, the source said. Slovenia this week ordered farmers in most of the country to keep all poultry indoors after the lethal H5N1 bird flu virus strain was confirmed in wild swans in neighbouring Croatia. -- Reuters.

London, Nov 1 -- A press report, dated Oct 31, states: The H5 avian influenza virus has been found in wild migratory birds in Canada, officials said today, but there is no threat to human health. The virus, whose subtype must still be determined, was detected in 28 ducks in the eastern province of Quebec and five in Manitoba in central Canada out of approximately 4,800 samples, officials said. The virus is not the H5N1 bird flu that has killed over 60 people in Asia in the past two years. "The detection of H5 avian influenza is not unexpected," officials said in a statement, since various types and strains have been detected in North America over the past 30 years. "The birds tested in this national survey were healthy, and there is no evidence of influenza-related illness among domestic or wild birds in the test areas." Tests continue to determine the N type of the virus. Meanwhile, Thailand has confirmed its 20th human case of the deadly H5N1 bird flu virus after tests on a woman proved positive, a government health official said today. "The Siriraj hospital this evening confirmed a 50-year-old woman is confirmed as having H5N1," Thawat Suntrajarn, director general of the Department of Disease Control, told AFP. "She became infected while cleaning the area where her backyard chickens live. She is fine and under treatment at hospital now" in Bangkok, Thawat added. The woman is from the Bang Bua Thong district of Nonthaburi province on Bangkok's northern border, an area that has reported an outbreak of the virus among poultry. The country today reported a new case of H5N1 among chickens in the northeastern province of Kalasin. It was the first bird flu case in the province for more than a year. Officials from the Avian Influenza Control Operating Centre in Bangkok said it confirmed the virus last week after noticing a suspicious death among poultry. The chickens were culled and their samples sent for testing. A centre official did not say how many chickens carried the virus or how many had been culled.

London, Nov 1 -- A press report, dated today, states: The deadly H5N1 strain of bird flu has been detected in

chickens in another Thai province, as the country struggles to contain the disease one day after the latest human case was diagnosed. "On Monday, we found an additional bird flu outbreak in Sam Chuk district of Supanburi. Four locally bred chickens died there," agriculture minister Sudarat Keyuraphan told reporters. The latest outbreak in Supanburi, just northwest of Bangkok, brings to six the number of provinces with confirmed cases in birds. Others are in Chachoengsao, Kalasin, Kamphaeng Phet, Kanchanaburi, and Nonthaburi, she said. Twenty-one of Thailand's 76 provinces are under surveillance for bird flu, she added.

Fires & Explosions



BARN AND THOROUGHBREDS, ELKTON, MARYLAND, UNITED STATES

London, Nov 3 -- A press report, dated Nov 2, states: According to a story in the *Thoroughbred Times*, a barn fire killed 24 Thoroughbreds last night at the Fair Hill Training Centre in Elkton, Maryland. Investigators are still trying to determine the cause of the fire. According to farm manager, Sally Goswell, four horses escaped without injury and no humans were hurt in the blaze. Hardest hit was trainer, Bruce Jackson, who lost eleven head. Also suffering losses were trainers Richard Lugovich, Peter Alexander, Richard Trimmer, Clyde Martin, Don Denemo and Malcolm Cook. More than 100 firefighters from Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Delaware helped battle the fire, according to the Associated Press. Damage to the building and the value of the lost horses is estimated at \$1 million.

COAL MINE, SHANXI PROVINCE, CHINA

London, Nov 2 -- A press report, dated today, states: An explosion in a coal mine in northern China's Shanxi province has killed 17 people, the State Administration for Work Safety said today. The blast happened on Monday (Oct 31) in the Fenhemao Coal Mine in Zhanglianggou town, Yuanping city, killing all 13 people working in the mine at the time, the Administration said. Two rescuers also died because of insufficient oxygen in the mine shaft and the thick smoke inside, the administration said. The blast also damaged a neighbouring mine, killing two people there, the Xinhua news agency said.

COAL MINE, XINJIANG REGION, CHINA

London, Oct 28 -- A press report, dated today, states: Sixteen miners have become trapped in a coal mine in China's north-west after a suspected explosion. The Xinhua News Agency

says mine safety officials have been sent to the mine in the Xinjiang region.

FACTORY, HIRAKATA, OSAKA PREFECTURE, JAPAN

London, Oct 28 -- A press report, dated Oct 27, states: An explosion occurred at the factory of an industrial waste collection company in Hirakata, Osaka Prefecture, Wednesday night (Oct 26), causing a fire that nearly burned down the factory and an adjacent factory, and left one dead and another injured, police and firefighters said. The blast took place just past 2200, local time, and the fire was put out in about one and a half hours later, they said. The factory belonged to Daisho Sangyo. The owner of Daisho, Eiji Hashimoto, was killed, while the owner of Taiho suffered burns on the back, according to the authorities.

FURNITURE MANUFACTURING PLANT, ARLINGTON, WASHINGTON, UNITED STATES

London, Nov 2 -- A press report, dated Oct 31, states: A fire that broke out yesterday night at a furniture plant in Arlington was still burning this morning. The fire broke out about 2000 hrs, in the Jensen Business Park. After the roof collapsed at the "Modern Furniture Manufacturers" business, firefighters took a defensive stand and kept the flames from spreading to nearby businesses. Flames were visible blocks away some two hours after a passing police officer reported the fire. Firefighters fought the blaze defensively, because there was nothing left to save. The plant was full of highly flammable materials, including furniture, paint, glue and other chemicals. They planned to stay on the scene overnight. Explosions were heard inside the plant. No one was inside the plant when the fire broke out. The plant employed about 100 people. There were no reports of any injuries. Investigators have not determined the cause of the blaze.

GOLD MINE, MOUNT DIWATA, PHILIPPINES

London, Oct 28 -- A press report, dated today, states: At least five people were dead and up to 100 feared trapped after an explosion and cave-in at a gold mine in the southern Philippines, officials said today. Toxic fumes were keeping rescuers away two days after five bodies and 11 injured miners were pulled out after the accident in the Mount Diwalwal area on the southern island of Mindanao late on Wednesday (Oct 26), said village chief Franco Tito. Villagers said a loud explosion was heard before the so-called Sunshine tunnel collapsed. The Office of Civil Defence said today an estimated 100 people were trapped, but there were lower estimates from other sources. Radio reports yesterday had said 18 people had died and that 50 were trapped and feared dead. "We're not really sure how many people were trapped

inside," Mr Tito said. "I talked with three survivors and they told me there could be 50 to 70 people inside when the tunnel collapsed." Rescue teams could not penetrate the mine because of fumes, he added. The poisonous gas had seeped into two nearby tunnels, the entrances to which are about 800 metres up the side of a mountain. "They said they have no special suits and equipment to battle the thick smoke and toxic fumes from inside the tunnel," Mr Tito said. "They told us they will come back in two days, waiting for the poisonous gas to blow away." Edilberto Arreza, regional director of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau, said only 11 people were believed trapped. The other two tunnels had been evacuated for safety reasons. Mr Arreza said as many as 50 people were initially feared to have been trapped in an area where hundreds of small-scale miners have been in operation for decades, but that most of the workers had been accounted for. "Rescuers are pumping out all the gases in the mine with ventilation fans," he said. "We might be able to enter this afternoon."

Mount Diwata, Oct 29 -- The death toll from a cave-in at a gold mine in the southern Philippines has risen to 12 after rescuers pulled out six more bodies from the rubble, officials said today. Rescue teams found the bodies late yesterday near the mouth of the tunnel that had caved in after an explosion on Wednesday (Oct 26), Reynaldo Espanola, an official of the company operating the collapsed tunnel on Mindanao island, said. "We're only trying to account for seven more people," he told reporters. "We're not giving up until we find them, hoping that they're still alive." Five bodies and 11 injured miners had been pulled out on Wednesday night. A sixth body was taken from a second tunnel where toxic fumes had seeped in on Thursday. Espanola, vice president of JB Mining and Management Corp., said the company had been operating the 1.8-km-long Sunshine tunnel for more than 10 years without any accident, producing about 20-30 tonnes of gold daily. -- Reuters.

GRAIN-PROCESSING PLANT, GRIDLEY, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 28 -- A press report, dated Oct 27, states: Fire destroyed one of three buildings at a grain-processing plant yesterday in Gridley. No one was injured in the fire, which broke out around 1125 hrs at the Kerry North America plant in downtown Gridley. The blaze, which produced smoke visible from eight miles away, engulfed the building and collapsed the roof. Efforts involving dozens of firefighters quickly turned toward keeping the fire from spreading. The cause of the blaze remains under investigation, but Gridley Fire Chief John Hoobler said fire officials do not think it was suspicious. "We've heard that they had a crew inside doing some work with welders," Hoobler said. When

firefighters arrived at 202 Market St., they knew they were going to need help. Immediately, they called for Chenoa and El Paso fire departments to respond, Hoobler said. "When we saw how big it was getting, we called for more help," Hoobler said. "We knew we were going to need more tankers, engines and more manpower." The call then went out to Pontiac, Normal, Lexington, Flanagan and Normal fire departments. Marc Johnson, operations manager for Kerry in Gridley, said seven employees were in the building at the time of the fire. All of them were out by the time firefighters arrived. Johnson said the employees who worked at Kerry's facility on Market Street would be relocated to jobs at Kerry's other two plants in Gridley. Hoobler said smoke was visible from the southwest corner of the building when firefighters arrived. The fire quickly spread through the plant, which turns grain into rice and soy crisps for cereal, granola and candy bars. Firefighters tried to enter the building, but Hoobler said the fire made it "too risky" and he withdrew the firefighters. After about 20 minutes, it became clear all they could do was try to contain the fire and keep it from spreading to nearby buildings, Hoobler said. By 1215 hrs, flames had engulfed the building and the metal roof began collapsing. Heavy black and gray smoke from the fire was visible from south of El Paso. McLean County sheriff's deputies evacuated nearby buildings. Deputies moved the perimeter around the fire scene from a half-block away to about a block away after a boom was heard from inside the building, shortly after 1230 hrs. By 1400 hrs, firefighters were working to put out hot spots. It took the 50 or so firefighters nearly two hours to bring the fire under control.

PIER, SOUTHEND ON SEA, ESSEX, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Nov 3 -- An excess of £250,000 must be paid for repair work to Southend Pier which was destroyed by a huge fire last month. But contractors have already provided a temporary access route for lifeboat crews and pier security staff. This is also used by police and fire officers investigating the blaze on the pier, which was insured for £17m. A Southend Borough Council spokesman said: "Unfortunately, due to health and safety and insurance reasons, visitors cannot use this walkway." The pier is insured for full reinstatement work and the excess, normal for the large amount of cover, will be taken from financial reserves. The new pier head is still staffed 24 hours a day by the council whose officers ensure the incident scene is protected and remains safe for those still carrying out investigation work.

PLASTICS PLANT, ALON TABOR, ISRAEL

London, Nov 3 -- A press report, dated Nov 2, states: A huge fire last

night destroyed the plastics plant of Starplast Industries in Alon Tabor. The plant uses injection molding machines to make plastic products, such as household utensils, products for children, and storage products. The fire caused hundreds of millions of shekels in damage to the plant, and left only one building untouched. 550 workers lost their jobs in a few hours. Only in the morning hours did the firefighters manage to control the blaze, the circumstances of which were unclear. The fire caused the collapse of three key buildings in the plant, and burned a large proportion of its inventory of plastic products. The plant's water pressure system collapsed. The fire department summoned help from the Mekorot National Water Company, and Israel Defense Forces firefighters reached the plant during the morning hours, and helped control the fire.

PREMISES, COUNTY KILDARE, REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

London, Oct 30 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: The headquarters of the historic Turf Club - Irish horse racing's regulatory body - have been destroyed in a fire. Six fire crews battled to put out the blaze at the building on the Curragh racecourse, Co Kildare, which started shortly after 1900, GMT. Cliff Noone, press officer of the Turf Club, said the building had been destroyed and the roof had collapsed. About 85% of historical racing form books, dating back to 1790, had been saved, he added. "It was a pretty extensive fire, the roof on the building has completely collapsed and as we are speaking I am standing across the road, and the back of the building is still ablaze," Mr Noone said last night. "There are several fire crews and many garda around, but it is under control," he added. Mr Noone said there was no indication as to how the fire started but that an investigation would be launched. There were no injuries in the fire, he said. Fire crews from Kildare and Naas rushed to the scene after security staff were alerted to the blaze at about 0715 BST. The Turf Club, founded in 1790, is responsible for both flat and national hunt racing in Ireland. Mr Noone said that a high percentage of the racing records had been saved because they were kept behind a fire proof wall.

PREMISES, KARACHI AIRPORT, PAKISTAN

Karachi, Nov 3 -- Understand from Central Fire Brigade and Civil Aviation Authority of Pakistan (CAA) that a huge fire broke out in the Operations Department of the state owned Pakistan International Airline (PIA) located near the old terminal at Karachi airport yesterday evening. No casualty was reported but the fire caused extensive damage to property. The cause of the fire could not be ascertained immediately, City Chief Fire Officer Mr Kazim Ali said. He said the extent of damage was also yet to be

determined. It is said that the fire had broken out in the offices of the Flight Operations Department on second floor, and caused 25 per cent damage to the offices. Five CDGK fire tenders and three CAA fire vehicles extinguished after two hours of struggle. PIA has formed an inquiry committee to ascertain loss and cause of the fire. -- Lloyd's List Correspondent.

PREMISES, LUTTERWORTH, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Nov 2 -- A press report, dated today, states: Dozens of firefighters have tackled a massive blaze at one of the UK's largest clothing warehouses. The fire at TNT Primark at Magna Park in Lutterworth yesterday evening destroyed the firm's warehouse and an office block. Leics fire service spokesman Sean O'Connell the national storage centre was "extensively damaged" in the fire. Fifteen fire engines responded to the call and the cause of the blaze is still under investigation. The warehouse, located near the M1 in Leicestershire, receives about 30 lorryloads of stock a day. A fire service spokesman said: "It was full of clothes so it was obviously going to spread very quickly." "It's pretty much 100% damage to the building but fortunately no one was injured."

London, Nov 2 -- Associated British Foods PLC said tens of millions of pounds worth of merchandise had been destroyed after a major warehouse, supplying clothing retail arm Primark with half its stock, was badly damaged by fire overnight. The maker of Silver Spoon sugar, Ryvita crispbread and Blue Dragon range of ethnic foodstuffs, said it is fully insured both for stock loss and business interruption. The full impact is being assessed. Europe's fifth largest food producer said alternative arrangements are being made to continue supply to Primark after the fire at the 300-square-metre warehouse in Lutterworth, Leicestershire. However, a spokesman admitted that while the discount clothing retailer's stores carry extensive amounts of stock, there are likely to be some shortages in the run-up to the busy Christmas trading period.

PREMISES, SOUTHAMPTON, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Oct 30 -- A press report, dated today, states: A massive fire has destroyed an important research facility at the University of Southampton. The blaze started in an electronics laboratory at the campus on Salisbury Road, Highfield, in the early hours of this morning. People living nearby were told to stay inside and keep windows and doors shut because of the smoke. The building contained gas cylinders and a number of explosions could be heard, but no one was injured. The laboratory was completely destroyed by the flames, and another nearby office building was also damaged. People living in the

area were warned of potentially harmful fumes and told to stay inside. It took more than 100 firefighters nearly ten hours to bring the fire under control.

London, Oct 31 -- A press report, dated today, states: Investigations are continuing into what caused a massive fire that destroyed a leading computer science research unit at the University of Southampton. Gas canisters exploded inside the Mountbatten building on Salisbury Road, Highfield, which was engulfed by a 100ft plume of smoke yesterday morning. No-one was hurt but the building, which housed valuable equipment for research, was gutted. It has been estimated that the fire caused £50m worth of damage. A spokesman said some of the world's most advanced research was carried out there and its loss was devastating. The laboratory, part of the school of Electronics and Computer Science, was completely destroyed, and a nearby office building was damaged. It took more than 100 firefighters nearly ten hours to bring the fire under control. Police forensics officers and fire investigators have started to look for the cause of the fire which, at this stage, is not thought to be suspicious.

ROAD TUNNEL, BUSAN AREA, SOUTH KOREA

Seoul, Nov 1 -- A military truck carrying missile parts exploded inside a South Korean highway tunnel today, YTN television reported. The truck was in a four-vehicle convoy when its brakes failed on a highway linking the southern city of Taegu and Masan, just west of Busan where a summit meeting of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum is scheduled to be held later this month. No casualties were reported, YTN said. A police officer said by telephone there were reports of a fire but could not provide further details. It was not immediately clear whether the truck was South Korean or belonged to the US military, which has troops stationed in the country. A South Korean Defence Ministry official said by telephone officials were following reports of an accident in the region but could not provide details. A highway patrol officer speaking to YTN from near the scene said the truck was carrying missile propulsion devices. Sparks flew from one of the brakes and caught fire in the cargo compartment of the truck, the officer said. Another witness speaking on YTN said the trucks were marked with signs indicating explosive materials were on board. A retired South Korean military general speaking on YTN said it was unlikely a propulsion device, although loaded with a detonator and fuel, would explode simply from heat and fire. -- Reuters.

WILDFIRE, SOUTH AFRICA

London, Oct 29 -- A press report, dated Oct 28, states: Firefighters were today working to contain a fire in the Rocklands and Elandsriver areas outside Port Elizabeth, a fire official

said. "It's not fully under control because of the wind, but we are trying our best to contain it," said the Cacadu district fire service co-ordinator, Spannien Spangenberg. Lulamile Jack, acting manager for fire and emergency services in the Nelson Mandela metropolis, said a fire started on Wednesday night (Oct 26) at the Longmore flower plantation, causing extensive damage. "It was brought under control, but suddenly a strong wind came up and blew it in a different direction," Jack said. The fire ran over the mountain and into the valley, where there was no access for vehicles carrying firefighting equipment. The flames threatened houses, warehouses and a nursery, and at one stage burnt bales at the Rockland chicken farm. "We have been experiencing wind the whole week; it is very strong," said Jack, explaining the difficulties facing the 15 firefighters on the scene. "The whole of Uitenhage is engulfed in smoke." A South African Forestry Company plantation nearby did not appear to be in immediate danger. No injuries have been reported so far and no damage to structures. All firefighters in the region are on standby. Working on Fire, an organisation funded by the government's expanded public works programme, said it was deployed to help fight the fire. A light drizzle has moved into the area and it is hoped that this will bring relief.

WILDFIRES, CHINA

London, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated today, states: Residents who have lost their houses in the forest fire in N.E. China's Heilongjiang Province have settled down with the help of local government, and no casualties have been reported, said the provincial forest fire prevention headquarter. The devastating forest fire started in Huma County in the province Sunday afternoon (Oct 23), and has been raging for three days, devouring an area of 110,000 ha., threatening 25 villages as well as three forestry farms. The fire has burned down 30 houses and left 140 people homeless. Normally temperature in Huma County on the Sino-Russian border will fall below zero centigrade in the evening of late autumn. To ensure victims health and life, the local government has sent 21 tents, warm clothes and other daily necessities to the fire-stricken area. So far, all of the 140 residents have been properly arranged in tents or houses of their relatives. The fire was ignited by a sudden gale when local forestry workers were burning weed to create a partition area for stopping fires from spreading to the mountain forests. As the force 8 wind blew, the forest fire quickly grew wilder and got out of control.

London, Oct 31 -- A press report, dated today, states: A forest fire that began in Huma County on the Sino-Russian border in north-east China's Heilongjiang Province, was completely quenched by 1700, yesterday, sources from the provincial headquarters for forest fire control said. All the fire

fighters have shifted the focus of their work from fire fighting to vigilance and debris removal on the ground where there was a fire, said the working group for fire eradication with the headquarters. The fires erupted on the night of Oct 23 in Huma County, which belongs to the highly forested Greater Hinggan Mountains. The devastating fires spread to the adjacent Heihe, also a city on Sino-Russian border inside Heilongjiang Province, because of strong winds. The fires in Heihe City were eradicated on Oct 27. Altogether 6,397 personnel were sent to fight the blazes in Heilongjiang Province, according to the provincial headquarters for forest fire control. The forest fires destroyed the homes of more than 30 families, with 140 dwellers, in Huma County, but didn't cause any casualties. The cost of the damage caused by the fires is being investigated.

London, Nov 1 -- A press report, dated today, states: A forest fire that has burned 110,000 hectares of forests since October 23 in the Greater Hinggan Mountains in northeast China's Heilongjiang Province has finally been extinguished. "No casualties have been reported during the fire. At one point it threatened more than 3,000 square kilometres, stretching for more than 300 kilometres," a forestry official said yesterday at a press conference in Beijing. Cao Qingyao, spokesman for the State Forestry Administration (SFA), said that by 1900 hrs, Sunday (Oct 30) the week-long fire had been extinguished, thanks to more than 6,300 firefighters and local forest staff. "They are now clearing up the sites and preventing any dying embers from blazing up again," he said. Enough food and clothing has been prepared for some 140 homeless locals, he added. The financial impact of the fire is still not known. The fire was caused by unexpected, force 8 winds when local forestry workers were trying to burn weed to create an isolation belt for preventing such fires. Due to strong winds, the devastating fires spread to Heihe, a neighbouring city. The spokesman also announced that a fire during the past nine days along the Sino-Mongolian border has also been fenced off by an isolation belt.

WILDFIRES, NEW ZEALAND

London, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated Oct 28, states: Firefighters have been dealing with a massive blaze on the outskirts of Invercargill which began yesterday and people living nearby have been warned they may have to evacuate. It is too dangerous to fight on the ground so helicopters with monsoon buckets have been fighting the fire from the air, which is proving tricky for the pilots with the horizon dominated by a thick wall of smoke that can be seen from 40 kilometres away. The main concern is the high tension wires carrying electricity to the Tiwai aluminium smelter. Four helicopters are working

to tame the 40 metre flames, with each monsoon bucket carrying about 1,000 litres of water. The main problem the firefighters are facing is the 35 knot north-west winds whistling down the Southland plains out to Awarua Bay. So far the fire has burned across twelve hundred hectares. Fire crews will start battling the fire again at daylight this morning.

London, Oct 28 -- A press report, dated today, states: A scrub fire fuelled by strong northerly winds last night burnt through more than 1100ha of conservation land near Bluff, and was posing a threat to the power supply to the Tiwai Pt aluminium smelter. Firefighters and Department of Conservation staff expected a late night as the fire showed no signs of burning out. No homes or buildings were threatened by the blaze, which leapt from a farm into a Department of Conservation reserve. A major concern for firefighters was the effect of smoke on the New Zealand Aluminium Smelter's powerlines. The company's external affairs coordinator, David Bloor, said soot had the potential to render insulators on the pylons that brought electricity to the plant useless, leaving the pylons live. Smoke from the fire could be seen as far away as Stewart Island as the fire burned throughout yesterday. Late in the afternoon it edged towards Tiwai Bridge connecting to the smelter. By 1930 hrs, Southern Rural Fire District principal rural fire officer Mike Grant said the fire had come close to the bridge. "We were very concerned about the power supply and that it might 'arc' out," Mr Grant said. Fire crews evacuated people from Tiwai area as a safety precaution. The bulk of the firefighting was done by six helicopters with monsoon buckets because of the fire's inaccessibility.

London, Oct 28 -- A press report, dated Oct 29, states: Fire crews in Southland will spend this morning dampening down hotspots following a major fire that swept through thousands of hectares of conservation wetland near Bluff. The scrub fire began on Thursday (Oct 27) and at one point threatened power lines to the Tiwai Aluminium smelter. Residents in the area were also on alert to evacuate. Light rain helped put out most of the fire yesterday afternoon, giving fire crews who had spent two days battling the blaze a welcome break. The Principal Rural Fire Officer Mike Grant said two crews will be back at the scene this morning to deal with about 40 hot spots. He says next week they may use infra red cameras to identify any further hot spots to ensure the fire does not ignite again.

London, Oct 30 -- Southland fire crews have been dampening down hot spots, following a major fire that swept through thousands of hectares of conservation wetland near Bluff. Light rain helped put out most of the fire yesterday afternoon, giving fire crews who had spent two days battling the blaze a welcome break. Principal

Rural Fire Officer Mike Grant says two crews will deal with about 40 hot spots today.

WILDFIRES, SOUTH AFRICA

Johannesburg, Nov 2 -- Firefighters are battling to contain about 20 wildfires that have forced hundreds from their homes near South Africa's southern coast, officials said today. Farms and semi-rural residential areas between the towns of George, 400 kilometres east of Cape Town, and Port Elizabeth, were evacuated as a massive blaze swept towards the area and one of the country's main highways was shut. The fires had burned through power lines, SABC said. No deaths were reported. "It's extremely difficult to assess the extent of the damage (but) it's extremely extensive ... (there are) at least 20 fires," said Val Charlton, spokeswoman for Working on Fires, a network of firefighters sponsored by government and private forest owners. The blazes burned through swathes of forest, grass and bush around South Africa's southern coast, near the popular tourist Garden Route. The area often experiences fires during the hot, dry months between October and April. Zane Erasmus, program manager for fires at Cape Nature Conservation, said they could cause major ecological damage. "It is a crisis from an ecological point of view ... young veld (wild grass) is burning. Species are becoming extinct. We are losing our biodiversity," he said. A separate fire raged through a shanty town in the Cape Town township of Khayelitsha, destroying 500 shacks and killing a disabled boy, eTV channel reported. -- Reuters.



5H-APE

London, Oct 31 -- Cessna U206P 5H-APE, a charter flight, operated by Nomad Aviation of Arusha, Tanzania, crashed in mountainous terrain near Mahone, Tanzania, at approximately 0640, UTC, Oct 16. The pilot and four passengers were fatally injured. The aircraft was destroyed.

9A-BTA

London, Nov 1 -- A press report, dated Oct 31, states: A cargo plane under contract with mail courier DHL crashed in northern Italy, killing all three crew members who were believed to be Croatian, authorities said today. The LET 410 aircraft, a Tradeair cargo plane registered in Croatia and bound for Zagreb, crashed soon after takeoff at about 2205 hrs, yesterday near Bergamo airport, said a statement from Italy's national agency for flight security ANSV. All three people on board were killed, said an official at Bergamo provincial fire department.

C-GCQT

London, Nov 2 -- Bell 206B JetRanger C-GCQT, operated by Far West Helicopters, crashed into Devels Lake, British Columbia, at 1300, PDT, Oct 26, while carrying out lake-sampling operations. One of the three persons on board was seriously injured and the other two suffered minor injuries.

CRASH NEAR BIGGIN HILL, KENT, UNITED KINGDOM

See G-BYLE.

CRASH, BAKER, LOUISIANA, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 28 -- A press report, dated Oct 27, states: A Cessna 210 that made an emergency landing on Plank Road yesterday crashed on take-off in Baker shortly before 1300 today. Only the pilot was on board, and he walked away safely. The Cessna 210 was originally going to be hauled out on a flatbed truck, but officials decided to allow the pilot, Michael Simon of Eunice, to take off and fly the aircraft to Baton Rouge Metro Airport. According to reports on the scene, while taking off the aircraft's wing clipped the mirror of an 18-wheeler parked on the shoulder, grazed an emergency vehicle and crashed into a wooded area on the side of the road.

CRASH, MAHALE NATIONAL PARK AREA, TANZANIA

See 5H-APE.

CRASH, PERTH AREA, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

See VH-NIT.

CRASH, PROVIDENCE-ST.PETER HOSPITAL, WASHINGTON, UNITED STATES

See N950AL.

CRASH, ST. ALEXIS DE MONTS, CANADA

London, Oct 31 -- Following received from LaSalle, Quebec, dated today: A 63-year-old hotel owner died Saturday (Oct 29) in a helicopter crash in St. Alexis de Monts, 120 kilometres north-east of Montreal. Yvon Plante took off from a heliport near his hotel around 1330 hrs. Seconds later, his helicopter went down. He was alone in the aircraft. The Transportation Safety Board of Canada is investigating the cause of the accident. An autopsy is to be performed during the week, the Surete du Quebec said.

CRASH, WINDHOEK AREA, NAMIBIA

See V5-AAG.

EMERGENCY LANDING, AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND

London, Nov 2 -- A press report, dxated today, states: An Air New Zealand Boeing 767 has landed safely at Auckland Airport, despite having a damaged nose wheel. The jet suffered the damage as it took off from Hong Kong, and the pilot circled Auckland Airport for a time while experts

assessed the situation. They gave it the all-clear and Flight NZ86 touched down without further drama.

EMERGENCY LANDING, OSAKA AIRPORT, JAPAN

London, Nov 2 -- A press report, dated today, states: A Tokyo-bound Japan Airlines aircraft made an emergency landing at Osaka airport today due to engine trouble, the transport ministry said. JAL Flight 1870, which left Kagoshima airport to head to Tokyo's Haneda airport, landed at Osaka at about 1700 hrs, the ministry said. The aircraft had reported that the trouble was developed in its left engine, it said.

EMERGENCY LANDING, ROSTOV AIRPORT, RUSSIA

London, Nov 3 -- A press report, dated yesterday, states: A Tupolev-154 passenger plane made an emergency landing at Rostov's airport on today. The aircraft, en route from Sochi to Moscow, requested permission for an emergency landing. The airport administration said there was no fire in the aircraft's engines. "The pilots responded to the readings of an instrument but no fire broke out aboard," it said. Fire engines were called in but were not used. Specialists are examining the aircraft. There were 70 people aboard the aircraft. None of them was hurt or injured.

EMERGENCY LANDING, STURUP AIRPORT, SWEDEN

Gothenburg, Nov 2 -- A Boeing 737 with 111 passengers onboard was forced to make an emergency landing at Sturup airport around 2300, yesterday. The aircraft landed without problem. The RyanAir aircraft coming from Tammerfors and heading for Stansted - gave notice at 2233 hrs that problem with one engine and only one working, requiring emergency landing. It landed safely at 2258 hrs. -- Westax Marine Services AB.

EMERGENCY LANDING, VANCOUVER INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, CANADA

London, Nov 3 -- A press report, dated today, states: More than 200 passengers aboard a China Eastern Airbus that had engine problems spent a tense two hours circling over the water west of Vancouver Island before landing safely at Vancouver International Airport yesterday afternoon. Airport spokesman Ralph Eastman said none of the 273 people on the aircraft -- including 16 crew members -- were injured. Eastman said the crew reported trouble with one of four engines around 1400 hrs -- shortly after it took off from YVR on its way to Shanghai, China. The pilot requested a return to Vancouver, but, because of the excessive weight of the aircraft, was instructed to burn off fuel before attempting the landing. The aircraft landed safely at 1555 hrs, with the airport's fire crews on standby on the runway. No details were provided on the nature of the

engine trouble, but Eastman said "whatever they were, they've been repaired." The flight took off again at 2000 hrs without incident.

G-BYLE

London, Oct 31 -- Piper PA-38-112 Tomahawk, (owners Surrey & Kent Flying Club Ltd), G-BYLE, crashed while returning to the Biggin Hill Airport, at 0839, Oct 22. The pilot and student pilot on board were fatally injured. The aircraft was substantially damaged.

INCIDENT AT LAGOS AIRPORT, NIGERIA

London, Nov 2 -- A press report, dated Nov 1, states: A Nigerian passenger plane was damaged as it skidded off a waterlogged runway on landing at Lagos airport today, an aviation official said. "At about 11am (1000, UTC) today, an Associated Airlines plane coming from Benin City ran into bad weather on arriving in Lagos. It landed on the flooded tarmac and skidded, damaging its front nose tyre," said Sam Adurogboye, a spokesperson of the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA). "All the 17 people on board the plane are safe," he told AFP, adding that after "the collapse of the wheel, it got stuck on the tarmac and blocked it. The tarmac was blocked for about an hour and 25 minutes before it was cleared to allow for the free flow of traffic." Adurogboye said an investigation had been launched into the cause of the crash, but he could not confirm a television news report that the pilot had ignored an order from air traffic control not to land because of the water on the runway. The Shorts SD-3-60 passenger turboprop which was damaged can carry 19 passengers and is 18 years old, Adurogboye said.

N888DV

London, Oct 27 -- A press report, dated Oct 26, states: A Learjet (N888DV, operated by Moana Management LLC) was forced to make a belly landing at McClellan air park tonight. A small fire erupted after the landing but it was quickly put out by foam trucks from the Sacramento Metro Fire Department. There were two people on board the jet, both are said to be uninjured. What forced the aircraft to make an emergency landing is still under investigation. The aircraft is not expected to be moved off of the runway until daylight tomorrow.

N950AL

London, Nov 1 -- Agusta A109E N950AL struck the side of a building at Olympia, Washington, at 0624, Oct 29, while on a flight from St. Peter's Hospital, WA, to Harbourview Medical Centre, and rolled over. The aircraft sustained substantial damage. Three of the four persons on board suffered minor injuries.

V5-AAG

London, Oct 31 -- Cessna 210 V5-AAG, crashed near Windhoek,

Namibia, at approximately 0430, UTC, Oct 20. The pilot, and passenger were fatally injured. The aircraft was destroyed, and there was fire.

VH-NIT

London, Nov 2 -- Air Tractor AT-602, VH-NIT, crashed after take-off from runway 24, Ballidu Aerodrome, Western Australia, at 1430, local standard time, Oct 22. Dunn's Aviation PTY LTD operated the familiarisation flight. The pilot, the sole occupant, sustained fatal injuries.

Product Recalls



BATTERY-POWERED RIDE-ON VEHICLES, UNITED STATES

Washington, DC, Oct 27 -- The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in co-operation with Dorel Juvenile Group USA, of Columbus, Ind., today announced a voluntary recall of about 141,000 Battery-Powered Ride-On Vehicles. Consumers should stop using recalled products immediately unless otherwise instructed. An electronic malfunction can occur in the ride-on vehicle's circuit board and/or battery connector, resulting in smoking and melting of components. This poses a vehicle fire hazard and a burn hazard to consumers if components are touched while malfunctioning. The firm has received 49 reports of overheating or melting components on the ride-on vehicles. No injuries have been reported. The recalled battery-powered ride-on vehicles include the Pink Corvette, Torch Red Corvette, Yellow Race Car Corvette, Red Electroplate Corvette, Fire Engine, and Batmobile. They were sold under the brands Safety 1st and Kid Trax by Safety 1st. The ride-on vehicles were manufactured between January 2004 and August 2005. The manufacture date is located on the underside of the unit and is molded into the plastic body as shown below. The circle on left displays the month of manufacture, the circle on the right displays the year of manufacture. The model numbers are located on the underside of the vehicles near the date code. Sold at major toy stores and mass merchandise outlets nation-wide under the brands Safety 1st and Kid Trax by Safety 1st from January 2004 through August 2005 for about \$300. Manufactured in China. Consumers should take the recalled ride-on vehicles away from children immediately and contact the company for a free repair. -- Consumer Product Safety Commission.

GENERAL MOTORS VEHICLES, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 29 -- A press report, dated Oct 28, states: General Motors Corp said today it was recalling about 100,000 sport utility vehicles in 20 northern states because corrosion can

affect latches on the two back seat doors, potentially allowing the doors to open while the vehicle is being driven. The recall involves the 2002-2003 models of the Chevrolet TrailBlazer EXT and GMC Envoy XL and the 2003 model of the Isuzu Ascender. In some cases, slush, water and salt has passed through a seal at the base of the door and come in contact with the door's latch. Over time, it can cause corrosion and make the door not latch properly, said GM spokesman Alan Adler. Adler said there had been one unconfirmed report of injuries related to the problem. GM did not have any details on what happened. The recall is expected to begin during January, 2006. It will be conducted in 20 states and the District of Columbia where the vehicles were sold or registered. The states include Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia, Wisconsin.

KIA MOTOR VEHICLES, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 24 -- Nearly 74,000 Kia Spectras built after a mid-2004 redesign and during the 2005 model year are being recalled due to their advanced airbags may not turn off as intended when children are in front passenger seats. Dealers are to reprogram the vehicles' occupant classification system control units so that a child in a safety seat is not misidentified as an adult passenger.

HYUNDAI MOTOR VEHICLES, UNITED STATES

London, Oct 24 -- More than Hyundai 240,000 Hyundai Elantras built for the 2004-05 model years are being recalled. Their advanced airbags may not turn off as intended when children are in front passenger seats. Dealers are to reprogram the vehicles' occupant classification system control units so that a child in a safety seat is not misidentified as an adult passenger.

LAPTOP COMPUTERS, NEW ZEALAND

London, Oct 28 -- A press report, dated today, states: Compaq and HP have issued a recall of laptop computers, saying a battery fault could cause them to catch fire. The laptops, sold between March last year and last May, have a defect that may cause a fire risk from overheating, smoke, melting or charring of the laptops.

Port Conditions



AUSTRALIA

London, Oct 29 -- A press report, dated today, states: A backlog of cargo

at Port Botany caused by problems with a new Customs computer system is slowly easing. Industry officials believe it will take several weeks for the situation to return to normal. Port Botany has gone from 100 per cent to 88 per cent operating capacity over the past two days though the Customs clearance rate has only marginally improved. David Katte from the Customs Brokers and Forwarders Council says industry representatives and Customs have agreed on action to tackle about 20 outstanding issues. He says the situation at Port Botany and other major ports is gradually improving. "There's been a steady increase in the throughput of the system," he said. Customs is urging freight operators to collect cleared containers this weekend. Hugh McMaster from the Road Transport Association says the main obstacle to that has not changed. "Very few importers are open on the weekend to take those containers," Mr McMaster said. He has suggested stevedoring companies increase their capacity during the week when importers are operating.

Sydney, Oct 31 -- The first meeting of the Integrated Cargo System (ICS) action group on Friday (Oct 28) has immediately put up proposals that could help clear the existing backlog at the ports and to stop the system's cascade reporting system tripping up over inconsistent documents and data. Meanwhile, Customs minister Chris Ellison will this evening face Senator Joe Ludwig, the government's arch-critic of the ICS implementation, at a Senate estimates hearing. Senator Ellison is almost certain to come under pressure over compensation for overtime and lost business in the freight industry, as well as huge storage charges. Following Friday's action meeting, Customs will this week examine how feasible it will be for parallel processing by both the ICS and Sea Cargo Automation. Under the proposal, cargo reporters will continue to use the ICS, with Customs then automating the data to go into SCA so that brokers using the Compile extension can look in the SCA system to organise clearances. ICS user representative Paul Zalai said this would free a lot of Customs resources now being used for manual checking. "If Customs can do this, it will go a long way to clearing the backlog," he said. The meeting heard that 50% of import cargo on Friday remained held in terminals, with three-quarters of those 8,000 containers either immobilised by mismatching data or remaining without declaration. Customs is also seriously looking at whether the ocean bill of lading which is said to be the chief source of data mismatches can be dropped as a reconciliation between import declarations and cargo reporting, and from the cascade reporting system as well. Work is also going on to try and standardise bill of lading and voyage numbers, with the ICS system unable to cope with prefixes and suffixes which shipping

lines add for their own administration. System users have been forced to deliberately quote incorrect data into the system in order to get a match. The legacy SCA system either did not have these data fields or was less sensitive to them, with the ICS now having to be rebuilt to replicate some of this robustness, Mr Zalai said. Meanwhile, there was understood to be another low take-up of Sunday truck slots at the major terminals. Customs was on Friday again urging the freight industry to speed up collection of the 8,000 containers it said were waiting to be cleared at major container ports. Patrick said that despite the media exposure given to importers's problems with "cargo held up on the wharf", no

containers were picked up during the evening and midnight shifts at its terminals on Saturday and Sunday, and only a few hundred were collected during the day shifts. Bob Wallace, managing director of Brisbane-based broker Wallace International, said the improvised container information system left brokers and forwarders always one day behind in being able to book transport which became an even greater problem when the weekend intervened. Mr Wallace said that if Customs was able to provide two container updates each day, brokers would get crucial hours in which to make arrangements and cut the time lags. "The timing issue is awesome for us," he said. Mr Wallace said that customs brokers were now becoming

financially stretched in handling payments for other parties because of the long delays. -- "Lloyd's List Daily Commercial News".

ITALY

Genoa, Oct 31 -- Port situation Oct 31: Genoa: One container vessel waiting for berth. Average delay in berthing 12 - 24 hrs. La Spezia: No vessels waiting for berth. Savona: Three vessels waiting for normal berth. Average delay in berthing 48 hrs. No vessels waiting for special berth. -- Lloyd's Agents.

SYRIA

Lattakia, Oct 22 -- Waiting period for Lattakia port: Two days. Waiting period for Tartous seven days. -- Lloyd's Agents.

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		
Brisbane	31-10-2005	Coal: Fisherman Island coal berth; Four vessels due by 9/11; up to 2 days delay expected.
Dalrymple Bay	31-10-2005	Coal: Three vessels loading at berth; 25 vessels due by 11/11; up to 6 days delay expected.
Dampier	31-10-2005	Iron ore: Parker Point A berth: One vessel loading at berth, 5 arrived; 5 vessels due by 5/11; up to 5 days delay expected; Parker Point B berth: 1 vessel loading, 1 arrived; 3 vessels due by 3/11; up to 3 days delay expected; East Intercourse Island: One vessel loading, 5 arrived; 5 vessels due by 9/11; up to 4 days delay expected.
Gladstone	31-10-2005	Coal: R.G. Tanna coal terminal: Forty-six vessels due by 7/12; up to 5 days delay expected; Barney Point: 7 vessels due by 27/12; up to 1 day's delay expected.
Hay Point	31-10-2005	Coal: Ten vessels due by 11/11; up to 3 days delay expected.
Newcastle	31-10-2005	Coal: Kooragang 4, 5 and 6: Three vessels loading at berth; 48 vessels due by 26/11; 2-3 days delay expected; Dykes 4+5: 2 vessels loading at berth; 16 vessels due by 25/11; up to 1 day's delay expected.
Port Hedland	31-10-2005	Iron ore: BHP Iron Ore Pty. Ltd., Mt. Newman (Nelson Point), "A" berth: One vessel loading at berth, 1 vessel arrived; 6 vessels due by 10/11; up to 1 day's delay expected; "B" berth: 1 vessel loading at berth; 3 vessels due by 6/11; 1-2 days delay expected; BHP Iron Ore Pty. Ltd., Goldsworthy (Finucane Island "C" berth): 1 vessel loading at berth; 3 vessels due by 6/11; up to 1 day's delay expected; "D" berth: 1 vessel at berth, 1 arrived; 5 vessels due by 10/11; no delays expected.
Port Walcott	31-10-2005	Iron ore: Two vessels loading at berth, 10 arrived; 7 vessels due by 11/11; up to 1 day's delay expected.
Azerbaijan		
Aspheron	31-10-2005	Oil products: Dubendi terminal: 1 vessel berthed, loading fuel oil; 1 vessel due 1/11 to discharge gasoil.
Baku	31-10-2005	Oil products: Bay of Baku: no vessels; Azerneftiyag terminal: no vessels; Azer Trans terminal - Nobel avenue: 1 vessel berthed, discharging crude oil; 1 vessel due 1/11 to discharge crude oil; Sangachal district: no vessels; Transserve terminal: closed.
Brazil		
Paranagua	01-11-2005	Thirteen vessels berthed of which 2 sugar loaders, 2 fertiliser dischargers, 2 container dischargers, 3 reefer loaders, 1 pellets loader, 2 bulk soya loaders, 1 other loader; 6 vessels waiting in roads, all to load, of which 1 pellets, 4 containers, 1 bulk soya.
Rio de Janeiro	01-11-2005	Porto do Rio: 6 steel products loaders; Tecon: no vessels; Porto de Sepetiba: 2 iron ore loaders, 2 steel products loaders, 5 other loaders/dischargers; 10 vessels due over the next 7 days.
Rio Grande	01-11-2005	One fertiliser discharger berthed; 7 vessels waiting in roads; 41 vessels due over the next 10 days.
Santos	01-11-2005	Eighteen vessels berthed of which 8 sugar loaders, 1 soya loader, 3 fertiliser dischargers, 3 chemical products dischargers, 1 bulk oil loader, 1 pellets loader, 1 full container loader/discharger; 17 vessels waiting in roads; 20 vessels due over the next 7 days; Private terminals: Terminal 37: 1 full container loader/discharger; Tecondi: 2 full container loaders/dischargers; Termars: no vessels; Rodrimar: no vessels; Cosipa: 3 steel products loaders; Ultrafertil: 1 fertiliser discharger; Cargill: 1 sugar loader, 1 soya loader; Santos Brasil: 2 full container loaders/dischargers; Cutrale: 1 bulk juice loader; Dow: 1 chemical products discharger.
Sao Sebastiao	01-11-2005	Six vessels berthed, 3 waiting in roads; 2 vessels due over the next 10 days.
Vitoria	01-11-2005	Four vessels berthed of which 1 granite loader, 1 sugar loader, 1 cellulose loader, 1 pig-iron loader; Terminal Vila Velha: 2 container loaders/dischargers; Tubarao: 1 iron ore loader, 1 steel products loader, 3 other vessels; Praia Mole: 2 steel products loaders, 1 coal discharger, 1 other vessel; Portocel: 1 cellulose loader; Ubu: 1 iron ore loader, 1 bagged cargo discharger; 32 vessels due over the next 7 days.
Bulgaria		
Bourgas	31-10-2005	Eight vessels in port operating, of which 3 loading (1 profiles, 1 coils, 1 wheat), 5 discharging (1 billets, 2 metals, 2 reinforced concrete); 2 vessels in roads, both to load ammonium nitrate; 8 vessels due, of which 6 to load (1 metals, 2 coils, 1 copper concentrate, 1 profiles, 1 bagged ammonium nitrate), 2 to discharge (1 metals, 1 iron ore).

Port Conditions

Varna	31-10-2005	Varna East, Varna West, Electrical Power Station, Balchik: Thirty-five vessels in port operating of which 20 loading (3 sunflower seeds, 3 bulk wheat, 1 kaolin/other, 1 bulk sulphuric acid, 6 soda, 1 bulk cement, 1 scrap, 1 bulk silica sand, 1 bulk clinker, 1 hydrochloric acid, 1 bulk maize), 7 discharging (2 bulk coal, 1 iron, 1 petcoke, 1 soda, 1 liquid urea, 1 containers), 8 discharging/loading (4 containers, 1 containers/small consignments, 1 equipment in packing cases/ pipes /containers/miscellaneous bagged cargo, 2 iron); no vessels waiting in roads.
Egypt		
Adabiya	31-10-2005	Four vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 3 general cargo, 1 containers.
Alexandria	31-10-2005	Thirty vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 20 general cargo, 6 bulk carriers, 1 tanker, 1 container vessel, 2 cruise vessels; 20 vessels dry-docked; 19 vessels at inner anchorage, 35 at outer anchorage.
Damietta	31-10-2005	Twenty vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 15 general cargo, 1 bulk carrier, 4 containers; 6 vessels at outer anchorage, none at inner anchorage.
Dekheila	31-10-2005	Fourteen vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 2 general cargo, 8 bulk carriers, 4 container vessel; 1 vessel at outer anchorage.
Port Said	31-10-2005	Six vessels berthed (loading/discharging), all containers.
Suez	31-10-2005	Nine vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 2 general cargo, 1 bulk cargo, 3 reefers, 3 passenger vessels; 4 tugs, 1 vessel dry-docked.
Suez Canal	31-10-2005	Twenty-five vessels transiting Northbound, 30 Southbound.
Estonia		
Tallinn	31-10-2005	Paljassaare (formerly Kopli): 2 vessels loading at berth (1 coal, 1 fuel), 2 discharging at berth (1 bark, 1 cocoa); no vessels waiting at anchorage; 4 vessels due, with 7 days berthing delay expected.
Israel		
Ashdod	01-11-2005	No labour problems. Four general cargo vessels loading at berth, 17 vessels discharging at berth (12 general cargo, 5 bulkers), 5 vessels loading/discharging at berth (3 containers, 1 tanker, 1 passenger vessel); 2 general cargo vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge; 7 vessels due, with 2-3 days delay expected.
Eilat	01-11-2005	No labour problems. One general cargo vessel discharging at berth; no vessels waiting at anchorage; 1 vessel due, with no delays expected.
Haifa	01-11-2005	No labour problems. Four vessels discharging at berth (3 general cargo, 1 bulker), 9 vessels loading/discharging at berth (5 containers, 2 car carriers, 2 passenger vessels); 4 vessels waiting at anchorage to load/discharge (3 containers, 1 tanker); 3 vessels under repairs/dry-docked; 20 vessels due, with 2-3 days delay expected.
Kazakhstan		
Aktau	31-10-2005	Oil products: 4 vessels berthed, of which 1 completed loading crude oil, 3 loading crude oil; 2 vessels in roads, both to load unknown cargoes; 4 vessels due by 1/11, all to load unknown cargoes.
Mozambique		
Maputo	01-Nov-2005	Five vessels in port operating, of which 2 loading (1 aluminium ingots, 1 bulk coal), 2 discharging (1 bulk maize, 1 bulk wheat), 1 under repairs; 3 vessels due to berth 1/11, of which 1 to load petroleum products, 1 to discharge pitch, 1 to load/discharge containers/steel plates; 20 vessels due by 18/11 of which 2 to load (1 aluminium ingots, ferro chrome), 17 to discharge (2 bulk alumina, 5 containers, 3 bulk wheat, 1 petcoke, 1 vehicles, 1 green peas/maize, 1 bagged rice, 1 vegetable oil, 2 bulk maize), 1 to discharge/load containers.
Pakistan		
Karachi	31-10-2005	Two vessels loading at berth (1 chemicals, 1 rice), 11 discharging at berth (1 crude oil, 1 coal, 4 DAP, 4 GEM, 1 fertiliser), 2 loading/discharging; 1 vessel waiting at anchorage to load containers, 6 waiting at anchorage to discharge (1 container, 1 general cargo, 1 fertiliser, 2 cement, 1 crude oil); 6 vessels due (3 containers, 2 general cargo, 1 chemicals), with no delays expected.
Port Qasim	31-10-2005	Four vessels discharging at berth (1 crude oil, 1 sugar, 1 wheat, 1 MEG); 1 vessel waiting at anchorage to load containers, 5 waiting at anchorage to discharge (1 container, 1 sugar, 1 HSP, 1 MEG, 1 PRXYLN); QICT berth: no vessels.

Port Conditions

Russia

Novorossiysk 31-10-2005 Thirteen vessels in port operating, all loading, of which 1 cement, 1 DRI, 2 steel billets, 1 steel billets/pipes/other, 1 steel sheets, 1 bulk urea, 1 equipment, 1 coils/tin plate, 1 wheat, 1 UAN solution, 1 diesel oil, 1 tin plate/steel billets/steel sheet/coils/H-beams/WRIC/pipes; 12 vessels waiting in roads, all to load, of which 1 bulk NPK, 1 scrap, 1 pig-iron, 1 aluminium, 2 wheat, 1 cement, 1 bulk urea/bulk ammonium nitrate, 1 tin plate/steel sheets, 1 diesel oil, 1 bulk ammonium nitrate, 1 steel billets; 66 vessels due, of which 63 to load (4 bulk urea, 3 DRI, 1 pig-iron, 2 WRIC, 4 HBI, 10 steel billets, 1 bulk ammonium nitrate/bulk urea, 2 bulk fertiliser, 1 steel sheets, 3 slabs, 6 copper, 5 wheat, 1 oil, 5 aluminium, 4 bulk NPK, 2 bulk ammonium nitrate, 1 H-beams, 1 coils/steel sheets, 1 cars, 1 slabs/steel billets, 1 coils, 1 pipes, 1 paper/cellulose, 1 diesel oil, 1 bulk cement), 1 to discharge zinc ore, 2 to load/discharge containers; Oil terminal: 1 tanker berthed loading crude oil; 6 tankers in roads, all to load, of which 5 crude oil, 1 diesel oil; 6 tankers due, all to load, of which 3 crude oil, 3 diesel oil.

Spain

Sagunto 31-10-2005 Seventeen vessels in port operating of which 3 loading (1 cement, 1 anhydrous ammonia, 1 steel products), 10 discharging (8 steel products, 1 anhydrous ammonia, 1 logs), 4 discharging/loading general cargo; Outside commercial wharf: no vessels; no delays expected

Sri Lanka

Colombo 31-10-2005 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 berthing at breakbulk berths if there is container congestion; conventional cargo vessels at BQ 1 & 2 are facing delays in navigation after commissioning of SAGT 1 & 2 berths (former QEQ 1 & 2). Five container/feeder vessels loading at berth, 7 vessels discharging at berth (6 containers/feeders, 1 bulk fertiliser); 6 vessels dry-docked; 1 vessel at new tanker berth; 9 vessels due (8 container/feeder, 1 bulk palm oil), with no delays for general cargo, bagged cargo, containers/feeders expected.

Turkmenistan

Okarem 31-10-2005 Oil products: 1 vessel in roads, waiting to load crude oil.
Turkmenibashi 31-10-2005 Oil products: 5 vessels in roads, all to load, of which 1 to gasoline, 2 gasoil, 2 unknown cargoes; 2 vessels due by 31/10, 1 to discharge crude oil, 1 to load unknown cargo.

Ukraine

Ilichevsk 31-10-2005 Nine vessels in port operating, of which 8 loading (2 steel products, 2 grain, 1 sunflower oil, 1 sulphur, 1 equipment, 1 ferrosilicon), 1 discharging/loading containers; 3 vessels in roads, of which 2 to load (1 sunflower oil, 1 equipment), 1 to discharge/load containers; 18 vessels due, of which 9 to load (7 steel products, 1 sunflower oil, 1 ferrosilicon), 9 to to discharge/load containers.
Mariupol 31-10-2005 Eight vessels in port operating, all loading, of which 4 steel, 1 kaolin, 2 coal, 1 sulphur; 2 vessels in roads, both to load steel; 66 vessels due, of which 61 to load (28 steel, 13 coal, 7 fire-clay, 2 wheat, 1 barley, 3 sunflower seeds, 1 coke, 1 sulphur, 1 carbamid, 1 bran, 1 luggage, 1 sunflower beans, 1 heavy lift cargo), 5 to discharge (1 equipment, 1 feldspar, 1 magnetite, 1 heavy lift cargo, 1 fish).
Odessa 31-10-2005 Eight vessels in port operating, of which 3 loading (2 metal, 1 sugar), 3 discharging (1 barley, 1 citrus, 1 oil), 1 loading/discharging containers, 1 passenger vessel; 1 vessel in roads to load wheat; 82 vessels due, of which 41 to load (28 metal, 2 pig-iron, 4 corn, 2 wheat, 1 oil, 1 building materials, 1 equipment, 1 paper, 1 general cargo), 10 to discharge (1 wheat, 3 bananas, 2 general cargo, 1 citrus, 1 meat, 1 luggage, 1 oil), 31 to discharge/load containers.

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