

## Zim Asia officer faces homicide charge following Israeli probe into collision

By Keith Wallis in Hong Kong — Friday December 30 2005

**T**he Serbian second officer on board the 3,834 teu containership Zim Asia could be charged with negligent homicide following an investigation by Israeli police into the September collision of the boxship and a Japanese fishing vessel.

Seven fishermen died when their vessel, the 19 tonnes Shinsei Maru 3, capsized following the incident about 40 km off the coast of Hokkaido in northern Japan. An eighth fisherman was later rescued.

### Recommended

In its report to Israel's prosecutor's office the National Fraud Squad has recommended that second officer Pilastro Zdrako should be charged with negligent homicide and violation of port authority regulations.

Mr Zdrako, who was in command of the vessel at the time, was placed under house arrest following an order by the Tel Aviv district court and ordered not to leave Israel.

He has been detained in the country since October when the Zim Asia arrived in Haifa after completing a transpacific voyage.

Israeli prosecutors will also decide whether to charge the ship's master, Moshe Ben David, who was asleep at the time of the accident.

While police raised doubts about the captain's performance they stopped short of recommending if charges should be brought.

The fraud squad found that the collision was "caused during a non-routine manoeuvre that the Zim ship made while following an order made by the second officer who commanded the ship at the time".

The police investigation also found that the Japanese fishing boat failed to adopt proper measures to prevent the accident, according to the Jerusalem Post.

### Claims

The probe appears to strengthen Japanese claims that the Shinsei Maru 3 was the victim of a "hit-and-run" collision. The crew of the Zim Asia has been widely condemned in the Japanese media for failing to stop to search for survivors following the collision on September 28.

The crew initially denied the ship was responsible, but the vessel's operator, Zim Integrated Shipping Services, later admitted the ship had collided with the Shinsei Maru 3.

Zim president and chief executive Doran Goder later apologised to the families of the victims and the Japanese government, while also offering financial compensation to relatives of the seven that died.

But earlier this month the bereaved families of the Japanese fishermen filed a suit against Zim seeking Yen900m (\$8.3m) compensation.

Hiroshi Tokuno, 71, the father of one of the victims, Hisashi Tokuno, 43, said: "I have firmly believed from the beginning that the collision was a hit-and-run case."

"The area where the boat was fishing is located on an international shipping route, and I want the court to pursue the issue so that the same thing will not happen again."

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

<b>Vessel</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Flag</b>	<b>Class</b>	<b>GT</b>	<b>DWT</b>	<b>Bit</b>	<b>Casualty</b>
<i>EL PRETTY BOY</i>	fishing	USA	—	92	—	1965	Found abandoned at south side jetties, Brownsville Ship Channel, during the night of Dec 17-18. Sank early Dec 18.
<i>ESTREITO DE RANDE</i>	trawler	ARG	—	1,553	1,885	1976	Reported adrift in lat 41 15S, long 60 33W, Dec 21.
<i>FIRST CARRIER</i>	general	VCT	—	1,749	2,610	1976	Sank about three miles off Dar es Salaam about Dec 20. Ten crew rescued. One drowned.
<i>ICE KING</i>	general	GRC	AB ABS	7,085	7,365	1994	Reported Dec 22 anchored in lat 38 52.5N, long 20 41E, with mechanical problems, possibly steering/propeller. Tug due on scene.
<i>JIN BI</i>	bulker	PAN	AB ABS	20,432	34,062	1983	Grounded shortly after leaving Qingdao Dec 15. Part cargo discharged, vessel refloated and returned to Qingdao for drydock repairs. Slight bottom damage reported. General Average declared.
<i>LERRIX</i>	general	GBR	GL	1,998	2,777	1977	Grounded off Danish coast around May 21 in poor visibility. Subsequently arrived Hull May 29 and sailed Jul 21.
<i>NAPOCOR POWER BARGE NO. 106</i>	—	PHL	—	—	—	—	Grounded off Semirara Island, central Philippines, Dec 18 after being buffeted by large waves caused by tropical storm "Kajiki". Storage tanks developed a leak and spilled about 2,000 litres of bunker fuel. Tug on scene Dec 20.
<i>P. MOUZELIS</i>	bulker	VCT	AB ABS	75,719	148,011	1981	Reported water ingress in forepeak and No 1 hold about 30 miles from Kaohsiung Dec 19. Proceeding to China. LOF signed. Tug due to rendezvous with vessel and render assistance.
<i>POLANA</i>	tug	—	—	188	281	1989	Had fire in engine-room near Rousse Dec 19. Beached on Romanian bank of River Danube. Firefighting operations continuing. Fire extinguished later same day. Sank Dec 20. No pollution reported. Fuel to be pumped out.
<i>PRINCESS ERICA EXPRESS</i>	—	—	—	—	—	—	Reported Dec 21 stranded at Port Moresby after rough waves cracked the bow about 14 miles outside the Basilisk passage. ETC repairs 2-3 days.
<i>VISPATAURINI</i>	container	IND	BV	12,273	17,506	1988	After being reported at Port Sudan with auxiliary engine damage, left the port on Dec 14 in tow of tug <i>Wizard</i> , bound for Suez
<i>YUE DA 28</i>	general	PAN	CS	3,805	4,340	1997	Grounded in lat 34 00.6N, long 130 48.3 E, Dec 16. Still aground Dec 21. Crew taken off. Owners negotiating with salvors. Containers reported adrift.
<i>ZIM HOUSTON III</i>	container	ATG	GL	10,742	14,111	1993	Reported drifting, at 0.3 knots, towards Little Cayman, with main engine problems in lat 19 44.7N, long 81 32.4W, Dec 21. Requires towage to Kingston (Jam). Crew attempting to restart engine.

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The following reports are reprinted from Lloyd's List



## AGAT (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Dec 20 — Following received from Madrid MRCC, timed 1100, UTC: General cargo *Agat* (2730 gt, built 1984) (Aveiro for Liverpool) was drifting, not under command, yesterday and was taken in tow by its sistership, general cargo *Maya*, to a position 16 miles off Vigo. At this point it was taken in tow by a tug from Vigo and it arrived safely in port at 2300, UTC, yesterday.

## ALEKSANDROV (Cyprus)

London, Dec 17 — General cargo *Aleksandrov* arrived Mantyluoto Dec 15.

## ALGOSTEEL (Canada)

London, Dec 19 — A 20 centimetre vertical fracture was discovered on bulk *Algosteel* (18423 gt, built 1966) in way of port wing tank No.2. at St.Lambert lock in the Seaway, in lat 45 30N, long 73 30W, Dec 19. The vessel is proceeding to Valleyfield for repairs.

## ALGOVILLE (Canada)

London, Dec 17 — Bulk *Algoville* arrived Port Colborne Dec 12 and sailed same day for Comeau Bay. (See issue of Dec 14.)

## ALLORA (Honduras)

Gothenburg, Dec 16 — Local yard, Kollandsoe, Lake Vanern, repairing general cargo *Allora*. Vessel's ETD Dec 20 after finalising the temporary repair. Confirm the line have paid all outstanding costs for salvage and yard received guarantee of full payment and downpayment made. — Westax Marine Services AB.

Gothenburg, Dec 21 — General cargo *Allora* departed shipyard, Lake Varnern, this morning and just passing Gothenburg bound Klaipeda, where booked to drydock after Christmas holiday. She made some permanent and temporary repairs in order to be allowed to continue/single trip only, temporary certificate. Permanent repairs, major part bottom structure to build up the forepeak in bottom; approximately 1,500 kos steel, repair of steering engine and rudder yoke. Main work to be carried out at Klaipeda, replacement of bottom steel plates from forepeak and aftwards since heavily affected. — Westax Marine Services AB.

## ALTEZA (Cambodia)

London, Dec 18 — A press report, dated Dec 17, states: Cambodian-registered general cargo *Alteza* (1798 gt, built 1969) is berthed in Tsuruga port in Fukui Prefecture Dec 17 after spilling about 1,000 logs into the Sea of Japan. The vessel was whipped by strong winds and began to list, but the

Japan Coast Guard said none of its 19 crewmen, all from Russia, was injured. The vessel spilled about 750 of the logs from a deck just before 0600, local time, and 250 more fell into the sea about one hour later, according to the Coast Guard. The vessel was 21 kilometres northeast of Cape Echizen in Fukui Prefecture where the sea was rough due to a strong cold air mass covering the area, when it spilled the logs, the Coast Guard said.

London, Dec 18 — A press report, dated today, states: General cargo *Alteza* spilled about 1,000 logs into the Sea of Japan early Saturday (Dec 17) after it was whipped by strong winds and began to list, the Japan Coast Guard said. The vessel departed from Vanino port on Dec 8 bound for Tsuruga, Fukui Prefecture, with about 8,500 logs. The logs are around 4 metres long and 40 cm in diameter. The listing vessel continued on and arrived in Tsuruga just before noon.

## ANGLIAN SOVEREIGN (U.K.)

Maassluis, Dec 20 — Anchor handling tug/supply *Anglian Sovereign* left Schiedam 1010, Dec 19 and returned at 1750 same day. — Lloyd's Sub-agents.

## ANL PIONEER (Germany)

London, Dec 20 — A press report, dated today, states: A Melbourne magistrate has been asked to consider fining a German shipping company almost Aus\$1 million for an oil spill at Phillip Island, in what would be the state's biggest environmental fine. Reederi Suderelbe GMBH & Co Schiffahrts KG (RSS), as the owner of c.c. *ANL Pioneer*, has pleaded guilty to three charges relating to the incident in February 2003. The vessel's master Erhard Heinz Schuschan, 60, of Germany, has pleaded guilty to one charge of being master of the ship when a discharge of oil or oily mixture occurred in Bass Strait. The two defendants, who are not present in court, have agreed to a statement of fact that was read to magistrate Frank Jones by Environment Protection Authority prosecutor Paul Willee, QC. Mr Willee told the court the defendants had been knowingly sailing the ship with leaking oil tanks and structural problems in Australian waters. On February 27, 2003 the ship left Melbourne for Sydney, and the discharge was first noticed at Cape Woolamai on Phillip Island. The court heard the discharge affected about 12km of coastline. The cleanup cost close to Aus\$600,000.

## ANTONIS A. (Panama)

London, Dec 19 — Understood chemical/oil carrier *Antonis A.* (22683 gt, built 1982), believed to be on voyage to Turkey and Ukraine, has sustained damage while transiting the Suez Canal.

Piraeus, Dec 19 — Chemical/oil carrier *Antonis A.*, cargo 37,000 tonnes of palm oil, entered Suez Canal, northbound, at 1300, Dec 15.

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About 1320 same day vessel contacted canal banks, causing it to lose half of its rudder and sustain damage to its bow and stern. There are some large cracks in the bow. Salvage assistance was rendered by Tsavlis Salvage and vessel is now safely anchored at Suez Anchorage.

#### **ARCTIC DAWN (U.S.A.)**

London, Dec 19 — Tug *Arctic Dawn* (191 gt, built 1973) hit an object in the middle of the Calcasieu River channel at beacon No.65 at approximately 1400, local time, Dec 18. As a result, the tug sustained damages and one or both of its rudders were torn off. The US Coast Guard has restricted the channel to vessels with a draft of 14 feet or less until the Army Corps of Engineers has conducted a side sonar scan of the channel in the area of concern. The equipment required for the sonar scan is coming from New Orleans and is not expected to reach the Calcasieu River until some time today.

#### **ARCTIC OCEAN (U.K.)**

See *Maritime Lady*.

#### **ARKLOW VIEW (Republic of Ireland)**

London, Dec 21 — General cargo *Arklow View* sailed Cork Dec 13 and subsequently arrived Pasajes Dec 19.

#### **AZZAHRA (Morocco)**

London, Dec 15 — Ro/ro *Azzahra* sailed from Gibraltar on Dec 14, bound for Casablanca.

#### **BLACKFRIARS (U.K.)**

London, Dec 21 — A press report, dated today, states: An empty oil tanker has run aground on rocks near the Kyle of Lochalsh in the west Highlands of Scotland. Attempts to re-float the ship have been unsuccessful but a police spokesman said the tanker is in no immediate danger. A tug has been despatched from Stornoway. Further attempts to re-float the vessel will take place around 0600 UTC.

London, Dec 21 — Following received from Coastguard Stornoway, timed 0120, UTC: At 2125, UTC, Dec 20, product tanker *Blackfriars* (992 gt, built 1985) ran aground in lat 57 16N, long 05 42W. Vessel is in ballast, having earlier completed discharge at Loch Iver. An inshore lifeboat has carried out a visual inspection and the vessel has experienced no visible damage. Salvage tug *Anglian Prince* has been tasked and is due to arrive on scene at around 0300, UTC.

London, Dec 21 — Following received from Coastguard Stornoway, timed 0140, UTC: Portree lifeboat unsuccessfully attempted to refloat product tanker *Blackfriars*. A further attempt to tow the vessel off the rocks will be made on the next high tide, at 1000, UTC. There does not appear to be any pollution and no ingress of water, at this time. Weather conditions at the time of grounding: winds south-westerly, force 6-7.

London, Dec 21 — Following received from Coastguard Stornoway, timed 1030, UTC: Product tanker *Blackfriars* was reported at 0921, UTC, to have been refloated by Coastguard salvage tug *Anglian Prince*. Vessel is now at a safe anchorage awaiting divers survey. There was no pollution.

London, Dec 21 — Following received from Coastguard Stornoway MRSC, timed 1133, UTC: Product tanker *Blackfriars* has sustained damage to the forepeak seawater ballast tank and is currently awaiting a Maritime & Coastguard Agency Surveyor.

London, Dec 21 — Crescent Marine Services, operators of product tanker *Blackfriars* confirm that the vessel was refloated at high water this morning following a brief grounding near the Kyle of Lochalsh, in the vicinity of the Skye Bridge. *Blackfriars* was in ballast at the time of the incident, 2100, Dec 20, having just departed the Highlands Regional Council berth at Lochinver following the discharge of a gasoil cargo. The vessel, caught by strong gusts and an unusually strong tide, was pushed against a rocky ledge. There was some minor damage: The vessel's forepeak was holed and there was some water ingress. There were no injuries to the eight crew on board and there was no pollution. As a precautionary measure, five seafarers were transferred to a lifeboat. The seafarers rejoined the vessel later in the morning. At high tide the ship's staff assisted the master of salvage tug *Anglian Prince*. Working under a Lloyd's Form contract, the salvage team achieved a refloating at 0954, today. *Blackfriars* is now at a safe anchorage off the jetty at Lochalsh, awaiting inspection. The exact circumstances of the incident are now under investigation.

#### **BLUE POINT (Italy)**

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

#### **BUNGA MAS LAPAN (Malaysia)**

London, Dec 17 — C.c. *Bunga Mas Lapan* arrived Moji Dec 15 and sailed same day for Kobe.

Busan, Dec 22 — After the completion of the marine police investigation, c.c. *Bunga Mas Lapan* sailed from Mokpo, Korea, bound for its original destination port of Moji, Japan, on Dec 13, but leaving the 2nd officer and the master. The 2nd officer has been detained at the prison since the accident and the master of the vessel is not allowed to leave Korea until completion of the marine police investigation. Fishing *Handong No.97* is now under salvage operation at the site. This is expected to be completed in the middle of January, 2006. — Lloyd's Sub-agents.

#### **BUNGA RAYA SATU (Malaysia)**

London, Dec 19 — A press report, dated today, states: C.c. *Bunga Raya Satu* (39582 gt, built 1998) was seen arriving Rotterdam "Sunday" (?Saturday) with storm damage on its

stern. (Note — *Bunga Raya Satu* arrived Rotterdam 1555, Dec 17 and according to LMIU AIS the vessel was in lat 50 54 16.94N, long 01 27 14.85W, Southampton, at 0712, UTC, today.)

#### **CAPTAIN A.B. (U.S.A.)**

London, Dec 16 — A press report, dated Dec 15, states: Commercial salvage crews will work throughout the day to salvage fishing *Captain A.B.* that ran aground in Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla. The Coast Guard is overseeing the salvage attempt to ensure there's minimal environmental impact. She has approximately 4,500 gallons of fuel in its fuel tanks and approximately 300 gallons of lube oil in her engine-room. Response crews from the Coast Guard are working with contractors hired by the owner of the boat to ensure that none of these pollutants spill from the vessel during its salvage. Limited vehicle and equipment access to the beach where the vessel is grounded has imposed some delays in the progress to salvage the vessel. Early this morning, the Coast Guard Captain of the Port, Capt. David Lersch, approved the commercial salvage company's plan for this salvage operation. The main Coast Guard priority is that the salvage crews get *Captain A.B.* off the beach as soon as the weather and tides allow. This will reduce the likelihood of the vessel becoming stuck in the surf on the beach or breaking apart due to the pounding waves. Either of these scenarios could potentially lead to the release of the fuel and oil from her. A commercial environmental remediation contractor is attempting to pump the fuel off *Captain A.B.* If the fuel is not pumped off, crews will still try and pull *Captain A.B.* off the beach to reduce any environmental risk associated with leaving the vessel in the surf zone on the beach. The salvage plan is tentative and could change to meet the needs of the weather, environment or the safety of salvage crews. A 200-yard safety zone will be put in place around *Captain A.B.* during this salvage operation. The public is urged to stay clear of this area.

London, Dec 17 — a Coast Guard Jacksonville press release, dated Dec 16, states: The first attempt to remove fishing *Captain A.B.* that ran aground in Ponte Vedra Beach was unsuccessful requiring the Coast Guard to review plans and impose additional requirements to lessen the chance of environmental harm. The Coast Guard will require the vessel's owner to remove remaining quantities of oil from *Captain A.B.*. A commercial environmental remediation contractor attempted to pump off the fuel yesterday, but could only pump off approximately 2,000 gallons. The Captain of the Port for Jacksonville has access to the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund, a contingency sum of money set up to pay for emergency responses to oil and hazardous materials spills, in

case efforts by the vessel's owner are determined to be insufficient. With winter storms a serious threat to stranded vessels caught in the surf, responses need to be rapid and closely monitored. The Coast Guard cannot say how much longer it will take to remove the vessel. With some progress on the salvage of the vessel made today, Coast Guard response crews remain optimistic.

London, Dec 17 — A press report, dated today, states: fishing *Captain A.B.* is still aground. Crews thought yesterday would be their best bet to pull the shrimping boat off the beach and back out into the surf. A tug made attempts to refloat the vessel at high tide yesterday without success. Only the boat's front end swung around. Between pulls at high tide, the Coast Guard has been arranging tanker trucks to pump more than 4,000 gallons of fuel and oil off the boat. Crews say this morning looks like a good time to try again, but time is running out as high tides will actually get lower and lower for the next two weeks.

London, Dec 19 — A press report, dated Dec 18, states: Fishing *Captain A.B.* stranded off the shore of Ponte Vedra has been refloated. Teams were able to get it loose and send it on its way to Mayport yesterday. The Coast Guard said no fuel was spilled during the move.

#### **CHAMPION ADRIATIC (NIS)**

London, Dec 22 — Following received from the operators of product tanker *Champion Adriatic*, dated today: *Champion Adriatic* has completed repairs and is presently under way for the Mediterranean.

#### **CHENG CHING FENG (Taiwan)**

See "Somalia" under "Piracy."

#### **CHING YI 218 (Taiwan)**

See "Somalia" under "Piracy."

#### **CHIOS SAILOR (Panama)**

London, Dec 19 — Ballasted downbound bulk *Chios Sailor* (17832 gt, built 1984), struck the ship arrester cable at Cote Ste-Catherine Lock, in lat 45 24N, long 73 34.1W, after experiencing a total black out at 0607, Dec 18.

Montreal, Dec 21 — Bulk *Chios Sailor* was on a ballast voyage out of the Great Lakes when the sea bay intakes iced up, causing the auxiliary generators to overheat and shut down, resulting in a black-out as the vessel was entering the Cote Ste. Catherine lock. The vessel dropped anchor but was unable to stop. It was stopped by the ship arrester unit which is designed for this purpose and to protect the lock gates. There was no damage to the vessel and it was able to proceed 12 hours later after the arrester was replaced. The only damage is to the structural section of the arrester. The vessel is at Montreal until Dec 23, carrying out other repairs and awaiting orders for the next cargo. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### **CHRISTINA (U.K.)**

London, Dec 19 — A Coastguard & Maritime Agency press release, timed 1054, UTC, Dec 18, states: Sixteen metre fishing *Christina* (76 gt, built 1978) with three people onboard is slowly making its way back to Great Yarmouth under tow, as a result of ingress of water in the vessel. The fishing vessel put out a Mayday at midnight which was fortunately relayed by the standby vessel *Putford Achates* as the transmission of the Mayday was not heard by the Coastguard due to the vessel being 55 nautical miles north east of Great Yarmouth and transmitting on VHF not medium frequency. A Rescue helicopter from RAF Wattisham was scrambled and lowered a pump onboard the vessel, the crew then felt they were in a position to be able to make their way home alone. Adam Hutchinson, Coastguard Watch Assistant, Great Yarmouth Coastguard, says: "At 0630 hrs the crew onboard the fishing vessel had lost power from their generator and the ingress of water was increasing, the RNLI all weather Gorleston lifeboat was requested to launch and is now towing the vessel to Great Yarmouth, their expected time of arrival is 1500 hrs. Communications throughout this incident have been difficult as the vessel was well outside the VHF range and we were fortunate to have the standby vessels *Putford Achates* and later *Putford Rover* able to assist."

London, Dec 19 — Following received from Coastguard Great Yarmouth MRCC, timed 1146, UTC: Fishing *Christina*, owned by Locker Trawlers, Whitby, has been employed on guard vessel duties in the vicinity of the Sean Gasfield approximately 55 north-east of Great Yarmouth. Shortly after midnight yesterday the vessel began taking water and broadcast a mayday which was intercepted by a nearby standby vessel. *Christina* was supplied with pumps by both the standby vessel and a SAR helicopter. *Christina* made for Great Yarmouth but broke down and was towed in by the Great Yarmouth RNLI Lifeboat arriving alongside at approximately 1530 hrs. Engineers were dispatched by the company from Whitby and subsequently the vessel set out for its home port at approximately 2330 hrs, expecting to reach Whitby some 20 hours later.

Hull, Dec 20 — Fishing *Christina* experienced water ingress due to a caulking failure after encountering heavy weather. The vessel's pumps subsequently failed and a pump was placed on board the vessel by helicopter. Yarmouth Lifeboat was sent to tow the vessel to Yarmouth after its engine failed. The vessel effected temporary repairs at Yarmouth and sailed for Whitby. — Lloyd's Agents.

Hull, Dec 20 — Fishing *Christina* arrived Whitby Dec 20. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### **CITIUS (Marshall Islands)**

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

#### **CP VALOUR (Bermuda)**

Piraeus, Dec 16 — C.c. *CP Valour*: Salvage operations continue. Tanker *Magadir* is ETA on scene Dec 20 to commence unloading bunkers, while general cargo *BBC Canada*, presently at Algeciras, is loading equipment and expected to depart Dec 18 for the casualty site, a journey which is expected to take around three to four days. When it arrives it will begin unloading the cargo from on board the *CP Valour*. — Tsavlis Salvage (International) Ltd.

Ponta Delgada, Dec 16 — C.c. *CP Valour* still grounded in position at Praia da Faja. No progress yet seen concerning a possible refloating. — Lloyd's Agents.

Ponta Delgada, Dec 18 — C.c. *CP Valour*: A local dredger is in scene on sand removal works around the casualty. A tanker is underway to the casualty in order to collect the combustibles remaining on board. A multi-purpose cargo vessel is also underway to collect the containers from the vessel. Oil containment booms have been placed around the casualty. It was reported that about 100 cubic meters of oil spilled from the vessel has already been collected ashore. Attempts being made by tug to refloat the vessel. — Lloyd's Agents.

Piraeus, Dec 21 — C.c. *CP Valour*: Salvage operations continue. Tanker *Magadir* is now on scene and has commenced removing bunkers. A helicopter has begun removing some cargo and empty containers from the vessel and general cargo *BBC Canada* is due on scene tomorrow to continue the operation to take off the cargo. — Tsavlis Salvage (International) Ltd.

Ponta Delgada, Dec 21 — C.c. *CP Valour* is still aground. Tug *Fotiy Krylov* assisted by local tug *Ilha de Sao Luis* on scene. Two local dredgers *Draga Areia* and *Atlantiareia* contracted to remove the sands around the casualty. The combustibles remaining on board the vessel, FO and MDO, being now pumped out to tanker *Magadir*. General cargo *BBC Canada* is expected this evening at Horta to collect/transport about 600 general cargo containers from the vessel to shore. Some considered dangerous cargo which is stuffed inside three 40-foot containers is being collected by helicopter due to difficult access to them on board the vessel which has no proper lifting gear. It is reported that about 150 tonnes of fuel spilled from the vessel has already been reached/collected at the beach of Praia da Faja, located nearby the casualty. Oil containment booms have been placed around the casualty to avoid the pollution extension to another places of the Island. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### **CRYSTAL HARMONY (Bahamas)**

London, Dec 21 — Following received from Coast Guard Seattle, timed 1730, UTC: Passenger *Crystal Harmony* (48621 gt, built 1990) was disabled for half-an-hour with computer problems near the Sea Buoy off Seattle on Dec 19. The engines were restarted and

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the vessel proceeded on voyage with no further problems. (Note — *Crystal Harmony* sailed Victoria(Can) Dec 18 and was reported by LMIU AIS in lat 48 26 13.2N, long 123 25 50.4W at 1735, today.)

#### DAVID Z. NORTON (U.S.A.)

Chicago, Dec 16 — Bulk *David Z. Norton*: Fraser Ship Yard repaired/welded crack in bow shell plate on Saturday, Dec 10. The ice damage was apparently reported to them on Dec 9. The vessel departed Saturday to Silver Bay, Minnesota, for discharge. — Lloyd's Agents. (See issue of Dec 14.)

#### DAYANA (Cambodia)

Vladivostok, Dec 19 — Advised by owners of general cargo *Dayana* (3331 gt, built 1977), not general cargo *Diana* as before reported, that saturation under control by crew, list rectified by jettisoning part of deck cargo (timber). No damage to vessel and her constructions was reported and vessel proceeded to Masan, where reportedly arrived yesterday. Assistance was requested and tug *Predanniy* has arrived, but after rectifying the list assistance was not required by vessel. In connection with case, Letter of Indemnity to reimburse the tug emergency call was issued by shipowner. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### DIANA (Cambodia)

See *Dayana*.

#### DIFKO SUSANNE (NIS)

Copenhagen, Dec 16 — Chemical/oil carrier *Difko Susanne*: Managers confirm a crack has been repaired after the cargo had shifted off Harwich. The vessel is loading in Tallinn, today.

#### DUBLIN VIKING (U.K.)

London, Dec 19 — Following received from Coastguard Liverpool MRSC, timed 0337, UTC: At 2311, UTC, Dec 18, Port of Liverpool Operations reported passenger ro/ro *Dublin Viking* (21856 gt, built 1997), Liverpool for Dublin, with 110 persons (66 of which passengers) onboard, aground in lat 53 31.7N, long 03 06.9W. Port of Liverpool Operations tasked tugs *Trafalgar* and *Waterloo* and a pilot launch. However, vessel refloated under its own power. Following an internal inspection by the vessel's crew and an external visual 360 degs inspection by a Liverpool pilot launch, *Dublin Viking* returned to Langton Dock Liverpool, for inspection, escorted by *Trafalgar* and *Waterloo*.

London, Dec 20 — A press report, dated today, states: An investigation is under way after passenger ro/ro *Dublin Viking* ran aground in Liverpool Bay. *Dublin Viking* had 120 crew and passengers on board when it was reported aground at the narrow section of the dredged channel at Crosby. Coastguards and the Port of Liverpool authorities were informed. The vessel, which was outbound for Dublin, was refloated and returned to

Twelve Quays in Birkenhead. It has since sailed on to Ireland. An inspection by divers revealed the only damage was to paintwork.

#### DUNAV 2

See *Filiasi 7*.

#### DUNAV 2 (Romania)

See *Filiasi 7*.

#### EAGLE CARINA (Singapore)

London, Dec 18 — Following received from Ankara MRCC, timed 0735, UTC: Crude oil tanker *Eagle Carina* (52504 gt, built 1993), Genoa for Batumi, in ballast, ran aground in lat 39 50.04N, long 25 57.6E, at 0410, local time today. Vessel is still aground and the crew are still on board. The vessel is aground forward. No pollution reported. Wind on scene force 7/8 (near gale/ gale). (Note — *Eagle Carina* sailed Genoa Dec 6 arrived Valletta Dec 8 and sailed Dec 9 for Batumi.)

London, Dec 19 — Following received from Ankara MRCC, timed 0620, UTC: Crude oil tanker *Eagle Carina* refloated at 1422 hrs, yesterday and resumed passage to Batumi.

Istanbul, Dec 19 — The grounding of crude oil tanker *Eagle Carina* Dec 18 occurred near Bozcaada. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Dec 19 — Following received from Eagle Shipmanagement Pte Ltd, managers of crude oil tanker *Eagle Carina*, dated today: Gale-force winds in Turkey yesterday resulted in the grounding of the *Eagle Carina*. The vessel subsequently safely refloated the same day using its own means and without external assistance. There were no injuries to crew and no pollution. *Eagle Carina* is now at anchor carrying out inspections.

#### EIDER (Hong Kong)

Balboa, Dec 21 — Bulk *Eider* is presently in the Balboa dry dock, Braswell, and expecting to complete repairs about Jan 14. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### EKATERINI P. (Greece)

See *Pantokrator*.

#### EL PRETTY BOY (U.S.A.)

London, Dec 20 — A press report, dated Dec 19, states: Shrimp fishing *El Pretty Boy* (92 gt, built 1965) sank in the Brownsville Ship Channel early yesterday. A Coast Guard spokesman said the boat was found abandoned during the night, but the vessel was completely submerged by daybreak. *El Pretty Boy*, based in Port Isabel, was reported floundering on the north side of the south jetty at about 0200 hrs, Coast Guard Petty Officer Steven Eckert said yesterday. "We had a report of a shrimp boat that was stranded on the south side jetties," he said. "When we got out there, it was sitting along the rocks, so we sent a couple units out there and investigated," Eckert said. "There was nobody on board, but everything was locked up on it." By daylight, the abandoned vessel had sunk, Eckert

said. "Over the night, there was nothing we could do, because of where it was," he said. "So, it sunk overnight. We got in contact with the owner and he's taken full responsibility for it and everything. So, he'll be getting a crew out here to retrieve that. He's already taken measures for that." No injuries were reported, Eckert said. The shrimp boat was totally submerged yesterday, but because it was against the jetty, he does not think the ship channel will be blocked or passing ships endangered, Eckert said.

London, Dec 21 — A press report, dated Dec 20, states: The case of a shrimp boat (fishing *El Pretty Boy*) that sank near the south jetty remains under investigation, but for the time being, it's not a navigation hazard to vessels using the Brownsville Ship Channel, officials said. The boat was being towed to Honduras when the cable broke. It then hit the rocks near the bank of the jetty, local shrimpers and the U.S. Coast Guard said. Charles Burnell and Carlton Reyes, the local shrimpers, said they were told the trawler was carrying a variety of items, like home appliances, as it was being towed. Charlie French, a marine safety officer for the Coast Guard in Brownsville, said the boat sank sometimes after sunset Saturday. French said no one was on board when the trawler sank. "It's not interrupting traffic flow on the ship channel," he said, "but it did so during several hours on Sunday." French said they will try to pull the boat out of the water today, but added it could take several days before the boat is towed to a salvage area at the Port of Brownsville. "After we went Sunday and today, we determined that there is plenty of room for traffic on the channel," he said. "It's closer to the rocks and it's not posing a hazard to traffic." He said that a crane or barge is needed to pull it out of the water and haul it to the port.

#### EMC 423 (U.S.A.)

Chicago, Dec 16 — Tank barge *EMC 423* is still being cleaned. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### ERIKA (Malta)

London, Dec 16 — A new French judicial report into the loss of the non specific tanker *Erika* has highlighted the failure of the ship's manager and classification society to detect and deal with the advanced structural corrosion from which it said the vessel was suffering immediately before its break-up and sinking six years ago this week. The report claims that the real level of corrosion at the time of the *Erika's* sinking on Dec 12, 1999, contradicted measurements taken in the course of its five-year survey a little over a year earlier. The structures of the vessel's ballast tanks were corroded to an extent "well beyond corrossions acceptable to a classification society", it said. "In summary, the fate of *Erika* was virtually sealed as soon as it was

confronted for a long period to very severe sea conditions." And it claims that a document detailing steel thickness measurements taken in 1998, which was communicated by *Erika's* manager, Panship, to its classification society, Rina, appears to have been falsified. According to the authors of the report, the document was used to reduce the quantities of steel plate to be replaced on *Erika* from 220 tonnes to 34.5 tonnes, cutting the cost of the operation from \$500,000 to \$157,000. "This situation cannot be the result of simple material errors," they say. The new report was produced by experts appointed by the court of commerce in Dunkirk, *Erika's* last port of call before its break-up and sinking off the southern coast of Brittany. Rina declined to comment yesterday on the allegation that data on the structural state of *Erika* had been falsified. But it drew attention to the fact that the report's findings conflicted with those of another one produced for the examining magistrate carrying out a separate investigation into the disaster in Paris. This latter report highlights the responsibility of *Erika's* charterer, the Total oil group, in the loss of the ship and the ensuing pollution disaster, arguing that it had had effective control of the ship. A Rina spokesman also noted that the report carried out for the Dunkirk court of commerce had been conducted at the request of the oil group, which had also financed it. "We do not want to comment directly on the report," he said. "These are matters for the court to handle." He added, however, that the company was confident that the court would find it had not been guilty of wrongdoing on the basis of the investigations the company had carried out on its own account and with the help of independent parties. "We think we are in a good position," he said. "We are sure that the court will take into account our report with the others and we will continue to cooperate in the investigations as we have until now." Panship, which indicated soon after the accident that it had no ships on its books as a result of its involvement with *Erika*, proved impossible to contact yesterday. Details of the report carried out for the Dunkirk court of commerce have emerged as examining magistrate Dominique de Talance prepares formally to close her investigation into the *Erika* disaster. She announced this week that she expected to be able to complete work on the case by the end of January, opening up the possibility that a trial could open before the end of next year.

**ESTREITO DE RANDE (Argentina)**

London, Dec 21 — Following navigation warning issued at 0227, UTC, Dec 21: Trawler *Estreito de Rande* (1553 gt, built 1976) is currently adrift in lat 41 15S, long 60 33W.

**EUGENIO**

Durban, Dec 22 — General cargo *Eugenio* is due to complete repairs Dec 23 but is not expected to sail before the middle of next week. — Lloyd's Agents.

**EURO FJORD (Norway)**

Trondheim, Dec 20 — General cargo *Euro Fjord*: Kvernhusvik Yard, Hitra, now estimate to complete repairs last week December / first week January 2006. — Lloyd's Agents.

**EXCELLENCE (U.S.A.)**

Seattle, Dec 21 — The fire damage to fish factory *Excellence* was confined to a wooden joiner bulkhead. The commercial repairs are in hand at Pier 91. Approximately 150 square feet of insulated wooden joiner bulkhead and an air conditioning unit are being replaced at this time. The electric circuitry in the vicinity of the fire and the switchboard have been cleaned, checked and found to be in good condition. The repairs are scheduled to be completed by January 7, 2006 and at that time the vessel is scheduled to depart Seattle for Alaskan waters to resume fish processing. — Lloyd's Agents.

**FCC PROSPERITY (St. Vincent & Grenadines)**

London, Dec 21 — Following notice to mariners broadcast at 1742, UTC, Dec 19: General cargo *FCC Prosperity* (4610 gt, built 1986), black hull, unreported Bangkok to North Korea. last known position lat 07 42N, long 110 08E, at 1200, UTC, Dec 15. Vessels in vicinity requested to keep a sharp lookout, assist if possible. Reports to Singapore Port Operation control centre.

London, Dec 21 — Following received from Singapore Port Operations, timed 0725, UTC: No reports received regarding general cargo *FCC Prosperity*. Notices to mariners still being broadcast.

London, Dec 22 — Following notice to mariners broadcast at 1446, UTC, Dec 20: Bangkok to North Korea, vessel (general cargo *FCC Prosperity*) located safe.

**FEDERAL ST.LAURENT (Barbados)**

London, Dec 17 — Bulk *Federal St.Laurent* sailed Lorain about Dec 14.

**FILIASI 7**

Bucharest, Dec 20 — Pusher tug *Filiasi 7*, Constantza for Galatz, with a convoy of six barges loaded with ore, and pusher tug *Dunav 2*, heading in the opposite direction, with a convoy of two barges loaded with sand, were in collision at km 30, Midia-Navodari Canal, at 0015, today. The collision has reportedly resulted in no significant damages, the canal traffic being restored at 1200 hrs and the two convoys continuing their course. — Lloyd's Agents.

**FILIASI 7 (Romania)**

Bucharest, Dec 21 — Pusher tug *Filiasi 7*, collision with pusher tug

*Dunav 2*: Following are vessel's details: *Filiasi 7*, Romanian flag, LOA 34.52 m, width 11.02 m, maximum displacement 491 tonnes, built 1984, Oltenitza Shipyard, Romania, owners CNFR Navrom SA, Galatz. *Dunav 2*, Romanian flag, LOA 30 m, width 5.80 m, HP 400, built: 1958, Oltenitza Shipyard, Romania, owners: Dunav Shipping Company SRL, Calarasi. — Lloyd's Agents.

**FIRST CARRIER (St. Vincent & Grenadines)**

London, Dec 22 — A press report, dated today, states: A Kenyan sailor drowned after Mombasa-based general cargo *First Carrier* (1749 gt, built 1976), Comoros Islands for Dar es Salaam, sank off the Tanzanian Coast yesterday. Kenya Ports Authority harbour master, Captain Twalib Khamis, confirmed the early morning mishap. "We are still awaiting details from the scene. The ship managers have already flown to Dar es Salaam," he said. It is believed that 11 Kenyan and Tanzanian crew members were on board the vessel. Mr Chris Burnes, the director of Spanfreight Shipping Ltd, the ship agents, was reported to have flown to Tanzania. The cause of the sinking was yet to be established. An official of the ship's agents said the vessel sank three miles off the port while laden with about 100 containers. "Ten crew members were rescued, but one died. The containers had various cargo, but I don't think they can be retrieved," said official who sought anonymity. Seafarers Assistance Programme (Sap) co-ordinator, Andrew Mwangura, said the container carrier, which left the Mombasa Port recently, operated between the Indian Ocean islands and ports to the south of Mombasa.

Dar es Salaam, Dec 22 — General cargo *First Carrier*, Mtwara for Dar es Salaam, cargo containerised cashew nuts, sank about three miles from the Dar es Salaam port pilot station "Dec 20." Understand one crew member has lost his life. — Lloyd's Agents.

**FREY (Malta)**

Tallinn, Dec 20 — General cargo *Frey* has completed repairs but still in port at Tallinn. The vessel is expected to shift tonight to Bekkeri Harbour for loading. — Lloyd's Agents.

**FU SHAN HAI (China)**

Gothenburg, Dec 15 — The court decision delared that general cargo *Gdynia*, involved in a collision with bulk *Fu Shan Hai* (on May 31, 2003, 2.5 nautical miles north of Hammerodds, Bornholm Island), caused the incident. The owner of *Gdynia* is to pay USD 13.5 million to Chinese Line and verdict settled at Danish Court. The crew of 27 persons on board *Fu Shan Hai* were all rescued, but the vessel sank after a few hours and 60,000 tons of fertilizer caused environmental damage, with outlet of bunker oil, and swept the south-east coastline of Sweden, with high cleaning costs. In July, last year.

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

the second officer on board *Gdynia* was sentenced to fines for not fulfilling his duties and not giving way to *Fu Shan Hai*. In addition to the above sum, owner's of *Gdynia* are also to pay DKK 400' Kr for Court procedures and other costs for cleaning, etc, for DKK 45 million kroner. — Westax Marine Services AB.

**GAS CRYSTAL (Malta)**

Maassluis, Dec 21 — Lpg *Gas Crystal* (3888 gt, built 1990) struck one of the Boudewijn lock doors at around 0900 this morning. At present no damage known yet. — Lloyd's Sub-agents. (Note — *Gas Crystal* had arrived Antwerp 0749, Dec 19 and according to LMIU AIS was in lat 51 16 40.67N, long 04 19 53.35E, at 0920 today, speed one knot.)

Maassluis, Dec 21 — Lpg *Gas Crystal* must return to the docks and berth at mooring place 405. — Lloyd's Sub-agents.

**GDYNIA (Cyprus)**

See *Fu Shan Hai*.

**HACI EMINE ANA (Turkey)**

See "Ipswich, Suffolk, United Kingdom" under "Pollution."

**HANDONG NO.97 (South Korea)**

See *Bunga Mas Lapan*.

**HSIN LIEN FENG 36 (Taiwan)**

See "Somalia" under "Piracy."

**ICE KING (Greece)**

London, Dec 22 — Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 1030, UTC: General cargo *Ice King* (7085 gt, built 1994), (Loviisa for Bejaia) loaded with timber, is anchored in lat 38 52.5N, long 20 41E, with mechanical problems, possibly involving steering/propeller. A tug is expected on scene at 1200, UTC, today.

**IVS KWELA (Panama)**

London, Dec 20 — Bulk *IVS Kwela* arrived Setubal Dec 17 from Casablanca.

**JIN BI (Panama)**

London, Dec 22 — Understand bulk *Jin Bi* (20432 gt, built 1983), Qingdao for Singapore, cargo steel, grounded afternoon Dec 15 shortly after leaving Qingdao. Local tugs were unable to refloat the vessel. Part cargo was discharged and vessel was refloated and it returned to Qingdao where rest of cargo is being discharged to allow vessel to be drydocked for inspection and repair. Slight bottom damage was reported. Also understand General Average has been declared.

**JOHN D.LEITCH (Canada)**

Montreal, Dec 16 — Bulk *John D.Leitch* arrived Toledo this morning with a cargo of iron ore from Seven Islands. — Lloyd's Agents.

**JOHN SPENCE (Canada)**

See *McAsphalt 401*.

**KARMSUND (Barbados)**

London, Dec 20 — According to LMIU AIS, general cargo *Karmsund* was in position lat 62 20 50.21N, long 06 07 12.79E, at 0456, UTC, today. Vessel is proceeding on a course of 212 deg at 11.45 knots.

**KENTUCKY HIGHWAY (Japan)**

See *Maistros Breeze*.

**KORNI (Norway)**

London, Dec 15 — Information received from Sandnes, today, states: General cargo *Korni* grounded at 0200 hrs, today, when sailing from Halhjem.

London, Dec 16 — Following received from Sandnes, dated today: General cargo *Korni* sailed from Tananger at 1330 hrs, today, bound for Moss.

**LADOGA 101 (Russia)**

St.Petersburg, Dec 15 — General cargo *Ladoga 101* is still under repair at St.Petersburg. No prospects for repairs completion are available. — Lloyd's Agents.

**LEDASTERN (Isle of Man)**

Belfast, Dec 19 — Chemical/oil carrier *Ledastern* (6262 gt, built 1993) grounded while coming alongside at Oil Berth 1, Belfast, Dec 15. After discharge she remained at Belfast to carry out underwater survey and temporary repairs to rudder. Sailed Dec 16 for Bremerhaven for permanent repairs. — Lloyd's Agents. (Note — According to LMIU AIS, *Ledastern* was in lat 52 34 29.08N, long 03 50 41.14E, at 1025, UTC, Dec 19.)

London, Dec 22 — Chemical/oil carrier *Ledastern*, from Belfast, passed Brunsbuttel 1215, Dec 20 and according to LMIU AIS was in lat 54 53 58.12N, long 18 51 32.92E, at 0242 today.

**LERRIX (U.K.)**

London, Dec 21 — A Marine Accident Investigation Branch report states: General cargo *Lerrix* (1998 gt, built 1977), loaded, grounded off Danish coast, sustaining serious hull damage, while on passage from Rotterdam to Aarhus in poor visibility (? May 21). Action taken: The Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents has written to the owner of the vessel concerning the following; The importance of completing a proper passage plan for each and every voyage, including laying the track to follow /course line of chart. The masters obligations concerning immediately reporting an accident such as grounding to the coastal state when within territorial waters. (Note — *Lerrix* sailed Rotterdam May 19, arrived Aarhus May 26 sailed same day, arrived Hull May 29 and sailed July 21.)

**LINA 1**

Aden, Dec 22 — Fishing *Lina 1* is a timber construction vessel of French build, 68 gt and trades under the Yemen flag. The owners are: Yemen Fishing Co., Mukalla. The vessel apparently began taking in water

about 150 miles off the coast in heavy weather. The ingress was apparently through seams although this has not been positively confirmed. The vessel is reportedly at Mukalla where they hope to dock it for repairs. — Lloyd's Agents.

**MACKINAW (U.S.A.)**

London, Dec 16 — A press report, dated today, states: The master of icebreaker *Mackinaw* (2700 gt, built 2003) was temporarily relieved of command after an accident that dented the \$90 million vessel. As the *Mackinaw* floated into the Grand Haven Channel on Monday (Dec 12), the 240-foot vessel slowly turned and rammed the breakwall on Lake Michigan. The accident left an 8-by-3-foot dent in the vessel's starboard bow. Part of the breakwall may also require repairs, the Coast Guard said yesterday. An investigation is under way, but Capt. Donald Triner said a junior crew member had made a steering mistake, the Coast Guard said. The Coast Guard took possession of the ship in mid-November. It was making a tour of Great Lakes cities when the mishap occurred.

Troy, Michigan, Dec 16 — Officials hope the investigation regarding the Coast Guard's newest cutter, icebreaker *Mackinaw*, which crashed into a Grand Haven breakwall Monday (Dec 12), does not hinder the vessel's voyage to Cheboygan this weekend. "It is our hope right now that the *Mackinaw* reaches its home port in Cheboygan for a homecoming celebration Saturday," Ninth Coast Guard District spokesman Chief Petty Officer Jeff Hall said Wednesday. "The city has set up a reception for the new boat and its crew." Coast Guard officials from the Ninth District in Cleveland are investigating the crash that caused a 10-foot hole in the southern breakwall, damaging part of its interlock system, according to the Army Corps of Engineers, which owns the pier. The impact also caused substantial damage to the vessel's bow, and possibly other areas, Hall said. "We have naval engineers still looking at the vessel. They'll be looking at how far back energy was dispersed through the vessel," Hall said, explaining that engineers will be investigating every confined space throughout the vessel that could have been affected by the crash. "Our primary concern is getting a good look at the structuring." The naval engineers have been surveying the vessel's damage, and could have a damage estimate by today, Hall said. They'll also be looking at the status of the 240-foot-long cutter and whether it is safe to operate. "The investigation is ongoing and it probably will be for quite some time," he said. Coast Guard officials are also considering whether to launch divers to look at the vessel's hull below the water line. If the new *Mackinaw* is to reach Cheboygan by Saturday, it would need to leave Grand Haven's port today, Hall said. Officials hope to reach a decision later today. The



*Mackinaw*, which was scheduled to depart Grand Haven at noon Tuesday, was also scheduled to stop in Sault St. Marie and Rogers City prior to its final destination in Cheboygan. However, those stops have been cancelled. "I believe they have canceled those stops since they'll be in Grand Haven longer," Hall said. — Great Lakes and Seaway Shipping News.

Troy, Michigan, Dec 21 — The damage to icebreaker *Mackinaw* was hurriedly cleaned, scraped and repainted in Grand Haven and when the vessel arrived in Cheboygan, the dent was barely noticeable. Ninth Coast Guard District spokesman Chief Petty Officer Jeff Hall told the Grand Haven Tribune that Coast Guard officials from Cleveland are investigating the incident that caused a 10-foot hole in the southern breakwall at Grand Haven. The impact damaged part of its interlock system, according to the Army Corps of Engineers, which owns the pier. The impact also caused substantial damage to the vessel's bow, and possibly other areas, Hall said. "We have naval engineers still looking at the ship. They'll be looking at how far back energy was dispersed through the vessel," Hall said, explaining that engineers will be investigating every confined space throughout the vessel that could have been affected by the crash. "Our primary concern is getting a good look at the structuring," Hall noted. In the interim, Executive Officer Nathan Podoll is in charge as the *Mackinaw* enters a "Charley" period for maintenance. No movement of the vessel is scheduled until early January. — Great Lakes and Seaway Shipping News.

#### **MAISTROS BREEZE (Hong Kong)**

Buenos Aires, Dec 16 — Sub-agents in Campana reported: At 1615, Dec 15, vehicle *Kentucky Highway* (50320 gt, built 1987) contacted bulk *Maistros Breeze* (17630 gt, built 1995), which was loading coal at the port of Campana, H Site, ESSO Terminal. *Kentucky Highway* is currently at Zarate, a few kilometres up river from the port of Campana, and *Maistros Breeze* is at C Site of the port of Campana. — Lloyd's Agents.

Buenos Aires, Dec 19 — The collision between bulk *Maistros Breeze*, berthed port side at Esso Jetty "H", and vehicle *Kentucky Highway*, transitting upriver, occurred in way of right margin Rio Parana de Las Palmas, port of Campana stretch, near Km 97, at about 1612, local time, Dec 15. *Kentucky Highway* reportedly lost voluntary steerage control and struck berthed vessel *Maistros Breeze*, which had recently commenced loading operations with about 850 tonnes petcoke onboard, in way of its starboard side top side tank No.3 breaching same and weather deck closed bulwark plating and slightly affecting aft folding steel hatch covers. *Kentucky Highway's* port side anchor remained locked in way aforementioned tank and as a

consequence both vessels surged forward leading towards the *Maistros Breeze* stranding of 11 head/stern mooring ropes, extensive damages to breasting/mooring dolphins, shore side loading installations, petcoke loader, plus vessels port side navigation bridge/navigation light. *Kentucky Highway* with slight top side damages in way of port side aft area abaft hawse pipe and anchor chain stopper. In order to release the vessel the port anchor chain had to be cut. Two harbour tugs in attendance. Repairs can be carried afloat. Interim external double plate only required in order to continue voyage. Spare anchor yet to be positioned, as other still onboard *Maistros Breeze* and condemned as shank deformed full length. *Kentucky Highway* might be sailing outbound this afternoon. No cargo damages. *Maistros Breeze* can undergo repairs afloat; loading delayed as terminal/loading chute-spreader damaged. Reportedly, once repairs finalized vessel may load similar cargo, green petcoke, at La Plata, Ensenada. Estimate a 15-day delay in between obtaining a free berth and final repairs. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### **MARITIME LADY (Gibraltar)**

London, Dec 15 — A "HavarieKommando" press release, timed 1500, today, states: It took a good three-quarter hour to turn general cargo *Maritime Lady*. The vessel now lies on even keel, held by the lifting crane *Samson*.

London, Dec 16 — Following received from Kiel, dated today: In spite of strong winds, floating crane *Samson* succeeded in righting the wreck of the sunken general cargo *Maritime Lady*, in Cuxhaven, on Dec 15. The salvors had worked on fixing the ropes, then the ship turned around within 45 minutes and is to be pumped out today. Then inspections are to commence. They will be difficult as the wheelhouse has been completely destroyed. Just little amount of oil escaped while turning the ship. The support *Neuwerk* and offshore support *Knechtsand* were in attendance as well as firefighters and other "helping hands". The *Maritime Lady* will probably be scrapped at Machulez in Cuxhaven. Before this, the large hole in the foreship has to be "shut". Only then the hold can be pumped out. Until then the vessel remains suspended in the ropes of the *Samson*.

London, Dec 17 — Chemical/oil carrier *Sunny Blossom* left Brunsbuttel 1906, Dec 15 and arrived Hamburg 0408, Dec 16.

London, Dec 19 — Hamburg shipping police has launched criminal proceedings for endangering shipping against all three masters involved in the serious accident on the river Elbe, near the entrance to the Kiel Canal. Police said that following the evaluation of radio communication and radar pictures, problems in coordinating the passing might have been the reason for the initial collision on Dec 5 between general

cargo *Maritime Lady* and c.c. *Arctic Ocean*. Despite the master of the *Maritime Lady* stopping the engine at the last moment and the *Arctic Ocean* trying to reverse, the vessels collided. Later that day, chemical/oil carrier *Sunny Blossom* hit the scene of the accident. Police said that the vessel had been contacted over radio several times and warned that it was heading directly towards the capsized *Maritime Lady*. The master and pilot of the *Sunny Blossom* had been charged shortly after the incident. Charges against the other two master have now followed as a result of police investigations. The US owner of the *Sunny Blossom* has rejected the accusations, pointing to the strong tide. The masters of the *Maritime Lady* and *Sunny Blossom* had to pay security of Euros 12,000 (\$14,400) each. Despite contrary claims made by the environmental organisation WWF, Hamburg police said that the scene of the accident had been sufficiently safeguarded. The wreck of the *Maritime Lady* has, meanwhile, been turned around in the port of Cuxhaven. A worker was injured during sealing work on the wreck. The vessel is bound for scrapping once it has been released by the investigating authorities. It has been abandoned by its Norwegian owner.

London, Dec 21 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: Chemical/oil carrier *Sunny Blossom* is currently under repair at Blohm & Voss in Hamburg. It was towed from Brunsbuttel to Hamburg by Bugsier tugs. The load of liquid fertilizer had been unloaded before.

#### **MAYA (Antigua & Barbuda)**

London, Dec 21 — General cargo *Maya*, Gijon for Leixoes, passed Cape Finisterre 0908, Dec 18.

#### **MCASPHALT 401 (Canada)**

London, Dec 20 — Anchor handling tug/supply *John Spence* (718 gt, built 1972) collided with tank barge *McAsphalt 401* (3366 gt, built 1966) while attempting to reconnect it in Lake Erie, lat 42 09 41N, long 81 04 53W, at 2038, EST, Dec 16. Barge was holed in the forepeak tank and was taking on water. After reconnection, the tug proceeded to anchor at Long Point.

#### **MICHELLE (Antigua & Barbuda)**

Rotterdam, Dec 22 — Operations to salvage general cargo *Michelle* are presently halted, owing to bad weather. — SMIT Salvage BV.

#### **MIRAC-3 (Turkey)**

Venice, Dec 21 — General cargo *Mirac-3*: Repairs to the damaged shell plating are in progress. The new rudder has not been supplied as yet. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### **MSC ELENA (Panama)**

See under "Pollution."

#### **MSC PARANA (NIS)**

Freeport, Dec 17 — C.c. *MSC Parana* (23761 gt, built 1987) reportedly

sustained structural damage to her No 2 ballast tank when a container was accidentally dropped on top of it during loading operations on Dec 5. In addition to the two containers reportedly damaged in the dropping incident, several other containers were reportedly exposed to water immersion in ballast water leaking from the ruptured tank. Repairs to the vessel were undertaken at Freeport and the vessel sailed for its next scheduled port in the Dominican Republic on Dec 11. — Lloyd's Agents. (Note — *MSC Parana* left Jacksonville Dec 4.)

**NAN HAI (Panama)**

London, Dec 14 — Bulk *Nan Hai* sailed from New Orleans on Dec 8.

**NAPOCOR POWER BARGE NO.106 (Philippines)**

See "Tropical Storm "Kajiki" under "Weather & Navigation".

**NECDET K. (Turkey)**

London, Dec 20 — Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 1030, UTC: General cargo *Necdet K.* (4337 gt, built 1985), Odessa for Tarragona, reported not under command in lat 37 50.56N, long 24 25.93E, at 0855, UTC, Dec 19. At 1330, local time, same day vessel reported making way and it subsequently anchored in Karistos Bay, in about lat 38 00.6N, long 24 25.2E. Vessel has been detained until a seaworthiness certificate is issued.

**NINA 1 (St. Vincent & Grenadines)**

Zeebrugge, Dec 22 — General cargo *Nina 1* is still in port at Antwerp. — Lloyd's Sub-agents.

**NOORDSTER (Belgium)**

London, Dec 15 — Following received from Coastguard Dover MRCC, timed 1646, UTC: Fishing *Noordster* is still lying capsized. Tugs *Multrasalvor* and *Brandaris* are on scene and working on the vessel. The intention is to fill the vessel with compressed air and then assess the situation. Tug/supply *Anglian Monarch* will remain on scene overnight.

London, Dec 16 — Following received from Coastguard Dover MRCC, timed 1541, UTC: One survivor from fishing *Noordster* has been landed at Eastbourne Hospital. Two bodies have been recovered and the third has been sighted but could not be recovered. Tug/supply *Anglian Monarch* will remain on scene until 1600, UTC.

London, Dec 20 — Following received from Coastguard Dover MRCC, timed 1212, UTC: Fishing *Noordster* sank Dec 16. The sinking position has been marked with buoys.

**NORMAND NEPTUN (NIS)**

Kristiansand, Dec 16 — Normand Neptun Ship Manager Solstad Shipping informs that tug/supply

*Normand Neptun* is under repair which started about one week ago and scheduled to end Jan 15. — Lloyd's Agents.

**NORMANDY (Bahamas)**

See "Republic of Ireland" under "Port State Control".

**P.MOUZELIS (St. Vincent & Grenadines)**

London, Dec 20 — Understood bulk *P.Mouzelis* (75719 gt, built 1981), which sailed Ponta da Madeira Oct 23, loaded with iron ore, has experienced difficulties off Taiwan, assistance required.

Piraeus, Dec 20 — Bulk *P.Mouzelis* reported water ingress into forepeak and No 1 hold about 30 miles from Kaohsiung yesterday. Tsavlis Salvage have hired a tug with divers and diving equipment on board and underwater welding is to be carried out. Vessel is proceeding in the direction of China and the tug is due to meet it soon to commence rendering assistance. The *P.Mouzelis* will be escorted into a Chinese port. — Tsavlis Salvage (International) Ltd.

London, Dec 20 — Bulk *P.Mouzelis*: Understood Lloyd's Standard Form salvage contract has been signed with Tsavlis Salvage (International) Ltd.

**PANTOKRATOR (Greece)**

London, Dec 19 — Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: While passenger ro/ro *Pantokrator* (3042 gt, built 1988) was making berthing manoeuvres yesterday evening at Kerkira (Corfu), vessel struck ferry *Ekaterini P.* (3250 gt, built 1990) which was already berthed at the port. Following the incident *Pantokrator* berthed safely and disembarked the 272 passengers and 70 cars. Only minor damage was sustained to both vessels and there were no injuries. The port authority prohibited departure of both vessels pending inspection by the marine inspectorate.

**POLANA**

Varna, Dec 19 — Tug *Polana* sank in the Danube river with 40 tons of diesel oil bunker still on board this morning. The hull of the vessel did not withstand the high temperature caused by the fire. There is a serious danger for oil spillage, which can affect the local environment. Six Bulgarian flagged vessels, which were involved in the salvage operations left the place of the accident yesterday, but firemen remained vigilant throughout the night ready to continue the fire fighting activities. Further actions in respect of the casualty for preventing and minimizing further damages to the environment and possible oil spillage have been taken by both the Bulgarian and Romanian side. Reportedly *Polana* sank out of the Danube waterway and does not impede the navigation and vessel traffic along the river. — Lloyd's Agents.

Bucharest, Dec 20 — The efforts of the Romanian and Bulgarian firemen to extinguish the fire on tug *Polana* have not been completely successful, the vessel sinking at about 0400, today. There is apparently no pollution or damage threat at present. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Dec 20 — A press report, dated today, states: Tug *Polana*, that was burning since yesterday after a fire broke out because of short circuit in the electrical system, sank one hour ago. Teams from the Romanian State Agency for Civil Protection and Gurgevo Port provided a vessel that would pump the fuel out from the tanks of the ship to prevent possible pollution. The area was sealed off. The State Agency for Civil Protection in the city of Ruse has also received the signal for the sinking but are waiting for the official signal to send the testing teams. There is a strict procedure that is abided by the border police that controls the crossing of the water border.

**POLANA (Slovakia)**

London, Dec 19 — A press report, dated today, states: Almost the whole of Slovakian ship *Polana*, which caught fire near Rousse, is in flames, the Regional Interior Ministry's Department reported. Director of the Fire and Emergency Safety Service, Gen. Kiril Voynov has headed for the site. Director of the Maritime Administration in Russe signalled about the fire at 0912 this morning. The ship was travelling in Romanian territorial waters when it caught fire. *Polana* transports grain. It sailed in the direction opposite to the course of the River Danube. The fire broke out in the engine-room of the ship. There were about 40-50 tons of fuel onboard the ship, the Maritime Administration said. There is no leakage of fuel.

London, Dec 19 — A press report, dated today, states: The Slovakian ship (*Polana*) was caught fire near Rousse, was dragged to a safe place at the Romanian bank, the Interior Ministry announced. The cargo, which the ship transported, was not damaged.

Bucharest, Dec 19 — Pusher tug *Polana* had fire break out at Km 495, River Danube, at 0730 today. At the time of the incident the vessel was pushing a convoy of five barges. Extent of damage is unknown at present but unconfirmed reports show that only the pusher tug was damaged by fire, the barges and cargo being unaffected. No personal injuries were reported but all the documents of crew and cargo and personal effects of crew members were burned. The fire has not been extinguished yet and Romanian and Bulgarian fire-fighting teams are still on site. — Lloyd's Agents.

Varna, Dec 19 — Slovakia flag pusher tug *Polana*, 188 gt, while pushing barges loaded with grain in Romanian waters near the Bulgarian river port of Rousse, caught fire about 0720, local time, today. Reportedly the fire started in the engine-room. The

vessel has approximately 50 tons of marine diesel bunker on board. Continuous efforts are being made in order to prevent explosion on the vessel, due to bottles containing oxygen which still remain on board. The salvage operations, which are still continuing, involve various Romanian, Ukrainian and Bulgarian vessels, among which is vessel *Yatra* and Bulgarian-flagged vessel *Paisii Hilendarski*. Up until this moment no traces of oil spillage which could be a threat to the environment have been observed. Reportedly a Romanian salvage vessel managed to separate the barges with cargo from the burning vessel. No damages are reported to the cargo. Presently the *Polana* is lying alongside the Romanian coast while efforts are being made to put out the fire and remove the bottles containing oxygen from the vessel. No injuries or loss of life have been reported. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Dec 20 — A press report, dated today, states: Fire broke out on the tow ship *Polana*, sailing in the Danube, not far from the city of Rousse. The reason for the fire was a short circuit in the electrical installation in the motor compartment. The ship was towing barges with corn. The fire was extinguished late in the afternoon and there were no injuries. The situation remained very risky before the fire was put down because there was 40 tons of fuel on board of the vessel. Romanian and Bulgarian firemen participated in the operation. The fate of the vessel is now in the hands of the Romanian authorities as the vessel is in their territory. There is no danger of any ecological crisis in the region. The corn was also safe because the rescuers divided the towboat from the barges.

London, Dec 20 — A press report, dated today, states: Tug *Polana* sank this morning in the River Danube, BNR reports. There is a danger of pollution from the 45 tons of fuel on board of the ship.

London, Dec 20 — A press report, dated today, states: There is no pollution after the sinking of tug *Polana*, Colonel Marian Ghimpe'eanu, director of Inspectorate for Emergency Situations in Gurgevo announced. Col. Ghimpe'eanu pointed out that the vessel that caught fire yesterday sank at 0400 hrs. The Romanian authorities pointed out that they have sealed off the area in order to prevent possible pollution from the tank of the ship.

#### PRINCESS ERICA EXPRESS

London, Dec 22 — A press report, dated Dec 21, states: About 100 people, including students and children, have been stranded at the Port Moresby's main wharf after rough waves cracked the bow of vessel *Princess Erica Express* they were travelling on. These people did not know that they would have to wait until tomorrow because that is the amount of time that is needed to work

on the damage. *Princess Erica Express* bound for Alotau encountered rough seas about 14 miles outside the Basilisk passage, off Fairfax Harbour that resulted in its return to the wharf. The vessel, which was previously scheduled to leave Port Moresby shores at 1400 Monday, did not make it because there had been a technical fault within its fuelling system where the fuel was said to be dirty. Maima Investments, which own the vessel, yesterday evening said that there was no major problem with the vessel, adding they had contacted the Curtain Brothers dockyard crew to work on the fibre glass which would take couple of hours after it docked at about 1745 hrs. But PNG Dockyard's (Curtain Brothers) assistance manager Brendan Hill says it was difficult to work on the ship at night. He said his men would pump out the water and then take the ship to their yard at Motukea in the morning and work on it for about two to three days.

#### PUERTO DE ALTAMIRA (Panama)

Veracruz, Dec 16 — An owners representative reported that cutter suction hopper dredger *Puerto de Altamira* is still tied up at the TNG shipyard repair dock in Veracruz. He said that they are still considering whether to repair the vessel or to scrap her and that the decision will not be made for another two months or so. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### RICKMERS GENOA (Marshall Islands)

London, Dec 15 — General cargo *Rickmers Genoa* now renamed *Rickmers Dalian* was reported arriving at San Francisco on Nov 25. The vessel departed the following day and was next reported arriving at Houston at 2300 hrs, Dec 13.

London, Dec 20 — Following received from the operators of general cargo *Rickmers Dalian*, ex *Rickmers Genoa*, dated today: *Rickmers Dalian* is presently under way to Hamburg to effect final repairs.

#### RIO NEGRO (Liberia)

Montreal, Dec 15 — General cargo *Rio Negro* (13066 gt, built 1999) has arrived in Montreal with substantial damage to approximately 35 containers due to heavy weather encountered in the North Atlantic. No damage to the vessel known of at this point. — Lloyd's Agents. (Note — *Rio Negro* sailed Bilbao Nov 17 for Montreal.)

Montreal, Dec 20 — General cargo *Rio Negro* departed Montreal Dec 17 back onto its regular liner service for MSC. No repairs were required to the vessel. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### RODINA (Bulgaria)

Fredericia, Dec 16 — Bulk *Rodina* sailed Fredericia Dec 15 for Frederikshaven. — Lloyd's Sub-agents.

Aarhus, Dec 19 — According to the agent of bulk *Rodina* the vessel sailed Fredericia 1720, Dec 15 for South America. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### S.PACIFIC (Marshall Islands)

Montreal, Dec 15 — General cargo *S.Pacific* arrived Quebec Dec 13 with tug assistance. It lost a 30t (? ton) spreader and has limited damage on deck due to the heavy weather. It also experienced main engine problems possibly relating to fuel quality. This is being investigated now by the MAK representative from Europe. It is believed that the vessel will be in Quebec for several days. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Dec 20 — General cargo *S.Pacific* arrived Hamilton Dec 19.

#### SAFE CONCORDIA (Panama)

Melbourne, Dec 22 — Contrary to our earlier advice that semi-sub HL vessel *Safe Concordia* was to be towed to Westernport for loading on board semi-sub HL vessel *Mighty Servant I*, it has now been arranged that the loading will take place in Port Phillip Bay. It is hoped to have the *Safe Concordia* loaded on board the *Mighty Servant I* by Dec 24. The *Mighty Servant I* will then depart for Singapore where repairs to the *Safe Concordia* are planned to take place. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### SHANGHAI PRIDE (Panama)

London, Dec 18 — A SvitzerWijsmuller Salvage BV report, dated Dec 17, states: SvitzerWijsmuller Salvage BV and partners Sri Lanka Shipping Co. today, Dec 17, successfully moved general cargo *Shanghai Pride* into Colombo port as a next step into the salvage operation concerning this collision damaged vessel. The vessel with 11,000 tons of bagged rice loaded vessel had a collision south of Sri Lanka during early November whereafter the vessel was compelled to remain well offshore not being allowed in for safety reasons. SvitzerWijsmuller Salvage and Sri Lanka Shipping Co. were contracted to assist in resolving the situation concerning the vessel and its crew and cargo during end November. A salvage team was put together of staff from Sri Lanka Shipping Co. with SvitzerWijsmuller Salvage staff being mobilised in from Singapore, South Africa, South Korea and The Netherlands. Salvage equipment not available locally was flown in from the SvitzerWijsmuller Salvage warehouses in Singapore and The Netherlands. Salvage craft, amongst which the tug *Mahanuwara* and a bunker tanker from Sri Lanka Shipping Co. also assisted in the operation. A specially developed salvage plan was set into motion which ensured that the condition of the vessel was progressively improved which amongst others consisted of the removal of the majority of the bunkers from the vessel and a part cargo removal. Some 4,000 tons, or close to 150,000 bags, of rice, which mainly concerned affected and condemned, wetted, cargo from holds No.1, 3 and 4, were removed. With these consecutive improvements of the condition of the vessel taking place,

the damaged vessel was at a certain stage allowed to close in to the Sri Lankan coast and drop anchor at the anchorage, which enhanced the safety of the vessel and improved the logistics considerably. Port entry was subsequently granted two days ago following further improvements and the vessel was assisted into Colombo and berthed alongside at 1020, local time, this morning under command of the salvage team with salvage equipment on standby. The vessel will subsequently be prepared for dry dock entry, expected in a few days time.

**SHINSEI MARU NO.3 (Japan)**

London, Dec 16 — Bereaved families of Japanese fishermen who died in a collision between their fishing boat *Shinsei Maru No.3* and a containership belonging to Israeli ship operator Zim Integrated Shipping Services have filed a suit against the owner of the container vessel, seeking a total of Yen 900m (\$8.3m) in compensation, Kyodo News reported. The news comes two months after Zim's president and chief executive Doron Goder pledged to offer financial compensation to the relatives of seven crew who died when their fishing vessel capsized after colliding with c.c. *Zim Asia*. "I have firmly believed from the beginning that the collision was a hit-and-run case. The area where the boat was fishing is located on an international shipping route, and I want the court to pursue the issue so that the same thing will not happen again," Hiroshi Tokuno, 71, who lost his 43-year-old son Hisashi in the collision, told a press conference. After the incident on Sep 28 the master of the containership had denied any involvement in the accident and the crew initially refused to co-operate with Korean investigators when the ship called at Busan, the first port of call after the incident. But Mr Goder subsequently issued a full apology to the families.

**SILVA (Cambodia)**

Esbjerg, Dec 16 — Auction of general cargo *Silva* was carried out yesterday; currently awaiting news of outcome. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Dec 19 — General cargo *Silva* was sold at auction last week. It was hammered down by the Oslo-based broker Saga Shipping & Trading on behalf of an Indian buyer for the sum of DKK 320,000 plus court fee of DKK 291,000. However, the fact that buyer was an Indian has caused a political row in Denmark. A number of politicians are up in arms over that fact that *Silva* might sail to Alang to be broken. So now the Municipal of Esbjerg's technical department will survey the vessel for a go or a no go to Alang.

**SILVER SKY (Philippines)**

Manila, Dec 16 — As a result of the "ammonia tank" explosion, located on the main deck, fishing *Silver Sky* sustained damage to her deck

planking that required three days afloat repairs. The vessel is now back in service. It was also reported that four of the six crew members who were hospitalised have been released, while two are still confined in the hospital. — Lloyd's Agents.

**SIRICHAH PETROLEUM 2 (Thailand)**

See "Somalia" under "Piracy".

**SKY SUN (U.S.A.)**

London, Dec 17 — A Coast Guard Honolulu press release, dated Dec 16, states: The Coast Guard Federal On-Scene Coordinator and Hawaii State On-Scene Coordinator are working with the owner of fishing *Sky Sun* (70 gt, built 1987) to coordinate removal of approximately 700 gallons of fuel and oil products from the vessel, which is aground two miles south of Cape Kumukahi Point on the Big Island. *Sky Sun* ran aground about 0500 yesterday with six people on board. The Hawaii County Fire Department rescued all six people from the 67-foot fishing boat. There were no injuries. Coast Guard investigators checked the vessel for leaks yesterday and did not detect any at that time. Personnel on-scene with the vessel today have detected a very light sheen surrounding the vessel. Absorbent booms have been positioned around *Sky Sun*. The owner is actively involved in all aspects of salvaging operations. A contractor has been hired and has reported removal of about 300 gallons of fuel as of 1400 today. Planning for operations to remove the vessel is ongoing. *Sky Sun* is aground half a mile north of Waiopae Tidepools, a State of Hawaii Marine Life Conservation District.

London, Dec 18 — A press report, dated today, states: Fuel removal from the grounded fishing *Sky Sun* was expected to be completed yesterday, the U.S. Coast Guard said. A Coast Guard federal on-scene coordinator and state on-scene coordinator were working with the owner to have the remaining fuel and oil products removed from the vessel. Petty officer Brooksann Anderson said the Coast Guard was monitoring the effort to make sure the owner was taking responsibility and was aware of the potential hazards to the environment. She said the fuel removal operation, which began Friday, was expected to be completed by yesterday. "They estimated about 700 gallons on board," Anderson said. Absorbent booms were positioned around the grounded vessel on Friday after a "very light sheen" was detected in the water around the boat. Planning is under way to move the boat once the fuel has been removed.

London, Dec 19 — Following received from Coast Guard Honolulu, timed 1815, UTC: Fishing *Sky Sun* is still hard aground in the same position. All fuel has been removed. The owner is working with state agencies with regards to salvage operations.

Honolulu, Dec 19 — Fishing *Sky Sun*, length 68-foot, ran aground at approximately 0509 hrs, on Friday, Dec 16, off the rocky Puna coast on the island of Hawaii. The Captain, Jong Pak and five others were airlifted to safety. The vessel was carrying 8,000 pounds of fish and 3,000 gallons of diesel fuel, but no fuel was leaking. The owner is currently removing the fuel from the vessel. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Dec 21 — Following received from Coast Guard Honolulu, timed 1730, UTC: Fishing *Sky Sun* is still hard aground in the same position.

**SOVEREIGN (U.K.)**

London, Dec 18 — Following received from Coastguard Aberdeen MRSC, timed 0407, UTC: Trawler *Sovereign* (164 gt, built 1974), 2FME, BF380, reported hard aground at Cairnbulg Point, 2.5 nautical miles east of Fraserburgh, in lat 57 41N, long 01 56W at 0120, UTC. Wind force 2, heavy swell. Rescue helicopter requested from ARCC Kinloss at 0141, UTC. Fraserburgh lifeboat on scene at 0150, UTC. Helicopter on scene at 0220, UTC, and all five crew winched off and landed at Cairnbulg, no medical assistance required. *Sovereign* reported listing 25-30 degrees to port and engine-room flooded.

London, Dec 18 — Following press release from the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, dated today, states: In the early hours of Sunday morning (Dec 18) a 26 metre Banff registered fishing trawler *Sovereign* went aground east of Fraserburgh with five people aboard. The initial alarm was raised by the vessel to the Fraserburgh Harbour Authority who in turn called Aberdeen Coastguard. At the request of the Coastguard the Harbour Authority instructed the stranded fishing vessel to make contact with Aberdeen Coastguard on channel 16. *Sovereign* went aground near Cairnbulg Point two miles east of Fraserburgh when homeward bound after fishing. Aberdeen Coastguard sent the Fraserburgh and Peterhead Coastguard rescue teams to the scene to assist on the shoreline and requested the RNLi all weather Fraserburgh lifeboat to attend. Hector Sutherland, Watch Officer at Aberdeen Coastguard, says: "Due to the heavy swell after recent gales we decided in consultation with the lifeboat it would be safer to airlift the five casualties from their vessel. Rescue helicopter 137 from RAF Lossiemouth was scrambled and took all five casualties to a prepared landing site ashore at Cairnbulg; where they were met by the Coastguard rescue teams and relatives. We are pleased to say all five crew were safe and well and required no medical assistance." The vessel is currently listing 30 degrees to port with its engine-room flooded. The situation will be assessed at first light.

London, Dec 18 — Following received from Coastguard Aberdeen MRSC,

timed 2328, UTC: Trawler *Sovereign* remains aground. Understood there have been no developments. At 1504, UTC, it was reported that, up to that time, no pollution had been sighted.

London, Dec 19 — Following received from Coastguard Aberdeen MRCC, timed 1450, UTC: Trawler *Sovereign* is still hard aground. Vessel grounded at high water and the water levels have now dropped, so it is anticipated it could take a few days before refloating can be effected. (See issue of Dec 20.)

London, Dec 20 — Following received from Coastguard Aberdeen MRCC, timed 1222, UTC: Trawler *Sovereign* is still aground. There have been no developments in the vessel's situation.

London, Dec 21 — Following received from Coastguard Aberdeen MRCC, timed 1139, UTC: Trawler *Sovereign* is still aground. Salvage operations have been delayed by bad weather.

**SPIRIT OF YAVEH (Panama)**

Colombo, Dec 20 — General cargo *Spirit of Yaveh* called Trincomalee Nov 19, 2004. It had experienced severe engine failure and it faced lot of difficulties on its berthing. The vessel was at the port of Trincomalee for repairs nearly 20 days. The vessel sailed from Trincomalee 1400, Dec 12, 2004 and grounded off Trincomalee port on 1700 same day. The services of a tug obtained to refloat vessel. Tug *Mahanuwara* was engaged to carry out the salvage operation and the tug arrived Trincomalee port Dec 5, 2004. Due to bad weather the salvage operation stopped and the tug returned to Colombo Jan 4. The tug again arrived Sept 24 to attend the above operation. According to the port sources *Spirit of Yaveh* was refloated Sept 25 and brought back to inner anchorage, Trincomalee port Oct 11. — Lloyd's Agents.

**STEADFAST (Dominica)**

See "Indonesia" under "Piracy."

**STEEL TRADER (Panama)**

Piraeus, Dec 16 — General cargo *Steel Trader*: Repairs have been effected to rudder and vessel is expected to be towed today by tug *Thunderer* to a safe anchorage in the Curacao area. — Tsavlis Salvage (International) Ltd.

London, Dec 19 — General cargo *Steel Trader* is understood to be on voyage from Buenaventura to Havana.

St. Vincent, Dec 21 — On Dec 16, general cargo *Steel Trader* was towed by tug *Thunderer* to Curacao. The welding of the rudder was the only repairs to vessel. — Lloyd's Agents.

**STELLA RIGEL (Netherlands)**

Gothenburg, Dec 19 — Asphalt tanker *Stella Rigel* was towed to Cityvarvet, Gothenburg, Nov 22. Repairs have commenced and are expected to be finished around middle of January 2006. — Lloyd's Agents.

**SUNNY BLOSSOM (Bahamas)**

See *Maritime Lady*.

**THANH PHONG**

Hanoi, Dec 22 — Vessel *Thanh Phong* is still in the same position. No salvage is available now due to rough sea, low tropical pressure and strong wind and waves. — Lloyd's Agents.

**VERESHCHAGINO (Ukraine)**

London, Dec 23 — General cargo *Vereshchagino* arrived Ilchevsk Oct 6 and sailed Dec 19.

**VERTIGO (Jamaica)**

London, Dec 18 — Following received from Aarhus MRCC, timed 1000, UTC: Bulk *Vertigo* is still in the same position. It is believed a refloating attempt will be made Dec 20 or 21 depending in weather.

London, Dec 20 — Following received from Aarhus MRCC, timed 0905, UTC: Bulk *Vertigo* is still in the same position. The weather on scene yesterday was very bad, but has improved today.

London, Dec 20 — Bulk *Ziemia Lodzka* sailed Police Dec 16 for Gdansk.

Houston, Dec 19 — Understand bulk *Vertigo* has flooding in Nos 3 and 4 holds. The intention is to move the vessel to Fredericia to tranship the cargo to another vessel. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Dec 21 — Bulk *Vertigo*: Understood there is a possibility that refloating attempts may be carried out on Friday, Dec 23, after which it is planned to move the vessel to Fredericia for transhipping of cargo.

London, Dec 21 — Bulk *Ziemia Lodzka* arrived Gdansk Dec 17.

London, Dec 22 — Information received from Kiel states: According to Danish information, the refloating of bulk *Vertigo* in the Great Belt is scheduled for today. The vessel will then be towed into the Fredericia shipyard, accompanied by *Gunnar Seidenfaden* and *Marie Miljo* to prevent oil pollution.

**VISPATAURINI (India)**

London, Dec 22 — Understand c.c. *Vispataurini* (12273 gt, built 1988) which was reported at Port Sudan with auxiliary engine damage left Port Sudan Dec 14 in tow of tug *Wizard* for Suez. (Note — *Vispataurini* had arrived Port Sudan Nov 17.)

**WAHKIAKUM (U.S.A.)**

Seattle, Dec 16 — Ferry *Wahkiakum* has had it's engine replaced with a spare and has been returned to service on Dec 8. — Lloyd's Agents.

**WILLOW (Bahamas)**

London, Dec 15 — General cargo *Willow* departed from Rotterdam at 2100 hrs, Dec 14, reportedly bound for Antwerp.

**WILSON MAR (Malta)**

Poznan, Dec 21 — According to information published on website of Polish ports, general cargo *Wilson Mar* is still staying in NAUTA shipyard. — Lloyd's Agents.

**YEMEN STAR 1 (Ghana)**

Aden, Dec 19 — Non specific tanker *Yemen Star 1* is now out of the floating dock but still undergoing repairs at the yard. — Lloyd's Agents.

**YEMEN STAR 1 (Yemen)**

Aden, Dec 22 — Non specific tanker *Yemen Star 1* is now out of the floating dock, but still undergoing repairs at the yard. Operators/Agents are Overseas Shipping & Stevedores Co., Yemen. — Lloyd's Agents.

**YLAIZA MAE 8 (Philippines)**

Manila, Dec 18 — Philippine-registered passenger ferry *Ylaiza Mae 8* was rescued by a Philippine Navy minesweeper last Thursday (Dec 15) in the Sulu Sea in the southern Philippines. The ferry had originated from Logos, Sulu island, and was bound for Zamboanga City when one of its propeller blades broke. The vessel, which was carrying a crew of nine and 66 passengers, had been drifting and taking in water when it was spotted by the minesweeper *Magat Salamat*. The minesweeper was returning from border exercises with the Malaysian Navy when it found the ferry foundering in rough seas south of Pilas island, the Philippine Navy reported. The *Magat Salamat* took the *Ylaiza Mae 8* in tow, reaching Zamboanga city on Friday (Dec 16). — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

**YM VENUS (Malta)**

London, Dec 15 — Chem.tank *YM Venus* was reported passing Gibraltar at 0039 hrs, Dec 14, on passage for Ceuta, where ETA was 0300 hrs, Dec 14.

**YUE DA 28 (Panama)**

London, Dec 21 — Following received from Coast Guard Japan timed 1325, UTC: General cargo *Yue Da 28* (3805 gt, built 1997), China for Osaka, with 125 containers, grounded in lat 34 00.6N, long 130 48.3E, at 2155, local time, Dec 16. Vessel is still aground. Crew have been evacuated from the vessel. Salvors are trying to negotiate a salvage contract with vessel's owner but nothing signed as yet.

London, Dec 22 — Following navigation warning broadcast at 0925, JST, today: Drifting object: Containers, missing in stranded vessel (general cargo *Yue Da 28*) in lat 34 00.6N, long 130-48.3E. Caution advised.

**ZIEMIA LODZKA (Liberia)**

See *Vertigo*.

**ZIM HOUSTON III (Antigua & Barbuda)**

Kingston, Ja, Dec 21 — C.c. *Zim Houston III* (10742 gt, built 1993) in approximately lat 19 44.7N, long 81 32.4W, and drifting at 0.3 knots towards Little Cayman. Vessel requires towage to Kingston, Jamaica. Vessel is laden with approx 800 TEU (8,300 tons cargo) and has main engine problems. Weather is okay and the crew are currently trying to

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



restart the engines. (Note — *Zim Houston III* sailed Houston Dec 18 and ETA Mobile Dec 28.)



#### INDONESIA

Barking, Dec 20 — Chemical/oil carrier *Steadfast* (10734 gt, built 1983) departed Palembang for Singapore Dec 18 with a cargo of 16,585 tonnes of vegetable oil, with ETA Singapore Dec 19. Last contact the owners had with the vessel was at 0530, UTC, Dec 19 in lat 02 20N, long 106 41E. Thereafter owners lost contact with the vessel. It is suspected that the vessel may have been hijacked. The IMB Piracy Reporting Centre has sent out special alerts to all vessels at sea and authorities in the region. By now the vessel may have changed name and flag and possibly has been repainted. — International Maritime Bureau.

London, Dec 21 — A press report, dated today, states: Regional marine police and navies were hunting today for chemical/oil carrier *Steadfast* and its crew, feared to have been hijacked by pirates in the South China Sea, a maritime official said. *Steadfast*, carrying a cargo of vegetable oil, departed Palembang Dec 18 and was due in Singapore the following day, said Noel Choong, head of the Piracy Reporting Center of the London-based International Maritime Bureau. "Its last contact with the owners was at 0530, UTC, Dec 19. Thereafter the owner lost contact with her," Choong said. "It is suspected to have been hijacked by pirates after departing Palembang. The regional authorities are looking for it," he added. Chong said regional marine police and navies were involved in the search, but declined to specify which countries they were from. Chong said that the tanker was near the Anambas islands in Indonesian waters in the South China Sea when it went missing. *Steadfast*, which had 25 crew members on board, was carrying 16,585 tonnes of vegetable oil worth several million dollars, he said.

#### SOMALIA

London, Dec 16 — Product tanker *Sirichai Petroleum 2* arrived Salalah Dec 12.

Manila, Dec 18 — Somali militia groups are reported to be fighting over the ransom paid to secure the release of 48 Asian crew being held hostage near Koyama island, Kismayu, in Somalia. Sources at the Philippine Department of Labor and Employment said that at least two Somalis were killed in a firefight between gunmen belonging to the Juba Valley Alliance (JVA) and the National Volunteer Coast Guard (NVCG). The clash was reported to have occurred some 60 km south of

Kismayu and was sparked by ransom funds that did not reach the NVCG. All 48 crew, made up of Filipino, Vietnamese, Indonesians and Taiwanese are reported to be safe. The NVCG has been holding for ransom the seafarers and their three vessels — *Cheng Ching Feng*, *Ching Yi 218* and *Hsin Lien Feng 36* since Aug 16. Ransom was initially placed at US\$500,000, but later scaled down to US\$50,000 per vessel. The NVCG claims that the JVA had been collecting protection money from the three vessels for fishing in NVCG territory. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

#### STEAFAST (Dominica)

See "Indonesia — Pir. Steadfast" under "Piracy".



#### REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

London, Dec 22 — A press report, dated today, states: Hundreds of ferry passengers heading to France for Christmas tonight are being forced to take alternative routes through Britain, after Irish Ferries passenger ro/ro *Normandy* (25745 gt, built 1982) developed a technical fault. Around 700 people were due to sail from Rosslare to Cherbourg and 130 were to make the journey to Ireland on the return voyage, in the vessel's last round-trip before Christmas. The sailing has been cancelled to allow the vessel to be repaired. A spokesman for the ferry company - which saw sailings disrupted during an industrial dispute with Irish workers which was only resolved last week said alternative routes through Britain had been found. The passengers, the vast majority of whom are travelling by car, have been booked onto services through the UK. But they will have to drive from Pembroke, in Wales, to English Channel ports, he said. The vessel is due to resume its scheduled sailings after Christmas.

London, Dec 22 — A press report, dated today, states: Irish Ferries passenger ro/ro *Normandy* has been detained at Rosslare Port after Department of Marine inspectors found several deficiencies in the ship's operations. These have been listed as 'fire fighting' arrangements, 'safety management' and 'crew training'. The vessel will not be returning to Cherbourg tonight and arrangements are being made for 700 passengers, many of them immigrants returning home for Christmas, to travel via Britain. Intending passengers who had planned to travel on the return trip from France will also have to make other arrangements. Irish Ferries will have to apply for the ship to be inspected again by Department surveyors before it is allowed to sail.

In a statement tonight, the company said work on the exhaust system had now been completed satisfactorily and there would be an independent inspection tomorrow, the result of which would be reported to the Department. The company said it was confident the ship would return to normal service quickly. However, this would be after the normal Christmas break. Tonight's sailing to Cherbourg and the return was to have been the last sailing before the festive break.

#### UNITED KINGDOM

London, Dec 16 — Product tanker *Citius* sailed Bristol Dec 12.

London, Dec 16 — Following press release received from the Maritime & Coastguard Agency, timed 1050, UTC, today: The Maritime & Coastguard Agency announced today that 10 foreign vessels were under detention in UK ports during November 2005 after failing Port State Control safety inspections. Latest monthly figures show that there were six new detentions of foreign flagged ships in UK ports during November 2005, along with four other ships still under detention from previous months.

#### UNITED STATES

London, Dec 21 — Following received from Coast Guard Boston, timed 1250, UTC: Chemical/oil carrier *Blue Point* (27001 gt, built 1986) was issued with a SOLAS detention order at New York yesterday due gas system problems. Vessel was ordered to leave port and proceed to anchorage, where it remains at present, attempting to rectify the problem. It will be allowed to return to port once this has been carried out and inspectors have been satisfied.



#### AGIOS CONSTANTINOS (Cambodia)

Tenerife, Dec 16 — General cargo *Agios Constantinos* remains arrested under judicial custody. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### AUDREY

London, Dec 21 — A press report, dated today, states: Tug *Audrey*: The Philippine Embassy and the Bahrain International Seafarers' Society yesterday postponed a visit to Bahrain's Justice Ministry. The visit is expected to take place today instead, when embassy and society officials plan to meet a judge and lawyers to discuss the plight of four Filipino sailors stranded at sea for months. An embassy spokesman told the GDN they hope to speak to the judge in particular to express the urgency of the sailors' situation. They will also seek the latest information on the owner of the ship and the company that chartered it. Officials

are hoping to get a clearer picture of a financial dispute between the owner and the charter following a complaint filed in Bahrain's courts in March. Inventra General Trading Dubai lodged a complaint against the ship's owner, Filipino Richard V Jorge, for losses it incurred when the ship broke down on its way to Iran in December last year. The ship is currently anchored two kilometres off Bahrain and, according to a surveyor's report, there was a high risk it could sink if left anchored for much longer.

**DA YUAN YU 139 (China)**

London, Dec 16 — A press report, dated today, states: The skipper of fishing *Da Yuan Yu 139* that was escorted to Port Elizabeth on Wednesday (Dec 14) is facing criminal charges for fleeing when South African fisheries inspectors ordered the vessel to stop for inspection. She was spotted three nautical miles off Cape St Francis by Marine and Coastal Management's environment protection vessel *Victoria Mxenge* during a routine patrol. The vessel had no permit to fish in South African waters and MCM staff ordered it to stop so they could board for inspection, putting up the international flag which signified that a vessel must stop for inspection. When the vessel continued to flee, two fisheries inspectors were dropped aboard by an SA Air Force helicopter. MCM inspector Benny Small said yesterday that although officers had not found any illegal fish on board, they had charged the skipper for not complying with boarding and inspection regulations of the Marine Living Resources Act. The vessel was in a poor state. The South African Maritime Safety Authority in Port Elizabeth is still inspecting her.

**DIAGORAS (Greece)**

See "Dodekanisiaki Anonymos Naftiliaki Etairia."

**DODEKANISIAKI ANONYMOS NAFTILIAKI ETAIRIA**

Piraeus, Dec 16 — Passenger ro/ro *Diagoras*, ro/ro *Rodos* and passenger ro/ro *Patmos* are still under arrest. The owner of the vessels, Dodekanisiaki Anonymos Naftiliaki Etairia, was recently set under special liquidation, by order of the Appellate Court of Dodecanese. During the liquidation, which is reportedly estimated to last at least a semester, no insolvency, injunction or auction can be effected. As a result, the prospect of the auction or release of the vessels in the near future is unlikely. — Lloyd's Agents.

**EMONA (Bulgaria)**

Limassol, Dec 15 — General cargo *Emona* (2959 gt, built 1981), which arrived Larnaca Dec 11 from Bourgas, is currently under arrest at Larnaca. — Lloyd's Agents.

Limassol, Dec 19 — General cargo *Emona* sailed Larnaca Dec 15. — Lloyd's Agents. (Note — *Emona* subsequently passed Dardanelles Dec 18.)

**EVER GENTLE (Taiwan)**

London, Dec 17 — A press report, dated Dec 16, states: C.c. *Ever Gentle* (37023 gt, built 1984) was arrested today on the orders of the Bombay High Court for non-payment of dues to a Kerala-based company for losses suffered by it due to the crew's negligence. The vessel, owned by the Evergreen Marine Corporation Taiwan, was arrested according to the court order passed Thursday (Dec 15) on the basis of a case filed by Kochi-based Baby Marine International. According to company officials, seven containers of frozen marine products were entrusted to the vessel crew in Dec, 2004, for transportation to Spain. "En route to Spain, due to the negligence of the carrier's crew, the required temperature was not maintained and the entire cargo was damaged," a company official said. "Even though we put the claim of \$252,211 along with interest with the carrier, it refused to pay for the losses. The Seafood Exporters Association of India and the Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry intervened and tried to bring an amicable settlement but to no avail," he noted. The vessel, which had then sailed out of Indian waters, returned last week. Judge S.R. Sathe of the Bombay High Court ordered the sheriff of Mumbai to arrest the vessel, which was docked at the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust Port. (Note — *Ever Gentle* arrived Jawaharlal Nehru Dec 14.)

**GAROYA SEGUNDO (Spain)**

See "Spanish Fishing Vessels Seized by Norway."

**HIGHLANDER**

Cape Town, Dec 19 — Understand from port authorities that fishing *Highlander* is no longer in port. The Sheriff of the Court has advised that the vessel was sold in October. — Lloyd's Agents.

**INDONESIAN FISHING VESSEL SEIZED BY AUSTRALIA**

London, Dec 21 — A press report, dated today, states: The Australian Fisheries Management Authority will begin investigations this afternoon into the latest apprehension of illegal fishing boats off the Northern Territory coast. The Navy says it caught the Indonesian boats on Monday (Dec 19), 100 km north-west of Bathurst Island. HMAS *Launceston* this morning towed the vessels and 22 crew into Darwin. A Navy spokeswoman says the vessels are large trap boats, which have cages on the back with bait.

**ISABEL I (Albania)**

London, Dec 22 — General cargo *Isabel I*, Azov for Ambarli, passed Istanbul Dec 18.

**PAN YUN BO 1 (China)**

London, Dec 16 — General cargo *Pan Yun Bo 1* is still at Western Anchorage No.1, Hong Kong, under detention.

**PATMOS (Greece)**

See "Dodekanisiaki Anonymos Naftiliaki Etairia."

**PAULIJING (Belize)**

London, Dec 22 — The Belize Registry has defended its registration of the stolen Malaysian general cargo *Natris*, as *Paulijing*, with the registry highlighting what it described as the "extraordinary" actions of the owner. The International Merchant Marine Registry Belize has come under fire from Malaysian managers of the *Natris*, BAL Shipping, for registering the *Paulijing* in the first place in 2003, and then since its seizure by the Malaysian Navy in August this year, for not deleting the vessel from its registry. The Malaysian-owned, Panama-flagged, 8,958 dwt general cargoship vessel *Natris*, which was built in 1982, was hijacked in November 2002. It then traded "legally" for nearly three years as the Belize-registered *Paulijing* before being recaptured by the Malaysian Navy this summer. The International Maritime Bureau has also highlighted the case as to how lax registration procedures by Flags of Convenience aid organized criminals in their activities. Fighting back, Angelo Mouzouropoulos, director-general and senior deputy registrar for IMBARE, questioned the role of the owner of the *Natris*, and why reports of the hijacking had not been made immediately after it happened, for example to the Panama registry, which flagged the ship, and Interpol. "The role of the owners of the *Natris* we find extraordinary," Mr Mouzouropoulos told "Lloyd's List". Nearly a month after the hijacking, which took place on November 17, 2002, as the vessel left a shipyard in Batam, Indonesia, lawyers acting for the owner did contact the Panama authorities. However, they did not say that the vessel had been hijacked or call for it to delete the vessel from its registry. Mr Mouzouropoulos said that on the December 10, 2002, the owners' lawyers stated to the Panama Registry that minority shareholders were trying to deprive the majority shareholders of ownership of the vessel and were trying to delete it from the Panama registry. They asked the Panama registry not to delete the *Natris*. "This indicates there was an internal dispute," he said. "Thereafter we have no record of action the owners took." The owner of the *Natris* had said previously that he maintained the registration of the vessel with Panama to prove the ship did indeed belong to them. "They never informed any authorities, such as the International Maritime Organization or the Memorandums of Understanding on Port State Control," Mr Mouzouropoulos commented. "To me that is very strange." He also noted that the owner did not report the matter to Interpol until two years after the incident. "Why is it they did not take any additional action?" he

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asked. As a result, Belize was not alerted to any problem when it checked established databases, such as Equasis, at the time it registered the *Paulijing*, even though the IMO number was the same as the *Natris*. When the vessel came into the Belize registry it was known as *Victoria* with a fraudulent Sierra Leone registration. Mr Mouzouropoulos said Belize was only made aware of a dispute of ownership in May 2004 and informed the owners it would act on a court decision. "This has been an ongoing dispute between shareholders. We believe as a fundament that this case can only be decided in a court of law. It is not for us as a registry to say he is right or he is wrong," he stated. The case is continuing in the Malaysian courts with the Singapore-based managers of the *Paulijing*, Pacific King Shipping, appealing an earlier verdict that the vessel did indeed belong to the owners of the *Natris*. On why Belize did not notice that the *Victoria* was fraudulently registered with Sierra Leone, Mr Mouzouropoulos said documents were provided as requested, properly notarised, including the bill of sale and certificate of deletion. In addition, the registry already flagged one vessel belonging to the same owner with which there had been no problems. On the bill of sale being for just \$10,000, he said there was nothing unusual about such a low amount. He did admit that in retrospect there would seem to be something amiss with facts such as the certificate of deletion being signed "Arthur Andersen". With Sierra Leone having since informed Belize that the documents were forgeries, it has asked Sierra Leone for more details to try and prevent further such cases in the future, but has yet to receive a reply. "The silence I am getting from Sierra Leone is not really a good sign for me," said Mr Mouzouropoulos.

**RODOS (Greece)**

See "Dodekanisiaki Anonymos Naftiliaki Etairia."

**RUSSIAN VESSEL DETAINED BY NORTH KOREA**

See "North Korea" under "Weather & Navigation."

**SEA SERENADE (Cyprus)**

Koper, Dec 21 — Ro/ro *Sea Serenade*, renamed *Chang Po Po* is still idle at Izola Shipyard. There is no any legal steps raised against the vessel albeit the known fact that there are unsettled invoices on account of repairs that were carried out on the vessel at Izola. Shipyard company does want to take any such legal action as the have experienced once the abandonment of the vessel resulting in having vessel in the shipyard for several years more. — Lloyd's Agents.

**SENTINEL (Comoros)**

Genoa, Dec 16 — General cargo *Sentinel* remains under arrest at Genoa. — Lloyd's Agents.

**SPANISH FISHING VESSELS SEIZED BY NORWAY**

Trondheim, Dec 20 — Trawler *Garoya Segundo*: Vessel's agents inform bank guarantee in order and vessel sailed from Tromso at 1750, Dec 16, for Vigo. — Lloyd's Agents.

**TERNEY (Russia)**

London, Dec 17 — A press report, dated Dec 16, states: North Korean authorities have completed their additional probe into the detention of a Russian general cargo *Terney*, in its territorial waters, the Russian Foreign Ministry said today. Ministry spokesman Mikhail Kamynin said Russia had answered all the authorities' questions and expressed hope that "the Korean side would take all the necessary measures for the quickest settlement of the incident."

London, Dec 19 — A press report, dated today, states: The authorities in North Korea have given permission to general cargo *Terney* detained in the country's territorial waters since Dec 5 to return home, the Russian embassy in Pyongyang said today. Ambassador Andrei Karlov was told that the competent authorities had made the decision to release the vessel due to the "friendly relations" between the countries.

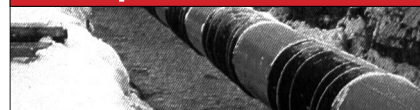
London, Dec 21 — North Korean officials have released the Russian general cargo *Terney* and its 14-member crew after holding them for more than two weeks. A senior executive with Ardis, the Vladivostok-based operator of the vessel, confirmed that the 3,197 dwt vessel and crew had been freed on Monday (Dec 19). Ardis director Andrei Makeyev told Russia's RIA Novosti news agency yesterday that the crew were in good health and the ship had left the North Korean port of Kimchaek and was on its way to Vladivostok. He said the Russian master maintained that he had permission from North Korean border officials to shelter in the country's territorial waters to ride out stormy weather which the ship encountered after leaving Pusan. Despite being given the green light, the ship and its crew were arrested by North Korean officials on December 5. The ship and crew were freed after intense diplomatic negotiations between consular officials at the Russian Embassy in Pyongyang and the Korean government.

London, Dec 22 — Reported that general cargo *Terney* entered Vladivostok harbour yesterday.

**UGO FOSCOLO (Greece)**

London, Dec 16 — A report in the Dec 16 issue of "Newsfront" states: Seized in the first half of September, passenger ro/ro *Ugo Foscolo* has been moved on by private creditors in pursuit of a Euro 19,665 claim.

**Pipeline Accidents**



**OPOBO CHANNEL, NIGERIA**

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

**SAKHALIN ISLAND, RUSSIA**

London, Dec 16 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: A burst pipeline has spilled oil onto a frozen lake in Russia's far eastern Sakhalin Island, the natural resources ministry said today, adding that some oil had seeped into the water. "An oil leak from the Katanglineftegaz pipeline formed a slick of some 5,000 square metres on the ice of Lake Bedinga," the ministry said in a statement. "Some of the oil sank under the ice and has polluted the waters of the lake," the statement said, adding that work to pump out the sunken oil was nearly complete. An investigation has been opened into the damage caused to the pipeline, which belongs to the Russian oil giant Rosneft.

**Pollution**



**BEI RIVER, GUANGDONG PROVINCE, CHINA**

London, Dec 21 — A press report, dated today, states: A toxic spill in southern China is threatening water supplies to millions of people, state media have said. The spill was caused by excessive discharge of cadmium from a state-owned smelter in the city of Shaoguan into the Bei River in Guangdong province, they said. In the city of 500,000 people, water was shut off for most of yesterday, residents said. Downstream, people were warned not to drink tap water. Cadmium levels in the river are currently 10 times above safety levels. The city of Yingde was on high alert following the spill at the smelter in Shaoguan, some 90 km upstream, China's Xinhua news agency said. Officials lowered a dam gate to block the spill from entering Yingde which has a population of about 100,000. Residents were now being warned not to drink tap water and supplies were being brought in by road, it said. The toxic stretch of water is expected to arrive in two or three days' time. Local television said earlier that the smelter had been ordered to stop discharging water from Sunday (Dec 18). Cadmium is a chemical used in protective plating. It can cause liver and kidney damage and lead to bone diseases. Compounds containing cadmium are also carcinogenic.

## IPSWICH, SUFFOLK, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Dec 19 — Associated British Ports confirmed that on Dec 15 the owners and master of general cargo *Haci Emine Ana* (4923 gt, built 1984) were found guilty by Ipswich Magistrates' Court of discharging oil into the River Orwell on Sep 23-24, 2004, under Section 131 (1) of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995. The vessel owners were fined £75,000, while the master of the vessel was fined £5,000. Both parties will also incur additional legal costs. The defendants have 21 days in which to appeal. Robert Smith, Port Manager for ABP's East Anglia Ports, commented on the verdict: "The magistrates' verdict was welcomed by ABP. The successful prosecution of the owners and master of the vessel demonstrates that ABP will not hesitate to take action in accordance with our responsibilities, and illustrates our commitment — as Statutory Harbour Authority for Ipswich — to maintain the environmental quality of our waterways."

## MSC ELENA (Panama)

London, Dec 19 — A press report, dated today, states: MSC Ship Management (Hong Kong) Limited has agreed to plead guilty to charges that it engaged in conspiracy, obstruction of justice, destruction of evidence, false statements and violated the Act to Prevent Pollution from Ships, the Department of Justice announced today. Per the terms of a plea agreement that must be approved by the court, MSC Ship Management will pay \$10.5 million in penalties. This is the largest fine in which a single vessel has been charged with deliberate pollution and the largest criminal fine paid by a defendant in an environmental case in Massachusetts history. According to the plea agreement, including a joint factual statement, MSC Ship Management will plead guilty to a criminal information which charges that a specially fitted steel pipe, referred to as the "magic pipe," was used on c.c. *MSC Elena* to circumvent required ship pollution prevention equipment and discharge oil sludge and oil contaminated waste directly overboard. Upon the discovery of this bypass equipment during a US Coast Guard inspection in Boston Harbour on May 16, 2005, senior company officials in Hong Kong directed crew members to lie to the Coast Guard. Additionally, senior ship engineers ordered that documents be destroyed and concealed. "This is the largest fine involving deliberate pollution from a single ship in a long series of similar prosecutions that have been brought as part of a vessel pollution initiative," said Sue Ellen Wooldridge, assistant attorney general for the Justice Department's Environment and Natural Resources Division. "Deliberate vessel pollution

is a serious and persistent problem which we will prosecute to the full extent of the law." "Residents of Massachusetts and particularly those along the Buzzards Bay coastline have experienced first-hand the devastation to the environment that can result from accidental oil spills. However, there was nothing accidental about this case," said Michael Sullivan, U.S. attorney for the District of Massachusetts. "The defendant knowingly violated anti-pollution laws, intentionally dumping oil-contaminated waste directly into the ocean and even went so far as to manufacture a so-called 'magic pipe' to accomplish the crime. Our hope is that this substantial \$10 million fine will send a strong message to those in the maritime community who would try to circumvent our Nation's anti-pollution laws." MSC Ship Management discharged approximately 40 tons or approximately 10,640 gallons of sludge during a five-month period in 2004 through a three-piece bypass pipe manufactured on the vessel. An even larger volume of oil-contaminated bilge waste was also discharged with a rubber hose and portable pump. The *MSC Elena* made regular voyages from ports in Europe across the Atlantic to ports in the United States, including Boston. Under the terms of the plea agreement, MSC Ship Management has agreed to plead guilty to charges that it made false statements to the Coast Guard denying knowledge about the existence and use of the bypass equipment; obstructed justice by directing subordinates to lie to the Coast Guard; concealed evidence; and concealed oil pollution in a falsified Oil Record Book- a required log in which all overboard discharges must be recorded. MSC Ship Management has also agreed to plead guilty to charges that in response to a Coast Guard inspection, senior ship engineers directed that an "alarm" printout from the vessel's computer and a log containing actual tank volumes be concealed in an effort to cover up the falsification of records. Coast Guard inspectors were presented with fictitious logs containing false entries claiming the use of the Oil Water Separator and omitting any reference to dumping overboard using the bypass equipment. "The Coast Guard is committed to the protection of the marine environment in Massachusetts, in New England, and throughout the United States. To accomplish this goal, the Coast Guard ensures that vessel owners and operators comply with the law and are truthful with our inspectors," said Rear Admiral David P. Pekoske, commander, First Coast Guard District. "This defendant's crimes, and especially management's direct involvement, undermines our entire regulatory system for the protection of the environment. This successful

prosecution and the severe penalties associated with it should send a message that intentional pollution and lying to the Coast Guard will not be tolerated." Additionally, under the terms of the plea agreement, MSC Ship Management will be on probation for five years, during which time it must operate under the terms of a government-approved Environmental Compliance Plan. The plan includes review by an independent auditor of any of MSC Ship Management's 81 vessels, including the *MSC Elena*, that trade in the United States, and a review of those audits by a court-appointed monitor. If the plea agreement is approved by the court, MSC Ship Management will pay a \$10 million criminal fine, and an additional \$500,000 to support community service projects. The projects will be administered by the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation to fund non-profit organizations that provide environmental education to seafarers visiting or sailing from Massachusetts ports, including how to report environmental crimes to the US Coast Guard. Engine-room operations on-board large ocean-going vessels such as the *MSC Elena* generate large amounts of waste oil and oil contaminated bilge waste. International and US law prohibit the discharge of waste containing more than 15 parts per million oil and without treatment by an Oil Water Separator and oil sensing equipment, a required pollution prevention device. The Act to Prevent Pollution from Ships also requires that all overboard discharges be recorded in an Oil Record Book, which is subject to inspection by the Coast Guard. The waste oil may be incinerated on board the ship or offloaded in port for proper disposal. In two related prosecutions, the chief engineer of the *MSC Elena*, Mani Singh, was indicted in November and has agreed to plead guilty at a hearing scheduled for Dec. 20. Aman Mahana, the ship's second engineer, pleaded guilty on Dec 1. Sentencings for Singh and Mahana will take place early next year. This investigation was conducted by the Northeast Regional Office of the US Coast Guard Investigative Service, with assistance from the US Coast Guard Sector Boston; US Coast Guard First District Legal Office; US Coast Guard Office of International and Maritime Law; US Coast Guard Headquarters Office of Investigations and Analysis; and US Coast Guard Office of Compliance. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant US Attorney Jonathan F. Mitchell in the District of Massachusetts' Economic Crimes Unit, Special Assistant US Attorney Luke M. Reid of the US Coast Guard, and Senior Trial Attorney Richard A. Udell and Trial Attorney Malinda R. Lawrence of the Justice Department's Environmental Crimes Section.

## Weather &amp; Navigation

**AUSTRALIA**

London, Dec 18 — A press report, dated today, states: Severe storms caused widespread damage to property across Brisbane late yesterday. The intense thunderstorms passed quickly across south-east Queensland, but strong winds and lightning strikes brought down trees and scores of powerlines. The State Emergency Service (SES) says there was property damage in Brisbane's south and north, while 40,000 homes were left without electricity. Electricity crews worked through the night to restore power to thousands of homes.

**CANADA**

Troy, Michigan, Dec 22 — It does not appear that traffic has yet resumed in the Welland Canal, this morning. The Seaway system is showing the tug *Bonnie B III* in Lock Seven. The tug was up bound last night to break ice in the canal below Lock Seven. Up bound vessels being delayed include *CSL Niagara* below Lock 3, *Capt. Henry Jackman* below Lock 2, *Algomarine*, *John D. Leitch* and *Cuyahoga* below Lock 1. Down bounders caught in the jam are *Federal Kivaland* and *Algolake* above Lock 7, and *Algowood*, *Algoisle*, *Stephen B. Roman*, *Algoway* and *Petite Forte* around Lock 8. In the Port Colborne anchorage are *Federal Welland*, *Federal Rhine*, *Federal St. Laurent*, *Pineglen* and *Canadian Transport*. — Great Lakes & Seaway Shipping.

**EGYPT**

London, Dec 16 — Dense fog is causing delays in the Suez Canal yesterday. Today's Northbound Convoy started with the 90 minute delay. The actual transit time is expected to be longer than usual due to the fog. For the 1st and 2nd Southbound Convoys, although a total of 32 vessels were eligible, only 16 entered the Canal at 0800, local time, will make fast at El Ballah Loop until further notice. The remaining 16 vessels will wait at Port Said anchorage until further notice.

**HURRICANE "KATRINA"**

London, Dec 22 — Hurricane "Katrina" has cost insurers and reinsurers more than twice the losses from the World Trade Center attacks of September 11, 2001. According to preliminary estimates published by reinsurer Swiss Re, Katrina caused insured losses of about \$45bn and was thus the most expensive catastrophe ever for the industry, followed by Hurricane "Andrew" of 1992 with \$22bn and the World Trade Centre terror attacks third with \$21bn. No figure could yet be put on the damage

wreaked by the huge fire in an oil depot near London, Swiss Re said. With insured losses of about \$80bn, 2005 was the costliest year ever for insurers, Swiss Re said. Almost 90% of that was due to storm and storm-related flood damage. The full scale of catastrophes in 2005 has not yet been fully assessed, but the trend towards very high losses appears to be continuing, the reinsurer said. Reasons for this development were the increasing population densities, higher concentrations of insured values, and construction activity expanding into areas with a high natural perils exposure, it added. Swiss Re issues annually its study on natural and man-made catastrophes. The full study for 2005 will be published in spring 2006. "Losses of \$70bn, or about 88% of all insured catastrophe losses in 2005, were recorded in the US," Swiss Re said. In Europe, the loss total amounted to \$6bn. Of that, \$1.9bn was due to the heavy rains in Switzerland, Germany and Austria in August which caused flooding and landslides. According to the preliminary figures, the financial losses caused by man-made and natural catastrophes affecting buildings, infrastructure and vehicles in 2005 totalled about \$225bn. Of that, \$135bn alone were attributed to "Katrina", followed by hurricanes "Rita" and "Wilma" with \$15bn each. This year's catastrophes also demanded a high death toll. Swiss Re estimated that more than 112,000 people worldwide died in man-made and natural catastrophes, more than 90% in Asia alone. The earthquake in Pakistan of October 8 caused more than 87,000 deaths.

**INDIA**

London, Dec 16 — A press report, dated today, states: The death toll from a cold snap sweeping northern India has reached 27, as officials report more deaths among the homeless due to the unseasonably low temperatures. In Lucknow, the state capital of Uttar Pradesh, the temperature dropped to six degrees Celsius, six degrees below normal for this time of year. Weather officials forecast that temperatures in Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state with 180 million people and one of its poorest, were likely to drop further. The night-time temperature in the city of Agra, home to the famed Taj Mahal, fell to just above three degrees Celsius, almost seven degrees below normal. The winter takes a heavy toll each year around South Asia, as poverty forces many homeless people to live outdoors or in flimsy shacks designed for the equally deadly hot summers. Most of the 27 dead in Uttar Pradesh were homeless. The state government has ordered that bonfires be lit at major street crossings so that the homeless can warm up.

**JAPAN**

London, Dec 18 — A press report, dated today, states: Heavy snow may

fall up until Monday (Dec 19) in regions along the Sea of Japan coast and some other parts of the country as the season's coldest air mass covers the Japanese archipelago today, the Japan Meteorological Agency warned Saturday. Many parts of the Hokuriku and Chugoku regions in central and western Japan have already seen more than double the average amount of snow this year. Fukui saw snow pile as high as 48 centimetres by yesterday evening, more than double the maximum average of 21 cm for December, according to the agency.

London, Dec 20 — A press release, dated today, states: Fifty-six domestic flights were cancelled and trains on the Tokaido Shinkansen line were delayed up to 80 minutes yesterday due to a record December snowfall. Although temperatures are expected to be slightly warmer today, the Meteorological Agency is still calling for caution because temperatures will dip again across the archipelago tomorrow. Most of yesterday's cancelled flights were leaving from or bound for airports in Hokkaido and areas along the Sea of Japan. Twenty-six All Nippon Airways flights and 30 Japan Airlines flights were cancelled, inconveniencing a total of 3,900 passengers. On the Tokaido Shinkansen line, bullet trains were forced to reduce speeds to 70 kph from 230 kph between Toyohashi Station in Aichi Prefecture and Shin-Osaka Station in Osaka. About 280 trains along the section were delayed for up to 80 minutes, inconveniencing about 200,000 passengers. Heavy snow also closed eight sections of expressways, including one between the Sekigahara Interchange in Gifu Prefecture and Ritto Interchange in Shiga Prefecture on the Meishin Expressway. At 0930 hrs, about 30 windows of the limited express train Raicho No. 5 on the JR Kosei Line, which travels from Osaka Station to Kanazawa Station, were found cracked in Nishiazai-cho, Shiga Prefecture. It is believed snow and ice dropped from the train and threw up stones against the windows. At 1015 hrs, Yamabiko No. 212 of the Tohoku Shinkansen line from Sendai bound for Tokyo stopped short of Shin-Shirakawa Station in Nishigomura, Fukushima Prefecture, for about 25 minutes, because an interchange in the station could not be switched due to snow. In the Tokyo metropolitan area, trains on the Seibu Shinjuku Line in Tokorozawa, Saitama Prefecture, were stopped at about 0615 hrs because crossing barriers could not be raised near Shin-Tokorozawa Station. The railway company said the rails shrank due to the cold temperature and created space between joints that stopped power from reaching the crossing bars. Seibu Shinjuku Line trains were delayed for up to 40 minutes, inconveniencing 16,000 passengers.

London, Dec 22 — Heavy snowfall hit Sea of Japan coastal areas today, causing power failures at 697,200



households in the Kinki region and at 650,000 in Niigata Prefecture as well as paralyzing railway transportation. Power was cut in Osaka, Kyoto, Shiga and Nara prefectures for about 30 minutes after Kansai Electric Power Co's two nuclear power plants in Oi, Fukui Prefecture automatically stopped operations due to snow accumulation on the transmission lines, company officials said. Power failures also occurred in the city of Niigata, affecting 1,100 traffic lights in Niigata, Agano and Nagaoka cities. Central Japan International Airport, serving the Nagoya metropolitan region, decided today to keep its runway closed until 1600 hrs due to snow. The airport initially shut down its runway for around two hours from 0700 hrs because of freezing caused by sleet but later decided to extend the runway's closure due to continuing snowfall. The closure disrupted air traffic, with Japan Airlines and All Nippon Airways cancelling a total of 21 flights to such destinations as Kagoshima and Fukuoka prefectures in the morning, airline companies said.

#### **MALAYSIA**

London, Dec 19 — A press report, dated today, states: Flooding in northern Malaysia has left at least four people dead and more than 10,000 people homeless, reports said today, while officials warned the region could be hit by a tropical storm this week. In the states of Kedah and Perlis, more than 4,000 people were evacuated from their homes, and key roads and a major highway lay under some 1.5 meters of water in some places. Flood relief officials were not immediately reachable for further details. Newspaper photographs showed village homes almost submerged, with only zinc roofs showing above the water. Also today, the Meteorological Department warned of a tropical depression over the South China Sea, which could turn into a tropical storm over Terengganu and Kelanta in the next few days.

London, Dec 20 — A press report, dated today, states: Massive floods in Malaysia, the worst in 30 years, have claimed at least five lives and forced the evacuation of over 20,000 people. Heavy rains inundated the northeastern states of Kelantan, Terengganu, Perlis, Kedah and Perak, and forced the closure of a part of the North-South Expressway. Perlis suffered its worst flooding in 20 years after the authorities were forced to release waters from the Timah Tasoh dam at hourly intervals, over fears that the dam could burst. Some 200 Perlis residents who fled their homes slept in temporary shelters by a highway. The capital city of Kangar was without electricity for more than 12 hours yesterday because the power station was flooded. Water supply in Perlis and in parts of Terengganu was also cut as pipes were swept away. Tragedy struck in Kedah when four rescue

workers went missing after their boat overturned and they were swept away by currents, Bernama reported. Although the annual monsoon season is widely anticipated, heavy rains of the past few days have raised water levels quickly. Officials warn those who are refusing to be evacuated that they are risking their lives. The body of 65-year-old Desa Arshad was found yesterday in his home by rescuers after floods hit his home in Perlis. Villagers say he refused to be evacuated because he was sickly. Thousands of rescuers used boats and helicopters to move villagers to temporary shelters in schools and public halls. Television footage showed the ground floor of many two-storey village houses in the states to be under water, while thousands of motorists were stranded as roads were cut off by rising waters. One such key road to be closed was the Plus expressway which links the Kedah capital of Alor Star to Bukit Kayu Hitam on the Thai border, an area lined with low-lying paddy fields. Police in Kelantan said they feared a repeat of the chaos that happened in a village in the Rantau Panjang area near the Thai border earlier. In that incident, the villagers refused to flee their homes but made desperate calls later to be evacuated when water levels blocked access roads. Meanwhile, officials are bracing themselves for the flooding to get worse as a tropical storm off the Malaysian coast gathers pace. Strong north-easterly winds were reportedly sweeping over the coastal waters off the Malayan peninsula's east coast.

#### **MEXICO**

London, Dec 21 — A cold snap has killed six children and forced airlines to suspend dozens of flights in Mexico, the local media reported yesterday. A cold front heralded winter caused icy temperatures and triggering snow in northern Mexico. Officials from the northern state of Nuevo Leon said the cold weather there has killed six children. Meanwhile, the cold also caused snowbanks in Mexico City and the cancellation of nearly 200 flights, both international and domestic, at the country's main international airport.

#### **NEW ZEALAND**

London, Dec 18 — A press report, dated today, states: Some flights are expected to be able to leave Wellington Airport this afternoon after fog and low cloud caused cancellations this morning for the third time in a week. The airport closed last night at 1900 and today one domestic flight has been able to leave and an international flight is expected to fly out shortly. But hundreds of passengers are still stranded until the weather clears completely. Airport duty manager Ian Pocock said fog yesterday closed the airport, and now it was low cloud that was causing problems. But he said the weather had improved "dramatically".

Today's fog and low cloud forced the cancellation of flights for the 16th time this year.

#### **NORTH KOREA**

London, Dec 16 — A press report, dated Dec 15, states: The situation surrounding the Russian ship detained in North Korean waters by the country's frontier guards Dec 5 will be settled after the ship's captain permits the inspection of the vessel, the North Korean ambassador to Russia said today. Pak Ui Chun said the *Terney*, trying to escape a storm, neared the shores of North Korea on Dec 5, but did not signal distress. He confirmed that the ship is currently at the port of Kimchaek. According to the ship's log, the captain changed course toward the North Korean coast after receiving permission from local authorities to enter the country's territorial waters. However, North Korean authorities detained the Russian vessel and escorted it to the port of Kimchaek.

#### **PHILIPPINES**

London, Dec 21 — A press report, dated today, states: The death toll from heavy flooding in the central Philippines rose to 10 today, with almost 13,000 people left homeless as rescuers braced for more torrential rains, officials said. Disaster relief officials said large areas remained under water after the weekend flooding in the provinces of Iloilo, Aklan, Oriental Mindoro, Negros Occidental and Camarines Norte. In Mindoro, where a protective dyke broke, rescuers had to pluck stranded residents from rooftops. The Office of Civil Defense lifted the death toll from the disaster from six to 10 and said 12,849 residents had been displaced. The state weather bureau said more rains were expected and officials expressed fear that thousands more would spend Christmas in crowded evacuation centers.

#### **ITALY**

Genoa, Dec 22 — La Spezia Port Authority reports that the fuel still contained in the tanks of general cargo *Margaret* will probably be removed shortly by means supplied by Fratelli Neri of Leghorn on behalf of Ingosstrakh Insurance Company. Italian authorities will then proceed with the removal of the wreck as shipowners have not provided necessary arrangements within the warning time limit. — Lloyd's Agents.

#### **RUSSIA**

London, Dec 21 — A press report, dated today, states: Over 2,000 passengers are stuck at the airport of Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, the administrative centre of the insular Sakhalin region because of icing of the runway there. Many of them have developed health problem and turned for medical aid. Departures of more than 20 domestic and international flights have been delayed. Local veterans of aviation say they cannot

remember any past situation where the airport would be unable to service inbound and outbound flights for four days running. The delays were a result of a cyclone that poured wet snow on Sakhalin Dec 18 and Dec 19. In the meantime road workers have finished the clearing of automobile roads that were blocked in some parts by 29 snow slides. The length of the road sections affected by the slides varied from 50 metres to 200 meters, and the snow mounds were 3 metres tall in some places. The railway authorities dispatched eleven clearing trains to ensure normal transportation of passengers and haulage of cargoes.

### SOMALIA

London, Dec 20 — A press report, dated Dec 19, states: Serious droughts in many parts of southern Somalia have claimed the lives of both humans and livestock. The WFP says that malnutrition rates among children under five in southern Somalia are as high as 20%. Local aid agencies and the Somali Red Crescent Society in Gedo region have found that more than 22 small villages and towns are suffering badly. Food aid is now reaching some of the villages and towns in the region, but local elders say it is not enough. At least two children, boys aged five and seven, have died of starvation in Fah-fah-dhun village, 80km west of Bardhere district of Gedo region in the past five days according to the village chief, Mr Ali Adam Warabeh. The chief said that more two-thirds of people in his village have left in search of pasture and water for their herds and themselves. "Fah-fah-dhun village had about 1,500 families, but now there are fewer than 500 families remaining," he said. "Most of those families have moved to the Hagar and Afmadow towns where there is some grazing land for the herds." Abdi Mohamed Abdulle, chief of the village of El-Addeh, said that the shallow hand-dug water wells of his village and that of El-Gudud village have dried up because of the drought. "We lost more than 30% of our herds to the drought already," he said. In those villages, tanker trucks collect the water for the people from Bardhere town, some 80km east of Fah-fah-dhun village, and each barrel of water, 200 litres, is sold for about \$7. The chief said very few people could afford this. Mr Shire Abdi Mohamed, the Somali Red Crescent Society co-ordinator in Gedo region, said that he observed during their trip in the region that both the animals and people are fed with sorghum, a donation from the CARE-International aid agency. The many other villages such as Khadijo Haji, Dhamaso, Harer Tur, Barwaqo and others are likewise suffering because of the drought and their village chiefs are crying out for help.

### SOUTH KOREA

London, Dec 17 — A press report, dated Dec 16, states: The government

and ruling party have decided to spend 30 billion won (\$29 million) on emergency aid for the nation's southwestern areas hit hard by heavy snowstorms that began last week. The government and the ruling Uri Party held a consultation meeting yesterday on taking immediate measures to rehabilitate Gwangju city, North Jeolla Province in wake of the record snowfall. An estimated 170 billion won worth of property damage was reported as of yesterday. But the government disagreed with Uri members who urged the affected areas to be designated as special disaster zones, saying it was important to retain balance between all regions. Residents of defined special disaster zones are entitled to compensation. Instead, the government will provide up to 10 million won of emergency loans to affected farming households and extend a repayment period for loans given to residents whose property damage exceeds 30 percent. The government will also deduct interest rates on the repayment of issued loans. Heavy snowfall in Jeolla Province or Honam has inflicted severe losses on farming households collapsing roofs and greenhouses while several traffic accidents were reported due to dangerous road conditions. The province has received record-high levels of snow since early this month. The heavy snowfall forced more than 100 primary, middle and high schools and colleges in Honam to close. The Defence Ministry also decided to dispatch additional 1,300 soldiers to help the southern province of North Jeolla recover from heavy snowfall damage. 5,900 soldiers have already been dispatched to the area on the rehabilitation mission.

### THAILAND

London, Dec 16 — A press report, dated today, states: Continuing floods in the southern provinces of Pattani and Songkhla forced nearly 70 schools in the two provinces to close today. A hillside in Songkhla gave way in a landslide this afternoon, leading to the deaths of a father and his son, while the man's wife was injured. Somwong Thammawong was electrocuted when he went back into his house in an attempt to save his 12-year-old son in Songkhla municipality. Mr Somwong's wife was injured. The body of their son was found buried under one metre of mud and rubble after a six-hour rescue operation. After heavy downpours Wednesday night, water levels in the Pattani River rose and flooded low-lying areas for the third time during the current rainy season. Provincial authorities evacuated persons at risk areas to higher ground. Some 20 schools were forced to close temporarily. Traffic on Phiphit road, the town's main street, was congested, while many roads in the municipality are impassable, either submerged or blocked by debris. In Nongjik district, local residents moved their belongings to higher ground and built sandbag embankments to prevent flooding. In

Songkhla province, 50 schools in five districts have been closed for a week due to the third round of flooding there. Damages incurred in earlier flooding is estimated at more than Bt700 million. Incessant rain over the past two days caused flash floods, particularly in the area near Songkhla lake.

London, Dec 17 — A press report, dated today, states: At least 2,500 people have been evacuated from their homes in southern Thailand, where violent storms have lashed the region and sent floodwaters rising, officials said. "We have gathered boats from across the country, not only from government agencies but also from private owners to help evacuate people," Kananat Kachna, head of the Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Department, said. "The roads are completely impassable, only six and ten-wheel trucks from the government will be able to get through to assist villagers," he said. Downpours during the night Friday (Dec 16) caused up to 30 centimetres of floodwater in Yala province, forcing the evacuation of at least 800 people, Mr Kananat said. Another 800 people from Pattalung province and 100 from Nakhon Si Thammarat province have been evacuated. About 680 people in Songkhla and more than 120 from Trang have also been evacuated to safer locations, he added. Officials were considering more evacuations in the provinces of Songkhla, Pattalung and Nakhon Si Thammarat, Mr Kananat said. Twelve people have died since late November in floods across southern provinces, while two people have gone missing, the department said. Two Swedish women also drowned after defying official warnings and swimming in the sea at Pha Ngan island, where the storms helped create an unusually strong current, police said.

London, Dec 18 — A press report, dated today, states: At least five people drowned and thousands of residents have been forced out of their homes after heavy rains and flash floods swept through Nakhon Si Thammarat and other southern provinces. Rescue operations were launched yesterday to find 50 Thai and foreign tourists after three boats they were on capsized in Phuket and Krabi provinces. Two Swedish tourists who drowned off Koh Phangan prompted Surat Thani authorities to cancel this month's full moon party to prevent other casualties. In Nakhon Si Thammarat, two residents drowned on Thursday night (Dec 15) and their bodies were swept away by the floods. The province was hit hard by three rounds of floods which have so far claimed 12 lives. Pol Col Naris Sunthornroj, chief of Pak Phanang district police, said marine police were yesterday sent to rescue seven crewmen whose fishing vessel sank near Laem Talumpuk village, about two nautical miles off Pak Phanang shore. One crewman drowned, his body has not been found. Nakhon Si Thammarat Governor Vichom

Thongsong yesterday declared the province a disaster zone as flash floods, triggered by heavy rains, ravaged 21 districts, affecting 173,300 people. So far, 4,012 flood-hit residents have been evacuated. The floods damaged over 1,800 roads, 37 bridges, 38 reservoirs, 27 schools and 24 temples. Over 90,000 rai of paddy fields and 55,329 rai of fruit orchards were damaged. Initial damage was estimated at 105 million baht, said Mr Vichom. He told residents to brace themselves for possible mudslides. Several villages in Chian Yai district were cut off from the outside world as floodwaters reached 1-2 metres high. Vichit Maneelok, chief of Nakhon Si Thammarat disaster prevention and mitigation, said mudslides blocked a section of Khuan Nong Hong-Kapang road in Cha-uat district yesterday, making the road impassable. In Trang, the floods have affected 4,000 residents, said governor Cherdphan na Songkhla, adding the flood situation was the worst in five years. Muang, Huai Yot and Na Yong districts were badly hit. Water level in Trang and Palian rivers and Khlong Nang Noi canals are rising. In Satun, heavy rains and high waves forced tour firms to cancel trips to the province. Several villages in Khuan Don district were inundated. Floodwaters in some areas rose to 120cm. In Songkhla, 18 houses were hit by mudslides in Ban Mai village in Krasae Sin district yesterday. But there were no reports of deaths or injuries. Deputy Prime Minister Visanu Krue-ngarm inspected flood-affected areas in Songkhla. He provided 55,000 baht in financial assistance to the victims' family. Floodwaters still remained high in Sathing Phra, Ra-not, Singha Nakhon and Krasae Sin districts. Three boats carrying 50 Thai and foreign tourists capsized in Phuket and Krabi, prompting the Third Fleet to launch rescue operations to help them. The first incident took place at 1630. A speed boat run by Phangnga Eco-Tour Co, capsized at Hinmusang area between Phuket and Phangnga. The boat carried 20 Thai and foreign tourists. Another boat travelling from Phi Phi island in Krabi sank in the same spot. Eight passengers jumped into the water. On the same day, a third boat carrying 22 passengers sank in Laemtong in Krabi province. Marines and divers were searching for them. In Surat Thani, provincial authorities cancelled the famous full-moon party of Koh Phangan yesterday after two foreign tourists drowned on Thursday. Two Swedish tourists were swept away by heavy currents.

London, Dec 21 — A press report, dated Dec 20, states: Troops in southern Thailand struggled through mountains of mud today in an effort to reach thousands stranded by floods and landslides that have killed at least 35 people. Late yesterday, 60 soldiers reached a village in Yala province where 2,000 people had been stranded for three days without food,

said Samrerng Wongmuneeworn of the Yala disaster prevention centre. He said the landslide in Tanoh Buteh killed one man and damaged about 50 homes. The government has declared nine southern provinces disaster zones after two weeks of heavy rains left much of the area under water or buried in mud. The affected area includes the Muslim-majority provinces of Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat, where more than 1,100 people have died in separatist violence since January 2004. The government has dispatched military rescue units to the area because civilian teams have been reluctant to look for victims for fear of attacks by Muslim insurgents.

London, Dec 21 — A press report, dated Dec 20, states: Flood damages in eight provinces in Thailand's southern region were reported to the Cabinet today, which was told of 15 dead, three persons missing, and nearly 200,000 households disrupted. Some 671,000 people (179,991 households) in 92 districts of eight provinces are affected by the disruption, Cabinet heard, with 463 roads and 14 bridges damaged or destroyed. Overall losses in financial terms have not yet been calculated, according to government sources, but preliminary figures indicate significant losses. Flood damage in the southern province of Pattani, for example, is estimated at Bt91 million, with over one hundred thousand people affected, according to the provincial office of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation. All schools were closed for the second day today. Schools under the municipality will be closed at least until Thursday (Dec 22), dependent on whether or not further rains and continued flooding occurs. Most shops and petrol stations in Pattani town are also closed, and normal life has come to a standstill. In addition to the emergency situation in the city, villagers in many surrounding areas need large amounts of drinking water, food and medication. Putting a hopeful light on events, Pattani Mayor Pitak Korkiart said that the flood situation in the municipality area has improved. Floodwaters are expected to dry up in the next few days if there is no more rain. The provincial office of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation said flood damage is estimated at Bt91 million baht. Some 31,784 families or 132,185 people are affected by flood, officials disclosed. Damages were sustained by over 300 roadways, 61 schools, eight temples, 14 mosques, 23 government offices, 24,000 rai of farmland, 10,000 rai of orchards, 18,915 animals, and 1,226 fish farms. Meanwhile, Trang governor Cherdphan na Songkhla led his team in flat bottom boats to visit flood-stricken areas near the Trang River today. All houses, temples, and schools are submerged under water up to three metres deep. Local residents have evacuated their homes to take temporary shelter on higher level, Trang-Sikao roadbed. Medication for

water-borne diseases is needed. He said the flood situation in Trang was better except some areas in the municipality and Kantang district. All schools in Trang are closed this week. The province was hard hit by floods triggered by high tides and damage could not yet be estimated.

#### TROPICAL STORM "KAJIKI"

Manila, Dec 19 — The Office of Civil Defense here has directed all vessels to avoid the Port of Calapan in Mindoro in central Philippines after heavy rains brought about by tropical storm "Kajiki," Philippine name "Quedan," caused massive floods in the city. "It would be better if ships using the Calapan port go directly to Caticlan or Roxas ports because the floods would only trap their passengers," Office of Civil Defense Region IV Director Armando Duque warned. Duque said he had asked the Maritime Industry Authority to immediately send the advisory to all shipping lines and buses plying the Nautical Highway route. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Manila, Dec 20 — Philippine-registered barge *Napocor Power Barge No.106* ran aground off Semirara island in central Philippines on Dec 18 after being buffeted by huge waves brought about by tropical storm "Kajiki", the Philippine Coast Guard reported today. The power barge was being towed by *Napocor Tugboat No.1* from Masbate to San Jose, Mindoro when the two vessels were forced into shallow waters near Semirara island by strong winds and waves. The power barge's storage tanks developed a leak as a result of the grounding and spilled about 2,000 litres of bunker fuel. The resulting oil spill is threatening about 1.5 kilometres of mangrove area and four square metres of coral reef. To limit the oil spill, the crew of *Napocor Tugboat No.1* has been pumping seawater into the power barge's storage tanks to float the oil to the surface of the tanks and prevent it from leaking out from the barge's damaged bottom hull. The Philippine Coast Guard has warned that the threat of a massive oil spill is imminent, as the barge, which is carrying 900,000 litres of bunker fuel, continues to be buffeted by strong waves. The Coast Guard said that unless the barge is salvaged, it could break apart or sink, causing a major environmental incident. *Napocor Power Barge No.106* is owned by state power company National Power Corporation or Napocor. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Manila, Dec 20 — Tug *Maranaw* has been contracted by the Philippine Coast Guard to repair and recover *Napocor Power Barge No.106* and clean up the oil spill it has caused. *Maranaw* left Manila this morning loaded with oil spill control equipment and chemicals. It is expected to reach the power barge, which has run aground off Semirara island, this afternoon. The *Maranaw* is owned by Malayan Towage and Salvage Co. "As

soon as we reach the site, our divers will conduct an underwater hull inspection to determine if the leak can be sealed. If this is not possible the bunker fuel carried by the power barge will be transferred to another vessel. Malayan has also dispatched an oil barge for this purpose," a Malayan Towage official said. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Manila, Dec 20 — Salvage tug *Maranaw* arrived in the area off Semirara island, where barge *Napocor Power Barge No.106* the run aground, at 1500 today. *Maranaw* immediately laid out an oil boom to contain the oil spill emanating from the fractured hull of the barge. Tomorrow, salvors from *Maranaw* are scheduled to conduct an underwater hull survey of the barge to determine the extent of the damage. The Philippine Coast Guard reported that more than 2,000 litres of bunker fuel have already escaped from the barge which is holding up to 900,000 litres of fuel in its storage tanks. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Manila, Dec 21 — Salvors are encountering difficulties in repairing *Napocor Power Barge No.106*, Malayan Towage and Salvage Co. officials reported today. The power barge is deeply imbedded in the sand and rocks off the island preventing divers from determining the site of the hull fracture from which bunker fuel is leaking. Malayan Towage, which has been commissioned by the Philippine Coast Guard to recover the barge and contain the oil spill, has dispatched another salvage tug and the salvage barge *Atlas*, with additional men and equipment to the site. Malayan Towage officials said that their salvors will attempt to tow the barge to deeper water so that an underwater hull inspection could be undertaken. Officials also said that the barge is still leaking bunker fuel but the installation of an oil boom has limited the spread of the oil spill. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

#### UNITED STATES

London, Dec 16 — A press report, dated Dec 15, states: A blast of freezing rain across Georgia and the Carolinas today closed schools, snarled traffic and caused power outages to more than 450,000 customers. At least one death was blamed on the storm when an ice-laden tree crashed through a man's house. The widespread outages were caused by the ice that formed on tree limbs and fell onto power lines. In Kannapolis, N.C., just north of Charlotte, N.C., authorities say the weight of that ice buckled a 100-foot-tall tree that crushed 58-year-old David Ralph Jones while reclined on a couch in his living room. While electricity was quickly restored to some, outages by early evening still totaled 260,000 in South Carolina's upstate, about 170,000 in North Carolina, 55,000 in northeast Georgia and 34,700 in the Atlanta area. School systems cancelled or cut short classes

across north Georgia, the affected parts of the Carolinas and into western stretches of Virginia. The National Weather Service said the freezing rain was expected to continue in the region through this evening and overnight temperatures were forecast to dip into the 20s. Ice accumulations were expected to be as much as three-quarters of an inch, which could lead to more snapped limbs and power lines. Lucinda Trew, spokeswoman for Duke Power, the main provider of electricity in the hardest-hit parts of the Carolinas, said there was no timetable when power would be restored but a warming trend tomorrow would help, with 7,500 workers being dispatched to the task.

#### VIETNAM

Hanoi, Dec 16 — Flash floods triggered by prolonged rains in central Vietnam have killed at least 32 people in recent weeks and damaged rice crops, officials said today. Rains which began in late November have inundated more than 30,000 hectares of newly-planted rice crops in the central provinces of Binh Dinh, Ninh Thuan and Quang Ngai, officials from the Committee for Flood and Storm Control told Reuters. "The weather is quite abnormal this year, waters in rivers in the central region have started to recede but we expect new rains over the weekend so people should stay alert," said an official from the centre in central city of Danang. He said the official death toll from four central provinces of Quang Ngai, Binh Dinh, Khanh Hoa and Phu Yen, had risen to 32 and at least eight people remained missing after being washed away by flash floods. Heavy rains also triggered landslides in the central region, damaging roads and disrupting traffic. Weather forecasters in the country's top coffee-growing province of Daklak told Reuters the rains had temporarily stopped on Friday but they expected more rains over the weekend. — Reuters.

London, Dec 17 — A press report, dated today, states: Landslides triggered by prolonged rains in central Vietnam have killed nine road workers, taking the total death toll in the region in recent weeks to 41. Officials in the central province of Khanh Hoa say the bodies of only six of the nine dead have been recovered. Rescue workers are searching for the others. Rains that began in late November have inundated more than 30,000 hectares of newly-planted rice crops and triggered flash floods that have killed 32 others in the central provinces of Binh Dinh, Ninh Thuan and Quang Ngai. "The rains have weakened but the new danger now is landslides so we advise all travellers to take extra caution when travelling through the region," said a weather forecaster in Khanh Hoa. Heavy rains have also damaged roads and disrupted traffic.

London, Dec 19 — A press report, dated today, states: Weeks of heavy

rains triggered floods and landslides that left at least 43 people dead and seven missing in central Vietnam the central Flood and Storm Prevention Steering Board reported yesterday. Flood waters destroyed hundreds of houses and inundated 5,300 other homes leaving nearly 50,000 hectares of rice paddy and cash crops under water and about 700 shrimp ponds destroyed. The water also swept away 22 irrigation systems and eroded nearly 500,000 cu.m motorway soil. Total losses are estimated at VND300 billion or nearly US\$19 million, half of which was incurred in Phu Yen province. "The water level at local rivers has fallen since late Friday (Dec 16), but the reported number of people killed by floods is on the rise, with 29 already dead" said Nguyen Quang Dung from the flood and Storm Control Department of Khanh Hoa province. A government delegation led by Nguyen Ngoc Thuat, Vice Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, is investigating the aftermath of the floods in the central region. Vietnam's Prime Minister Phan Van Khai also sent an official message asking all relevant agencies to do their utmost to ensure that residents have enough food and to provide seeds for farmers to start the winter-spring crop. Floodwaters caused three sections of the National Highway 1A to sink by as much as 3m in Phu Yen province, marooning thousands of cars and buses that piled up for more than 10 km. An alternative route has already been built. House foundations have cracked under the swell of floodwaters, and a section of the national highway in the province continues to sink, said Tran Quang Lan, deputy director of Phu Yen Road Management and Maintenance Company.

Hanoi, Dec 21 — Floods have killed six more people in Vietnam's Central Highlands coffee belt, taking the death toll in the central region to 60 over the last 10 days, but officials said today the important coffee crop was not affected. The six, two of them children, drowned as heavy rains triggered floods in the eastern and southeastern parts of Daklak province, which are not key coffee growing areas, an official at Daklak's disaster management department said. "The damaged coffee area, mainly along streams and rivers, is relatively small, between 300 and 400 hectares," he said, referring to an area of between 740 and 990 acres. Irrigation projects were damaged and more than 1,100 homes inundated in the districts of Ea Kar, Krong Bong and Krong Ana. Daklak, which has 160,000 hectares of coffee plantations, produces a third of Vietnam's output. The country is the world's second-largest producer of the commodity after Brazil. The rain has prevented coffee growers from drying cherries, raising concerns about quality as beans ferment and turn black if kept indoors for too long, making them unfit for export. A total of 54 people

had died in floods that struck five central coastal provinces since early last week, 40 of them in the provinces of Khanh Hoa and Phu Yen near Daklak, the government's floods and storms committee said. — Reuters.

London, Dec 22 — A press report, dated today, states: Officials in Vietnam now say at least 61 people have died in floods that have ravaged the country's central region since the start of this month. They say the latest deaths have been reported in the central highlands province of Dak Lak where seven people have drowned, including two children. A national disaster official says three other people are still missing.

## Earthquakes



### INDONESIA

Jakarta, Dec 21 — An undersea earthquake of magnitude 6.3 rocked parts of eastern Indonesia today, causing some panic, but there no immediate reports of casualties or damage, officials said. An official at Japan's Meteorological Agency said chances of a tsunami were very low given the small magnitude of the quake. The Meteorological and Geophysics Agency in Jakarta said the quake had its epicentre in the Moluccas sea between the regions of Sulawesi and the Moluccas islands. The U.S. Geological Survey on its website said the quake had a depth of 70 km and struck at 0709, GMT. Some residents in the city of Manado in northern Sulawesi fled their homes, El Shinta radio said, but the local head of the Meteorological and Geophysics Agency in Manado said he had not received any reports of damage or casualties. — Reuters.

### JAPAN

London, Dec 17 — A press report, dated today, states: An earthquake, registering a preliminary magnitude of 6.2, jolted northeastern Japan this morning, the Japan Meteorological Agency said. The 0332 quake registered 4 on the Japanese seismic intensity scale of 7 in northern Miyagi Prefecture and southern Iwate Prefecture, the agency said. No tsunami warning was issued, and there were no immediate reports on damage or casualties. The quake originated about 50 kilometres underground in the Pacific off the coast of Miyagi Prefecture, the agency said.

### MICRONESIA

London, Dec 20 — A magnitude 6.2 earthquake occurred in state of Yap, Micronesia at 0551, UTC, Dec 20.

### PANAMA AREA

London, Dec 21 — A moderate 5.9 magnitude earthquake struck in lat 6.5N, long 82.6°W, south of Panama at 1432, UTC, today.

## Volcanic Activity



### AMBAE ISLAND, VANUATU

London, Dec 18 — A press report, dated Dec 16, states: Officials in Vanuatu say people displaced by Ambae volcano are threatened by a shortage of fresh water. Radio New Zealand International reports thousands of litres of water have already been handed out to the three-thousand people forced to move to relocation centres by continuing volcanic eruptions. The chairman of the Port Vila Manaro Disaster Committee, Jean Sese, said if further ashfall poisons existing water tanks, more water will be needed. "There is already sign that water on the island has already been affected by ashes. They're tapping water from the bore holes, they will certainly need more water. The Red Cross has been providing water, but not enough." Mr Sese said a second shipment of relief supplies compiled by private donors, is expected to head to Ambae within days.

### MOUNT AUGUSTINE, ALASKA, UNITED STATES

London, Dec 18 — A press report, dated Dec 16, states: A sulfurous steam plume, hundreds of miniature earthquakes and a new swath of ash on snowy Augustine Volcano have scientists looking for a possible eruption in the next few months. The 4,134-foot volcano hasn't shown such signs since it last erupted in 1986, when ash from a 7-mile-high column drifted over Anchorage, the state's most populous city, and kept flights out of the skies over Cook Inlet. "It's steaming more vigorously right now than it has at any point since 1986," Steve McNutt, research professor of volcano seismology with the Alaska Volcano Observatory, said Wednesday (Dec 14). The observatory has been monitoring the uninhabited volcanic island more closely since bumping its status up from code green to code yellow on Nov 29. Code yellow means the volcano is restless and showing signs of an eruption. Steam mixed with sulfur dioxide gas has been billowing vigorously since late last week from a space between lava domes formed during Augustine's most recent eruptions, in 1976 and 1986. The presence of sulfur, one of the main magmatic gases, is a sign that molten rock has moved closer to the surface, McNutt said. Residents on the Kenai Peninsula, about 50 miles across Cook Inlet, have reported the rotten-egg smell of sulfur. Seismometers have recorded more than 170 small temblors during the last week, and 74 on Sunday. The average for the past 15 years has been about one to two per week. The jump is "very dramatic," McNutt said. But

he noted the magnitudes, less than 1, were still smaller than the bulk of the earthquakes preceding the 1986 eruption. The entire island, located 171 miles southwest of Anchorage, has inflated by as much as 1 inch as injections of molten rock rise into the mountain, he said. Scientists on a flyover earlier this week also spotted a swath of new ash on the snow-covered peak. The thin dusting indicates cracks have opened on the mountain to vent steam.

## Political & Civil Unrest



### AFGHANISTAN

London, Dec 18 — A press report, dated Dec 17, states: Taliban guerillas attacked a high school in southern Afghanistan today killing a guard and a male teenage student, a witness said. Two attackers arrived at the school in Lashkargah, the capital of the troubled southern province of Helmand, just before noon, said the witness, Sargar Mohammad. "They shot the watchman and opened fire on some teachers but didn't hit any, but they shot dead an 18-year-old student," Mohammad said. They then went out firing into the air and called on people to obey their orders to shut down schools, saying they would be killed if they did not. Helmand police chief Abdul Rahman Sabir confirmed that Taliban gunmen had killed two people in their latest attack on a school. Yesterday, suspected Taliban guerrillas dragged a teacher from a classroom of teenagers in another district of Helmand and executed him at the school gate after he ignored their orders to stop teaching girls, police said.

Kandahar, Dec 18 — Three policemen were killed in an ambush by Taliban guerillas in southern Afghanistan in the latest violence ahead of the opening of a new parliament next week, police said today. The three were killed on Friday (Dec 16) night while patrolling a highway in Zabul province. One Taliban fighter was killed in the clash that followed the ambush, said Mohammad Nabi Mullah Khel, a senior provincial police officer. The incident followed a spate of attacks by the Taliban in recent weeks, including a suicide car bombing close to vehicles of NATO-led peacekeepers and the parliament building in Kabul earlier on Friday. That attack killed the bomber and wounded two civilians. The parliament, Afghanistan's first since the 1970s, will hold its inaugural session tomorrow. U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney and other foreign dignitaries will be attending. The Taliban have threatened to target the assembly, which they have called a symbol of U.S. "occupation". Speaking to Reuters, Taliban commander Mullah Sabir Momin

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urged civilians to stay away from the parliament site. "Killing agents of foreign infidels is permissible," he said, referring to lawmakers and U.S.-led troops who overthrew the Taliban government in 2001. — Reuters.

Kabul, Dec 19 — Former warlords, ex-communists, Taliban defectors and women activists were sworn in today as members of the first Afghan parliament in more than 30 years amid hopes of national reconciliation after decades of bloodshed. The inauguration was peaceful despite threats by Taliban guerrillas and was greeted with tears of emotion, although there is disappointment that many in the parliament are accused of serious rights abuses and links to the drugs trade. "This meeting is a sign of us regaining our honor," President Hamid Karzai said after swearing in the 351 lower and upper house members. The inauguration was the culmination of a U.N.-backed plan to bring democracy to Afghanistan that was drawn up after U.S.-led forces overthrew the Taliban in 2001. — Reuters.

## BURUNDI

Bujumbura, Dec 15 — Burundi's army has killed 120 fighters from the only remaining Hutu rebel group and captured more than 600 others since October in a major offensive in the rebels' stronghold. "The government has launched a campaign against the FNL (Forces for National Liberation). This campaign has been very successful," Burundi's Defence Minister Germain Niyoyankana told a press conference late yesterday. "Since October, 120 rebels have been killed, 646 captured and more than 1,500 people who used to collaborate with that movement have surrendered and are now under the protection of the army," he said. Burundi is struggling to emerge from a 12-year civil war between rebels from the Hutu majority and a Tutsi elite that has killed 300,000 people in the tiny country since 1993. Most Burundians believe the country is on the path to peace after a series of polls led to the swearing-in of former rebel Pierre Nkurunziza as president in August, but sporadic clashes continue between FNL rebels and the army. Niyoyankana said the army had seized 84 assorted arms from the rebels and predicted that the FNL, estimated to number about 3,000 fighters, would soon disappear after suffering the losses. "I can't say that by the end of December the war will be over. But I am quite sure that at the end of December, the FNL will be in trouble not only with (Burundi) government, but also with the entire region," he said, but the FNL dismissed the defence minister's announcement as pure propaganda. "It is not the first time they have announced that they have finished us, it is pure propaganda," FNL spokesman Pasteur Habimana told Reuters. Habimana repeated FNL's position that it would only talk to the government if the state stops harassing its members. — Reuters.

## CHAD

N'Djamena, Dec 18 — Chad repulsed a rebel attack on a town near the Sudanese border today and blamed its neighbour for fighting that killed around 100 people. Army deserters allied to a rebel group called the Rally for Democracy and Liberty (RDL) mounted the early morning attack in Adre, a few km from the border, Chad's Communication Minister Hourmadji Moussa Doumgor said. Chad accuses the RDL of being a "militia used by the Sudanese government". "The Chadian government holds the Sudanese government totally responsible for this morning's attack mounted from its territory," Doumgor said in a statement. But Sudanese Foreign Ministry spokesman Jamal Ibrahim denied Sudan was involved in the attack. "Sudan is not planning or doing anything against Chad," he told Reuters. Chadian forces were still pursuing rebel elements on Chadian soil, but would chase them over the frontier into Sudan if necessary, Doumgor said. "That would be justified," he told Reuters. Doumgor told Reuters earlier that losses on the rebel side had been worse than on the government side. The toll could not immediately be independently verified. Aid workers on the Sudanese side of the border said the attack was the worst offensive to date of an escalating conflict. Earlier Sudanese rebels and aid workers reported hearing large explosions and heavy fighting near Adre. Scores of Chadian soldiers deserted their barracks in late September before regrouping near the border, and the government has accused Sudan of using the deserters to fight rebels in Darfur and of backing Chadian rebel activities. Sudanese army sources reported sporadic fighting in recent days, crossing over the long, porous border between the countries, but added the Sudanese army was not involved. Both Darfuri rebels and aid workers in the region have reported large troop movements over the past two weeks near the border, with reports of Chadian troops patrolling on the Sudanese side of the border. The deserters pose a threat to President Idriss Deby by demanding his resignation. They are also accused of attacks on army bases in the capital N'Djamena. A Sudanese army source said today Sudanese forces were in control of all the towns and villages but could not prevent the clashes spilling over the border. "We are in total control of the villages and towns. All these clashes are happening outside the villages on open territory," he told Reuters. — Reuters.

London, Dec 21 — A press report, dated today, states: Chadian fighters say they are poised for a fresh attack against a town on the border with Sudan which they first attempted to storm at the weekend. The Rally for Democracy and Liberty (RDL), opposed to Chad's president, Idriss Deby, said in a statement today that its forces had made a "tactical

withdrawal" from the town of Adre on Chad's eastern border with Sudan after intense fighting on Sunday (Dec 18). Chad's government says its army repulsed two attacks by the rebels on Adre, pursued them over the border into Sudan and destroyed their bases there. It accused Sudan of supporting the attackers and said around 300 of them were killed. Speaking in el-Geneina, in Sudan's western Darfur region, Abdullahi Abdel Karim, a RDL official, rejected the Chadian government's version of the fighting as contradictory and exaggerated. "RDL fighters are at the gates of Adre and occupy all the main approaches leading to the town. The next assault will be decisive," he said in what was the rebel group's first known public comment on the fighting. Abdel Karim said more than 70 Chadian government troops were killed and about 50 wounded in the battle over Adre. The fighting over Adre has raised tensions in neighbouring Darfur where Sudanese rebels have the country's central government for almost three years. Chad has accused the Sudanese president, Omar Hassan al-Bashir, and his government of sheltering and equipping armed opponents of Deby "as though they were part of the Sudanese army". It said it will pursue them inside Sudan if necessary.

## COLOMBIA

London, Dec 18 — A press report, dated today, states: Rebels from the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia attacked a tiny village in western Colombia yesterday, killing at least five police officers and kidnapping six others, top government officials said. Just before dawn, dozens of FARC fighters encircled the village of San Marino, 170 miles west of Bogota, and then began shooting at police officers, National Police chief Gen. Jorge Daniel Castro said. The attorney general's office reported five officers were killed and six kidnapped. Orlando Palacio, a local official in the nearby town of Bagado, told local media that seven officers were killed and 33 were taken hostage by the FARC. It was not possible to immediately reconcile the differing accounts. Castro said army troops were headed to the area to track down the guerrillas. More than 30 police officers in far-off towns such as San Marino have been killed by the FARC in the past three months.

London, Dec 19 — A press report, dated Dec 18, states: Colombian rebels killed eight police officers and captured at least 30 others at a remote jungle station yesterday in what appears to be one of the biggest blows against the security forces in years, the police said today. The scale of yesterday's attack by hundreds of members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia became clear today when police and army reinforcements reached the Afro-Colombian town of San Marino in a rain forest in Choco province near the Panama border.

London, Dec 21 — A press report, dated Dec 20, states: Colombia's main rebel group, the Farc, has released a video showing that a former official kidnapped five years ago is still alive. In the tape aired by RCN TV channel, former Development Minister Fernando Araujo said he was in "good health". He also urged the authorities to do "whatever it takes" to facilitate a swap of hostages for jailed rebels. The government says it is ready for talks on the issue, but conditions for a meeting have yet to be agreed. The Farc is holding some 60 hostages, several of whom were seized several years ago. Among the kidnapped people are three US nationals and a former Colombian presidential candidate, Ingrid Betancourt, who has dual Colombian-French nationality. Mr Araujo, 49, served under the previous administration. He was taking an evening jog in the seaside city of Cartagena in December 2000 when unidentified men forced him into a jeep and sped away. The footage broadcast by RCN showed the former minister wearing a checked shirt and guarded by three heavily armed fighters - two of them young women. The TV channel said the video was filmed on December 11, two days before European mediators proposed that prisoner exchange talks be held in a small mountainous area in south-western Colombia. The government later said it was prepared to pull out troops from this zone to facilitate hostage negotiations with the Farc. The rebels have yet to respond to the proposal.

London, Dec 22 — A press report, dated Dec 21, states: Colombia's government and the nation's second-largest rebel group ended nearly a week of cordial talks in Cuba today with an agreement to set an agenda for formal peace negotiations, a move both sides called significant. "I think this shows the seriousness with which these conversations have moved forward," said Colombian peace commissioner Luis Carlos Restrepo, the government's envoy, as the discussions wrapped up in Havana. "This commits us as the government to continue moving ahead." Restrepo said that just months ago, few in Colombia believed a genuine peace process with the National Liberation Army would be possible. The fact that both sides have committed to more face-to-face meetings in Havana at the end of January was "transcendental," he said. The peace commissioner attributed the success to the "cordial" and "respectful" tone of the talks, which opened Friday (Dec 16). Antonio Garcia, the military chief of the rebel group known as the ELN, said his group was "pleased with this first step. This recognizes years of work, and could show a change in the path taken by Colombia." The current talks with the ELN mark President Alvaro Uribe administration's first formal negotiations with insurgents. Several informal talks between the Colombian government and the ELN have failed since 1998. When Cuba

last hosted Colombia's talks with the ELN in 2002, then-President Andres Pastrana pulled out, saying the rebel group was not interested in peace. The latest talks aimed at ending part of Colombia's four-decade conflict remain in an introductory stage, but the meetings between Garcia and Restrepo laid a groundwork of mutual trust that will help future encounters, observers said. Both parties declined to provide details of the issues that would be tackled in the agenda-setting meetings. But Garcia said the discussion of deep social and economic changes in Colombia would have to be central to any peace process, and it was assumed the government would demand some sort of cease-fire agreement from the rebels.

#### DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

London, Dec 20 — A press report, dated Dec 19, states: The International Court of Justice has ruled that Uganda must pay compensation to the Democratic Republic of Congo for looting during the 1998-2003 war. A government spokesman said DR Congo will seek up to \$10bn in compensation. The Hague-based court also found Uganda responsible for human rights abuses. DR Congo has accused Uganda of invading its territory and massacring civilians. Several African states were involved in the war, which left three million people dead. Uganda says its troops entered Congolese territory to pursue Ugandan rebels. DR Congo brought the case saying its sovereignty had been violated, and demanding compensation for plundered minerals and other resources. Congolese government spokesman Henri Mova Sakanyi said that Kinshasa would seek between \$6bn and \$10bn in compensation from Uganda. Court rules allow states to negotiate compensation between themselves. The judges said the amount sought by DR Congo was "appropriate". Uganda's Foreign Minister in charge of International Affairs Okello Oryem told Reuters news agency that Uganda "did not deserve" the judgement. "We went in Congo to pursue rebels, we were not the only people in Congo, there were many other militia groups," he said, but ICJ president Shi Jiuyong told the court Ugandan troops had "created an atmosphere of terror pervading the life of the Congolese people". Uganda pulled its troops out of eastern DR Congo in 2003, but Kinshasa says its neighbour still supplies arms to Ugandan warlords who continue to steal the country's natural resources of gold, diamonds and timber. This year, the United Nations accused Uganda and Rwanda of violating an arms embargo by shipping weapons across DR Congo's borders.

Kinshasa, Dec 22 — UN and Congolese soldiers launched a major operation against a militia in the lawless east of the huge country today four days after a landmark poll to

adopt a post-war constitution, the UN said. A UN spokesman said a government soldier and seven militiamen were killed when hundreds of Nepalese UN peacekeepers and some 1,500 Congolese soldiers, backed up by helicopter gunships, clashed with militiamen in Ituri Province. The clashes highlighted insecurity in the east days after millions voted in Congo's first free national poll in 40 years. Latest results released today showed that with nearly 60% of polling stations counted, the "yes" vote had just over 80% — which appeared to guarantee the adoption of a constitution paving the way for elections in 2006. "There is a major operation going on at the moment; 375 of our men and 1,500 Congolese soldiers are carrying out an operation to restore the rule of law," said Major Hans-Jakob Reichen, a military spokesman for the UN peacekeeping force. "Clashes are taking place and the UN is giving fire support," Reichen said of the fighting near Fataki, around 75 km north of Bunia, in Ituri Province. "So far one Congolese soldier has died and seven militiamen have been killed." Reichen said the militiamen involved in the fighting were Lendu fighters who have refused to join a UN-backed disarmament process and are accused of atrocities against civilians. — Reuters.

#### HAITI

Port-au-Prince, Dec 19 — Three Chilean soldiers with the U.N. peacekeeping force in Haiti were ambushed and shot in the troubled Caribbean nation, which holds elections next month, U.N. officials said today. A U.N. civilian spokesman in Haiti, Damian Onses-Cardona, said the wounded peacekeepers were members of a road reconnaissance mission on Friday (Dec 16) in Plaisance, a town between the northern cities of Gonaives and Cap-Haitien. Haiti has scheduled legislative and presidential elections for January 8 amid concerns over security in a country gripped by political and gang violence and a spate of kidnappings since a bloody rebellion forced President Jean-Bertrand Aristide from power on Feb. 29, 2004. Onses-Cardona said the two peacekeepers who were slightly wounded would resume work today and that such incidents would not deter U.N. forces — which number nearly 7,300 soldiers and 1,600 police — from carrying out their mission. Seven U.N. peacekeepers have died since the deployment of the U.N. mission to stabilize Haiti in June, 2004 — four of them in accidents. Thirty others have been wounded, according to U.N. officials. — Reuters.

London, Dec 21 — A press report, dated Dec 20, states: A Canadian police officer serving as a U.N. peacekeeper in Haiti was shot to death today near a volatile slum on

the outskirts of the capital, the United Nations said. Mark Bourque, from Stoneham, Quebec, was ambushed with another peacekeeper as they drove near Cite Soleil, said Marc Jaquet, U.N. police spokesman. He was fatally wounded in the leg. The Canadian embassy said in a statement that it "demands that the Haitian government does everything to shed light on the circumstances of the attack and to bring the authors of this crime to justice." Armed gangs allegedly close to ousted president Aristide clash on a near daily basis with U.N. peacekeepers in Cite Soleil - where a number of kidnappings have recently occurred.

### HONG KONG

London, Dec 18 — A press report, dated today, states: Hong Kong police fought running street battles and fired volleys of tear gas to repel hundreds of protesters trying to force their way into a building where world trade ministers were meeting. Seventy people were injured in the fighting, including 10 police officers, the government says. Most of the injuries were minor and the majority of the injured were South Korean farmers and workers who say free trade is ruining them. The clashes were the heaviest since the six-day World Trade Organisation (WTO) meeting began on Tuesday (Dec 13) and the worst violence in Hong Kong since protests following China's bloody crackdown on democracy protesters in Tiananmen Square in Beijing in 1989. "The protesters got very close to the building, they were standing just across the street," reports said. "They made several advances on police but pulled back a block or so after tear gas was used." Nine hundred protesters were rounded up on one road in the area, Police Commissioner Dick Lee said. Asked if they would be arrested, he said, "they will be handled according to the law". "At the moment, the majority of areas in Wanchai are under control," he said. "Police will be taking all necessary action to restore order. We are fully confident the venue (trade meeting) can proceed as normal." Some 1,000 protesters were involved in the scuffles, facing off against twice as many police, he says. Inside the convention centre, trade ministers were locked in talks, trying to find an elusive world trade deal, which critics say will hurt the world's poor. Journalists, delegates and policemen crowded round TV monitors watching the brawls outside. Police say they have not yet decided whether another large demonstration scheduled for today will be allowed to proceed. At one point on Saturday, protesters seized metal barricades and used them as battering rams against the police, but police lines held and reinforcements pushed the protesters back. Reports say police fired numerous volleys of tear gas in the area near the building, and

television showed officers bringing up what appeared to be armoured vehicles.

### INDONESIA

Banda Aceh, Dec 19 — Former rebels in Indonesia's Aceh completed a weapons handover today under a peace pact that ended one of Asia's longest running civil wars, foreign monitors said. "Today we could confirm that the (Free) Aceh Movement has offered the last of their weapons, thereby completing their commitment under the Helsinki MOU (Memorandum of Understanding)," Pieter Feith, chief of the European Union-led Aceh Monitoring Mission, told a news conference. Feith said GAM had turned in 1,018 weapons during the four stages of weapons handover, of which 840 were counted by the monitoring mission as meeting its criteria. That number matched the target under the truce deal. GAM reached the required level after several dozen weapons were handed in today in Banda Aceh, the provincial capital. Feith said GAM would also give a written confirmation that its former combatants had given up all of their weapons, ammunition, and explosives. The Indonesian military accepted the final results, although they said by their standards a much lower figure of 769 acceptable weapons had been turned in and called on GAM to hand over more by the end of the year. The fourth and final stage of the weapons handover kicked off last Wednesday (Dec 14) and will be followed by the last withdrawals of Indonesian troop reinforcements, which Feith said would get under way tomorrow in the town of Lhokseumawe, in an area once a stronghold for the former rebels. The August 15 truce requires Indonesia to cut troop and police levels in Aceh to no more than 14,700 soldiers and 9,100 police. Prior to the pact, it had more than 35,000 soldiers and 15,000 police in the province on the northern tip of Sumatra island. Monitoring mission official Lieutenant General Nipat Thonglek from Thailand told Reuters last week that Indonesia had pulled more than 20,000 troops from Aceh since September and another 6,000 would be part of the final withdrawal. With the weapons handover now complete and troop withdrawals set to conclude, security experts say the next challenges are finding jobs for demobilised fighters and satisfying rebel demands for political participation in Aceh. Officials are drawing up a law for governing Aceh that paves the way for Aceh-based parties to run in elections, allowing GAM to take part in politics in exchange for dropping its demand for independence. The peace pact says the new law must be in force by March 31. — Reuters.

### IRAQ

Berlin, Dec 18 — A German archaeologist kidnapped by gunmen

in Iraq three weeks ago is free and her driver should shortly be released, German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier told a news conference today. Susanne Osthoff, 43, who had spent more than a decade working on excavations in Iraq, disappeared heading north from Baghdad with the driver on November 25. Steinmeier declined to comment on how or under what conditions Osthoff, the first German to be kidnapped in Iraq, had been freed. German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who only took office a month ago, had said the German government would not be "blackmailed" by kidnappers, but did not give a clear answer when asked if Germany would be prepared to pay a ransom. Security experts say Germany has paid ransoms for hostages in the past and would probably do so for Osthoff. More than 200 foreigners and thousands of Iraqis have been kidnapped since the U.S.-led forces invaded the country in 2003 to topple the government of Saddam Hussein. Fifty-two foreign hostages are known to have been killed by their captors. Several other Westerners, including four members of a Christian aid group, are still being held. — Reuters.

London, Dec 19 — Following received from Reuters, dated Dec 18: A roadside bomb went off close to an Iraqi police patrol in eastern Baghdad killing two policemen and wounding two others police said. They said that the attack, which took place in Palestine street, eastern neighbourhood of Baghdad totally wrecked an Iraqi police vehicle. In a separate attack, a suicide bomber blew himself up near an Iraqi police checkpoint in eastern Baghdad today, wounding five policemen, police said. The attack occurred near the road that leads to the Ministry of Interior, police added. In a Shi'ite neighbourhood in western Baghdad, at least five civilians were killed and seven others wounded when an improvised explosive device (IED) exploded in a crowded market today, police said. Police added that the bomb was planted near a market in al-Kadhimiya neighbourhood of eastern Baghdad. Meanwhile, Saleh al-Mutleq a Sunni leader and head of Iraqi Front for National Dialogue said that violence will increase in Iraq if there will be rigging in the election results. "If violation in the election continued, so violence and disorder in Iraq will continue because of Iraqis dissatisfaction in the results of this election," al-Mutleq told journalists at a news conference in Baghdad. In stark contrast to bloody polls in January, the election was largely peaceful, with turnout swelled by the participation of Sunnis sidelined by a previous boycott. Washington and its allies in the Shi'ite and Kurdish-led government have been trying to lure Sunnis into the political process, hoping to undercut support for the Sunni insurgency. The big Sunni turnout means the new government will probably consist of a broader

coalition than the current one between Shi'ite Islamists and Kurds, raising the possibility that a more diverse leadership could ease sectarian tensions. Fresh efforts to stabilise Iraq after more than two years of suicide bombings, shootings and kidnappings will be set against the background of complex negotiations to form a new government.

London, Dec 19 — A press report, dated today, states: A suicide car bomb exploded outside a children's hospital in western Baghdad today, killing at least two people and wounding 11, including seven policemen, officials said. Police believe the bomb had been targeting a passing convoy carrying a police colonel, who was among the injured. In western Baghdad, gunmen attacked the convoy of the city's Deputy Gov. Ziad Tariq, killing three civilians and wounding three of Tariq's bodyguards, Baghdad police said. Tariq was not injured. A string of violent attacks, including shootings and bombings, began Saturday night (Dec 17), shattering the relative calm since Iraq's parliamentary election last week. An extremist group, the Islamic Army of Iraq, posted a video on a website today that showed an unidentified man being shot in the back of the head, and the group claimed the killing was of American advisor Ronald Allen Schulz. The video did not show the face of the victim, however, and it was impossible to identify him conclusively. The victim was kneeling with his back to the camera, with his hands tied behind his back and blindfolded with an Arab headdress when he was shot. The German government, meanwhile, said yesterday that kidnappers had freed a German woman taken hostage with her driver in northern Iraq more than three weeks ago. Susanne Osthoff, a 43-year-old aid worker and archaeologist, was reported in good condition in the care of the German Embassy in Baghdad. It was unclear whether Osthoff's Iraqi driver had also been freed. Osthoff and driver disappeared Nov 25.

London, Dec 21 — A press report, dated Dec 20, states: U.S. soldiers in the northern Iraqi desert dug up more than 1,000 aging rockets and missiles wrapped in plastic, some of which were buried as recently as two weeks ago, Army officials said today. Commanders in the 101st Airborne Division said an Iraqi tipped them off to the buried weapons, perhaps an indication that residents in this largely Sunni Arab region about 150 miles north of Baghdad are beginning to warm up to coalition forces. A U.S. Air Force explosive ordinance team planned to begin destroying them as early as tomorrow morning.

Baghdad, Dec 20 — A Jordanian embassy driver was kidnapped as he left his home in Baghdad today, Iraqi police and Jordan's state news agency said. Gunmen in three cars pulled up at the Jordanian's home in the south

of the Iraqi capital and seized Mahmoud Saadat, who was described by Jordan's Petra news agency as a driver for the embassy and by police as the ambassador's personal driver. Jordanian diplomats in Baghdad declined to comment but Petra said officials were in contact with Iraqi authorities to begin efforts to rescue the missing employee. — Reuters.

London, Dec 22 — Iraqi oil exports via a pipeline to the Ceyhan terminal in Turkey, remain at a standstill two months after sabotage stopped the flow. "We don't foresee anything in the near future," said one shipping source. "Ceyhan is empty". Exports have been limited for at least four months, with attacks repeated each time the pipeline is repaired.

Baghdad, Dec 22 — Four Iraqi policemen were killed and six others wounded when gunmen opened fire on a police checkpoint in Baghdad today, police said. The attack comes after a relative lull in violence in the Iraqi capital in recent days as Iraq sealed off its borders, and shut down vehicular traffic during last week's parliamentary elections. — Reuters.

### ISRAEL

London, Dec 16 — A press report, dated today, states: An Israeli settler was killed and two others were wounded when gunmen opened fire on their car in Hebron, the Israeli army has announced. The 30-year-old settler was shot in the head when his car was ambushed on a road near the southern West Bank town. The man, who died later in hospital, was the first Israeli civilian to be killed in the West Bank since October. No group has said it carried out the attack, but Israel has linked it to the upcoming Palestinian elections.

Gaza, Dec 18 — Israeli aircraft struck the Gaza Strip repeatedly early today and the army said it had targeted sites used by militants firing rockets into Israel and roads for transporting the makeshift missiles. Four Palestinians were wounded in at least nine raids, including three policemen and a baby who was hit in the face with shrapnel, medics said. Key bridges in the northern Gaza Strip were also targeted, cutting roads for thousands of people. "These routes are used by terrorists to reach the areas from which they launch rockets at Israeli targets," the army said. Israeli warplanes also carried out mock raids over Gaza City, shaking homes with deafening sonic booms. Repeated violence has dimmed hopes for peacemaking that had been kindled by Israel's withdrawal of troops and settlers from the impoverished Gaza Strip in September after 38 years of occupation. Militant groups agreed to follow a truce until the end of the year in order to smooth the Gaza pullout, but their commitment to "ensure calm" formally expires at the end of the year. Palestinian factions have fired rockets at Israel in retaliation for deadly raids against militants that in turn followed a suicide bombing

that killed five Israelis on Dec 5. Two rockets struck southern Israel yesterday and the army responded by firing artillery shells towards open fields in northern Gaza. Nobody was hurt in either incident. A Palestinian militant was also killed in an explosion in a car in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday which Palestinian officials blamed on Israel. But the Israeli army denied any involvement in the death of Khaled Abu Sitta, a senior leader of the Abu el-Reesh Brigades, who was killed when his car blew up as he drove at night between the southern Gaza cities of Khan Younis and Rafah. Palestinian security sources and members of the Abu el-Reesh Brigades said an Israeli missile fired from an unidentified aircraft hit Sitta's car, killing him and turning the vehicle into a mound of charred and twisted metal. The Abu el-Reesh Brigades said they would avenge Sitta's death. The Israeli army, which often openly admits to strikes on militants' cars, denied involvement in the incident. Palestinian militants have also occasionally been killed when explosives they were transporting detonated prematurely. — Reuters. (See issue of Dec 14.)

Nablus, Dec 22 — Israeli troops killed three militants in a West Bank gunbattle and another Palestinian in shelling to stop Gaza rocket fire today in escalating violence that could complicate upcoming elections on both sides. Five soldiers were wounded in southern Israel by a makeshift rocket launched from the Gaza Strip, where continuing bloodshed has dimmed optimism for peacemaking that was raised by Israel's withdrawal in September. Soldiers on an arrest raid in the city of Nablus killed the three militants in a gun battle, including the West Bank commander of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine's armed wing, Palestinian and Israeli sources said. The army has stepped up raids since a deadly suicide bombing on Dec. 5, which Palestinian militants claimed as vengeance for earlier killings of gunmen by the army. — Reuters.

### LIBERIA

United Nations, Dec 20 — The U.N. Security Council renewed diamond and timber sanctions on Liberia today for another six months and asked an expert panel to take a fresh look at the bans by June 7. In a resolution adopted unanimously, the council also extended an arms embargo for another year in the West African nation. A panel of experts established by the 15-nation council recommended on December 9 that the sanctions stay in place. It cited the "chronic corruption and incompetence" of a transitional government set up at the end of a civil war in 2003 when then-President Charles Taylor was forced into exile in Nigeria. "Should sanctions be lifted on diamonds and timber there is little reason to believe that government revenue will be directed to the budget to be used for

the benefit of the Liberian people," the panel said. The transitional government loses power in January when a new government, headed by Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, a former U.N. and World Bank official, takes over. She won the first elections since the end of the war, in which a quarter of a million people died. Johnson-Sirleaf has vowed to stamp out corruption in a country of 3.2 million people that is still without running water or electricity or schools and hospitals that function properly, more than two years after the guns fell silent. Today's resolution called on Johnson-Sirleaf to reform existing logging concessions and commission "independent external advice" to manage Liberia's diamond resources. Bans on diamond, weapons and timber exports were imposed between 2001 and 2003 after the Security Council accused Taylor of fueling war in neighboring Sierra Leone, through an illicit gems-for-guns trade. But despite the ban, diamonds are easily smuggled out of Liberia. Buyers from as far away as North America freely told Reuters in Monrovia of their smuggling activities. "Most of the quality — about 80 percent — is low," one dealer said, displaying a handful of diamonds that he said he planned to smuggle to Belgium. "But of the other 20 percent, you get some good stones and some can go for \$200,000," he said. The London-based advocacy group Global Witness said in a recent report that Liberia's transitional government and the United Nations peacekeeping mission in the country had failed to control the exploitation of Liberia's natural resources. "The result has been an explosion of illegal diamond mining activities by a large number of ex-combatants leading to violations of the U.N. sanctions and a significant security risk," Global Witness said. "With regards to timber, pit-sawing activities by ex-combatants continue unabated, generating large amounts of uncontrolled and unaccounted revenue," the group said. — Reuters.

#### NEPAL

Kathmandu, Dec 16 — Shops, schools and public transport came to a standstill in Kathmandu today as the Nepali capital heeded a strike call by political parties over the killing of 12 civilians by a soldier. Anger remained high in the city following the incident around midnight on Wednesday (Dec 14) when the soldier fired on a crowd of villagers who had gathered at a temple to mark the full moon. The soldier, who had an argument with the villagers, also died in the shootout in the tourist town of Nagarkot, near Kathmandu, but the circumstances of his death were not clear. The Nepali Congress is a constituent of an alliance of seven parties campaigning for the restoration of democracy after King Gyanendra fired the multi-party government in February and seized full control of the impoverished nation. Today's strike was called by the alliance to grieve for the victims of the shooting. Witnesses said some children carrying school

bags were returning home from bus stands as schools did not send buses to pick them up fearing attacks from political activists. — Reuters.

#### NIGERIA

London, Dec 19 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: Thirteen pipeline vandals were yesterday killed in two separate incidents in Delta and Edo states. The vandals who had succeeded in breaking into the pipeline and were at the point of siphoning fuel when the line went up in flames killing at least six persons. In another incident along the same line which belongs to the Pipelines and Product Marketing Company, a subsidiary of the NNPC, seven vandals were killed while attempting to break through the lines along the Ethiope River crossing in Sapele. The men were said to have died from the inhalation of associated gas which suffocated the man to death.

Port Harcourt, Dec 20 — At least eight people were killed by an explosion at a Nigerian oil pipeline after it was attacked by unidentified gunmen, a local government official said today. The attack on the pipeline operated by Anglo-Dutch Royal Dutch Shell, located in the Oporo Channel in Nigeria's remote southern delta, also caused a major oil spill and fire, the company said. "The attack was very devastating ... the whole community has been razed down by the explosion. Eight corpses have been recovered so far and many more are still missing," Monwan Etete, chairman of Andoni local government area, told journalists in the state capital Port Harcourt. Shell said it closed two oilfields to help curb the fire and that 170 barrels per day of oil output had been "deferred". — Reuters.

Asagba Okwan Asarama, Dec 21 — Oil workers in boats and a helicopter circled a huge pipeline blaze in remote southern Nigeria today, surveying the damage caused by a suspected dynamite attack that killed at least eight people. Yesterday's attack by unknown gunmen on the pipeline operated by Royal Dutch Shell, located in the Oporo Channel in the Niger Delta, caused a major slick and fire, cutting output by 170,000 barrels per day (bpd). "The fire is still blazing. It's as high as a 10-storey building. There is thick black smoke billowing," a Reuters witness said. A Shell spokesman said work was ongoing to determine the extent of the damage, and there was no estimate yet of how long the outage would last. It represents a 7 percent cut in output from the world's eighth biggest exporter of crude. The nearby community of Asagba Okwan Asarama was deserted. Shell has closed two oilfields to help curb the fire. The Niger Delta pumps almost all of Nigeria's 2.4 million bpd. — Reuters.

#### PAKISTAN

Karachi, Dec 21 — Pakistan Railways said a big portion of the railway track linking Sibi with Harnai was blown up when a device planted under a small

railway bridge exploded in Balochistan Province of Pakistan yesterday. As a result, train services between the two towns remains suspended. According to a local media report, engineers and other staff were sent to the area to replace the damaged portion of the track and repair the bridge. A passenger train which left for Harnai from Sibi on Monday (Dec 19) morning was stopped at the Babar-Kach station after the incident that took place at around 0900 hrs. Meanwhile, a spokesman for the Baloch Liberation Army in Sibi claimed responsibility for blowing up the track. "It is retaliation against the operation launched in the Marri area," he said in a letter sent to the Sibi Press club. —Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Karachi, Dec 21 — Normal life was partially paralysed in upper Sindh Province and in other parts of the interior and in some areas of Karachi city yesterday on a call given by a local regional party, the Jeay Sindh Qaumi Mahaz, against the proposed construction of the Kalabagh dam in Pakistan. According to a local media report, except for Sanghar and Tharparkar districts, City and Latifabad talukas of the Hyderabad district, Mirpurkhas city and Sukkur, a complete strike was observed in all districts. Vehicular traffic from Hyderabad to the Sindh interior and vice versa was thin. Life was normal in most areas of Karachi although seven vehicles had been burnt on the eve of the strike. Shops and markets were mostly closed in Safoora Goth while business activities in some areas of Lyari were partially closed. No reports of violence was received from any locality of Karachi. Scattered incidents of violence, including throwing of stones and road blockades, were reported from Dadu, Jamshoro and Nawabshah districts. An incident of firing between the Motorway police and protesters near Qazi Ahmad was reported. Window-panes of many vehicles were smashed in Jamshoro. Tyres were burnt on roads, which had been blocked by placing logs, in the Nawabshah district. —Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Islamabad, Dec 22 — Seven people were killed in a gunbattle in a tribal region near the Afghan border as Pakistani Islamic militants raided homes searching for rivals, residents and a representative of the militants said today. More than 30 people have died this month alone in clashes between the militants, who call themselves Taliban like Afghanistan's former hardline rulers, and rivals they have branded bandits in the remote North Waziristan tribal region. A representative of the militants, many of whom are religious students, said five bandits and two Taliban were killed in the remote Shawal area after the raids on several fortress-like tribal homes yesterday. Government officials declined to comment but travellers from the area, to the west of the region's main town of Miranshah,



confirmed the latest fighting. Two bullet-riddled bodies were found in a stream on the outskirts of Miranshah today. One of the men was a retired junior officer of the paramilitary Frontier Corps, the other was a friend, a local official said. — Reuters.

#### PERU

London, Dec 21 — A press report, dated today, states: Shining Path guerrillas have ambushed and killed eight Peruvian policeman in a coca growing region of the Andes mountains, officials say. The ambush is the latest incident in an upsurge of violence linked to recent efforts to destroy coca crops. The police died in a remote jungle area known to be patrolled by rebels. Renegade Shining Path units are thought to be behind a series of attacks against security forces, despite the group's general defeat in the 1990s. Police spokesman Luis Vicarra said the Shining Path left a trademark red rag in the ambushed car, identifying themselves as the attackers. Peruvian authorities have launched an ongoing security operation in the remote Huanuco province to try to regain control. The Shining Path have waged a guerrilla campaign to topple the Peruvian state, killing an estimated 70,000 people since the 1980s.

#### PHILIPPINES

Manila, Dec 16 — Three people were killed, including a deputy mayor, and two wounded when unidentified gunmen ambushed a convoy of officials in the southern Philippines today, an army spokesman said. Major Gamar Hayudini said officials from Dinas town in Zamboanga del Sur province were returning home after watching a sports competition when gunmen fired at their vehicles. "The local police are still trying to establish the motive for the ambush," he said, adding the town had a long history of clan feuds due to political rivalries. The military said the mayor escaped unhurt but his deputy, a police officer and a local government employee were killed. A member of the town's legislative council was one of the two people wounded. — Reuters.

Manila, Dec 20 — Philippine communist rebels killed four soldiers and wounded a woman in an attack at a public market on the southern island of Mindanao, an army field commander said today. "The soldiers were about to board a van after buying food supplies when the rebels sprayed them with automatic gunfire," Colonel Antonio Amodia told reporters by telephone. "They were not able to return fire. Two escaped unhurt but four died, including an army captain." Amodia said the rebels of the New People's Army (NPA) picked up the fallen soldiers' guns and fled on two motorcycles after the attack in Tagum City in Davao del Norte province. — Reuters.

#### SPAIN

London, Dec 18 — A press report, dated today, states: A bomb has exploded at a business in Spain's Basque country causing no injuries, after a warning call in the name of Basque separatist guerrilla group ETA, police say. The telephoned warning to a Basque newspaper and the regional highway authority gave police time to evacuate the business that sells eels, and cordon off the area at Iurra, near the Basque coastal resort of San Sebastian. A police spokesman says no one was injured in the blast. He had no information on damage, but news reports say it is extensive.

London, Dec 22 — A press report, dated Dec 21, states: A bomb exploded near a nightclub in a Basque area of Spain today, but police cleared the area before the blast and no one was hurt, the Spanish Interior Ministry said. Police had been tipped off to the explosive in the back of the building in the Pyrenees village of Santesteban, about 10 miles south of the border with France, and cordoned off the area before the explosion, the ministry told The Associated Press. There was no immediate word on the extent of damage. The ministry didn't name any suspects. But the Basque newspaper Gara said it had received a warning of the bomb from a caller claiming to represent the separatist group ETA.

#### SRI LANKA

London, Dec 16 — A press report, dated today, states: New Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse has invited the rebel Tamil Tigers to crunch talks amid escalating violence which has raised fears of a return to civil war, the government said today. "The President and the United National Party (UNP) have agreed to resume talks with the LTTE," government spokesman Nimal Siripala de Silva told reporters, referring to the main opposition party and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. "The President has informed the UNP delegation that he has invited the LTTE for talks with the government," Mr de Silva said after a cabinet meeting. "He sent a letter to the LTTE through Sri Lanka's Peace Secretariat and the Norwegian facilitators," he added. "The government is waiting for a response from the LTTE. We expect a positive response." But Mr Rajapakse's outright rejection of the Tigers' demand for an ethnic homeland in the north and east has been followed by a series of attacks on the military by suspected rebels, and many ordinary Sri Lankans fear a return to civil war. The LTTE have threatened to resume their two-decade struggle next year unless Colombo comes up with a viable power-sharing blueprint, saying this is its last chance to avert a return to a war in which more than 64,000 people have been killed. The government was willing to talk to the Tigers in an Asian country, rowing

back on the previous government's refusal to hold talks outside Sri Lanka, Mr de Silva said. However, the Tigers said on Tuesday (Dec 12) they had not decided whether to accept a Japanese offer to host talks in Tokyo.

London, Dec 21 — A press report, dated today, states: A soldier was killed and another was injured in separate attacks carried out by the suspected Tamil Tigers in the northern Jaffna peninsula, defense officials said today. A soldier was killed in the centre area of Jaffna city yesterday night when the Tigers opened fire around 2130 hrs, (1530, UTC). At around 0530 hrs today (2330, UTC, yesterday) a soldier was injured at Ariyalai in Jaffna due to a similar firing incident. Defense officials said that there had been three more grenade attacks on security road check points manned by soldiers but the grenades failed to explode on each occasion. The incidents came in the wake of clashes between students of the Jaffna university and security forces on Monday (Dec 19). The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) accused the security forces of assaulting and firing at students and professors of the university, causing injuries to 15 civilians. Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse yesterday ordered the security authorities to report to him on the incidents. Rajapakse was keen to ensure calmness in Jaffna amidst his moves to re-start peace negotiations with the LTTE, said officials close to the president.

#### SUDAN

Nairobi, Dec 21 — Militias riding on camels and horses attacked Abu Sarouj village in the West Darfur state of Sudan on Monday (Dec 19), killing 20 people and wounding 16 others, according to a United Nations official in the area. "The attackers also burnt 50 shelters, temporarily displacing several thousand people," Andy Pendleton, the West Darfur coordinator for the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) told IRIN on Wednesday. Fifteen men, three women and two children were killed. Two of the victims were burnt alive when their homes were torched. Those wounded included five policemen, Pendleton added. Yesterday, hundreds of people affected by the raid on Abu Sarouj brought the bodies of the victims to the provincial hospital in West Darfur's capital, El-Geneina, where the crowd ran riot and stoned a policeman to death. "Hundreds of people gathered to protest the insecurity and beat people at random," said Pendleton. The demonstrators also stoned and damaged vehicles, including one belonging to the African Union's mission in Darfur and another owned by the UN. — Reuters.

## Labour Disputes

**AUSTRALIA**

London, Dec 16 — A press report, dated Dec 15, states: Striking workers at BP's Kwinana refinery say they will continue industrial action indefinitely, despite facing fines and legal action. The Industrial Relations Commission has ordered an end to the protected bargaining period for the workers, meaning any industrial action is now illegal. However, 86 workers have continued to strike, demanding a pay rise of about 21% over three years. Their employer, United Group, is offering 19%. Colin Saunders, from the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union, says the difference is not insurmountable and the company should increase its offer to match the demands of the workers.

**FRANCE**

London, Dec 19 — Container handling at the port of Le Havre is expected to be at a standstill for the second day running today because of a strike by gantry operators. They are protesting port authority plans to approve their private sector transfer as part of preparations for the imminent opening of the new Port 2000 container complex. The gantry operators, who are currently employed by the port authority, gave notice last week of their intention to stage a 48-hour strike yesterday and today, and to ban overtime in an attempt to block the transfer plan. Several months of negotiations between cargo-handlers and the gantry operators' union have failed to produce an agreement. The affair came to a head last week after the port authority let it be known that it intended to approve the principle of the transfer of the gantry operators to the private sector at its meeting on Friday afternoon (Dec 16). Gantry operators are refusing to give up their status as port authority employees despite the insistence of the future terminal operators at that they must have full control of cargo-handling personnel at the new facility. Originally due to open before the end of this year, the first phase of the new complex is now expected to open in March.

**GREECE**

London, Dec 16 — A press report, dated Dec 15, states: Greek urban transport came to a standstill and state utilities employees stayed away today as workers protested against a labour law seen as a precursor to drastic public sector reforms. A day after a nation-wide strike, bus, train and metro employees remained away for another 24 hours, bringing Athens traffic to a near halt. Workers at state

firms, where the new law ends job security for life, also walked out. The conservative government has refused to comment on strike participation. Yesterday's strike affected flights, sailings, industry and utilities. It was described by the GSEE umbrella union, whose 2 million members are about half the country's workforce, as a major victory against the government. GSEE said participation in that strike reached 90% in some sectors, but northern Greek industrialists said only about 20% of their workers had walked out. But government officials said they would not back down on the law, which is expected to clear parliament this week. Olympic Airlines cancelled scores of flights today but, unlike yesterday, most other flights were unaffected. Unions slam the law for creating two types of workers, those secure for life and those at the mercy of management. But economic analysts say it launches long overdue reforms aimed at making lumbering state firms more competitive.

**IRISH FERRIES PERSONNEL**

London, Dec 16 — All Irish Ferries services were back to normal by the early hours of yesterday, following a three-week dispute over the company's efforts to replace Irish seafarers with low-cost foreign nationals. The move came after peace talks between the two sides reached a tentative agreement earlier in the week. Representatives of the company were yesterday unavailable for comment. But union negotiator Paul Smyth, docks and marine workers branch secretary of Siptu, said: "I suppose we achieved all of the things we wanted to achieve. "I would like to have done better on some of the conditions, but it wasn't the case." However, the replacement seafarers will be on the Irish minimum wage. Meanwhile, some 50 Irish seafarers, of the total Irish workforce of 534, who do not wish to accept redundancy will have their pay and conditions ringfenced. Mr Smyth said the task now was to turn the agreement into a full document.

**UNITED KINGDOM**

London, Dec 21 — A press report, dated Dec 20, states: Around 6,000 magistrates' court staff in England and Wales have caused widespread closures after the first strike in their 800-year history. Unions said courts were brought to a "near standstill" by the 24-hour strike - in protest at a pay offer said by the government to be worth an average 3.7%. The strike resulted in 33 courthouses out of 350 in England and Wales closing for the day, government figures showed, but it insisted essential services had still been delivered. The Prospect union, which represents 120 senior legal and managerial staff in magistrates' courts, said there had been "widespread" support for today's strike. The Department of Constitutional Affairs said its "robust

contingency plans" meant courts had held up well across the country. In London all essential services had been delivered but through a smaller number of courts, it said. Custody, out of hours services, urgent family cases and those involving children at risk were not affected, it said. The industrial action involved ushers, legal clerks and administration staff. Workers have been offered an average 3.7% pay rise but the unions want more. A DCA spokeswoman said individuals at the top of their scale would get 2.2% and those who were not - 50% of those affected - would receive 5.2%. Some 80% of 7,800 staff in the Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS) voted to strike over the pay offer and the 120 members of Prospect were also balloted over the pay offer, with the majority supporting strike action. Both unions have agreed a series of exemptions so as to avoid risks to public safety. The PCS, which represents more junior workers, said members were angry about the government offer. PCS general secretary Mark Serwotka said 51% of administration staff working in magistrates' courts outside London earned less than £14,000 annually.

**UNITED STATES**

London, Dec 19 — A press report, dated today, states: Commuters who depend on two private bus lines were forced to find their own way home after drivers walked off the job early today, a predicament that could soon paralyse the entire city if the transit strike widens. The walkout at the two Queens bus lines came as the Transport Workers Union continued to threaten a large-scale strike beginning after midnight tomorrow that could affect as many as seven million subway and bus commuters. After making little progress during the weekend, the union and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority briefly negotiated yesterday afternoon in a midtown Manhattan hotel, but the talks were "not in the final analysis fruitful," the MTA's chief negotiator said. "The MTA is quite concerned that we are now down to the last day before the union-imposed deadline," MTA negotiator Gary Dellaverson said, referring to the plans for a citywide strike. Mayor Michael Bloomberg, in his weekly radio address yesterday, called a possible strike "reprehensible" and said it would drain \$400 million a day from the economy. Some 20 workers were picketing in front of the Triboro Coach Corp. bus depot early today. More talks were planned for today. The 33,000-member union announced plans for today's strike on Friday (Dec 16). The two private bus lines, which employ about 750 union members, are being taken over by the MTA but are not yet covered by the state's Taylor Law, which forbids strikes by public employees. The union has opposed an MTA plan to raise the age at which a new employee becomes eligible for a

full pension from 55 to 62. The MTA has said it made its best offer to the union hours after its contract expired. The MTA also has offered the transit workers, who make between \$47,000 and \$55,000 a year, 3% annual raises for each of three years.

London, Dec 20 — A press report, dated today, states: Subways and buses across New York shut down this morning as transit workers walked off the job after failing to agree with management on a new contract, stranding millions of travellers. Commuters, scrounging for alternatives on a freezing cold day, lined up for taxis and gathered on designated spots throughout the city for company vans and buses to shuttle them to their offices. There were carpools, and cyclists, and hundreds of people walking to work. City officials estimate that the strike will cost New York \$334.4m a day. It also will strand more than seven million commuters a day, a transit service estimate that might overstate the number of daily users because it counts each fare but doesn't take into account that many riders log two fares a day in their round-trip commute. The city instituted a sweeping emergency plan to reduce gridlock and keep certain streets open for emergency vehicles. City schools opened two hours late, and city police were dispatched to guard subway stations abandoned by the workers. Huge lines formed at ticket booths for the commuter railways that stayed in operation, and traffic backed up for up to six miles at bridges and tunnels leading into Manhattan as police inspected cars to make sure they followed a four-passenger minimum rule in effect at most crossings. The union called the strike around 0300 hrs after a late round of negotiations broke down last night. Authorities began locking turnstiles and shuttering subway entrances. The union and Metropolitan Transportation Authority had worked furiously to reach a new contract to replace the one that expired on Friday. It is illegal for mass transit workers to strike in New York, which means the 33,000 bus and subway employees will incur huge fines, two days pay for each day on strike. The union said the latest MTA offer included annual raises of 3%, 4% and 3.5%; the previous proposal included 3% raises each year. Pension issues were another major sticking point in the talks, particularly involving new employees.

London, Dec 21 — A press report, dated Dec 20, states: A judge has imposed a \$1m (£570,000) per day fine on New York's main transport union for a strike that has brought city transport to a standstill. The 34,000 members of the Transport Workers Union went on strike after talks over their contracts collapsed. They say they are "tired of being

underappreciated" but transport bosses accuse them of "bullying tactics". Mayor Michael Bloomberg joined many in walking to work, warning the strike could cost up to \$400m a day. Public sector workers are banned from striking under New York state law, and lawyers had requested a severe penalty in an effort to deter the union from a lengthy strike. Brooklyn-based judge Theodore Jones ordered the union to pay \$1m for each day the strike continues. Under emergency measures, cars carrying fewer than four passengers were being turned away at bridges and tunnels into Manhattan. Huge queues formed at commuter buses, trains and ferries that were still running. Some Wall Street firms had laid on shuttle buses. Many commuters showed little sympathy for the strikers. Meanwhile, the striking transit workers took to the picket lines with signs saying "We move NY. Respect Us!" MTA's lawyers immediately asked for an emergency court hearing to seek a contempt of court ruling against the union. The strike violates a state law that prohibits public employees from walking out, and the unions and its members could face huge fines.

London, Dec 21 — Millions of New Yorkers trudged to work today in another bone-chilling commute without subways and buses as a transit strike entered its second day. With contract talks still stalled, a judge fined the Transport Workers Union \$1 million for each day of the strike, and lawyers were due back in court today. The sanction was levied against workers for violating a state law that bars public employees from striking. The union said it would immediately appeal, calling the penalty excessive.

London, Dec 22 — A press report, dated Dec 21, states: A judge has threatened to jail three union leaders who called a strike of New York city public transport workers. Justice Theodore Jones ordered the union heads to appear before him tomorrow because of the "distinct possibility" they would be jailed. The union has already been slapped with fines of \$1m a day, as New York law bars transport workers from striking. New Yorkers faced below-freezing temperatures as they made their way to work on the second day of the strike. With no subway or bus services operating, millions of people once again had to walk, cycle or share cars to get to their workplaces. Some people woke hours before dawn to beat a ban on cars with fewer than four people entering Manhattan between 0600 hrs and 1100 hrs. A lawyer for the union - Transport Workers Union Local 100 - said it could not afford the existing fines, producing tax records showing it had only \$3.6m in its accounts.

## Awards & Settlements



### AIRCRAFT CRASH, GRAND CANYON, ARIZONA, UNITED STATES

London, Dec 17 — A press report, dated Dec 16, states: A Brooklyn woman who survived a Grand Canyon sightseeing air crash will receive \$38 million, according to the terms of the settlement announced today involving the tour company, the pilot and the helicopter manufacturer. A lawyer for Chana Daskal, 29, said the defendants agreed to pay the settlement in a lump sum within 30 days. "Chana is delighted to have this part of her life over with. She's pleased she doesn't have to travel to Las Vegas for trial. The important thing is now she can address her needs," said Gary Robb, Daskal's lawyer in Kansas City, Mo. Daskal has been recovering from near-fatal injuries she received in the crash Aug. 10, 2001, Robb said. The mother of two suffered a broken back, burns over 80 percent of her body, and had both legs amputated after the helicopter crashed into a cliff during a sightseeing tour to the Grand Canyon. Daskal's medical bills have topped \$11 million and her future care could cost \$23 million, Robb said. Daskal filed a civil suit against Papillon Grand Canyon Helicopters in Las Vegas; American Eurocopter Corp. and Turbomeca Engine Corp., of Grand Prairie, Texas; Washington-based helicopter retailer Zuni LLC; and the estate of the pilot who died in the crash. Gary Robb said the deal resolved all claims against the defendants. He could not disclose the details of the settlement. Lawyers and officials representing the defendants did not respond to messages seeking comment. Robb said the deal is ranked by a national jury verdict tracking system as the largest pretrial cash settlement in a personal injury case in US history. It was approved by Judge Nancy Saitta this week, he said. The settlement is sealed in Clark County District Court, according to a court spokesman. Daskal's husband, David Daskal, and traveling companions Shayie Lichtenstein, Avi and Barbara Wajsbaum and Aryeh Zvi Fastag, all of Brooklyn, were killed along with the pilot, Kevin Innocenti, 27, of Henderson. The National Transportation Safety Board blamed pilot error for the crash in a report last year. A major focus of Daskal's claim was the subsequent fire that engulfed the cabin, Robb said.

### ASBESTOS SETTLEMENT, UNITED STATES

London, Dec 20 — A press report, dated today, states: ABB Ltd., the world's biggest maker of power

transformers, won U.S. court approval for a \$1.43 billion asbestos settlement, moving the company closer to capping liabilities that once threatened it with bankruptcy. Parties to the plan have 10 days to appeal the U.S. Bankruptcy Court ruling, Zurich-based ABB said today. A federal district court must then give its backing. If no objections are filed against that decision, the agreement is final. ABB has paid about \$900 million since 1990 to settle thousands of U.S. asbestos claims. The new plan would resolve the last actions concerning its Connecticut-based Combustion Engineering unit, paving the way for a return to investment-grade credit ratings after the claims pushed it close to bankruptcy. "This should all be resolved in the first quarter," said Andreas Riedel, a Zurich-based analyst at Bank Sarasin & Cie. with a "buy" rating on ABB stock. "Afterwards, ABB should come back up to investment grade." ABB's settlement plan was in September backed by claimants who say their health was impaired by exposure to asbestos from Combustion Engineering's boilers. The unit, purchased by ABB in 1990, had used the mineral, which is linked to respiratory illnesses and cancer, as insulation until the 1960s.

#### **CLASS ACTION SUIT, SEATTLE, WASHINGTON, UNITED STATES**

London, Dec 20 — A press report, dated Dec 19, states: The city of Seattle has agreed to pay \$11.5 million to settle claims that it improperly denied benefits to about 2,000 workers it classified as "temporary" between 1996 and 2005. The city also said that from now on it will limit temporary assignments to less than one year, unless the position involves less than half-time employment. Four "permatemp" city workers brought the class-action lawsuit in 2002. Two had worked full-time for city-owned golf courses for four years without being granted the benefits of regular city workers. One worked at Seattle Public Utilities and the other as a job counsellor. King County Superior Court Judge Douglas McBroom gave preliminary approval to the settlement today. He is scheduled to hold a hearing on final approval in March. The case was the second brought against the city alleging abuse of temporary workers. In 1989, the city agreed to pay \$5 million to settle claims it had improperly denied benefits. After the current case was filed, the city created more than 220 new regular positions to accomplish work previously performed by temps. The mayor's office said it was not immediately clear if the settlement would be covered by insurance.

#### **CLASS-ACTION LAWSUIT BY HOURLY RETAIL EMPLOYEES, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES**

London, Dec 19 — A press report, dated Dec 16, states: Guitar Center Inc. announced today its plans to

settle two class-action lawsuits filed by hourly retail employees in California. Under the terms of the proposed settlement, which is subject to court approval, the Westlake Village-based music retailer would pay up to \$3.5 million to fully resolve the claims. The plaintiffs' allegations included improper documentation and enforcement of breaks and lunchtime periods, according to Guitar Center. "While the company denies all liability or wrongdoing in these cases, we chose to settle these lawsuits in order to put them behind us and avoid the distraction and additional, unnecessary legal expenses that we would otherwise incur," according to Leland P. Smith, executive vice president and general counsel for Guitar Center.

#### **CLASS-ACTION SUIT SETTLEMENT, FORD, UNITED STATES**

London, Dec 19 — A press report, dated Dec 17, states: Detroit Ford has finalised a settlement over an intake manifold. The deal requires the automaker to pay at least \$735 each to sedan owners who had to replace the plastic part. Ford also is extending warranty coverage to seven years to cover vehicle owners who haven't replaced the manifold. An intake manifold is a pipe that supplies a mixture of fuel and air to the engine's cylinders. Plaintiffs claimed in a class-action suit that the pipes are prone to premature cracking. The lawsuit covered a total of 1.8 million vehicle owners.

#### **MEDICAL MALPRACTICE, UNITED STATES**

London, Dec 19 — A press report, dated Dec 18, states: A Cook County jury (in Illinois) Thursday (Dec 15) ordered St. Anthony Hospital to pay \$17 million in damages to the family of a seven-year-old girl born with severe brain damage and cerebral palsy after an obstetrician delayed her delivery, lawyers for the plaintiffs said. A medical malpractice suit filed on behalf of the girl alleged the in-house obstetrician, Dr. Jacques Hercule, was negligent for waiting 20 to 25 minutes to perform an emergency Caesarean section on the girl's mother, Selene Araujo, who suffered a seizure during labour in 1998. The girl, seven-year-old Evelyn Araujo, was born with severe developmental problems that will likely require a lifetime of medical treatment and therapy, according to a statement issued by Anastopoulos & Clore, the South Carolina-based law firm representing the Araujo family. "We sympathize with the family involved in this case. While a verdict has been rendered, the parties have agreed to a confidential settlement," said St. Anthony President and CEO Kathleen DeVine in a statement.

#### **VIOLATION OF CLEAN AIR ACT, UNITED STATES**

London, Dec 22 — A press report, dated Dec 21, states: DaimlerChrysler

A-G has reached a \$94 million settlement with the government. It will repair defective emission controls on nearly one-point-five million Jeep and Dodge vehicles. The Justice Department and Environmental Protection Agency say the agreement involves vehicles from the 1996 to 2001 model years. It settles allegations that the automaker violated the Clean Air Act. Federal officials say it represents the largest settlement involving an emission-related defect reporting case. As part of the deal, DaimlerChrysler will recall about 494,000 vehicles and extend warranties on about 700,000. Another 300,000 vehicle owners will receive warranty notifications.

## **Railway Accidents**



#### **FORT ST. JAMES AREA, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA**

London, Dec 16 — A press report, dated Dec 15, states: A CN Rail train derailed in northern British Columbia today. Railway spokesman Graham Dallas said 13 cars on the northbound train left the tracks at about 0400 hrs, about 22 km east of Fort St. James on a section of track that was once part of Crown-owned B.C. Rail. "Our No. 1 goal is to investigate to determine what the cause is," said Dallas. "It had 48 cars, so it is a relatively short train." He said most of the cars were empty forest products cars. Dallas said there were no injuries and no hazardous materials were involved. "This was a relatively small train carrying a load of empty cars up to the Fort. St. James area where they would have been loaded with wood chips and lumber," he said. Dallas said there were two people on board the train, an engineer and a conductor.

#### **LARAMIE, WYOMING, UNITED STATES**

London, Dec 18 — A press report, dated Dec 17, states: Eight railroad cars from a Union Pacific train derailed at the Laramie train yard Thursday night (Dec 15). No one was injured in the derailment and no hazardous materials leaked. The cause of the derailment is still under investigation by Union Pacific. Four of the cars carried phosphoric acid. The others carried steel and dirt. None of the cars carrying phosphoric acid ruptured. The train derailed at about 2200, Union Pacific spokesman Mark Davis said. Union Pacific righted the derailed cars, none of which toppled to the ground, by yesterday afternoon and the rail yard operations returned to normal. The derailment didn't hinder other railroad traffic through Laramie, Davis said. The train was enroute between Green River and Denver.

**MARIETTA, OHIO, UNITED STATES**

London, Dec 19 — A press report, dated today, states: Eight rail cars carrying coal ran off the tracks and a train bridge collapsed early this morning, sending rubble and six cars onto the street below. No injuries were reported in the accident just outside Marietta, an Ohio River city about 90 miles southeast of Columbus, said Kim Skorniak, a spokeswoman for CSX Transportation, which owns the cars and the track. Skorniak said the cause of the derailment, which happened around 0200, was under investigation. The 90-car coal train was headed north from Parkersburg, W.Va., to a power plant in Washington County.

**NEWCASTLE, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA**

London, Dec 19 — A press report, dated today, states: Port Waratah Coal Services (PWCS) have advised that a train derailed at the entrance to Dyke Terminal rail receival facility at 1745, local time, yesterday, blocking 2 of the 3 approaches to the terminal. Repairs commenced at 0530 hours this morning, but this requires the closing of the 3rd rail receival point. Therefore, no rail receival is currently taking place at the Dyke terminal. PWCS advise they hope to have 1 rail receival point operating again by 1900, today, and a second rail receival point operational by 2200 hrs. These two rail receival points will operate until about 0600, tomorrow when rail receival will revert to 1 point to allow work on the track damage to continue at full speed. PWCS is hopeful that all 3 rail receival points will return to service tomorrow afternoon/evening. All coal is at port for vessels at berth and there is cargo available for the next two vessels scheduled to berth. Therefore, if repairs proceed as scheduled, only very minor delays - if any - are expected as a result of the derailment.

London, Dec 21 — Rail receival of coal at the Dyke Terminal has returned to normal since, yesterday evening, after the completion of repairs following a train derailment at the weekend. (See issue of Dec 20.)

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**PITSANULOK PROVINCE, THAILAND**

London, Dec 19 — A press report, dated today, states: A northern speed train from Thailand's northern resort province of Chiang Mai derailed in Pitsanulok Province this morning, but there was no report of any casualties. The incident took place near Pitsanulok's Ban Kwae Noy Railway Station in Muang District. An official inspection at the scene by railway technicians found that parts of the old

railroad were broken. The technicians said cold weather covering the area at the moment could have caused a contraction of the steel-railway, leading to the accident. However, all the 300 passengers of the train were reportedly safe. The railway technicians have urgently repaired the broken parts, saying the work is expected to be completed by this evening so that train services from the North to Bangkok and vice versa will resume.

**ROCCASECCA, ITALY**

London, Dec 20 — A press report, dated today, states: Two trains have collided south of Rome, injuring a number of people, Italian media report. One train rammed another, which was stopped at a station, the ANSA news agency reported. The accident happened at the station in Roccasecca, a town about 120 km south of Rome. Many ambulances were said to have been sent to the scene, though the number of casualties, and their seriousness, was still unclear.

London, Dec 20 — A press report, dated today, states: Two regional trains collided today at Roccasecca station, south of Rome, injuring at least 30 people, railway company Trenitalia and police said. "One of the trains rammed the other," said a Trenitalia spokesman. A police source said at least 30 people had been injured, some of them seriously.

London, Dec 20 — A press report, dated today, states: About 60 people were injured, three critically, when two trains collided at Roccasecca Station, southern Italy, according to a preliminary count by railway officials and press reports. "Three people have been hospitalized in very serious condition, an adolescent and two women," a member of the civil protection force told state-run RAI television. Italian media reported that 59 people were injured, about a dozen seriously, and two others were listed as missing. The accident occurred when "a regional train linking Rome and Cassino ran into another train that was stopped in the station," explained Marco Mancini, a spokesman with the Italian railway company. The other train was traveling from Rome to Campobasso in the south. ANSA said that the impact of the accident pushed one rail car on top of another and left another car lying on its side on the track. Railroad officials said they did not yet know what caused the collision. Italian Transport Minister Pietro Lunardi promised an investigation would be launched into the incident.

**SWINNA, POLAND**

London, Dec 20 — A press report, dated Dec 19, states: A commuter train that could not stop at a station in the southern Poland mountains, possibly because of brake failure, collided with an oncoming passenger train, injuring at least seven people, police said. The trains, carrying about

50 people, collided at about 1500 hrs, in the village of Swinna, police spokesman Wieslaw Zon said. Five passengers and two train drivers were hospitalised, but their injuries were not considered life-threatening, Zon said. The accident occurred after one train could not stop at a station, possibly because of brake failure, where there was a stretch of only one track, he said. The conductor had planned to halt at the station to allow an oncoming train to pass on a short stretch of double track. The malfunctioning train rolled downhill on a collision course with the oncoming train from the village of Zywiec. The train driver from Zywiec was alerted, told passengers to lie down and started backing up, but he could not avoid a collision, Zon said. A special commission was investigating the accident, he said.

**Robberies & Thefts**



**PAINTINGS, NORWAY**

London, Dec 20 — A press report, dated Dec 19, states: Six people have been indicted in the August 2004 theft of the still-missing Edvard Munch masterpieces "The Scream" and "Madonna", a Norwegian national prosecutor said today. Masked gunmen grabbed The Scream and Madonna from the Munch Museum in Oslo on August 22, 2004, in front of stunned visitors. Despite an international search and promises of a reward the works have yet to be recovered. State lawyer for Oslo Terje Nyboe said five will face trial for participating in the theft itself, and the sixth was indicted for receiving stolen property. Their names were not released.

**STATUE FROM MUSEUM, HERTFORDSHIRE, UNITED KINGDOM**

London, Dec 17 — A press report, dated today, states: A bronze statue worth £3m (\$5.3m) by sculptor Henry Moore has been stolen from the grounds of a museum. Two vehicles gained access to the courtyard of the Henry Moore Foundation in Perry Green, Much Hadham in Hertfordshire, on Thursday evening (Dec 15). Three men then loaded the huge statue of "a reclining figure" onto the back of a Mercedes lorry using a crane. Officers investigating the theft believe it could have been stolen for scrap value. The 1969/1970 work is more than 11ft long and weighs 2.1 tonnes. Det Sgt Graeme Smith said officers were keeping an open mind as to the motive behind the theft - which was captured on CCTV - but added: "We are fearful it is possibly going to be sold for scrap." A substantial reward has been offered by the Foundation for information leading to its recovery. Gareth Spence,

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from the Foundation, said that the statue was in the farmyard area of the museum and was in the process of being moved to another location. The 70-acre estate at Perry Green is home to the studios, barns and galleries gifted to the Foundation by Henry Moore. The gardens house the late artist's sculptures.

Miscellaneous



**OUTBREAK OF "BIRD FLU"**

London, Dec 17 — A press report, dated today, states: Local tests have confirmed that a 36-year-old man who died two days ago in a Jakarta hospital had bird flu, senior health officials said today. Health officials were still waiting for the results to be confirmed by a World Health Organization (WHO) laboratory, but if the man, who lived in South Jakarta, is confirmed to have died from bird flu, he would be the 10th fatality in Indonesia from the virus. "It is positive, but we're still waiting for confirmation from the WHO lab in Hong Kong," Indonesia's health ministry spokesman Haryadi, said. "Investigation of the history of the man's contacts with chickens is ongoing." The man died three days after he was admitted to the Sulianti Saroso infectious disease hospital in Jakarta with symptoms of H5N1, the strain of avian influenza that has proven deadly in humans. (See issue of Dec 14.)

London, Dec 18 — A press report, dated today, states: The 18th outbreak of bird flu has been detected in chickens in Romania, an official speaking for the agriculture ministry said yesterday. The H5 virus was found in chickens in a farm in the village of Marsilien in the department of Ialomita in the south east of the eastern European country, he said. "The results of the tests were positive and we have started to cull the chickens," the official Gabriel Predoi said. A deadly H5N1 strain of the H5 virus has killed nearly 70 people in Asia in the past two years and is feared to eventually cause a human flu pandemic. Most of the cases in Romania were in the Danube river delta, located on a major migration path of wild birds. A total 100,000 poultry have been slaughtered in Romania since the first case was discovered on Oct 7.

Jakarta, Dec 19 — An eight-year-old Indonesian boy has died from the H5N1 strain of bird flu according to local tests, a Health Ministry official said today. Hariadi Wibisono, who heads a department charged with eradicating animal-borne diseases, said the boy's results had yet to be confirmed by a Hong Kong laboratory affiliated with the World Health Organization. "Based on the results, local tests show he is positive for bird

flu," Wibisono told Reuters. Indonesia has had nine deaths from bird flu confirmed by the Hong Kong laboratory and five cases where patients have survived. Besides the boy, Indonesia is also awaiting confirmation from Hong Kong on a 39-year-old man who died last week of bird flu according to local tests. It was unclear if the boy had contact with infected chickens, Wibisono said. He died last week in Jakarta. — Reuters.

London, Dec 20 — A press report, dated today, states: Quang Tri, one of nine localities of Vietnam meeting criteria to announce an end to bird flu outbreaks, has once again seen poultry die of bird flu, local newspaper Labor reported today. The provincial Veterinary Bureau has, in recent days, culled over 15,400 fowls after nearly 2,700 poultry died in the five districts of Hai Lang, Trieu Phong, Gio Linh, Vinh Linh and Dong Ha. Tests showed that the dead fowls were infected with bird flu virus strain H5. Since Oct 1, a total of 21 cities and provinces of Vietnam have been hit by bird flu, which has killed and led to the forced culling of over 3.6 million fowls.

Fires & Explosions



**BUSH, AUSTRALIA**

London, Dec 21 — A press report, dated today, states: Fire crews in Victoria and New South Wales will work through the night to control several bushfires burning in the two states. Dozens of firefighters are still battling a large blaze at Allambie Heights on Sydney's northern beaches that earlier threatened a number of houses. Around 15 hectares of bushland has been burnt out and containment lines have been set up around nearby homes. In the central-west of New South Wales firefighters will work through the night to contain a large bushfire in the Weddin National Park. While a fire burning north of Newcastle is almost under control. A large bushfire in the Grampians National Park in Western Victoria has destroyed about 150 hectares of bushland. Five aircraft have been helping ground crews fight the fire. Lightning strikes started the fire this afternoon. The Department of Sustainability and Environment has closed the Halls Gap-Dunkeld Road. State duty officer John Lloyd says crews hope to control the fire tomorrow before Friday's (Dec 23) forecast hot weather.

**FACTORY, PORT STEPHENS, NEWCASTLE AREA, AUSTRALIA**

London, Dec 22 — A press report, dated today, states: A factory at Port Stephens, south of Newcastle, has been destroyed by a fire this afternoon. Fire crews were called to the car-wrecking business at

Salamander Bay just before 1400, AEDT, and found the building well alight. Rural Fire Service superintendent Allan Gillespie says initially there was concern the blaze might spread to adjoining buildings. "The fire had taken such a grip on the building, was so intense, there was a very real danger it could spread, so we concentrated on protecting adjoining buildings," he said. "Once they were secure we were able to commence fighting the fire. At one stage the roof collapsed creating a bit of a hazard for our firefighters, but we were able to bring the situation under control and at this stage there's no further danger with this fire."

**FACTORY, CHANDIGARH AREA, INDIA**

London, Dec 21 — A press report, dated today, states: Goods worth lakhs were burnt when a fire broke out at an ice cream factory in Phase I of Industrial Area early yesterday morning. According to fire department officials the incident probably occurred due to an electric short circuit. The fire department received information about the fire at Lotus Ice Cream factory at 0351 yesterday. Six fire brigade vehicles reached the spot. "We succeeded to control the fire within 20 minutes but it was very difficult to save the articles as the factory was full of the paper packing used for ice cream," a senior fire department officer told Times of Chandigarh. Ice cream machines, ceiling fans, packing paper and a cold room were burnt in the incident. The fire was controlled fully in about four hours.

**FRUIT GODOWN, KARACHI, PAKISTAN**

Karachi, Dec 17 — A fire broke out at a privately owned fruit godown, Khalil & Co, in Gulistan-e-Johar, Karachi. It is said the fire engulfed the whole godown and destroyed about rupees 15 million of goods. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

**HOSPITAL, LIAOYUAN, CHINA**

London, Dec 16 — A press report, dated today, states: A fire at the largest hospital in the north-eastern Chinese city of Liaoyuan has killed at least 33 people, the official Xinhua news agency reported. Xinhua quoted a provincial government official as saying rescuers found 19 bodies at the scene and 14 other people died after they were transferred to other hospitals for treatment. It said all the victims were patients at Liaoyuan's City Central Hospital. The cause of the blaze and the extent of the damage were not immediately known. Liaoyuan is about 120 km south-west of Changchun, capital of Jilin Province. Last month, an explosion at a chemical plant in Jilin spilled 100 tonnes of cancer-causing benzene compounds into the Songhua river and forced nearby Harbin city to suspend water supplies for four days. A police official said that provincial leaders rushed to the scene of the

hospital fire. He said its cause was under investigation. A witness said scores of patients were evacuated. Some people were seen jumping from burning buildings, Xinhua quoted witnesses as saying. Fire engines from Changchun and nearby Yitong county were mobilised to help fight the fire, it said without giving further details.

London, Dec 17 — A press report, dated today, states: Chinese authorities have detained an electrician blamed for a hospital fire that killed 39 people, a local Communist Party leader said today. The blaze in the city of Liaoyuan forced patients to leap from second- and third-storey windows in subfreezing weather. "Initial investigation shows the fire accident was due to malpractice of an electrician, who has been detained by police," the official Xinhua News Agency said, citing the city's party secretary, Zhao Zhenqi. It didn't identify the electrician or say what he was accused of doing wrong or whether he would face criminal charges. The government said authorities confirmed no one was missing following the blaze, putting the final death toll at 39. Some 89 patients jumped from the building, with 24 suffering serious injuries as they fled the flames, Xinhua said.

**HOTEL, LAKE PLACID, NEW YORK, UNITED STATES**

London, Dec 16 — A press report, dated Dec 15, states: Flames engulfed the main building of the historic Lake Placid Lodge, one of the Adirondacks' most exclusive retreats, as firefighters from nearly a dozen companies battled the blaze in freezing temperatures today. No injuries were reported, but there was extensive damage to the award-winning resort's main building, housing the kitchen, bar and dining area, fire officials said. The cause of the blaze was under investigation. The secluded resort dates back to 1882, when it was a private residence. As a lodge, Zagat recently named it among the Top 20 U.S. Small Hotels and Resorts, and Conde Nast Traveler named it one of the three best lakeshore hotels in North America. Its rates range from \$400 to over \$1,000 a night. Philip Wood, president and chief operating officer of the Garrett Hotel Group, couldn't say how the fire would affect operations but he promised it wouldn't spell the end of the lodge. Guests were relocated to another Garrett resort, The Point on Upper Saranac Lake. Forrest Morgan, who works at the Lodge, told the Adirondack Daily Enterprise that thousands of dollars in paintings lined the walls of the damaged building and the wine cellar contained at least \$250,000 in the wine.

**HOUSES, BRADFORD ABBAS, NEAR SHERBORNE, DORSET, UNITED KINGDOM**

London, Dec 22 — A press report, dated today, states: About 50

firefighters are still at the scene of a major fire at six thatched properties in Dorset. The blaze broke out in the roof of the row of terraced cottages in the village of Bradford Abbas, near Sherborne, in the early hours. Ten fire engines from Dorset and Yeovil are still at the scene. A spokesperson for Dorset Fire and Rescue Service said crews were using a "firebreak" to stop the fire spreading to adjoining properties. Four of the properties have been severely damaged by the fire. One home was so badly affected that the front is in danger of collapsing, the spokesperson said.

**NATURAL GAS PLANT, MOOMBA, SOUTH AUSTRALIA, AUSTRALIA**

London, Dec 22 — A press report, dated today, states: The major oil and gas producer, Santos Limited, is set to benefit from a big insurance pay-out. The company says it will recover \$149 million from its insurer over the explosion at its Moomba gas plant, in South Australia, almost two years ago. Santos has already received \$54 million, with the rest expected in the first-quarter of the new year.

**NUCLEAR POWER PLANT, ST. PETERSBURG, RUSSIA**

London, Dec 16 — A press report, dated today, states: An explosion ripped through a smelter at a nuclear power plant outside the northern city of St. Petersburg, badly injuring three people, Russia's nuclear agency said today. Rosenergoatom said radiation levels were not affected as the reactor in that part of the Leningrad nuclear plant was undergoing repairs and not in operation at the time. But yesterday's blast raised questions about safety at an onsite scrap metal operation. The blast caused molten metal to burst out of the smelter, where a private company was reprocessing scrap metal, said a plant spokesman, Sergei Averyanov. Averyanov blamed the explosion on violations of production rules. The Leningrad nuclear plant is in the town of Sosnovy Bor, 400 miles northwest of Moscow and 50 miles west of St. Petersburg, the chief city in the region with 5 million people. The plant has four units, or reactors, and the smelter is located in the complex containing the second one. The second unit was shut down for major repairs in July, the agency said. "There were no violations of safety levels and operating conditions of the energy units of the Leningrad nuclear plant," Rosenergoatom said in a statement.

**OIL DEPOT, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD, UNITED KINGDOM**

London, Dec 16 — A press report, dated today, states: Flights from Heathrow to Australia are having to make unscheduled stops at Stansted Airport to take on more fuel. Qantas aircraft are refuelling at the Essex terminal because of rationing at Heathrow after the fire at Buncefield oil depot in Hemel Hempstead. The depot is said to supply a third of the

fuel for Heathrow. Some aircraft are only being allowed 40% of the fuel they would normally take on board. Tony Astle of airport company BAA said restrictions could last some weeks. Qantas said it was adding about an hour and a half to journey times to the Far East and Australia to allow for the refuelling. Mr Astle said: "Clearly the loss of one third of our fuel supply is having an impact on us but with the co-operation of all the airlines, Heathrow continues to operate normally. "Fuel demand at Heathrow is now approximately the same as the fuel that is being supplied into the airport, so the operations are unlikely to see any serious delays and the situation is improving hour by hour and day by day." Gideon Ewers of the International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations (IFALPA) said only airlines flying to destinations as far away as Australia, the Far East and the west coast of the US were likely to be affected, but it would cause disruption for passengers. He said: "The flying time between Heathrow and Stansted is only about 15 minutes but it will add longer than that to flights. "You have to stay on the ground for at least 30 minutes after landing, so I would guess it could add an extra two hours on every flight. "That could have issues with people making connecting flights and there will be a little bit more passenger disruption than people expect." Mr Ewers said the fact that planes were having to make an extra landing and take off would have implications for aircraft maintenance and crew working hours limitations.

London, Dec 20 — A press report, dated today, states: Fire preparations at the Buncefield oil depot were cleared in the weeks leading up to the massive blaze, inspectors said. The Health and Safety Executive revealed that it had recently reviewed and approved fire measures at the site as it formally took over the investigation into the blast. HSE deputy chief executive Justin McCracken told a press conference: "The last inspection was specifically focusing on issues of preparation for dealing with fire." He added that on the "specific" areas they had looked at, "nothing came out which caused us undue concern." Mr Callaghan said the investigation, which will also involve the Environment Agency, would be chaired by an "independent" figure. He said he hoped the initial report could be completed "within months."

**PETROCHEMICAL PLANT, JILIN PROVINCE, CHINA**

London, Dec 17 — A press report, dated Dec 16, states: A toxic slick that threatened the water supply of several large Chinese cities along the Songhua river has reached Russian territory. Russia's Emergencies Minister, Sergei Shoigu, says the slick has flowed into a river that forms a barrier between the two countries. "The water polluted with benzene today reached the Russian border and

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has flowed into the Amur river," he said in the city of Khabarovsk. However, initial tests by Russian experts show the slick, which contains benzene and nitrobenzene, is not as highly concentrated as had been feared. It is continuing to dilute. Mr Shoigu says the authorities are prepared to ensure safe drinking supplies, regardless. "Water reserves and carbon (filters) have been set up. Artesian wells have been reopened," he said. Widespread contamination prevention efforts have been under way in China and Russia since an explosion on Nov 13 at a PetroChina chemical factory in the north-east Chinese province of Jilin. The accident led to the spillage of 100 tonnes of carcinogens into the Songhua River, one of China's longest waterways and a source of water for millions of people. Chinese media also reported that the slick had significantly diluted ahead of entering Russia.

London, Dec 21 — A press report, dated today, states: Authorities in Khabarovsk in Russia's Far East cut off water to its 10,000 people today as a toxic slick from a chemical plant explosion in China floated downriver. By evening, pipes began to pump water once again to the homes of people in three southern districts of the city, with full supplies expected to resume by tomorrow morning. But a top regional environmental official warned the 580,000 residents not to drink tap water because of the contamination from the Chinese accident last month. Regional officials said that tests conducted in the Amur River, which flows past the city and provides it with all its water supplies, so far had not detected chemicals above permissible levels. But residents of the three districts woke to find notices posted outside their apartment blocks with a list of hazardous chemicals that could be in the water supply and their effects. The notice warned them not to try to siphon hot water from their centrally heated radiators. An official with the regional branch of the Emergency Situations Ministry, Sergei Gorchkov, said that water supplies to this area had begun to resume at 2000, local time. The spill was about 20 miles up the Amur from city limits, and it was unclear when exactly it would arrive, Sergei Levkov, a regional administration spokesman, said. The pollutant slick, measuring 110 miles long, was expected to take up to four days or more to pass through Khabarovsk. Gorchkov said the decision to restore water was taken after Chinese workers labouring around the clock finally managed to complete a dam across a waterway in a bid to prevent the toxins from reaching three water treatment facilities that service the south of the city. The Nov 13 chemical plant explosion dumped 100 tons of toxins into northeastern China's Songhua River, disrupting water supplies to millions of Chinese and straining relations with neighbouring Russia.

**PREMISES, KAWANA, QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA**

London, Dec 16 — A press report, dated today, states: Arsonists have torched two blocks of shops on Queensland's Sunshine Coast, sparking evacuations, causing millions of dollars in damage and putting jobs in jeopardy just before Christmas. No one was hurt in the blazes which began about an hour apart early today, but the two fires have directly affected more than 150 employees, many not knowing when they can return to work. Inspector John Maloney said police suspected the same person may have lit both fires. "It's very suspicious in that it's an hour apart and certainly we're looking if the same person is responsible," he said. The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS) said the first blaze began about 0130, AEST, at a retail complex housing Spotlight, Chandlers and a furniture outlet on Nicklin Way, Kawana. Firefighters were alerted to the second fire about an hour later, just two km further along Nicklin Way in Warana, which destroyed a fruit shop and damaged an adjoining butchery. Specialist units and an aerial firefighting appliance were sent from Brisbane to battle the blazes. Nearby residents, including about 100 people in a retirement village at Kawana, were evacuated because of toxic smoke. QFRS commissioner Lee Johnson said 13 units and 60 firefighters were in attendance at the height of the fires. "They have caused, particularly in the major fire (in Kawana), multiple millions of dollars worth of damage to the commercial businesses and premises that operate from them," he said.

**PREMISES, SHANGHAI, CHINA**

London, Dec 22 — A press report, dated today, states: A housing project billed as the most expensive property in Shanghai caught fire this lunchtime, but the fire was extinguished some half an hour later, with no casualties reported. The cause of the blaze has yet to be determined. The fire broke out at 1248 hrs in the basement of the Tomson Riviera project, and the black smoke soon billowed out and clouded the Lujiazui area of Pudong. By 1315 hrs, the fire had been extinguished. The Tomson Riviera project, developed by the Hong Kong-based Tomson Group, carries a price tag of over yuan 110,000 (US\$13,597) per square metre on average. Separately, on Monday (Dec19) afternoon, a fire was reported at the under-construction Huaihai International Plaza at the prime business centre of Huaihai Middle Road. The fire was put out after nearly three hours, causing no casualties. Police are still investigating the cause of the fire.

**SCHOOL, SWADLINCOTE, DERBYSHIRE, UNITED STATES**

London, Dec 22 — A press report, dated Dec 21, states: Damage from an arson attack at a Derbyshire school

could cost more than £2m to repair, school staff said. Much of the sixth form block and specialist science classrooms at the Pingle School in Swadlincote were destroyed in the fire on December 2. Since then, some of the 1,300 pupils have lost a day of school every week, but senior staff have said they expect lessons to return to normal in the New Year despite repairs to buildings taking at least a year. The school will return to a full timetable when 18 temporary classrooms open in January.

**TEXTILE MILL, KARACHI, PAKISTAN**

Karachi, Dec 17 — A privately owned cotton mill, Fazal Alahi Textile Mills was destroyed in a huge fire today in Small Industrial Area, Karachi. A fire broke out in the cotton wastage stored in the mill located in plot R-154 near Small Industrial Area, Karachi and soon engulfed the whole mill area and destroyed cotton bales worth millions of rupees. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

**WILDFIRE, AUSTRALIA**

London, Dec 21 — A press report, dated today, states: A bushfire in northern Sydney is threatening homes in Allambie Heights. A home is believed to be alight in Kirra Road. The fire brigade says two or three homes in Derna Crescent are also under threat. Eight fire crews and a water bombing helicopter are battling the blaze in Allenby Park, which began this afternoon. A total fire ban has been declared across New South Wales from midnight tonight.



**ABORTED TAKE-OFF, HAMILTON, NEW ZEALAND**

London, Dec 19 — A flight from Hamilton to Sydney was aborted today when the aircraft hit a bird shortly before take-off. Witnesses reported seeing smoke coming from the right engine as the Freedom Air aircraft prepared to take off in the direction of Tamahere at 0820 hrs. Two rescue engines raced to the plane. Freedom general manager Stephen Jones said the smoke was probably the burning remains of the bird. The flight, which was to have left at 0725 hrs, had already been delayed 55 minutes because of fog.

**AIRCRAFT PUT BACK TO ABUJA, NIGERIA**

London, Dec 21 — A press report, dated today, states: Another air disaster was averted in Nigeria as a flight operated by privately owned EAS Airlines was aborted 20 minutes after take-off in the country's capital Abuja, local media reported today. The official News Agency of Nigeria said the pilot had complained of a faulty

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fuel filter, while The Punch newspaper quoted passengers as saying the engine of the Lagos-bound aircraft developed problem 20 minutes into the journey yesterday afternoon. "The aircraft initially found it difficult to land in Abuja, but eventually landed after hovering for 10 minutes," the newspaper said. There were 100 passengers and five crew members on board.

#### **C-GGGC**

London, Dec 15 — Messerschmitt BO 105CBS, C-GGGC, operated by Canadian Coast Guard, was en route from Go By Point to Marystown, NL, with a pilot and passenger on board. At 1900 NST, Dec 7, the aircraft was reported overdue and a search was initiated. At 2100 NST, the bodies of both occupants were recovered in the sea, a short distance from Go By Point. The aircraft has not been found.

#### **CRASH OFF ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA, UNITED STATES**

See N22L.

#### **CRASH, CANBERRA AREA, AUSTRALIA**

London, Dec 16 — A press report, dated today, states: Three people have had a lucky escape after they were forced to land their single engine aircraft in a paddock at Bungendore near Canberra this morning. The aircraft is believed to have been travelling from Essendon in Melbourne to Sydney. But a spokesman for Airservices Australia says the flight was interrupted by fuel problems. The spokesman says the aircraft was attempting to reach the Canberra airport when it was forced to ditch in a paddock. He says no-one has been hurt, and the three people on board have been talking to the Canberra control tower by mobile phone. Police are now at the site.

#### **CRASH, MOSTOLES, SPAIN**

See EC-HCT.

#### **CRASH, SOUTH WESTLAND, NEW ZEALAND**

London, Dec 18 — A press report, dated today, states: Two people were seriously injured when a helicopter crashed in South Westland last night. Inspector John Doherty of the police southern communications centre said police were alerted just after 2000, local time, that a R22 helicopter had crashed at Mussel Point at Jackson Bay, south of Haast. The two occupants were transferred to Greymouth Hospital by helicopter. It was not known whether the helicopter was a commercial or private flight, he said. Constable Noel McEwen of the Greymouth police said the cause of the crash had yet to be determined, but it was believed at least one of the occupants had suffered spinal injuries. National Radio reported that the pair were in a serious condition.

#### **CRASH, TERRACE, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA**

London, Dec 21 — A press report, dated today, states: A Navair charter courier aircraft crashed moments after taking off from the Northwest Regional Airport last night, killing the pilot and co-pilot. Airport manager Laurie Brown said the small, twin-engine Mitsubishi aircraft crashed less than a minute after taking off from the airport enroute to Vancouver. "Shortly after departure there was an impact, just south of the airport," said Brown. "The airport staff responded and local RCMP and Terrace fire department. "The two individuals on board didn't make it," he said. The names of the deceased were not immediately available. The Navair aircraft makes daily trips to the airport, transporting packages and other business correspondence, said Brown.

#### **EC-HCT**

London, Dec 22 — Bell 206L-4T, EC-HCT, operated by Helicopteros del Sureste, was substantially damaged while attempting to depart a bullring in Mostoles, Spain, at 1315, UTC, Dec 1. The pilot and five passengers sustained minor injuries.

#### **EMERGENCY LANDING, ACCRA, GHANA**

Accra, Dec 19 — A Nigerian aircraft, owned by the same company as an airliner which crashed in October killing all on board, made an emergency landing in Ghana today after a failure in its hydraulic system, officials said. The Bellview Airlines Boeing 737 sent a distress call while approaching Accra airport from Lagos and a tyre burst as it landed, but none of the 63 passengers and four crew were hurt. "The pilot had earlier radioed the control tower in Accra, declaring an emergency during descent to land at Accra airport due to a hydraulic system failure," said Eric Noi, public affairs director for the Ghana Civil Aviation Authority. "The aircraft landed safely without any casualties. The aircraft burst a tyre upon landing and was disabled for a while on the runway and was subsequently towed to the hangar." "It may have been a nail or any other sharp object that pierced the tyre after the aircraft landed," said Bellview spokesman Habib Mohammed. The flight was on its way to Freetown in Sierra Leone from Lagos with a stopover in Accra. — Reuters.

#### **EMERGENCY LANDING, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS, UNITED STATES**

London, Dec 21 — A press report, dated today, states: A Midwest Airlines Boeing 717 reportedly carrying 81 people made an emergency landing late yesterday at Boston's Logan Airport, live television reports showed. No injuries were apparent in the landing, which showed sparks and flames shooting from the plane's right landing gear as it moved down the runway. According

to reports, the plane, a flight from Boston to Milwaukee, turned back after takeoff due to possible problems with the landing gear and circled above Boston burning off its jet fuel.

#### **EMERGENCY LANDING, INDIRA GANDHI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, INDIA**

London, Dec 20 — A press report, dated today, states: A Chennai-Delhi Indian Airlines aircraft with over 100 passengers on board tonight made an emergency landing at the Indira Gandhi International Airport after developing some technical snag. The pilot of the flight IC-539, while approaching Delhi airport, made an SOS call to the Air Traffic Controller at around 2015 hrs seeking emergency landing, airport sources said. Full emergency was declared at the airport with fire tenders and ambulances being rushed to the tarmac, the sources said.

#### **EMERGENCY LANDING, LOS ANGELES, UNITED STATES**

London, Dec 20 — A press report, dated today, states: An Air India flight carrying 273 passengers and crew made an emergency landing after blowing a tyre just as it left the airport runway, officials said. Air India Flight 136 departed Los Angeles International Airport at 2033 yesterday for Frankfurt, Germany. The aircraft safely returned to the airport at 2000 after dumping fuel, airport spokeswoman Nancy Castles said. Television footage showed sparks flying from the 747-400 aircraft as it made its emergency landing. There were no reports of injuries. The Federal Aviation Administration temporarily halted flights at the airport while the aircraft was landing, but operations resumed soon afterward, Castles said. More than 100 firefighters and paramedics were standing by when the aircraft returned, said Los Angeles Fire Department spokesman Jim Wells.

#### **EMERGENCY LANDING, SANTIAGO MARINO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, VENEZUELA**

London, Dec 16 — A press report, dated today, states: A turboprop Dash 7, operated by state airline Conviasa, carrying 40 passengers, was forced to make an emergency landing in Venezuela after encountering problems with its landing gear. The aircraft landed safely at Santiago Marino International Airport after taking off from Caracas. Firefighters sprayed foam across the runway before the aircraft landed on its belly. Officials said there were no injuries.

#### **EMERGENCY LANDING, ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI, UNITED STATES**

London, Dec 21 — A press report, dated today, states: A corporate jet carrying at least seven people landed safely today in St. Louis after after developing a landing gear problem. Lambert Airport spokeswoman Sandy

Singer said the jet carrying seven to nine people took off around 0800 from Spirit Airport in Chesterfield, Mo., a St. Louis suburb. She didn't know whose jet it was. The front landing gear would not retract, said Dave Nichols of the Monarch Fire District. But shortly before 1020, the aircraft touched down, holding the front landing gear off the runway for several seconds before slowing bringing it down. The landing was apparently flawless. Soon after take-off, a visual inspection showed the nose gear apparently turned to the left, Nichols said earlier. The aircraft flew for more than two hours burning fuel before preparing for the emergency landing.

#### **G-WLLY**

London, Dec 21 — A press report, dated today, states: Two people have died in a helicopter crash in Perthshire. The helicopter is believed to have come down near Coupar Angus at 1015, GMT. Air accident investigators are heading to the scene and diversions are in place.

London, Dec 21 — A press report, dated today, states: Two people have died in a helicopter crash in Perthshire. The Bell Jet Ranger 206B helicopter came down in a field beside the A94 Coupar Angus to Forfar road near the village of Meigle at 1015, GMT. It left Cumbernauld Airport near Glasgow about an hour earlier on a flight to Aberdeen. The helicopter, which was built in 1969, is registered to a company in Newmachar, Aberdeenshire. The A94 has now reopened. Air accident investigators have been sent to the scene, where debris from the aircraft is spread over a wide area.

London, Dec 21 — Bell 206A JetRanger G-WLLY crashed near Coupar Angus Dec 21. The two persons on board were killed

#### **INCIDENT AT CHARLOTTE DOUGLAS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, NORTH CAROLINA, UNITED STATES**

London, Dec 16 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: A FedEx cargo aircraft went off a runway and got stuck in mud today at Charlotte-Douglas International Airport after the pilot cut a turn too short, authorities said. No one was injured in the early morning mishap, said Catherine Bergen of the Federal Aviation Administration in Atlanta. The aircraft had landed safely and was taxiing to its unloading zone when the pilot "turned short" and wound up in the mud, airport spokeswoman Haley Gentry said. Only the crew was onboard at the time of the accident, officials said. Even though there was freezing rain in the area, Gentry said the icy conditions didn't cause the mishap. FedEx spokesman Maury Lane said poor light and heavy rain may have contributed to the pilot missing the turn. Airport workers freed the craft with a towing vehicle and moved it to the unloading zone, she said. No

commercial flights were affected by the accident, she said.

#### **INCIDENT AT DUSSELDORF AIRPORT, GERMANY**

London, Dec 19 — A press report, dated today, states: A Boeing-737 passenger aircraft of Turkish Airlines (THY) skidded off the runway and slid into security zone at Dusseldorf Airport yesterday. Sources said that a THY aircraft which was on a flight from Istanbul could not stop after it landed at Dusseldorf, and slid 100 metres into security zone at the end of the runway. Nobody was injured, added sources. The aircraft was hauled to apron, and it was still not known what caused the aircraft to slide.

#### **INCIDENT AT GREATER ROCHESTER INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, UNITED STATES**

London, Dec 20 — A press report, dated today, states: A Boeing 717 has skidded off the taxi-way at the Greater Rochester International Airport this morning. The aircraft was coming into Rochester and attempted to make a turn when it went off the runway shortly after 1145 hrs. There were 85 people on board. No one was injured

#### **INCIDENT AT KOTA KINABALU INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, MALAYSIA**

London, Dec 16 — A press report, dated Dec 15, states: A Boeing 737-400 belonging to AirAsia with 133 passengers and crew made a successful landing at the Kota Kinabalu International Airport around midnight Tuesday (Dec 13) although two of its left tyres burst upon touchdown. No passengers or crew were injured in the 2254 hrs incident but the airport was closed until 0240 Wednesday to enable the aircraft to be towed away. The flight, AK112 was from Kuala Lumpur. Three incoming Malaysian Airlines flights from Kuala Lumpur with more than 500 passengers were diverted to the Kuching International Airport while an international flight to South Korea was delayed. KKIA airport manager, Zakaria Daud said there was no need to institute emergency procedures but it took quite a while to have the affected tyres fixed before the aircraft could be safely towed back to the terminal. Zakaria said the aircraft would remain at KKIA until AirAsia's engineers gave it the go ahead to take to the air. MAS said in a statement that it swiftly mobilised its engineering resources to remove the aircraft from the runway and completed this initiative by 0240 hrs.

#### **INCIDENT INVOLVING JAPAN AIRLINES BOEING 747**

London, Dec 21 — A press report, dated today, states: Japan Airlines had been flying a Boeing jumbo jet for seven months without realizing the aircraft's left and right outer engines had been placed on the wrong sides

during maintenance in Singapore in February, airline officials admitted today. Some components of the engines are required to be inspected once every 650 flights, but as a result of the mistake, one of the engines completed about 850 flights without being examined. The officials said there were no safety problems but the Land, Infrastructure and Transport Ministry instructed the airline to take measures to prevent any recurrence. In February, JAL commissioned ST Aviation Services Co Pte Ltd in Singapore to conduct maintenance work on the four-engine Boeing 747. The aircraft resumed service after the overhaul was completed in April. It was not until a regular maintenance checkup in November that the engines were discovered to have been attached wrongly. Reversing the engine locations results in air flow toward the fuselage instead of away from it during reverse thrust. However, it does not create any difference during normal thrust and thus poses no safety problems during flights, the officials said. They said JAL will revise in-house procedures to ensure that inspections on the aircraft are conducted after outsourced maintenance work. The current policy only calls for checking documents after the completion of maintenance work.

#### **INCIDENT ON FLIGHT TO SHONAI AIRPORT, YAMAGATA PREFECTURE, JAPAN**

London, Dec 18 — A press report, dated today, states: An All Nippon Airways' flight from Tokyo's Haneda airport was struck by lightning shortly before it landed at Shonai airport in Yamagata Prefecture at around 0830, local time, yesterday, ANA said. While no one was injured among 97 passengers and six crew members, the right side of the aircraft's nose was damaged, according to the airline. The aircraft was hit by lightning at an altitude of 1,000 metres about 10 minutes before the landing, Shonai airport officials said, adding that it was snowing near the airport in northeastern Japan at the time.

#### **MID-AIR COLLISION, GLOUCESTERSHIRE, UNITED KINGDOM**

London, Dec 18 — A press report, dated today, states: A man has died in a mid-air collision between two light aircraft in Gloucestershire. Police said one aircraft came down in the grounds of the fire service training college at Moreton-in-Marsh at about midday today. "The 34-year-old male pilot from the Coventry area was the sole occupant of one plane and died as a result of injuries sustained," police said. The second aircraft, although damaged, landed safely in an area nearby. Its two male occupants were not seriously injured, said the police spokesman who also asked for witnesses to contact Gloucestershire Police.

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**N22L**

London, Dec 19 — A press report, dated Dec 18, states: A small plane crashed off the Florida coast today leaving at least one person dead, and the Coast Guard was searching for two missing passengers, authorities said. The Cessna 195 was near St. Augustine in northeast Florida when it crashed around 1330 hrs, Coast Guard Petty Officer Donnie Brzuska said. The cause of the crash was under investigation. Missing were pilot Gary Tillman, 43, and his daughter, Hanna Tillman, 16, both of Rome, Ga., said sheriff's Sgt. Charles Mulligan. Anna Kipp, 16, of Rome, Ga., was taken to a local hospital where she was pronounced dead, Mulligan said. Rachel Hestetler, 16, was found in the water and is listed in good condition, authorities said. The plane had left Craig Field in Jacksonville and was headed south to Fort Pierce when the plane went down, according to the Federal Aviation Administration. Gary Tillman reported that the plane was in distress and unable to maintain altitude shortly after 1300 hrs. A short time later the tower lost contact with the aircraft, Mulligan said. Rain, strong winds and seven-to-10-foot seas made the search difficult today. Brzuska said the storm prevented the Coast Guard from keeping a helicopter and motor lifeboat involved in the search. An 87-foot cutter was sent in to assist, Brzuska said.

London, Dec 21 — Cessna 195 N22L crashed into the sea off St. Augustine, Florida, at 1832, Dec 18, while on a flight from Jacksonville, FL, to Fort Pierce, FL. One of the three persons on board was killed and the other two were seriously injured.

**N26399**

London, Dec 20 — A press report, dated today, states: A preliminary report from a federal investigator says there were no signs of mechanical problems in the Piper PA-23-250 (Aztec) that crashed in Williston last month, killing the pilot. Jill Andrews, lead investigator for the National Transportation Safety Board, said the engine cylinders, spark plugs and propellers appeared to be in working order and the landing gear was extended. Pilot Donald Roberge did not report any problems with the aircraft when he spoke with air traffic controllers at Burlington International Airport, Andrews wrote in her report. The aircraft was on line with the airport runway as it approached on Nov 20 but was dropping altitude until it crashed three miles from the airfield. The report said that about a minute before the aircraft disappeared from radar it was flying at 900 feet above sea level. The area of Williston where the aircraft crashed has hills ranging from 600 to 900 feet in elevation. Andrews wrote that the plane hit trees about 20 feet off the ground and landed in a field about 100 yards beyond. Andrews said that Federal Aviation Administration radar data

showed Roberge was flying below the recommended slope for the approach as much as 7 miles away from the airport. There was light snow, winds were blowing about 17 mph, gusting to 23 mph, Andrews said, and the temperature was about 30 degrees.

**N2969**

London, Dec 20 — A press report, dated today, states: A seaplane crashed just off Miami Beach within sight of the city's high-rises yesterday, killing all 20 people aboard. Witnesses said the aircraft exploded in flames as it came down, and the FBI joined the investigation. Amateur video obtained by CNN showed the main part of the aircraft slamming into the water followed by a flaming object trailing thick black smoke. Scuba divers and rescuers in speedboats struggled to reach the victims, but as evening fell, they found no sign that anyone survived. The Chalk's Ocean Airways aircraft, a twin-engine Grumman G-73T Turbine Mallard, went down around 1430 after taking off from Miami for the island of Bimini in the Bahamas. The Coast Guard said 19 bodies were found. The 1940s-era aircraft was carrying two crew members and 18 passengers, including three infants, authorities said. Because of the witness reports of an explosion, the FBI sent agents to assist in the investigation, but there was no immediate indication of terrorism or sabotage, said Judy Orihuela, spokeswoman for the FBI's Miami field office. "It's too soon to say whether we are going to get involved," Orihuela said. "We're just going to check it out." Chalk's is a small air carrier that is not required to conduct federal security screening of passengers and their luggage, said Dale Karlen, federal security director at Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport. Coast Guard Capt. James Maes said the main part of the fuselage was submerged in about 35 feet of water that is subject to strong tidal currents because of the narrow ship channel. Divers continued to search after dark for the final victim. Ship traffic in and out of the port will be suspended indefinitely, Maes added, including three large cruise ships that had been scheduled to depart yesterday afternoon. Mark Rosenker, acting chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board, said the initial investigation will focus on locating the aircraft's cockpit voice recorder and examining aircraft records. He said much of the wreckage, including the fuselage, would likely be raised today. The skies were cloudy, but there was no rain or lightning at the time of the crash. The aircraft that went down was built in 1947 and is registered to Seaplane Adventures LLC in Greenwich, Conn., according to FAA records. The aircraft had a relatively clean safety record with few major problems, according to Federal Aviation Administration records. In September 2002, the plane skidded on a runway in Fort

Lauderdale after its landing gear failed at touchdown. In February 1984, the elevator trim tab, which controls pitch, failed and caused the steering column to shake. In April of that year, the landing gear failed to retract, and investigators found the nose gear assembly was overstressed. No passengers or crew were injured in those incidents, according to the records. Chalk's Ocean Airways flies between Miami and the Bahamas, using planes that take off and land on the water. Chalk's was in the midst of an "extensive refurbishment" of its airline fleet, according to the company's web site. The company's Grumman G-73 aircraft, like the one that crashed, had engines converted from older piston-driven models to turboprops, as well as upgrades in avionics and improvements to the aircraft's interior, the company said.

London, Dec 20 — Grumman G-73T Turbo Mallard, N2969, operator: Chalk's Ocean Airways, had a structural failure and crashed into 35 feet deep water, just off the Miami beach, at approximately 1430, Dec 19. There were two crew and 18 passengers on board who were all killed.

London, Dec 20 — A press report, dated today, states: Federal investigators searched for evidence today, hoping to explain why a seaplane broke apart and plunged into the ocean just off Miami Beach, killing all 20 people on board, including three infants. Acting National Transportation Safety Board Chairman Mark Rosenker said today that investigators hope to find the cockpit voice recorder to see if it provides any clues to why the 58-year-old Chalk's Ocean Airways aircraft crashed moments after taking off yesterday. The aircraft had no flight data recorder. Much of the wreckage, including the main fuselage, was expected to be raised from about 35 ft of water today. Nineteen bodies had been recovered; the 20th was still missing, Rosenker said. Although the seaplane, a twin-engine Grumman G-73T Turbine Mallard, was built in 1947, Rosenker said there was no reason to believe that the company's entire fleet was not airworthy. The NTSB and the Federal Aviation Administration both sent teams, and five small boats containing investigators were at the site early today. Coast Guard Capt. James Maes said the main part of the aircraft's fuselage was in about 35 ft of water that is subject to strong tidal currents because of the narrow ship channel. Ship traffic in and out of the port was suspended indefinitely, Maes added. That includes three large cruise ships that had been scheduled to depart yesterday afternoon. The crashed aircraft, registered to Seaplane Adventures LLC in Greenwich, Conn., and operated by Chalk's, previously had few major reported incidents, and no passengers or crew were injured in any of them, according to the FAA. Chalk's aircraft had been converted

from piston engines to turboprops, and their avionics systems had been upgraded, the company said.

Miami, Dec 20 — A wing apparently separated from the fuselage of the twin-engine seaplane that crashed off Miami Beach, a U.S. federal safety official said today. Mark Rosenker, acting chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board, told a news conference the breaking apart of the aircraft could be seen in amateur video footage of the Grumman G-73T Turbine Mallard, filmed in its final moments yesterday above water. "It is rare that you get to see an accident while it is going on," Rosenker said of the video, which shows a part of the 58-year-old plane spiraling downward and belching thick black smoke as the rest of the aircraft ploughed into the sea in the background. "It is still very early to understand what we've seen, other than perhaps a separation of a wing ... and the fuselage," said Rosenker. Rosenker said authorities had secured all maintenance and flight records from Ft. Lauderdale-based Chalk's Ocean Airways, the operator of the aircraft, and that the delicate task of raising the fuselage from the seabed would probably be completed tomorrow. While the doomed aircraft was 58 years old, Rosenker said it had been retro-fitted in the mid-1980s and had new engines. Speedy retrieval of its cockpit voice recorder, by FBI and Miami-Dade Police divers, was impossible due to the mangled condition of the underwater wreckage, he said. Rosenker earlier said the crash investigation would likely take nine to 12 months. Capt. James Maes of the U.S. Coast Guard said authorities had been unable to account for one of the 20 people believed to be on board the aircraft. They included two crew members and three infants. In Hamilton, Bermuda, Bacardi Limited, the world's largest privately held spirits company, said a great-great grandson of its founder died in the plane crash together with his wife. Sergio Danguillecourt, a member of the company's board of directors since 1992, was 42, the company said in a statement. In a lone bright spot amid the gloomy salvage operations, Maes said authorities were in the process of reopening the Port of Miami to cruise ships and commercial traffic. At least three cruise ships had been trapped in the harbour while divers filmed and mapped the underwater crash site. — Reuters.

London, Dec 22 — A press report, dated Dec 21, states: A 1940s-era seaplane that lost a wing during takeoff and crashed within sight of the beach, killing all 20 people aboard, had undetected cracks in its airframe that apparently caused the aircraft to break up, federal investigators said today. After the discovery was disclosed, Chalk's Ocean Airways voluntarily grounded its fleet of four planes for inspection. All four planes are the same model as

the one that crashed. The cracks were found in the main support beam of a wing that fell off the seaplane shortly after it took off for the Bahamas on Monday (Dec 19). As salvage crews and divers worked to haul the wreckage from a channel just off Miami Beach, investigators focused on how the cracks escaped notice by maintenance crews. Authorities also recovered the plane's cockpit voice recorder, which was sent to the National Transportation Safety Board in Washington, along with part of the beam. Mark Rosenker, acting chairman of the NTSB, said the cracking in the 58-year-old seaplane should have been found and repaired, though the cracks could not be seen with the naked eye and it would have taken "a very serious" inspection to find them. Investigators planned to scour maintenance and flight records for evidence of work done. The Federal Aviation Administration took no immediate action against the airline. Rosenker said the age of the plane built in 1947 could have been a factor in the cracking. The aircraft was retrofitted in the 1980s with more powerful engines, but it was not clear whether that played any role in the cracking, Rosenker said. At the time of those modifications, the airplane "would have a thorough inspection to make sure that it was a suitable aircraft to be modified," said Joseph Frakes, assistant manager of Frakes Aviation, the company that installed the new engines and refurbished the seaplanes. He declined to give further details because his company is part of the NTSB investigation. Finding such damage would require "very sophisticated testing," such as a special dye that penetrates the aluminum structure, said Bill English, NTSB investigator in charge of the crash investigation. Some additional stress on the airframe must have contributed to the cracking because age alone would not cause it, Rosenker said. Crews used a crane today to lift out of the water the plane's left wing, an engine, a propeller, and parts of the fuselage and landing gear. The right wing was removed yesterday.

#### **N4350F**

London, Dec 21 — Piper PA-28-181 (Cherokee Archer II) N4350F crashed near Butte, Montana, at 0535, Dec 17, while on a flight from Miles City, Utah, to Butte. The aircraft sustained substantial damage. The one person on board was killed.

#### **N44EK**

London, Dec 19 — A press report, dated today, states: Two helicopter pilots walked away unscathed from an emergency landing yesterday in a muddy field at Merck's Rahway-Linden research facility, a mile away from Linden Airport. The men, flying in a light four-seat Robinson R44, had taken off from the airport for a flying lesson just before noon when they began experiencing difficulties, said

the helicopter's owner, Jerry Kaplan. "They had experienced some vibration, turned around, and noticed they were losing power," said Kaplan, who spoke with both pilots after the incident. Unsure that they could safely return to the airport, the senior pilot on board decided to land in a muddy field in the north-eastern end of the company's property, Kaplan said.

London, Dec 19 — A press report, dated today, states: A privately owned helicopter carrying two men was forced to make an emergency landing yesterday in a field on Merck & Co., Inc. property, a Merck spokeswoman said. Neither of the men was injured, said Gail Driscoll, a spokeswoman for the Readington-based drugmaker. The helicopter had taken off from Linden Airport just before noon and made the emergency landing after the aircraft lost power, Driscoll said. According to the spokeswoman, the helicopter incurred damage to its main rotor, tail rotor and tail boom.

London, Dec 21 — Robinson R44 N44EK made a precautionary landing at Linden, New Jersey, at 1720, Dec 18. The aircraft sustained substantial damage.

#### **N471WN**

London, Dec 19 — A press report, dated today, states: The Southwest Airlines jet (N471WN) that overshot the runway during a snowstorm in Chicago last week needed another 800 feet to safely stop, investigators said in a preliminary report on Thursday (Dec 15). Flight 1248, a Boeing 737-700, from Baltimore skidded off the runway at Midway Airport, crashed through a blast fence and struck cars on a city street, killing a small boy in one of the vehicles. The National Transportation Safety Board said in an update of its investigation into the Dec 8 accident that the crew, with the help of the airline's ground staff and on board computer, determined the aircraft carrying 103 people could land despite the snow and a tail wind. Preliminary calculations show that the aircraft's wheels hit the snow-covered ground about a third of the way down the runway, with approximately 4,500 feet remaining, at 245 kph. Investigators said the aircraft would have needed another 800 feet to stop based on how the crew handled the engine thrust reversers and brakes. The jet would have been able to stop on the runway with a little room to spare had it landed into the wind. The reversers, which slow the aircraft, were operating and the crew was applying maximum pressure on the brakes manually when the aircraft ran off the runway at 46 miles-per-hour. There were no maintenance problems with the engines and the brakes were in good condition, investigators said. The tyres were also in good shape. The jet had been delivered to Southwest in 2004. The captain told investigators he had trouble deploying the thrust reversers immediately after the aircraft landed. The co-pilot noticed

the problem and activated them 18 seconds after touchdown, or about 14 seconds before the jet crashed through the fence at the end of the runway. Investigators said last week they were looking closely at the thrust reverser system and whether they were deployed in time. Prior to take-off from Baltimore, the runway assignment at Midway for Flight 1248 was switched to Runway 31C, which has a more forgiving approach path in bad weather. Runway 31C was the only one open at the time of the accident. The crew said the flight from take-off to touchdown was normal.

#### **N542SP**

London, Dec 16 — Cessna 172S (Skyhawk SP), N542SP, operated by Maui Aviators LLP, with one person on board, crashed at 0152, UTC, Dec 16, under unknown circumstances, 15 miles north-east of Kahului, Hawaii. The aircraft was destroyed and the pilot was killed.

Honolulu, Dec 16 — A single-engine Cessna 172 (N542SP), owned by Maui Aviators LLC, crashed in a forested area southwest of Hana Airport on the island of Maui at approximately 1552, local time, Dec 15, apparently killing the lone occupant. FAA spokesperson stated that the cause of the crash was unknown and as of now it is believed that only one person was on board. To date the body has not been found. Maui Fire Department plans to renew the search today.

London, Dec 19 — A press report, dated Dec 16, states: Maui fire fighters rappelled into rugged mountainous terrain today to recover the body of a pilot killed in a crash yesterday. The Cessna 172 (N542SP) slammed nose first into a steep ridge about 2,400 ft above sea level, roughly six miles inland of the Hana airport. Maui fire personnel told KGMB9 the pilot was from Salt Lake City. He was the only person on the aircraft. The accident investigation is just getting underway and right now there are more questions than answers. What the aircraft was doing in the area or why its pilot ran into trouble is unknown. The crash was first reported as a possible forest fire, but people in another aircraft who followed a plume of smoke spotted the burning wreckage below. The aircraft belongs to a company called Maui Aviators, which is based at Kahului airport. The National Transportation Safety Board is investigating the crash. It has already done some interviews and will review company records. An NTSB investigator will fly to Hawaii from the west coast early next week. By then the wreckage is expected to be removed from the mountain and ready for inspection.

#### **N8040G**

London, Dec 15 — Cessna 177B (Cardinal RG), N8040G, operated by Roger T. Rasmussen, with one person on board, struck power lines, at 0045, UTC, Dec 14, and crashed in a field five miles east of Travis airfield,

Clarksburg, California. The aircraft was destroyed and the pilot was killed.

#### **SEIZURE OF AIRCRAFT, LISBON, PORTUGAL**

London, Dec 22 — A press report, dated Dec 21, states: A plane belonging to the Angola airlines (TAAG) which was to fly from Lisbon (Portugal) to Luanda on Dec 20 has been held in the departing airport, on account of a debt to a local firm, Angop learned. According to some sources, "Pomobel", a firm operating in Angola, claims to be owed \$500,000 by Angolan State, resulting from the purchase of treasure bonds already due. A TAAG official based in Lisbon said his company, as a commercial society, with self juridical personality has no debt in the Portuguese territory and is suffering losses for acts it is not responsible for, either direct or indirectly.

#### **TEMPORARY GROUNDING OF BOEING 737 AIRCRAFT, NIGERIA**

London, Dec 19 — A press report, dated Dec 18, states: Authorities have grounded Boeing 737 planes across Nigeria for spot safety checks, stranding thousands of travellers today around Africa's most populous nation after two deadly accidents in two months. All Boeing 737-100 and 200 series aircraft in Nigeria will be checked for stress cracks, in compliance with a US air-worthiness directive, Folasade Odotola, head of a special aviation panel overseeing the checks, said in a statement. The ruling by the US Federal Aviation Administration required all such models of aircraft to be inspected within 90 days of its August 2000 ruling. Many countries follow FAA directives. The Nigerian official did not explain why the measure is only being implemented now. Thousands of passengers in Lagos, Nigeria's largest city and Abuja, the capital, could be seen waiting in departure lounges. The changes affected major domestic airlines including Bellview, Chanchangi, ADC and Albarka. In Lagos, thousands of disappointed passengers travelling for various domestic destinations for the Christmas holidays left to seek other means of travel with most scheduled flights cancelled. President Olusegun Obasanjo had vowed to overhaul Nigeria's airline industry after two major plane crashes in seven weeks killed 224 people, blaming some of the industry's problems on corruption. Obasanjo ordered a halt to flights by Sosoliso and Chanchangi last week, citing intelligence reports about problems with some of their planes.

#### **TI-AZQ**

London, Dec 19 — De Havilland Canada DHC-6 Twin Otter 300, TI-AZQ, operator NatureAir, crashed in a forest 2 km from Tamarindo Airport, Costa Rica, at approximately 1145, Dec 16 while on a flight from San Jose-Tobias Bolanos International

Airport for Tamarindo Airport. There were two crew and six passengers on board. There were no fatalities. The aircraft was "written off."

## **Product Recalls**



#### **CRIBS, UNITED STATES**

London, Dec 22 — A press release, dated Dec 21, states: The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in co-operation with Simplicity Inc., of Reading, Pa., today announced a voluntary recall of approximately 104,000 Aspen 3 in 1 Cribs, sold under the Graco Trademark. The screws on the wooden mattress support can come loose allowing a portion of the mattress to fall, posing a suffocation hazard to young children. Simplicity Inc. has received 14 reports of the mattress support coming loose, including eight reports of entrapment. Five injuries have been reported including scratches and bruises to the face and head, a strained neck and a report of a child turning blue. The recalled cribs are made of wood and have a wooden mattress support. Only cribs with wooden mattress supports and with model number 8740KCW SC and serial number 2803 SC to 1605 are included in this recall. The model and serial number are printed on the envelope attached to the mattress support. Manufactured in China, the cribs were sold at department stores, and children's product stores from August 2003 through until May 2005 for about \$130.

#### **FORD MOTOR VEHICLES, UNITED STATES**

See "Class-Action Suit Settlement, Ford, United States" under "Awards & Settlements."

#### **GAS GRILLS, UNITED STATES**

Washington, DC, Dec 20 — The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission announces the recall of about 98,000 Aussie Gas Grills in voluntary co-operation with grill manufacturer, Meco Corp., of Greeneville, Tenn, and regulator manufacturer, TPA Metal and Machinery (SZ) Co. Ltd. of Shenzhen, China. Consumers should stop using recalled products immediately unless otherwise instructed. The regulators on these gas grills, the component that controls the amount of gas released to the burner, can leak propane when the propane cylinder is connected and open, and the grill is not in use. This poses a risk of fire and burn injuries. There have been 10 reports of gas leaks. No injuries have been reported. There has been one report of a fire causing property damage. The recall involves certain Aussie Gas Grills in the Bonza, Bushman and Bondi series, which have "Aussie" found on the front panel and the series name

found on the control panel. Regulator assemblies on these grills have date codes of 2704 and lower. The regulator is attached to the side of the grills. The model number and serial number of the grill can be found on the back of the grill or on the sides of the control panel. The recall includes grills with the following model numbers and serial number ranges: 7362K3XM11 0000001 through 0000760, 7720.1.641 0005559 through 0055583, 7462K3XB11 0000001 through 0000155, 7830.3.641 0000001 through 0006492, 7462K3XM51 0000001 through 0000917, 7710.1.641 0071582 through 0089666, 7820.3.641 0001801 through 0018329, 7362K3XB41 0000001 through 0000289, 7362K3XG51 0000001 through 0003804 and 7362K3XM51 0000001 through 0000860. Sold at grocery, department, hardware and other retail stores nation-wide from December 2003 through December 2004 for between \$100 and \$480. Manufactured in China. Consumers should immediately stop using the grill and contact Mecor for instructions on receiving a replacement regulator assembly. — Consumer Product Safety Commission.

**GAS RANGERS, UNITED STATES**

Washington, DC, Dec 15 — The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in co-operation with GE Consumer & Industrial, of Louisville, Ky., today announced a voluntary recall of about 6,600 GE Monogram 36-inch and 48-inch Professional Gas Ranges. Consumers should stop using recalled products immediately unless otherwise instructed. These ranges were manufactured with a design flaw that can cause an electrical arc between the wiring and adjacent gas supply tubes at two locations in the control housing of the range, posing a fire hazard. GE has received reports of six incidents of fire in the control area of these ranges. No injuries or property damage have been reported. The recalled GE Monogram built-in ranges include models ZDP48N6RH1SS, ZDP48L6RH1SS, ZDP48N4GH1SS, ZDP48L4GH1SS, ZDP48N6DH1SS, ZDP48L6DH1SS, ZDP36N4DH1SS, and ZDP36L4DH1SS. The recalled ranges have serial numbers starting with DG, FG, GG, HG, LG, MG, RG, SG, TG, VG, ZG, AH, DH, FH, GH, HH, LH, MH, RH, SH. To find the model and serial number, look underneath the top ledge (also called the “bull nose”), above the range controls. They were manufactured from February 1, 2004 to October 1, 2005. Sold by home builders and by appliance stores nation-wide from February 2004 through November 2005 for between \$4,000 and \$6,000. Manufactured in U.S.A. Customers who have purchased one of these recalled ranges should contact GE to schedule a free, in-home repair. Until the repair is completed, consumers should stop using the griddle on the 36-inch and 48-inch models, and the left front burner on the 48-inch models. The

large oven and all other burners can be used. — Consumer Product Safety Commission.

**GENERAL MOTORS VEHICLES, UNITED STATES**

London, Dec 21 — A press report, dated Dec 20, states: General Motors Co. is recalling about 425,000 full-size passenger and cargo vans because of reports that the seat belt buckles will not latch or unlatch. The recall, announced today, affects the Chevrolet Express and GMC Savana from the 2003-2006 model years. GM, the world’s No. 1 automaker, discovered the problem through an analysis of warranty claims. Consumers reported problems latching the buckle or unlocking it once it was in place. GM spokesman Alan Adler said there have been no reports of injuries. Dealers will inspect the buckles and replace the upper buckle cover. If the restraint isn’t working properly, dealers will replace the entire buckle assembly. The Express and Savana passenger vans have seating for eight people. The cargo version seats two people.

**HARLEY DAVIDSON MOTORCYCLES, JAPAN**

London, Dec 22 — Harley-Davidson Japan said yesterday it is recalling a total of 512 units of six motorcycle models, including the FXDLI Dyna Low Rider, due to defective transmissions. The motorcycles were imported in the August-October period, the company said in a report to the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport.

**INFRARED PLAQUE HEATERS, UNITED STATES**

London, Dec 21 — A press release, dated Dec 20, states: The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission reported that a product safety recall was voluntarily conducted by CFM Corporation, of Mississauga, Ontario, Canada, of about 10,200 Legacy Propane Infrared Plaque Heaters, in co-operation with the CPSC. All recalled heaters have been returned to CFM. The product posed a potential carbon monoxide hazard. A non-specification gasket around the heating plaques could allow heater carbon monoxide emissions to leak into the area in which the heater is being used. No injuries or incidents of property damage have been reported. The heaters are propane infrared plaque space heaters sold after September 1, 2005. The units are rectangular in shape and the casing has a white finish. The heaters can be mounted on walls or stand on the floor. The name “Legacy” is centered on the front of the heater immediately below the grill. Manufactured by Chant Kitchen Equipment, of Guandong, China, the product was sold by heating and hardware retailers, and HVAC dealers in the U.S. from September 2005 through until November 2005 for between \$156 and \$290.

**MERCEDES MOTOR VEHICLES, UNITED STATES**

London, Dec 21 — A press report, dated today, states: Mercedes-Benz USA LLC said today it would recall 61,000 models of C-Class sport sedans because of irregularities involving the driver’s side air bag discovered during government testing. The automaker, a division of DaimlerChrysler AG, said the recall affects the 2005-2006 model years of C-Class sport sedans. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration said during government compliance testing some irregularities were found involving the air bags. The vehicles will have new driver’s side air bag modules installed as part of the recall. The new air bags will be compatible with government rules. Mercedes-Benz spokesman Rob Moran said the automaker did not “feel this represents a risk in real-world situations, only in this clinical situation.”

**NOTEBOOK COMPUTER BATTERIES, UNITED STATES**

London, Dec 19 — A press release, dated Dec 16, states: The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in co-operation with Dell Inc., of Round Rock, Texas, today announced a voluntary recall of about 22,000 Dell Notebook Computer Batteries. These batteries can overheat, which could pose a fire risk. Dell has received three reports of batteries overheating. The incidents involved damage to a tabletop, a desktop, and minor damage to personal effects. No injuries have been reported. Description: The recalled batteries were sold with the following Dell notebook computers: Latitudeø D410, D505, D510, D600, D610, D800, D810; Inspironø 510M, 600M, 6000, 8600, 9200, 9300, XPS Gen 2; and Dell Precisionø M20 and M70 mobile workstations. The batteries were also sold separately, including as secondary batteries and in response to service calls. øDello and øMade in Japanø or øMade in Chinaø are stamped on the batteries. Dell sold these batteries with the notebook computers, as part of a service replacement, and as individual units on its Web site and catalogs from October 5, 2004 through until October 13, 2005. The computers with these batteries sold for between \$900 and \$2,650, and individual batteries sold for between \$99 and \$179.

**WASHER DRYERS, JAPAN**

London, Dec 21 — Hitachi Home & Life Solutions Inc said yesterday about 238,000 of its washer-dryers have a defect that could lead to fire. The electric home appliance unit of Hitachi Ltd will check and repair these washer-dryers produced between August 2001 and December 2002 free of charge. It asked owners of these washer-dryers to refrain from using their drying functions. The structural defect could cause the lead wire for the drying heater to break and cause fire, the company said.

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

## Port Conditions



### IRAQ

London, Dec 22 — Tankers loading at Basra are experiencing waits of up to 15 days on top of two to three days loading time, say local shipping sources. Congestion is largely to blame, as flow rates are still at the normal 65,000 barrels per hour. One shipping agent told Reuters: "There's a jam after so many vessels arrived in late November and early December." Traders added that Vitol is considering sending Urals crude to its Canadian refinery instead of Basra light, because of the difficulties.

### ITALY

Genoa, Dec 19 — Port situation Dec 19: Genoa: No vessels waiting for berth. Savona: No vessels waiting for

berth. La Spezia: No vessels wait for normal berth, one vessel waiting for special berth. — Lloyd's Agents.

### PHILIPPINES

See "Tropical Storm 'Kajiki'" under "Weather & Navigation."

## Bloodstock



### ROOSTER BOOSTER

London, Dec 20 — A press report, dated today, states: Rooster Booster died on the gallops this morning while being prepared for the Stan James Christmas Hurdle at Sandown on Boxing Day. "He died of either a haemorrhage or a heart attack. We're not sure yet," said trainer Philip Hobbs. The popular 11-year-old grey won the 2003 Champion Hurdle and was runner-up to Hardy Eustace the following year. His regular partner

Richard Johnson was devastated on hearing the news. "It's a big shock. He was a horse that loved life and he was always in a rush to get from A to B," he said. "He gave great pleasure, not only to myself but to the owner and to everyone connected with him. He gave me one of the highlights of my career when winning the Champion Hurdle. It was a fantastic day and I'll never forget him." The Riverwise gelding, owned by Terry Warner, graduated from the handicapping ranks to lift the Cheltenham Festival feature two years ago, having run with credit in a string of big handicaps before landing a deserved success in the County Hurdle at the Festival in 2002. He proved a revelation the following season, notching up a sequence of five wins including the Bula Hurdle before landing the Champion Hurdle itself. Hobbs' charge won the 2004 Champion Hurdle Trial at Haydock before putting up an amazing performance to be beaten just a short head in the Tote Gold Trophy at Newbury despite shouldering top weight.



**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
<b>Australia</b>		
Abbott Point	19-Dec-2005	Coal: Nine vessels due by 10/1; up to 2 days delay expected; terminal will be closed from 16.00 on 24/12 until 07.00 on 26/12.
Brisbane	19-Dec-2005	Coal: Fisherman Island coal berth; Five vessels due by 29/12; up to 3 days delay expected.
Dalrymple Bay	19-Dec-2005	Coal: Three vessels loading at berth; 25 vessels due by 28/1; up to 14 days delay expected.
Dampier	19-Dec-2005	Iron ore: Parker Point A berth: One vessel loading at berth, 4 arrived; 7 vessels due by 6/1; up to 12 days delay expected; Parker Point B berth: 1 vessel loading, 1 arrived; 5 vessels due by 28/12; up to 6 days delay expected; East Intercourse Island; One vessel loading, 1 arrived; 10 vessels due by 27/12; 2-9 days delay expected.
Geraldton	19-Dec-2005	Iron ore: Two vessels due by 24/12; no delays expected.
Gladstone	19-Dec-2005	Coal: R.G. Tanna coal terminal: No ship loading 25-26 December due to Christmas break shutdown; One vessel loading, 1 at berth; 46 vessels due by 24/1; 1-11 days delay expected; Barney Point: No ship loading 25-26 December due to Christmas break shutdown; 12 vessels due by 18/1; up to 1 day's delay expected.
Hay Point	19-Dec-2005	Coal: One vessel loading; 17 vessels due by 31/12; up to 2 days delay expected.
Newcastle	19-Dec-2005	Coal: Kooragang 4, 5 and 6: Three vessels loading at berth; 12 vessels off port awaiting berth; 53 vessels due by 6/1; 6-7 days delay expected; Dykes 4+5: 2 vessels loading at berth; 4 vessels off port awaiting coal; 26 vessels due by 7/1; 5-6 days delay expected.
Port Hedland	19-Dec-2005	Iron ore: BHP Iron Ore Pty. Ltd., Mt. Newman (Nelson Point), "A" berth: One vessel loading at berth, arrived; 6 vessels due by 26/12; up to 5 days delay expected; "B" berth: 1 vessel loading at berth; 5 vessels due by 26/12; up to 5 days delay expected; BHP Iron Ore Pty. Ltd., Goldsworthy (Finucane Island "C" berth): 1 vessel loading, 1 arrived; 3 vessels due by 25/12; up to 3 days delay expected; (Finucane Island "D" berth): 3 vessels arrived; 4 vessels due by 29/12; up to 5 days delay expected; Cockatoo Island: 1 vessel due 2/1; no delays expected.
Port Kembla	19-Dec-2005	Coal: Eleven vessels due by 25/1; up to 1 day's delay expected; coal terminal will be closed from 07.00 on 25/12 to 07.00 on 26/12.
Port Walcott	19-Dec-2005	Iron ore: One vessel loading at berth, 6 arrived; 13 vessels due by 31/12; up to 10 days delay expected.
Whyalla	19-Dec-2005	Iron ore: One vessel loading, 1 at anchor; 2 vessels due by 26/12; up to 2 days delay expected.
<b>Azerbaijan</b>		
Apsheron	19-Dec-2005	Oil products: Two vessels discharging at berth (1 gasoil, 1 crude oil).
Baku	19-Dec-2005	Oil products: Bay of Baku: No information; Azerneftiyag terminal: no information; Azertrans terminal: Nobel Avenue: port open; no vessels; Sangachal District: port open; no vessels.
<b>Bulgaria</b>		
Bourgas	19-Dec-2005	Eight vessels in port operating, of which 4 loading (2 coils, 1 cigarettes, 1 containers), 4 discharging (1 containers, 1 metals, 1 billets, 1 benzene); no vessels in roads; 15 vessels due, of which 8 to load (4 coils, 1 gasoil, 1 bulk ammonium nitrate, 1 sulphur, 1 containers), 7 to discharge (1 containers, 2 coal, 1 salt, 1 kaolin, 1 zinc concentrate, 1 wheat).
Varna	19-Dec-2005	Varna East, Varna West, Electrical Power Station, Balchik: Conditions 12-19 December: Twenty-eight vessels in port operating of which 16 loading (2 dense soda in bulk, 2 clinker, 1 kaolin, 1 bulk sulphuric acid, 2 bulk maize, 1 bulk wheat, 1 light soda in big bags, 1 dense soda in big bags, 1 caustic soda, 1 packed hardboard, 2 silica sand, 1 chamotte), 6 discharging (1 raw phosphate, 1 bulk copper concentrate, 1 bulk clay, 3 bulk coal), 6 discharging/loading containers; no vessels waiting in roads.
<b>Chile</b>		
Antofagasta	20-Dec-2005	Four vessels berthed, 3 berths vacant; 20 vessels due this week to load/discharge concentrates, bulk copper, containers and general cargo.
Arica	20-Dec-2005	Five vessels berthed, 2 berths vacant; 21 vessels due this week.
Iquique	20-Dec-2005	Three vessels berthed, 4 berths vacant; 16 vessels due this week.
Lirquen	20-Dec-2005	Three vessels at terminal, 3 berths vacant; 17 vessels due this week.
Puerto Montt	20-Dec-2005	Two vessels at terminal, 1 berth vacant; 9 vessels due this week.
Punta Arenas	20-Dec-2005	Five vessels at terminal, 2 berths vacant; 13 vessels due this week.
San Antonio	20-Dec-2005	Seven vessels berthed, 2 berths vacant; 23 vessels due this week.
San Vicente	20-Dec-2005	Three vessels berthed, 2 berth vacant; 19 vessels due during the week; Steel pier: 1 vessel at terminal, 1 berth vacant; no vessels due this week; Coronel pier: 3 vessels terminal, 1 berth vacant; 7 vessels due this week; Oil terminal: 1 tanker at terminal, 1 berth vacant; 1 tanker due this week.
Valparaiso	20-Dec-2005	Three vessels berthed, 5 berths vacant; 2 vessels anchored; 19 vessels due this week.

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## Port Conditions

### Cyprus

Larnaca	One conventional vessel discharging at berth; 1 conventional vessel due 21/12; no delays expected.
Limassol	Seven container vessels loading/discharging at berth, 3 conventional vessels discharging at berth; 7 vessels due 21/12, of which 4 containers, 3 conventional vessels; no delays expected.

### Egypt

Adabiya	19-Dec-2005	Six vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 1 general cargo, 3 bulk carriers, 2 containers.
Alexandria	19-Dec-2005	Thirty-six vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 24 general cargo, 5 bulk carriers, 4 tankers, 3 container vessels; 24 vessels dry-docked; 14 vessels at inner anchorage, 8 at outer anchorage.
Damietta	19-Dec-2005	Twenty-three vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 14 general cargo, 2 bulk carriers, 2 reefers, 5 containers; 7 vessels at outer anchorage, 1 at inner anchorage.
Dekheila	19-Dec-2005	Seven vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 3 general cargo, 1 bulk carrier, 3 container vessels; no vessels at outer anchorage.
Port Said	19-Dec-2005	Six vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 2 general cargo, 4 containers.
Suez	19-Dec-2005	Ten vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 2 general cargo, 1 tanker, 3 reefers, 4 passenger vessels; 3 tugs, 1 vessel dry-docked.
Suez Canal	19-Dec-2005	Twenty-six vessels transiting Northbound, 28 Southbound.

### Estonia

Tallinn	19-Dec-2005	Paljassaare (formerly Kopli): 2 vessels loading at berth (1 fertiliser, 1 oil products), 1 malt vessel discharging at berth; no vessels waiting at anchorage; 3 vessels due, with 8 days berthing delay expected.
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### Georgia

Batumi	16-Dec-2005	Oil products: One vessel loading crude oil at CBM; 2 vessels loading at berth (1 crude oil, 1 fuel oil); 2 vessels in roads, both to load crude oil; 7 vessels due by 24/12, all to load (5 crude oil, 1 kerosene, 1 gasoil).
Supsa	16-Dec-2005	Oil products: Two vessels due by 22/12, both to load crude oil.

### India

Kolkata	19-Dec-2005	5 vessels operating at berth of which 1 loading Containers, 4 vessels discharging (Containers-3 Timber Logs); 3 vessels working at mid stream (1 to load, 2 to discharging); 5 vessels under repairs; 4 vessels due (Containers, Timber Logs, Lubricant Oil, Edible Oil).
Haldia	19-Dec-2005	13 vessels operating at berth of which 2 loading (POL, Iron ore), 9 vessels discharging (POL, Coke-2, Fertiliser, Rock Phosphate, Met Coke, Project Cargo, Net Coke); 2 vessels loading and discharging Containers; 7 vessels awaiting berth (3 to discharge, 4 to load); 7 vessels waiting at anchorage (4 to discharge, 3 to load); 4 vessels due (Crude, Prxl, Iron ore, Containers).
Paradip	19-Dec-2005	6 vessels operating at berth of which 4 loading (Iron ore, Thermal Coal-2, Chrome Concentrate), 2 vessels discharging (Coking Coal, Rock Phosphate); 3 vessels awaiting berth (1 to discharge, 2 to load); 2 vessels waiting at anchorage to load.
Visakhapatnam	19-Dec-2005	14 vessels operating at berth of which 6 loading (Iron ore-3, Soya Bean, Granite/General Cargo, POL Products), 8 vessels discharging (Coking Coal-3, Rock Phosphate-2, Timber Logs, Pet Coke, POL Products); 8 vessels not ready to work and waiting at anchorage (7 to discharge, 1 to load); 1 vessel under repair (MV Chin Shwe Haw at Hsy Jetty which was collided with MV Uttar Kasi); 34 vessels due (Iron Ore-6, Iron Steel-2, C.P.Coke, Illuminate Sand, Feld Spar and B.F.Slag, Rock Phosphate, Sulphur, Coking Coal-9, Alumina, Containers-2, Pet Coke-2, General Cargo-2, Steel Scrap, Liquid Ammonia, POL and Crude Oil-3).
Chennai	19-Dec-2005	12 vessels operating at berth of which 1 loading Iron ore, 8 vessels discharging (S.Coil, MOP-2, Rock Phosphate, S.Plate/HR Coil, Urea, S.Coal, Met Coke), 3 vessels loading and discharging (Project Cargo, Containers-2); 1 vessel not ready to work and waiting at anchorage to load; 5 vessels due (Project Cargo/Granite Blocks, S.Pipe/S.Plate, Containers, HSD/Naptha, DAP).
Tuticorin	19-Dec-2005	10 vessels operating at berth of which 5 loading (General Cargo, Caustic Soda, Granite, Motor Cars), 4 vessels discharging (Thermal Coal-2, Copper Concentrate, MOP), 1 vessel loading and discharging Containers; 1 vessel awaiting berth to discharge; 2 vessels not ready to work and waiting at anchorage to load; 1 vessel at the anchorage after completion of Cement loading operations for want of MMD clearance(MV Shahad); 1 vessel at the anchorage after completion of RP discharge operations awaiting orders at the anchorage(MV Lok Pratima) .
Cochin	19-Dec-2005	7 vessels operating at berth of which 1 vessel loading HSD/SKO, 4 vessels discharging (Soda ash, Coal, Phosphoric Acid, Crude), 2 vessels loading and discharging Containers; 2 vessels awaiting berth (1 to discharge, 1 to load).

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## Port Conditions

New Mangalore	19-Dec-2005	6 vessels operating at berth of which 3 vessels loading (POL Product, Iron ore (P), Containers), 3 vessels discharging (POL Crude, Timber, Chemicals); 6 vessels waiting at anchorage (1 to discharge, 5 to load); 13 vessels due (Timber Logs, Granite-3, Iron ore (F), POL Product-2, Iron ore(P), POL Crude-3, LPG, Met Coke).
Mormugao	19-Dec-2005	4 vessels operating at berth of which 1 loading Iron ore, 3 vessels discharging (CPS & Phosphoric Acid, C.P.Coke, Fiber Optics); 3 vessels working at midstream to load Iron Ore; 1 vessel awaiting berth to discharge; 1 vessel waiting at anchorage to load; 6 vessels under repairs/dry dock; 9 vessels due (Met Coke, R.P.Coke, Coking Coal, Iron ore-6).
Mumbai	19-Dec-2005	8 vessels operating at berth of which 3 loading (Maize/Corn in Bags/SBM-2, Steel cargo), 3 vessels discharging(Steel Cargo-2, POL), 2 vessels loading and discharging (General Cargo/steel, Containers); 1 vessel working at midstream to discharge Peas in bulk; 1 vessel not ready to work and waiting at anchorage to discharge; 1 vessels awaiting order to discharge, 2 vessels waiting at anchorage (1 to discharge, 1 to load and discharge); 8 vessels under repairs/dry docked, 4 vessels under arrest, 1 vessel under laid up (Berths not required for cargo operations); 35 vessels due (Containers-7, Oil-2, General Cargo-26).
J.N.P.T.	19-Dec-2005	7 vessels operating at berth of which 1 loading Molasses, 6 vessels loading and discharging Containers; 3 vessels awaiting berth to load and discharge; 1 vessel not ready to work and waiting at anchorage to load and discharge; 2 Containers vessel due.
Kandla	19-Dec-2005	14 vessels operating at berth of which 5 discharging (Chemical, Phosphoric Acid, Scrape, Timber Logs-2), 7 vessels loading (Agriculture Product-3, Cement, Pipes, Motor Bikes, Castor Oil), 2 vessels loading and discharging Containers; 3 vessels awaiting berth to load; 2 vessels not ready to work and waiting at anchorage to discharge; 1 vessel under repair/dry docked.
Ennore	19-Dec-2005	3 Thermal Coal vessels due ( MV Apj Sri Devi, MV Gem of Ennore, MV Rani Padmini).
<b>Israel</b>		
Ashdod	20-Dec-2005	Three general cargo vessels loading at berth, 15 vessels discharging at berth (11 general cargo, 4 bulkers), 1 container vessel loading/discharging at berth; 2 bulkers waiting at anchorage to discharge; 2 vessels awaiting orders; 15 vessels due, with 2-3 days delay expected.
Haifa	20-Dec-2005	Three vessels discharging at berth (2 general cargo, 1 bulker), 9 loading/discharging at berth (6 containers, 1 car carrier, 2 tankers); 4 bulkers waiting at anchorage to discharge; 5 vessels under repairs/dry-docked, 1 awaiting orders; 23 vessels due, with 2-3 days delay expected.
<b>Mozambique</b>		
Maputo	20-Dec-2005	Twenty-four hour berthing/sailing. There are some restrictions to berthing at certain badly lit wharves. Vessels have to be geared for general cargo berths as shore cranes are very few and unreliable. The Port is working normally and is expected to remain so, hence vessels should berth on arrival, daylight, draft and weather permitting. No berthing delays envisaged. A shortage of equipment is being experienced (except at the Container terminal). Shed space is currently available. Safe draft for transiting the channel is 9.1 metres plus the tide of the day. Density of water varies from 1.020 to 1.023. Vessels with ramps on starboard side can berth with the ebbing tide. Should ramps be portside, vessels to berth with the flowing tide. Pilot launch is operational. Both tugs are operational. Leading lights are lit. One container gantry is operational, the second is under repairs. Matola coal terminal is operational. Ressano Garcia, Goba and Limpopo railway lines are all operational. Five vessels are currently in port berthed, of which 3 loading (2 ferro chrome, 1 magnetite), 1 discharging bagged rice, 1 dredger; 1 vessel due to berth 20/12 to load/discharge containers; 26 vessels due by 24/1 of which 7 to load (2 bulk coal, 2 aluminium, 1 pitch, 1 petcoke, 1 other cargo), 10 to discharge (1 alumina, 1 bulk maize, 2 coke, 1 vegetable oil, 2 petcoke, 1 bagged sugar, 1 vehicles, 1 bulk wheat), 7 to discharge/load (6 containers, 1 containers/bundled cargo), 2 passenger vessels.
<b>Pakistan</b>		
Karachi	19-Dec-2005	Six vessels loading at berth (1 naphtha, 3 rice, 1 general cargo, 1 cement), 9 vessels discharging at berth (1 crude oil, 4 general cargo, 2 urea, 1 DAP, 1 sugar), 3 container vessels loading/discharging at berth 2 vessels waiting at anchorage to load (1 rice, 1 containers), 4 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (1 fertiliser, 1 scrap, 1 containers, 1 chemicals); no vessels bunkering, none under repairs/dry-docked, none awaiting orders; 8 vessels due (4 containers, 3 general cargo, 1 chemicals), with 2 days berthing delay expected for general cargo vessels, 1 day for containers, 3 days for bulk cargoes.
Port Qasim	19-Dec-2005	One sugar vessel discharging at berth, 1 container vessel loading/discharging at QICT berth; 2 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (1 coal, 1 HSD oil).

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## Port Conditions

### Poland

Gdansk	19-Dec-2005	Two vessels loading at berth (1 general cargo, 1 bulk), 3 discharging at berth (2 general cargo, 1 tanker); 12 vessels under repairs/dry-docked; no vessels waiting at anchorage, none waiting in roads; 18 vessels due.
Gdynia	19-Dec-2005	One bulk loading at berth, 4 vessels discharging at berth (2 tankers, 2 grain); 17 vessels under repairs/dry-docked; no vessels waiting at anchorage, none waiting in roads; 35 vessels due.

### Russia

Novorossiysk	19-Dec-2005	Sixteen vessels in port operating, of which 14 loading (1 bulk cement, 2 bulk urea, 1 cars, 2 steel billets, 1 copper, 3 wheat, 1 barley, 1 bulk NPK, 1 steel billets/tin plates, 1 oil), 2 discharging (1 citrus, 1 products); 22 vessels waiting in roads of which 18 to load (1 HBI, 2 bulk NPK, 2 copper, 1 bulk urea/bulk NPK, 2 aluminium, 1 equipment, 1 slabs, 1 steel billets/coils, 2 wheat, 1 barley, 3 diesel oil, 1 bulk cement), 4 to discharge (1 bulk sugar, 2 citrus, 1 products); 79 vessels due, of which 75 to load (6 bulk ammonium nitrate, 4 wheat, 5 coils, 1 steel sheets, 6 DRI, 4 copper, 3 aluminium, 4 slabs, 6 bulk urea, 2 pipes, 1 pipes/coils, 5 bulk NPK, 1 spare parts/cars, 3 oil, 1 scrap, 1 pig-iron/steel billets, 1 cars, 6 steel billets/cars, 2 bulk fertiliser, 1 cellulose, 1 steel billets/cars, 1 pig-iron, 1 steel billets/steel sheets, 2 pipes/steel billets, 2 H-beams, 1 bulk cement, 1 lead/zinc, 1 diesel oil, 1 equipment, 1 scrap), 2 to discharge (1 citrus, 1 debar), 2 load/discharge containers; Oil terminal: no tankers berthed; 8 tankers in roads, all to load, of which 7 crude oil, 1 fuel oil; 9 tankers due, all to load, of which 8 crude oil, 1 diesel oil.
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### Slovenia

Koper	19-Dec-2005	Port working normally. Thirteen vessels berthed of which 1 tanker discharging liquid cargo, 2 vessels discharging/loading containers, 6 vessels loading sawn timber/general cargo, 1 vessel discharging bulk cargo, 3 vessels loading bulk cargo; 3 vessels waiting at anchorage, of which 1 tanker to discharge liquid cargo, 1 vessel to load sawn timber, 1 vessel to discharge bulk cargo; 19 vessels due over the next 2 days of which 2 to load sawn timber/general cargo, 4 to discharge/load containers, 6 vessels to load bulk cargo, 4 to discharge bulk cargo, 2 liquid cargo tankers, 1 car carrier to discharge vehicles.
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### Spain

Bilbao	19-Dec-2005	Thirty-eight vessels operating (8 tankers, 30 other vessels), of which 15 loading, 14 discharging, 9 loading/discharging.
Sagunto	20-Dec-2005	Eighteen vessels in port operating, of which 2 loading (1 cement, 1 baled scrap), 15 discharging (13 steel products, 1 vehicles, 1 anhydrous ammonia), 1 discharging/loading containers; no vessels outside commercial wharf; no berthing delays at present.

### Sri Lanka

Colombo	19-Dec-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). Ten container/feeder vessels loading at berth, 17 vessels discharging at berth (12 containers/feeders, 1 bulk palm oil, 1 bagged fertiliser, 1 bagged cement, 2 bulk cement); 1 vessel waiting at anchorage to discharge bagged maize; 5 vessels dry-docked, 1 under repairs; 1 vessel at Dolphine tanker berth, 1 floating library; 6 vessels due (5 containers/feeders, 1 bulk gypsum), with no delays for general cargo, bagged cargo, containers/feeders expected
Galle	19-Dec-2005	No vessels loading at berth, 2 discharging at berth; no vessels awaiting berth.
Trincomalee	19-Dec-2005	Two vessels loading at berth, 1 discharging at berth; no vessels awaiting berth.

### Turkmenistan

Aladja	19-Dec-2005	Oil products: One vessel in roads to load crude oil.
Turkmenbashi	19-Dec-2005	Oil products: Two vessels at berth of which 1 loading gasoil, 1 discharging crude oil; 2 vessels in roads of which 1 to load, 1 to discharge crude oil.

### Ukraine

Ilichevsk	20-Dec-2005	Eleven vessels in port operating, of which 7 loading (4 steel products, 1 grain, 1 cake, 1 sunflower oil), 2 discharging ore, 2 discharging/loading containers; 3 vessels in roads, of which 1 to load sunflower oil, 2 to discharge/load containers; 18 vessels due, of which 9 to load (5 steel products, 2 sunflower oil, 1 sulphur, 1 equipment), 2 to discharge ore, 7 to discharge/load containers.
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## Port Conditions

Mariupol	20-Dec-2005	Eight vessels in port operating, all loading, of which 1 steel, 3 sulphur, 2 coal, 1 wheat, 1 equipment; 5 vessels in roads, all to load, of which 2 steel, 2 coal, 1 sulphur; 59 vessels due, of which 54 to load (33 steel, 9 coal, 3 fire-clay, 1 sulphur, 2 coke, 1 fertiliser, 1 sunflower beans/husks, 2 bran, 1 wheat, 1 barley), 2 to discharge (1 citrus, 1 heavy lifts), 3 to discharge/load (1 feldspar/fire-clay, 1 containers, 1 magnetite/angles).
Odessa	20-Dec-2005	Twelve vessels in port operating, of which 6 loading (2 metal, 1 oil, 1 ferro alloy, 1 corn, 1 barley), 4 discharging (1 luggage, 1 general cargo, 1 citrus, 1 sand), 1 loading/discharging containers, 1 passenger vessel; 9 vessels in roads, of which 6 to load (3 metal, 1 metal/timber, 2 corn), 2 to discharge citrus, 1 to load/discharge containers; 79 vessels due, of which 33 to load (26 metal, 2 pig-iron, 1 corn, 1 general cargo, 1 barley, 1 ferro alloy, 1 car parts), 17 to discharge (8 citrus, 1 luggage, 2 vegetable oil, 1 animal fats, 3 bananas, 1 general cargo, 1 sugar), 29 to discharge/load containers.

### United States

Beaumont, TX	20-Dec-2005	Louis Dreyfus terminal: 1 day's delay expected.
Galveston, TX	20-Dec-2005	ADM-Farmland terminal: 2-3 days delay expected.
Houston, TX	20-Dec-2005	LDC Dreyfus terminal: no delays expected; Cargill terminal: 2-3 days delay expected.
Kalama, WA	20-Dec-2005	Kalama export terminal: 1 day's delay expected; United Harvest terminal: no delays expected.
New Orleans, LA	20-Dec-2005	Mississippi River terminal berthing delays: Cenex-Harstates/Myrtle Grove: 2-3 days delay expected. Cargill-Westwego: 2-4 days delay expected ADM/Ama: 4-5 days delay expected. Bunge/Destrehan: 3 days delay expected. ADM/ Destrehan: 4-5 days delay expected. ADM/Reserve: 4-5 days delay expected. Cargill/Reserve: 1-2 days delay expected. ADM/Paulina: 4-5 days delay expected. Zen-Noh/Convent: 1-2 days delay expected. Cargill/Baton Rouge: No delays expected. Mississippi River mid-stream buoys - estimated berthing delays based on new vessel presented as load-ready and weather permitting: Mile 121.5 ADM (Gemini) - Destrehan: no delays expected; Mile 158.0 Myrtle Grove Midstream terminal: up to 2 days delay expected; Mile 180.0 Cooper (America) - Darrow: 2 days delay expected.
Portland, OR	20-Dec-2005	Columbia Grain terminal: 2 days delay expected; CLD Irving terminal: no delays expected; CLD, O Dock terminals: no delays expected.
Seattle, WA	20-Dec-2005	Louis Dreyfus (Pier 86) terminal: 2 days delay expected.
Tacoma, WA	20-Dec-2005	Temco terminal: 2 days delay expected.

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