

US signals zero tolerance for polluters

Shipowners warned they could face jail or swingeing fines, as punitive policy aims to crack down on 'epidemic of crimes', writes Rajesh Joshi in New York — Thursday February 09 2006

WASHINGTON has laid down the law to shipowners and operators — pollute US waters and we'll jail you or run you out of town.

The "going rate" for oily water separator offences in the US is "going up" and Washington will aggressively seek prison time for individuals and swingeing fines for companies perpetrating such crimes, a top Department of Justice official told a New York conference this week.

The warning, delivered under the banner "The Image of Shipping — Perception and Reality", sought to convince owners and crews that the department would have no mercy until the industry realises the inevitability of "zero tolerance" and fundamentally revamps its culture.

Richard Udell, senior trial attorney at the Department of Justice's environmental crimes section, said at the Hellenic-Norwegian-American joint shipping conference that such punitive measures were the only deterrence against what he described as an epidemic of crimes.

Washington has prosecuted 30 criminal cases between 1995 and 2005 involving intentional discharge of oil, 21 of which have come since 2002. A total of \$133m in criminal fines has been levied since 1998, Mr Udell revealed.

The last major case was sentenced last week, involving a \$10m fine — the highest ever on a single ship and the largest environmental fine in

Massachusetts history — on MSC Ship Management (Hong Kong). The chief engineer and second engineer of the offending ship, the 1994-built, 36,887 dwt, 2,394 teu containership MSC Elena, face jail time in the US.

Mr Udell said almost all oily water cases involve obstruction of justice, as in witness tampering, destruction of evidence, alteration of documents and perjury — logically, the only watertight jurisdiction the US would have on crimes on the high seas.

Cost-cutting motives

However, he said such crimes "always" derive from financial and cost-cutting motives, and advised crew who would potentially "obey orders" that going to jail was simply too high a price to pay.

About 25%-30% of the enforcement actions derive from whistle-blowing crews — several of whom profess ignorance of the US bounty law that provides up to 50% reward out of fines collected — and a small number from "foreign referrals", Mr Udell said. However, he said the biggest proportion still comes out of routine Coast Guard inspections.

How the shipowner responds to the discovery of crimes dictates the final sentencing outcome, he said. This would inevitably shape the company's "future image", he concluded. He exhorted companies to embrace a cultural change, involving crew training, audits, formal written policies and other safeguards.

In response to a question, Mr Udell said sentences in future crimes could include sanctions, including barring the guilty companies from trading into the US.

Echoing Mr Udell's theme, Rear Admiral Thomas Gilmour of the US Coast Guard said companies could burnish their image by denouncing deliberate dumping, and getting the quality message "all the way to the deck plate".

However, this federal tag team encountered a determined contrarian in the audience. Bill Gray, a Connecticut maritime consultant, blasted Washington for penalising such offences while ignoring technical realities on the one hand, and ignoring its own international obligations on the other.

Oily water separator technology is still imperfect and most separators "simply do not work", Mr Gray said. The US is remiss in not providing shoreside slop reception facilities as mandated by Marpol, he added.

The recent case of the Athos I is also redolent of a double standard since a derelict anchor on a federal riverbed caused the oil spill, Mr Gray said.

Mr Udell rejected the first charge, saying prosecutions are never exclusively a technical issue. The fact that the culture is corrupted transcends the technical aspect, he insisted.

Likewise, Adm Gilmour asserted that the US is doing what is necessary on the sludge discharge facilities, but the "issue is cost".

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

Vessel	Type	Flag	Class	GT	DWT	Bit	Casualty
<i>AL MANARA</i>	general	KNA	—	3,053	4,524	1969	Disabled and adrift in lat 03 34S, long 49 56E, Jan 29. Provisions delivered to vessel by <i>USS Nassau</i> . Awaiting tug to tow into port.
<i>CITRA MANDALA BAKTI</i>	passenger	IDN	—	321	—	1972	Sank in rough waters en route to Rote Island from Kupang in eastern Indonesia Jan 31. About 160 people on board, 114 rescued search continuing for another 45 people.
<i>ECE</i>	acid tanker	MHL	NV	8,003	11,290	1988	In collision with bulk <i>General Grot-Rowecki</i> , in lat 49 44N, long 03 06W, Jan 31. Leaking oil from ballast tank. All 22 crew taken off. 35 deg list. Taken in tow by tug <i>Abeille Liberte</i> . Capsized and sank in lat 49 43.7N, long 03 14.4W, Feb 1.
<i>GOLD MENAM</i>	ro-ro	PAN	NK	9,999	11,281	1996	Made heavy contact with the berth at Yokohama. Sustained damage to shell plating. Leaked considerable quantity of fuel oil. Arrived Yokohama Jan 20 & sailed Jan 22. Arrived back at Yokohama Jan 26 & sailed Jan 28 for Kobe, where arrived Jan 29. Sailed Jan 30.
<i>KOJIMA MARU NO. 52</i>	chem tanker	JPN	—	499	1,230	1993	Grounded at Mutsurejima anchorage, Shimonoseki, Jan 13. Refloated under own power.
<i>LADY SACHA</i>	general	GUY	—	—	—	—	Began leaking and subsequently sank 14 nautical miles off Dominica in lat 15 12N, long 62 03W, Jan 22. Crew rescued.
<i>LAS VEGAS</i>	yacht	—	—	—	—	—	Destroyed by fire in Coronado Cays, San Diego, Feb 1. Fire extinguished, cause unknown.
<i>MARE NOSTRUM</i>	trawler	BEL	—	385	—	1998	In collision with trawler <i>Sainte Emme</i> in lat 50 36.38N, long 00 41.24E, Jan 27.
<i>RAMOS III</i>	passenger	—	—	—	—	—	Blown ashore in strong winds from tropical cyclone "Jim" at the Randi Marine School Beach in the Honiara area Jan 30. Understand in a bad state of repair.
<i>SAINTE EMME</i>	trawler	FRA	—	73	—	1989	In collision with trawler <i>Mare Nostrum</i> in lat 50 36.38N, long 00 41.24E, Jan 27. Bridge demolished. Arrived Boulogne same day.
<i>SLOMAN PRODUCER</i>	ro-ro	ATG	GL	7,260	7,260	2004	Reported in lat 35 49.6N, long 14 31.77E, not under command and towed to Marsaxlokk Jan 26. Reported in lat 35 49.15N, long 14 31.57 E, 2.1 nautical miles from Marsaxlokk Jan 30.
<i>TROY</i>	general	ANT	NV	1,203	1,370	1976	Grounded in lat 40 47N, long 28 03E, at Marmara Eregli, Jan 23, while transiting Dardanelles. Refloated Jan 30 & anchored at Tekirdag. Inspections revealed no problems.
<i>TWIN STAR</i>	bulker	PAN	—	14,437	23,701	1998	In collision in heavy fog with bulk c.c. <i>Pintail</i> and general cargo <i>Alice</i> , near Callao, Peru, Jan 27. Split in two and sank. Some fuel spilt. All 22 crew rescued.

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The following reports are reprinted from Lloyd's List



A.AKIF (Cambodia)

London, Jan 31 — Lloyd's Casualty representatives in Piraeus report: Today, the master and two crewmembers of sunken general cargo *A.Akif* confirmed that the two bodies recovered from the areas of Mourteris Kymi and Fokos Mykonos yesterday, were those of the missing Chief Engineer and Bosun of their vessel.

AL MANARA (St. Kitts-Nevis)

See "Somalia" under "Piracy".

ALGOPORT (Canada)

London, Jan 30 — A report, dated today, states: Bulk *Algoport* (20222 gt, built 1979), downbound, had steering gear problems, rudder inoperative, in lat 46 46N, long 71 14W, at 1733, EST, Jan 27. (Note — *Algoport* sailed Magdalen Island Jan 23 and ETA Quebec Feb 1.)

ALICE (Malta)

See *Twin Star*.

ANANGEL DYNASTY (Greece)

London, Jan 26 — Dardanelles strait northbound vessel traffic will close at 1800, local time, today and southbound vessel traffic will open at 1930, local time, today because of grounded vessel (bulk *Anangel Dynasty*) in front of Nara lighthouse and heavy traffic.

London, Jan 27 — Dardanelles strait will close for Southbound vessels and will open for Northbound vessels today. Northbound vessel traffic will open at 1530, local time, Jan 27. Southbound vessel traffic will close at 1400, local time, today because of grounded vessel (bulk *Anangel Dynasty*) in front of Nara lighthouse and heavy traffic.

London, Jan 27 — Dardanelles strait: Northbound vessel traffic will close at 0200, local time, Jan 28 and southbound vessel traffic will open at 0330, local time, same day because of grounded vessel (bulk *Anangel Dynasty*) in front of Nara lighthouse, two lng tankers and heavy traffic.

London, Jan 28 — Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 1050, UTC: Bulk *Anangel Dynasty* is still aground in the Dardanelles. Lightering operations are in progress and it is reported that an attempt to refloat the vessel will be made this afternoon.

London, Jan 28 — Bulk *Anangel Dynasty* refloated at 1745, local time today. The vessel will drop anchor in Doganaslan bay anchorage area for formalities. The vessel is to continue her voyage to Constantza after survey procedure.

London, Jan 31 — Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 1055, UTC: Bulk *Anangel Dynasty* has been

refloated and will reload some cargo before resuming voyage to Constantza.

London, Feb 2 — Understand bulk *Anangel Dynasty* is expected to resume its voyage to Constantza today.

London, Feb 2 — Following received from Piraeus RCC, timed 1105, UTC: Bulk *Anangel Dynasty* has now resumed voyage for Constantza.

ANDREAS K. (Panama)

London, Jan 27 — Bulk *Andreas K.* sailed from Nordenham at 1730 hrs, Jan 26.

ANG PANGULO (Philippines)

Manila, Feb 2 — Yacht *Ang Pangulo* remains at Keppel Batangas shipyard in Bauan town south of Manila, undergoing repairs to damage caused by a fire which broke out in its engine-room Jan 14, Philippine Navy spokesperson Captain Geronimo Malabanan said in an update released yesterday. He said that work was proceeding as scheduled. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

ANTIGONI B. (Cyprus)

London, Feb 2 — Bulk *Antigoni B.*, involved in a collision at Singapore on Dec 1, subsequently arrived Kandla Jan 2 from Singapore and sailed Jan 7 for Chittagong.

APL PANAMA (Antigua & Barbuda)

Mexico City, Jan 30 — The situation of c.c. *APL Panama* remains the same. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated Jan 30, states: Salvors trying to free the grounded c.c. *APL Panama* will bring in a more powerful helicopter to unload more of the vessel's cargo in hope of finally getting it afloat. The salvors had been using a Sikorsky S-64 Skycrane helicopter to lift some of the hundreds of containers off *APL Panama*, but the helicopter is not powerful enough to pick up the heaviest of the containers stacked on its deck, so they will bring in a more powerful helicopter, said Jose Luis Rios Hernandez, Ensenada's harbour-master.

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated today, states: C.c. *APL Panama* is still aground and salvage teams are now looking at the next step, unloading half its cargo with one of the world's largest helicopters. "By taking off half the weight they could refloat it," said Capt. Jose Luis Rios Hernandez, Ensenada's harbour-master. Stuck since Dec 25 *APL Panama* has budged somewhat, despite two considerable endeavours this month to pull its bow away from shore. The most recent effort, which began Friday and continued yesterday morning, has involved six tugs and hydraulic pulling machines, with a combined capacity of more than 80,000 horsepower. The bow has moved only 35 degrees since the pulling started earlier this month, the salvage master says. That is just over

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one-third of the total distance needed to pull the vessel to open water. Salvage workers believe a major problem has been the 30,000 tons of cargo. The efforts are being led by Florida-based Titan Maritime LLC. It wants to fly in a Russian-made MIL Mi-26 helicopter, capable of lifting close to 20 tons, said Rios, the harbour-master. Titan has located one in Peru that could be prepared in 48 hours. The weight is not the only impediment to moving the ship. Banks of sand accumulating underwater are trapping it, and the salvors are trying to find a way to loosen the sand. Last weekend, Titan had hoped to have a giant underwater hose in place to displace some of the sand, but it broke in several places as it was being carried out in the surf. The timing of the next phase was uncertain yesterday. Rios said Titan representatives are expected to discuss their plans today in Ensenada with representatives from city, state and federal agencies. Local officials have been growing increasingly worried about fuel spills. As of yesterday morning, three spills have been reported since the middle of the month, totaling nearly 265 gallons. Although most of the fuel has been removed from the ship, a small amount remains, and officials say cracks have led to leaks at low tide from a fuel-contaminated ballast tank. JC Environmental Co. of National City has been responsible for cleaning the spills, and it maintains a boom alongside the vessel's starboard side. "So far, we have not identified flora and fauna that have been affected," said Ricardo Castellanos Percevault, the top official in Baja California for Mexico's environmental watchdog agency, known as PROFEPA. PROFEPA has gone to court to seize the vessel, Castellanos said, as a guarantee that the owners will fix any environmental damage before leaving Mexico. Meanwhile, those with containers must stand by. Among them is Sony Electronics Inc., which has raw materials and components for liquid crystal display televisions produced in Baja California as well as finished goods for the Mexican retail market, spokesman Rick Clancy said.

London, Feb 2 — The conundrum of loaded containers continues to bedevil the stranded c.c. *APL Panama*, with salvage experts now suggesting that an airlift of cargo is the most viable option to get the containership off the sandbank. The vessel's operator Mare Britannicum Schiffahrtsgesellschaft MBH & Co could not be contacted by press time yesterday. However, the harbour-master told local reporters that the lead salvors, Florida-based Titan Maritime, "want to fly in a Russian MIL Mi-26 helicopter, capable of lifting close to 20 tonnes." The vessel has budged only 35 degrees towards the open sea despite two huge efforts to move or refloat it this month. The latest attempt was said to involve six tugs with a combined capacity of more than 80,000 hp. The

30,000 tonnes of loaded cargo "makes the ship too heavy," some experts have suggested. The vessel is understood to have some 1,800 containers carrying a quantity of electronic goods and "other goods routinely carried by the line." There also are some reefer containers, which were reported as of last week to be in "good shape" thanks to generator sets deployed by the owner.

ARIADNE (Greece)

London, Feb 2 — Greek-flagged bulk *Ariadne* (38289 gt, built 1999) Immingham to Eregli, ran aground near the entrance to the Bosphorus strait yesterday. The vessel was carrying 66,560 tonnes of cargo when the accident happened at the southern entrance to the waterway, Tuncay Cehreli, a manager at the Coastal Safety and Salvage Administration said. "We are awaiting results of an underwater survey to see whether the vessel can move from its position alone or if salvage operations are required," he said. Traffic through the 17 mile strait was unaffected, he added. (Note — *Ariadne* passed Gibraltar east Jan 22 for Eregli.)

London, Feb 2 — Following received from Ankara MRCC, timed 0950, UTC: Bulk *Ariadne*, cargo 65,651 tonnes coke, ran aground in lat 40 57.8N, long 28 52.9E, at 0635, UTC, yesterday. Vessel is still aground trying to refloat itself. There is a tug nearby if required.

ATLANTIC SUPERIOR (Canada)

Halifax, Jan 27 — Bulk *Atlantic Superior*: It is understood that the crankshaft machining of the main engine is complete, however, additional engine bearings are also to be renewed at this time. Subsequently, after cargo transfer, the vessel found damage to the steering nozzle and shall soon enter the local ship yard for permanent repairs. Completion of repairs to the main engine and the steering nozzle are expected late next week. — Lloyd's Agents.

BALTIC SKIPPER (Gibraltar)

London, Jan 30 — General cargo *Baltic Skipper* remains at Wilhelmshaven. (See issue of Jan 25.)

London, Feb 1 — Following received from Kiel, dated today: General cargo *Baltic Skipper* which was berthed at the Nordwestkai (Northwest Quay) in Wilhelmshaven since Jan 17 is due to depart at 1000 hrs, today, after completing its repairs.

BARBARA W. (South Africa)

London, Jan 27 — Following received from Cape Town MRCC, timed 1200, UTC: Fishing *Barbara W.* (built 1966, length 17.51 metres) had engine breakdown in lat 34 44.15S, long 18 11.6E, at 0343, local time, Jan 25. Vessel was taken in tow by fishing *Tomren* and arrived Hout Bay at 1930, local time, same day.

BEETHOVEN

London, Jan 30 — Passenger *Beethoven* is currently being repaired and will be back in service this week.

BOUNDER (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Jan 30 — Following received from Kiel, dated today: General cargo *Bounder* (1984 gt, built 1989), Kaliningrad for Goole, 1984 ts, was in collision with the Danish fishing *Jeppe Hansen* (147 gt, built 1992) during the morning of Jan 28, five miles east of the island of Hiddensee in the Baltic. The 89 metre long cargo vessel, which is owned by Erwin Strahlmann, of Leer, crashed into the fishing vessel, which was fishing at that time, and proceeded. *Jeppe Hansen* was hit at the starboard-bow. Little amounts of oil leaked into the sea. Support vessel *Scharhoern* rushed to the scene and stopped *Bounder*. The officer on the bridge was found to be drunk. He had 2,0 promille. *Jeppe Hansen* subsequently reached its homeport. *Bounder* had to anchor for investigations and it was subsequently decided that its bow damage is to be repaired in the Polish port of Szczecin.

CALIFORNIA MERCURY (Japan)

London, Jan 27 — C.c. *California Mercury* arrived Seattle Jan 23 and sailed Jan 26 for Vancouver.

CASSIOPE (Cambodia)

Mariupol, Jan 31 — General cargo *Cassiope* remains aground on the sandbank due to very heavy ice conditions in the Azov sea. The salvage/repair operation is expected to commence on improvement of the weather and ice conditions, which according to the weather forecast will not be earlier than the spring period. — Lloyd's Agents.

CELINE I (Liberia)

Beirut, Jan 27 — Bulk/oil *Celine I* completed discharge at Uniterminal Dora on Jan 26 and sailed same day. Destination undeclared. — Lloyd's Agents.

CELTIC TERRIER (U.K.)

Poznan, Jan 31 — Chem.tank *Celtic Terrier* will probably sail tomorrow for Gdansk to load cargo. — Lloyd's Agents.

CHUNG YI 218 (Taiwan)

See "Somalia" under Piracy.

CITRA MANDALA BAKTI (Indonesia)

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated today, states: An inter-island ferry (?passenger ro/ro *Citra Mandala Bakti*, 321 gt, built 1972) carrying nearly 140 people on board sank in rough waters in eastern Indonesia, leaving dozens missing and feared drowned, officials said today. The accident took place yesterday evening when the vessel was caught in heavy seas en route to the eastern island of Rote from Kupang, the provincial capital of East Nusa Tenggara province, said Syamsir Siahaan, an official at Kupang's port. "The ferry was carrying 115 passengers and 23 crew members

when it sank at about 1930 hrs Tuesday," Siahaan told Deutsche Presse-Agentur. Three navy vessels and an air force plane were scouring the area close to where the vessel was suspected to have sunk, said naval spokesman Rear Adm. Yusuf Malik. Yusuf, however, said that the vessel's manifest showed it was carrying 82 passengers and crew, but that it was possible that more people were on board. The ferry was hit by huge waves while traveling from Kupang, about 1,900 kilometres east of Jakarta on Indonesia's side of Timor island, to nearby Rote island, he said. Siahaan said rescue workers, backed by Navy ships and helicopters, intensified their search for people still missing and feared drowned in the rough sea waters. In addition to carrying passengers, the vessel was also carrying a number of cars and trucks that were lost, he said. Meanwhile, AP reported that Navy vessels picked up more than 74 survivors. The ferry contacted Kupang port around two hours after leaving land to say it was turning back because of bad weather, he said. "The report said waves were up to 3 metres (10 feet) high," he said.

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated today, states: A ferry (? passenger ro/ro *Citra Mandala Bakti*) sank today in eastern Indonesia after it reported being battered by 10-foot waves, and rescue ships picked up more than 100 survivors, officials said. Rescuers were still searching for at least 47 people believed to have been on board. A navy spokesman in Jakarta said the ship's manifest showed it was carrying 82 passengers and crew, but a port official in Kupang on the western side of Timor island said there were more than 160 people on board when it left the harbour. "So far, 113 people have been rescued alive," said Kupang port official Sinta. "Rescuers are still searching for at least another 47 people." Many passengers apparently had time to put on lifejackets and board life rafts before the ferry sank, said Samsir Siahaan, port chief in Kupang, where the ferry originated. The ferry was travelling from Kupang to Rote Island, a trip that normally takes around four hours.

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated today, states: Naval vessels picked up 114 survivors from passenger ro/ro *Citra Mandala Bakti* that went down in rough seas in eastern Indonesia, but there was no sign late today of dozens of others still missing, rescuers said. By nightfall, 114 survivors had arrived at the port, an official said. Around 45 others believed to have been on board had yet to be accounted for, she said. There was no sign of any more survivors when the rescue effort was called off for the night at dusk today. Rescue operations were to recommence at dawn tomorrow. *Citra Mandala Bahari* was carrying far more people than listed on its manifest.

CLEMENCEAU (Decommissioned Aircraft Carrier)

London, Jan 29 — A press report, dated today, states: For the first time since the controversy erupted over the amount of asbestos on board decommissioned aircraft carrier *Clemenceau*, France has declared it is willing to repatriate the toxic wastes that will be removed when the vessel is dismantled in India. This is a definite change in the French position, which has so far been that the wastes would be buried in secure landfill sites in Gujarat. Environmentalists say the vessel poses a threat to Indian workers who do not have either the right know-how or the technology to safely remove deadly asbestos and other wastes from the vessel. They also claim it contains far more asbestos than the French government admits. The government says there is only 45 tonnes of asbestos on board, all of it in the vessel's structure, and impossible to remove without damaging the vessel's seaworthiness. It says it will create a model industrial process whereby Indian workers will be trained and provided with the requisite technology and protective gear in order to safely remove the asbestos on board. Ecologists maintain that the vessel carries much more of the deadly substance than the government admits and that a great deal more could have been removed without damaging the structure of the vessel. Indian environmentalists also question why French toxic wastes should be buried on Indian soil. The *Clemenceau* is now on its way to India for dismantling at Alang but the Indian Supreme Court has ordered the vessel to stay out of India's territorial waters until Feb 13 when it will decide whether or not to allow it into India. "Our ambassador has indicated to the Indian committee of experts that if the Indian authorities demand it, the asbestos waste will be repatriated to France," defence ministry spokesman Jean-Francois Bureau said in Paris. "This question doesn't seem to be resolved, so we have made this proposition to avoid any ambiguity," he said.

CP VALOUR (Bermuda)

Ponta Delgada, Jan 30 — C.c. *CP Valour*: No news or developments in respect of operations to commence dismantling the vessel. — Lloyd's Agents.

CRYSTAL ORCHID (Malta)

Balboa, Jan 26 — Ref *Crystal Orchid* sailed Cristobal 1405, Jan 25 reportedly bound St Petersburg where ETA on/about Feb 9. — Lloyd's Agents.

DANICA RED (DIS)

London, Jan 26 — Following received from Coastguard Dover MRCC, timed 1520, UTC: General cargo *Danica Red* proceeded to the Oaze Anchorage and subsequently reported at 0548, UTC, that it was proceeding on voyage, all problems resolved.

DENIZ ATI (North Korea)

London, Jan 31 — Cement *Deniz Ati* was reported arriving at Novorossiysk on Jan 29.

DESH RAKSHAK (India)

Melbourne, Jan 27 — Crude oil tanker *Desh Rakshak* sailed Geelong Jan 19 for Singapore. Repairs were not completed at Geelong. The vessel is to be drydocked at Singapore to complete repairs. — Lloyd's Agents.

DS FREEWAY (Bahamas)

See "Cocoa Laden Vessel Delayed at New York, United States" under "Miscellaneous."

ECE (Marshall Islands)

London, Jan 31 — Following received from Coastguard Falmouth MRCC, timed 0309, UTC: Acid tanker *Ece* (8003 gt, built 1988), 22 persons on board, was in collision with bulk *General Grot-Roweckki* (23409 gt, built 1985) in lat 49 44N, long 03 06W at about 0200, UTC. Helicopters and lifeboats proceeding. Understand crew of *Ece*, are abandoning the vessel. (Note — *Ece* passed Cape Finisterre Jan 28, bound Ghent. *General Grot-Roweckki* passed Cape Finisterre Jan 29 bound for Police.)

Following received from Jobourg MRCC, timed 0330, UTC: *Ece* has a six degree list to port and oil leaking from a ballast tank. All crew remain on board vessel.

London, Jan 31 — Understand all crew members have been removed from acid tanker *Ece*.

London, Jan 31 — Following received from St.Peter Port Radio, timed 0621, UTC: At 0209, UTC, St.Peter Port Radio was advised of a collision between acid tanker *Ece* and bulk *General Grot-Roweckki* in the north-east bound shipping lane, 28 miles north-west of Guernsey. The Guernsey and Alderney lifeboats were immediately launched to go to the assistance of the vessels. Two helicopters from the UK south coast were also tasked. *Ece* was reported listing to port. On arrival, one of the helicopters started to winch off the crew of *Ece*. In total 12 crew were taken off by helicopter. The remaining 10, were safely taken onto the Guernsey lifeboat. At 0520, UTC, the helicopter arrived at Guernsey. The lifeboat was due to arrive at 0650, UTC. At 0530, UTC, tug *Abeille Liberte* was reported to be on scene and was attempting a salvage attempt.

London, Jan 31 — Following received from MRCC Joborg, timed 1000, UTC: Acid tanker *Ece* is currently listing 35 deg to port. An inspection/salvage team is on scene and are attempting to secure a tow line on the vessel. Bulk *General Grot-Roweckki* is still "in situ". An inspection team has already boarded the vessel and no apparent/obvious damages have been found. All on board is well.

London, Jan 31 — Following received from St.Peter Port Radio, timed 0752, UTC: Acid tanker *Ece*, cargo phosphoric acid, which miscible with

water and mildly corrosive, remains afloat but listing to port. Tug *Abeille Liberte* on scene. Alderney lifeboat also on scene. All 22 crew safely in Guernsey. *Ece* presently in lat 49 42.45N, long 03 12.8W. Weather fine and clear, wind 060 deg, 12 knots, sea slight with low swell.

London, Jan 31 — Following received from Coastguard Portland MRSC, timed 1033, UTC: Acid tanker *Ece*, 10,316 tonnes phosphoric acid, bound Ghent, and bulk *General Grot-Rowecki* in collision in lat 49 45.4N, long 03 03.06 W. *Ece* holed by way of port side, sustained a 30 deg list, all 22 crew evacuated. French State inspectors on scene. Master and Chief Engineer re-boarding to assess the situation with a view to towing the vessel to a French port, Cherbourg or Le Havre.

London, Jan 31 — Following received from Coastguard Portland MRSC, timed 1515, UTC: Acid tanker *Ece*: Divers arrived from Cherbourg and have inspected vessel, which has been found to have a five-metre by two-metre gash in No 2 double bottom ballast tank. Tug *Abeille Liberte* is still on scene awaiting more favourable tidal conditions before towage options can be assessed. Master and chief engineer have returned to the *Ece* and French state inspectors have also boarded it.

London, Jan 31 — A report from Guernsey Harbours, dated today, states: Acid tanker *Ece*, collision with bulk *General Grot-Rowecki*: Incident has moved from a search and rescue operation to that of salvage activity. Crew of *Ece* all safe and well, ashore in Guernsey. The Prefecture Maritime de La Manche have retained full control of the incident. A salvor has been appointed and salvage team on board *Ece*. Captain and chief engineer have returned offshore to assist evaluating the situation. They have advised that in respect of *Ece*, a diving inspection is being carried out to determine extent of hull damage. A laboratory analytical chemist is on board to assist. Understood that depending on the outcome of the survey, intention is to have vessel towed to a safe anchorage in vicinity of Le Havre. Tug *Abeille Liberte* remains standing by casualty. Prefecture Maritime de La Manche advise that *General Grot-Rowecki* has been permitted to continue voyage to Poland. Vessel has deformation in the area of bulbous bow.

London, Jan 31 — Following received from Coastguard Portland MRSC, timed 1832, UTC: Acid tanker *Ece* is in tow of tug *Abeille Liberte* for Le Havre, ETA Feb 3.

London, Feb 1 — Salvage services rendered to acid tanker *Ece* under LOF 2000 by Les Abeilles International Limited after it was in collision with bulk *General Grot-Rowecki*, Jan 31.

London, Feb 1 — Badly holed Turkish-operated acid tanker *Ece* was being towed towards the French port of Le Havre yesterday evening following a collision with bulk *General*

Grot-Rowecki, 50 nautical miles west of the French port of Cherbourg. *Ece*, carrying 10,000 tonnes of phosphoric acid, was abandoned by its crew early yesterday morning and was listing 25 deg. It was placed under tow in mid-afternoon by the French rescue and salvage vessel *Abeilles Liberte*. The Maritime Prefecture in Cherbourg said that, barring incidents en route, it would go to Le Havre, which was the port best equipped to receive it and its cargo. French divers, who inspected the vessel's hull in the early afternoon found a 5 m by 2 m hole under the waterline on its port wing tank but reported that there was no cargo leakage. The 1988-built *Ece*'s master and chief engineer and two French technicians were also reported to have gone on board the vessel to assist the salvage operation. Earlier, the tanker's 22-man crew was rescued by helicopter and lifeboat. Ten were winched aboard a British coastguard rescue helicopter. The 12 other crew were rescued by lifeboat. The *Ece*, operated by Turkey's Aksay Denizcilik, began listing progressively after the collision although the French authorities said at the end of the morning that its position had stabilised. They added that no pollution had been detected and a pollution alert was not expected, given that the vessel's cargo would normally dilute without difficulty in the sea. *General Grot-Rowecki*, sustained no major damage and no injuries were reported among its 21-member crew. Both vessels were heading north into the Casquets traffic separation system off Cherbourg when the collision occurred. The *Ece* was bound for Ghent in Belgium and the *General Grot-Rowecki*, which was loaded with 26,000 tonnes of phosphate, for Police in Poland. The Cherbourg Maritime Prefecture said that the 1985-built *General Grot-Rowecki* had been behind the *Ece* but gaining on it in choppy seas with waves up to 2.5 m and a 20-knot north-easterly wind. Captain Zdzislaw Niewegloski, chief marine superintendent of Polish Steamship, said the two vessels were 10 miles south of the Casquets traffic separation system when the accident occurred. He said he had been told by the second officer on board *General Grot-Rowecki* that the two vessels were 0.8 miles apart when the chemical tanker changed course to port for unknown reasons. The Polish vessel had turned hard to port and went full astern to avoid it, but failed. "It was too close so that the bow of our vessel struck the under part of the chemical tanker amidships," he said. Ahmet Akkayin, operations manager at Aksay Denizcilik in Istanbul, said that *Ece* had lost none of its cargo but that he was waiting for the result of the investigations of the French authorities to find out the nature and extent of the damage sustained by the tanker and the reasons for the collision. He confirmed, however, that *General Grot-Rowecki* was overtaking *Ece* on the port side when the collision occurred.

London, Feb 1 — Following received from Coastguard Portland MRSC, timed 0052, UTC: *Ece* capsized during towing operations at 2330, Jan 31. Tow has been detached.

London, Feb 1 — Following received from Coastguard Portland MRSC, timed 0400, UTC: Acid tanker *Ece* sank in lat 49 43.7N, long 03 15.4W at 0230, UTC, today. Fishing and all nautical activities prohibited one nautical mile around position of wreck.

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated today, states: The European Commission yesterday highlighted a collision involving Maltese-registered bulk *General Grot-Rowecki* earlier in the day to call on the European Council to immediately start discussing its proposal to improve the liability regime for maritime transport. The Commission's proposal foresees levels of compensation to be paid in the case of maritime pollution. No one was injured and no pollution was reported in the collision, which involved the Maltese-registered Polish-owned *General Grot-Rowecki* and Marshall Islands-registered Turkish-owned acid tanker *Ece*. Following an inspection by French authorities, the Maltese vessel was allowed to sail to its destination port of Police. French Transport Commissioner Jacques Barrot in a statement appealed to member states to start immediately the discussion on the Commission's proposals. "The collision shows the risk of maritime pollution. We must make sure that those who cause damage are liable in the event of grave negligence and are obliged to pay compensations," he said. The Commission recently proposed a third maritime safety package to complete and reinforce existing measures. The Commission said that in the context of the latest collision and the risk of environmental pollution the proposed liability directive was crucial. "The Commission regrets that the Council has not started work on this proposal yet. The Commission's intention is to improve the existing liability regimes for maritime transport. Member states would be invited to implement an international convention which sets levels of compensation that will be sufficient to allow for appropriate redress in most scenarios. The Commission also wants ships entering European waters to be covered by an insurance policy to cover their liability in the event of damage to third parties," the Commission statement said. The Malta Maritime Authority (MMA) said in a statement that in terms of IMO Assembly Resolution 849(20), the flag state administrations of Marshall Islands and Malta have agreed that Marshall Islands will assume the role of lead investigating state whereas Malta will be actively involved in the investigation as a substantially interested state. An inspector from the Merchant Shipping Directorate of the Malta Maritime Authority will be awaiting *General Grot-Rowecki* in Poland, the MMA said.

London, Feb 2 — Bulk *General Grot-Rowecki*, collision with acid tanker *Ece*: *General Grot-Rowecki* is continuing its voyage to Police and, according to LMIU AIS, was reported in lat 55 28 35.06N, long 06 10 36.17E, course 33.9 deg, speed 12.7 knots, at 0532, UTC, today.

EGASCO FORTUNE (Egypt)

Alexandria, Feb 2 — Bulk *Egasco Fortune* is still under arrest at Alexandria. — Lloyd's Agents.

EIDER (Hong Kong)

Balboa, Jan 27 — Bulk *Eider* vessel remains anchored at Balboa and now understand main engine is to be realigned. — Lloyd's Agents.

EMERALD STAR (Belgium)

Avonmouth, Feb 1 — Trawler *Emerald Star* has been repaired, released and is on its way back to Belgium. — Lloyd's Agents.

ESTRADEN (Finland)

See *Wolgastern*.

EUGENIA (Honduras)

Mumbai, Feb 1 — General cargo *Eugenia* is currently reported in the Mumbai Port Trust records as being "anchored in stream", detained by the Mumbai Police Authorities. — Lloyd's Agents.

EUGENIO

(St. Vincent & Grenadines)

Durban, Feb 2 — General cargo *Eugenio* is still effecting repairs and expect to complete same around mid February. — Lloyd's Agents.

FALAK G. (Slovakia)

Trieste, Jan 26 — General cargo *Falak G.*: The weather has now abated and Rijeka tug *Beli Kamik* is pumping out fuel from the vessel, an amount of about 60 tons, in order to avoid the risk of pollution. A second tug, the *Rijavec*, is standing by. Concrete boxes will be used to seal the hull. It is expected that the *Falak G.* will be ready to be towed away Saturday (Jan 28). We understand that owners have not yet nominated a repairers' yard. — Lloyd's Agents.

Trieste, Jan 30 — General cargo *Falak G.*: Fuel oil has now been completely pumped out. First refloating attempt is expected tomorrow. Owners' decisions (regarding future plans) unknown at this moment. — Lloyd's Agents.

Trieste, Feb 2 — General cargo *Falak G.* still aground in spite of continuing refloating efforts. A third tug, *David Prvi*, has joined the salvors. — Lloyd's Agents.

FAYSAL (Syria)

London, Jan 27 - A [pres report, dated today states: The fire on general cargo *Faysal* at Novorossiysk anchorage was fully extinguished at 0418, Moscow time, today. Water from its holds is now being pumped out, duty officer of the civil defence and emergencies department of the Krasnodar territory Vladimir

Perederii said. According to him, fire fighters had to work in the conditions of hurricane winds reaching 35-40 metres per second and air temperature 12 degrees Celsius below zero. Thick smoke in the lower part of the ship impeded the fire extinguishing efforts. It was impossible to get to some sections of the vessel because they were locked. The situation was aggravated also by the fact that there were 37 tonnes of diesel fuel onboard that could burst into flames any minute. So the fire liquidation efforts were conducted with the use of foam and cooling of the main deck. Two causes of the conflagration are being investigated - a short circuit in the electricity network or the use of unauthorised heating devices, the territorial emergencies department official said. The fire started at 0750, Moscow time, yesterday. Fire fighting boat *Marsand* four tugs of the port's rescue-coordinating centre were engaged in the fire extinguishing operation. The ship's master and his mate were helping the fire fighters. The rest 10 crewmembers were urgently evacuated to passenger *Mariya Yermolova* staying at the 34th moorage of the Novorossiysk port. The ship arrived to Novorossiysk to take a load of metal.

Novorossiysk, Jan 30 — Understood that fire damaged engine-room of general cargo *Faysal* and the cause of fire was electrical. — Lloyd's Agents.

FENG RONG (Taiwan)

See "Somalia" under "Piracy".

FIRST CARRIER

(St. Vincent & Grenadines)

Dar es Salaam, Jan 31 — General cargo *First Carrier* together with the containers are still at the bottom of the sea where it sank. No efforts have been made by parties concerned to salvage/refloat the vessel to date. — Lloyd's Agents.

FLORA S. (Cyprus)

London, Jan 30 — Understand general cargo *Flora S.* (10322 gt, built 1980) was refloated yesterday following grounding in River Orinoco, by Tsavlis Salvage (International) Ltd under Lloyd's Open Form dated Jan 29.

Piraeus, Jan 31 — General cargo *Flora S.*, bound Mexico, cargo steel products, grounded in the River Orinoco Jan 27 and was refloated by a Tsavlis salvage team Jan 29. Vessel has already resumed voyage for Mexico. — Tsavlis Salvage (International) BV.

FOS

Bucharest, Jan 30 — Chem tank *Fos* proceeded to sea under tow, bound for Aliaga, on Jan 28. — Lloyd's Agents.

FOS (Panama)

Bucharest, Jan 26 — Understand from vessel's agents that chem tank *Fos* was sold at auction on Dec 15 and reflagged to St Kitts & Nevis. Tug *Golden Blessed* is reportedly waiting

nearby in order to tow *Fos* to Istanbul as soon as the Sulina channel is reopened. It would appear that the vessel will likely be scrapped in Turkey. — Lloyd's Agents.

FOWAIRET (Qatar)

Maassluis, Jan 31 — C.c. *Fowairet*, with an overall length of 249m, will leave Schiedam 0900, local time, this morning, for trials at sea. After which it will go back to Schiedam. — Lloyd's Sub-agents.

FREITIND (Norway)

Trondheim, Jan 31 — General cargo *Freitind*: Kvernhusvik Shipyard inform there is no change in the vessel's situation. — Lloyd's Agents.

GECO SAPPHIRE (Panama)

Jan 27 — As at Dec 31, research *Geco Sapphire*, now named *EDT Protea*, was reported still undergoing repairs at Gdynia.

GENERAL GROT-ROWECKI (Malta)

See *Ece*.

GEORGE LYRAS (Greece)

London, Jan 31 — Marine Accident Investigation Branch preliminary summary: Bulk/c.c. *George Lyras* collided with five unlit barges at night while outbound on the River Thames Nov 15. The barges were drifting in the channel after their mooring had parted. A shackle in the mooring system had failed due to twisting which occurred after a swivel piece had been jammed but a wire/rope. The drifting barges were not noticed on the ship's radar or by VTS. Action taken: To prevent a similar accident occurring in the future - the ship owner was advised to: Ensure that an adequate lookout is maintained at all times, including proper monitoring of radars. Ensure that the general alarm is sounded in similar circumstances. The port authority was advised to: Ensure that customers using its moorings utilise appropriate securing methods. Ensure that VTS screens are adequately monitored at all times. The barge operating company was advised to: Ensure its employees use appropriate securing methods when tying up moorings. Ensure that its safety management system includes lessons learned from this and previous accidents involving moorings.

GLOBAL PEACE (Panama)

London, Jan 26 — A press report, dated Queensland Jan 27, states: A legal battle is looming over who should foot the multimillion-dollar clean-up bill for the Gladstone oil spill. Oil skimmers continued to work through the night to scoop up the estimated 25,000 litres of heavy fuel that spewed from bulk *Global Peace* after its fuel tank was punctured by tug *Tom Tough* while berthing at the RG Tanna coal port. As clean-up crews battled to contain the oil spreading up Auckland Creek after an overnight storm yesterday, lawyers on

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both sides were busy putting a case together as the matter looks more than likely to end up in court. International maritime law dictates that the ship's owner is responsible for paying the clean-up bill. But Brisbane law firm Thynne and Macartney, which is acting for IGlobal Peace's managers Korean Marine Ltd, claims the tug *Tom Tough* was to blame. Speaking from Gladstone harbour yesterday, investigating lawyer Frank Turner said he understood the tug's control system failed during the berthing manoeuvre. Adsteam Australasia refused to comment yesterday. Maritime Safety Queensland general manager John Watkinson confirmed engine malfunction "will be looked at" by investigators. Clean-up operations hit a snag about 2330 Wednesday when a violent storm hit and caused a protective boom to collapse. Capt Watkinson said that allowed oil to flow into Auckland Creek and the Gladstone Marina. "We have had reports of boat owners having their hulls soiled by the oil and the usual method of dealing with those is to direct those complaints to their insurance company," he said. Maritime Safety Queensland has said the oil spill, which now covers more than 80 sqkm of ocean, will take a week to clean up. Local fisherman Lance Hayward claims he is facing a \$50,000 loss due to the oil spill. The handline fisherman returned to port on Tuesday afternoon with more than 1050 live coral trout on board, destined for the lucrative Hong Kong market in time for Chinese New Year celebrations. But in the past two days the oil has slowly infiltrated his on board water tanks and killed more than 100 fish. Now the company he was to have deliver his catch to says it will only pay half price for the trout.

Sydney, Jan 27 — Work to recover oil from a spill in the port of Gladstone was progressing "really well" this morning, according to the state government agency, Marine Safety Queensland. An MSQ spokeswoman said that most of the oil had been picked up and while the environmental effects were still being assessed, the immediate impact on wildlife appeared to be minimal. A range of anti-pollution equipment, including oil skimmers, was deployed to clean-up the estimated 25,000 litres of bunker fuel released after a collision between bulk *Global Peace* and salvage tug *Tom Tough* on Tuesday night (Jan 24). It is understood that an engine malfunction on *Tom Tough* may have contributed to the impact. *Global Peace* was manoeuvring into a berth at the RG Tanna coal terminal when the collision occurred. There were reports that oil had flowed into Auckland Creek and the Gladstone Marina, soiling the hulls of vessels moored in the area. There are also fishing industry concerns about the effects on prawns and mud crabs, which live in the mangrove-fringed waters that have been affected by the

spill. MSQ estimated the clean up might take a week. International maritime law dictates that the vessel's owner is responsible for paying the clean-up bill. However, Brisbane law firm Thynne and Macartney, which is acting for the managers of *Global Peace*, Korean Marine, claims *Tom Tough* was to blame. — "Lloyd's List Daily Commercial News."

London, Jan 27 — Bulk *Global Peace*: A press report, dated today, states: Queensland's Transport Minister Paul Lucas says he is pleased with the progress of the Gladstone Harbour oil spill clean-up. More than 80 specialised personnel from around Australia have been helping the operation. Mr Lucas inspected the central Queensland site this afternoon and says more than 12 tonnes of material have been collected. "They now believe they have got all the oil from the harbour itself, other than a bit of sheen that might be out there," he said. "The efforts then will switch to mangrove clean-up and beaches as is dictated and determined by the environmental advisers."

London, Jan 29 — A press report, dated today, states: The Queensland seafood industry has called for test results to be released as soon as possible following the oil spill in Gladstone Harbour from bulk *Global Peace* last Tuesday (Jan 24). Fisheries Minister Tim Mulherin says samples of fish, prawns and crabs will be collected from the affected area. Neil Green, from the Queensland Seafood Industry Association, says commercial fishermen will be awaiting the test results. "We'll be hoping that this can be rushed through as fast as possible and the thing that we will be certainly impressing on the minister is that we'll need the truth whatever it is so that we can work on with this because it is costing us a huge amount of money every day," he said. Vessels returning to the area with catches on board are currently being diverted to Yeppoon. Meanwhile, the clean-up in the Gladstone area is continuing.

Brisbane, Jan 31 — Bulk *Global Peace*: Repairs consisted 700 X 400 cm crop and weld with repairs completed by Friday (Jan 27). Thereafter the vessel was arrested and is at present still in Gladstone. The main clean-up has been completed but the residual will take some time as usual. Understand that six or seven vessels in port at the time, have sustained damage, along with a number of pleasure craft. — Lloyd's Agents.

GOLD MENAM (Panama)

Yokohama, Jan 27 — Ro/ro *Gold Menam* (9999 gt, built 1996) during berthing at Kanazawa Mokuzaei berth in Yokohama, contacted berth heavily. No personal injury. Vessel sustained damage to its shell plating and a considerable quantity of fuel oil leaked into sea. — Lloyd's Agents. (Note — *Gold Menam* arrived Yokohama Jan 20 and sailed Jan 22, arrived Kashima Jan 22 and sailed Jan 25 and arrived Yokohama Jan 26.)

London, Jan 30 — Ro/ro *Gold Menam* sailed from Yokohama on Jan 28, bound for Kobe, where it arrived on Jan 29.

London, Jan 31 — Ro/ro *Gold Menam* sailed from Kobe on Jan 30, bound for Masan.

GRANDE ATLANTICO (Italy)

London, Jan 31 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: Vehicle *Grande Atlantico* (56642 gt, built 1999) seems to have been involved in a collision in dense fog off Cuxhaven, overnight Jan 29/30. It berthed in the harbour of Cuxhaven for six hours afterwards, was investigated by the police, then resumed its voyage. There is no information about the other ship and the damage. *Grande Atlantico* is operated by Grimaldi.

London, Jan 31 — Vehicle *Grande Atlantico* arrived Tilbury 1023, UTC, Jan 30, from Hamburg.

London, Feb 1 — Vehicle *Grande Atlantico* sailed from Tilbury at 1420 hrs, Jan 31, bound for Antwerp, where it arrived at 0601 hrs, this morning.

GULF RANGER (Canada)

London, Jan 31 — Tug *Gulf Ranger* (10 gt, built 1962) with barge *ITB Orca* (158 gt, built 1959) in tow, reported taking on water in lat 51 02N, long 127 38W at 1439, Jan 26, near Allan Rocks, Queen Charlotte Strait, BC.

HAPPY BRIDE (Isle of Man)

Nantes, Jan 31 — Both Lpg *Happy Bride* and Lpg *Sigmagas* are currently under repairs in St Nazaire drydocks. *Happy Bride* is expected to sail three weeks from now and *Sigmagas* another four weeks. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Jan 30 — Lpg *Sigmagas* was reported arriving at St. Nazaire on Jan 19.

HARRIX (U.K.)

Riga, Jan 31 — According to information from class representative and vessel's agents, general cargo *Harrix* (1992 gt, built 1977) was found to have rudder damage during manoeuvre for departure berth SD-02 at Riga Jan 25. Vessel is currently lying at SD-02, in ballast condition. It may be necessary to replace the rudder. — Lars Krogius Baltic Ltd. (Note — *Harrix* arrived Riga Jan 25 from Hull.)

Riga, Jan 31 — General cargo *Harrix* is still at Riga, awaiting owners' instructions. — Lloyd's Agents.

Riga, Feb 2 — General cargo *Harrix* was shifted today to the Riga Shipyard for repair. A spare rudder stock is expected to be delivered on Feb 8. Docking will be after this date. — Lloyd's Agents.

HASAN ATASOY (Turkey)

Ancona, Jan 27 — Understand from the Ancona Harbour-master that on Jan 13 tug *Salus* towed general cargo *Hasan Atasoy* to the port of Tuzla, Turkey. — Lloyd's Agents.

HERA (Cambodia)

See "Turkey, Greece and Bulgaria" under "Weather & Navigation."

HOOPRIDE (U.K.)

London, Jan 31 — Following received from Den Helder RCC, timed 1035, UTC: General cargo *Hoopride* (794 gt, built 1984) is still aground and hopes to refloat between 1500 and 1600, this afternoon at high water. (Note — *Hoopride* Antwerp for Ipswich, was reported aground in lat 51 22N, long 04 07E.)

London, Jan 31 — Following received from Den Helder RCC, timed 1645, UTC: General cargo *Hoopride* was refloated at 1518, local time, and has now berthed at Hansweert, where it will be inspected.

London, Jan 31 — A report, dated today, states: General cargo *Hoopride*, from Antwerp, with 130 tons of fertilisers, grounded on a sandbank, River Scheldt, near Buoy 60 at about 0645, local time. According to the river police, cause of this accident was that the 56-year-old Belgian pilot has been drinking too much alcohol. Between 1530 and 1600 hrs *Hoopride* was towed off the sandbank by tugs of the towage company URS and sailed to the outer harbour of Hansweert for a technical investigation by the authorities.

HORIZON 9 (St. Kitts-Nevis)

London, Jan 29 — General cargo *Horizon 9*, which was towed to Karachi following a fire off there in May, and which subsequently sailed to Fujairah for further inspection of repairs, was reported Jan 22 sailing Jebel Ali for Iraq.

HUMBER WAY (Malta)

London, Jan 31 — Ro/ro *Humber Way* (9963 gt, built 1976), from Immingham, hit the pier at Ostend at 1440, local time, while entering Ostend harbour. According to the federal police the concrete rail of the pier has been damaged over a length of about 30m and the site is now closed for the public. The vessel is still seaworthy but has a big dent near the anchor. The weather conditions were normal. A steering fault might have been made, but the police are making an inquiry. Nobody has been hurt by this collision. (Note — According to LMIU AIS, *Humber Way* was in lat 51 13 53.49N, long 02 55 49.93E, at 2045, UTC, Jan 31.)

HYUNDAI ISLAND (South Korea)

Mackay, Jan 30 — Bulk *Hyundai Island* sailed Jan 25. No damage to the vessel. No.2 shiploader has resumed normal loading operations. — Lloyd's Agents.

ICE KING (Greece)

London, Jan 27 — General cargo *Ice King*, Barcelona for Rotterdam, passed Gibraltar Jan 25. ETA Rotterdam Jan 29.

IRAN MADANI (Iran)

London, Jan 30 — Following received from Rabat MRCC, timed 1025, UTC: Bulk *Iran Madani* (25768 gt, built

1985) is aground near Casablanca. It is believed the vessel ran aground yesterday. There are 37 crew, all still on board.

Casablanca, Jan 30 — Bulk *Iran Madani* grounded north of Casablanca port, at approximately 0300, UTC, due to bad weather. There is about 800 tonnes of fuel oil and 100 tonnes of diesel oil on board. Understand P&I club representative has appointed a surveyor to conduct the refloating attempts. — Lloyd's Agents.

Ymuiden, Jan 30 — Salvage services are being rendered to bulk *Iran Madani*, in ballast, by Svitzer Wijsmuller Salvage BV under Lloyd's Open Form. — SvitzerWijsmuller Salvage BV.

London, Feb 1 — A SvitzerWijsmuller report, dated Jan 30, states: SvitzerWijsmuller Salvage was contracted this morning to assist the grounded bulk *Iran Madani*. The vessel grounded overnight during a spell of bad weather seven miles off Casablanca. SvitzerWijsmuller salvage specialists were immediately flown in from the Netherlands and South Africa to take charge over the operations, while tugs were being mobilised from different locations, including SvitzerWijsmuller station tugs *Groningen* and *Neftegaz 51*.

London, Feb 2 — A Svitzer Wijsmuller report, dated Feb 1, states: SvitzerWijsmuller Salvage this afternoon, successfully refloated the grounded 190 metre long bulk *Iran Madani* during the first scheduled refloating attempt. During the past two days the grounded vessel had been prepared for the planned operations using weight distribution techniques while the necessary tugs, amongst others SvitzerWijsmuller's *Groningen* and *Neftegaz 51*, were mobilised in. Under command of the salvage team from The Netherlands and South Africa, which included a naval architect, the vessel during two consecutive tides and with assistance of the tugs was first changed in heading to a more favourable refloating condition, whereafter further weight adjustments were applied and the vessel was refloated during the next high tide. The vessel is presently anchored offshore to undergo the necessary inspections.

IRENA ARCTICA (DIS)

Poznan, Jan 31 — Local agents of c.c. *Irena Arctica* advise that repairs should be completed on Feb 11. Destination will be probably be Aalborg, Denmark. — Lloyd's Agents.

ISOLDE (Sweden)

London, Feb 1 — Vehicle *Isolde* arrived at Nagoya on Jan 30. It sailed later that day, bound for Mizushima, where it arrived on Jan 31.

ITB ORCA (Canada)

See *Gulf Ranger*.

JEPPE HANSEN (Denmark)

See *Boulder*.

JIN BI (Panama)

London, Jan 30 — Bulk *Jin Bi* arrived at Singapore at 2250 hrs, Jan 25.

Singapore, Feb 1 — Bulk *Jin Bi* is currently at Sembawang Shipyard Berth 2, Singapore. — Lloyd's Agents.

JOHN P.TULLY (Canada)

See under *Point Henry*.

KATYA Z.**(St. Vincent & Grenadines)**

London, Jan 30 — The crew of general cargo *Katya Z.* (6049 gt, built 1973), which ran aground in Azov Sea, is well, Head of Maritime Administration - Sofia Captain Ventsislav Ivanov said. It is expected that an ice-breaker will make way for the ship. There are 14 Bulgarians and four Ukrainian citizens on board the ship. The area in which the ship has run aground freezes often and there have been similar incidents before. The icebreaking operation may finish in a day or two if there are enough ships to act as convoy after the ice-breaker. The company that operates the ship has no information about any technical problems, the problem is technological, Captain Ivanov also stated.

London, Jan 30 — A press report, dated today, states: General cargo *Katya Z.*, bound Bourgas, loaded with charcoal, has run aground in the Sea of Azov. A Ukrainian icebreaker will today try to clear the way out for the vessel, after which two Ukrainian tugs are expected to escort it to the Black Sea through the Strait of Kerch. The *Katya Z.* has 14 Bulgarian seamen and four Ukrainians on board and has been struck in the Sea of Azov since Jan 18, Bulgaria's Darik Radio revealed.

London, Jan 30 — A press report, dated today, states: General cargo *Katya Z.* is expected to reach Mariupol not later than tomorrow, representative of authorities in port Mariupol. *Katya Z.* is stranded in ice in the Azov Sea. The area in which the ship is stuck freezes often and there have been similar incidents before. An ice breaker was sent to help the ship, authorities in Mariupol said.

London, Jan 30 — A press report, dated today, states: Ukrainian tug *Portovik* has also headed for the location where general cargo *Katya Z.* is stranded in thick ice, in order to help pull off the vessel, the undersecretary of the Bulgarian Embassy in Kiev Stefan Balabanov said.

London, Jan 31 — General cargo *Katya Z.* is stranded in the ice of the Azov Sea. There are 14 Bulgarians and four Ukrainians crewmembers on board. The Bulgarian crew of the ship that has been stranded for almost a week is in good health. There are two tugs at the scene from an Ukrainian company but they have no possibility of towing it. They have already managed to drill the ice. The powerful ice-breaker *Belarus* is expected to arrive today and clean the waters in front of *Katya Z.* so that it can be towed out.

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

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated today, states: The case with the saving of general cargo *Katya Z.* that has been stranded in the ice in the Azov Sea since Jan 23 has been given to the maritime administration at Mariupol because the icebreaker *Belarus* was unable to reach the vessel, Stefan Balabanov, Secretary at the Bulgarian Embassy in Ukraine announced. The Central Maritime Administration ordered the Maritime Administration at Mariupol to deal with the rescue of the ship. The port has at its disposal two powerful tugs that are expected to arrive in the region this afternoon and start the salvage operation.

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated today, states: Mariupol port authorities have decided to help general cargo *Katya Z.*, which ran aground in the Sea of Azov. The Bulgarian managers of the vessel announced today that they have been informed by the Mariupol port authorities that ice-breakers *Captain Belousov* and *Portovik* tug will join the rescue operation.

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated today, states: The Bulgarian consul in Donetsk Nikolay Yurukov will leave for Mariupol in order to help general cargo *Katya Z.* stranded in the ice in the Azov Sea, said Stefan Balabanov, secretary at the Bulgarian Embassy in Ukraine. The representative of the Bulgarian Maritime Fleet in Mariupol Ivan Voinski will meet them there. Only one Ukrainian vessel has reached to the ship for the time being. The crew is well and has plenty of food and water, Balabanov confirmed.

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated today, states: The rescue effort for general cargo *Katya Z.*, stuck in the Sea of Azov off Ukraine, has been delayed. The vessel was expected to be dragged out of the ice field on Jan 31. But it emerged today that a group of helping vessels would reach her tomorrow.

London, Feb 2 — A press report, dated today, state: The situation with general cargo *Katya Z.*, stuck in the Sea of Azov off Ukraine, has declined in view of the poor weather conditions in the area. The company manager of the ship Varna Shipping and Trading explained that the direction of the ice-break and the accumulation of massive ice are threatening the ship. Separate ice pieces as thick as one metre might make holes in the ship. The ship has spent over 11 days in the ice and during that time it has been subjected to massive pressure, Varna Shipping and Trading warns. The company also says that it would pay all costs for the icebreakers that have to release the ship. The vessel was expected to be assisted out of the ice field on Jan 31. But it emerged yesterday that a group of helping vessels would reach *Katya Z.* today.

KELLY LEE (U.S.A.)

London, Jan 27 — Following received from Coast Guard New Orleans, timed 1520, UTC: Tug *Kelly Lee* (609 gt, built 1975) lost three barges that it was pushing on the Ohio River near Louisville, Ky, yesterday. Two of the barges were recovered but a third drifted into the piling of a railway bridge. Barge remains stuck against pilings this morning and a salvage plan is being drawn up.

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated Jan 27, states: The Ohio River is back open. Officials in Kentucky had to close it after a barge carrying liquid asphalt and diesel fuel got loose (from tug *Kelly Lee*) and became pinned against a railroad bridge. The barge was one of three that broke free last night and two of them have been recovered by the US Coast Guard. A Coast Guard spokesman says officials are working on a way to salvage the barge, and a clean-up plan. The Coast Guard says the lodged barge spilled an unknown amount of liquid asphalt and diesel fuel into the river. Officials hope to begin removing the barge later in the day today. They have not determined why the barges came loose.

London, Jan 29 — A press report, dated Jan 28, states: Tug *Kelly Lee*: A runaway barge lodged against an Ohio River railroad bridge has partially sunk to the bottom, but Coast Guard officials said it doesn't seem to be in great danger of breaking up. "The cracks or the breeches in it don't appear to be getting any bigger than we can see," Lt-Comdr Jerry Nauert said this morning. The river current has pushed the 80-foot barge carrying more than 800,000 gallons of liquefied asphalt up against the K&I Railroad Bridge, with the barge's stern resting on the river bottom, he said. "So, with that, and just being up against the bridge piers, we feel it's pretty stable," he said. Barge owner Magnolia Marine Transportation Co. of Vicksburg, Miss., has hired a Pennsylvania company, River Salvage Co Inc, to bring in two crane barges to pump out the spilled asphalt and secure the broken barge before it is towed away. The cleanup won't begin before Monday (Jan 30) and "could be up to three weeks or more, depending upon how the progress goes," Nauert said. The river remains open to commercial boats. And both the K&I and Sherman Minton bridges are open. Louisville and New Albany police are ready to close the I-64 bridge if the barge breaks loose and threatens it. Norfolk Southern Railroad continues to run trains over the K&I bridge, inspecting it each time a train goes over, Nauert said.

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated today, states: Tug *Kelly Lee*: It will take up to five weeks to remove an 80-ft barge pinned against the pilings of the K&I Railroad bridge on the Ohio River, officials said yesterday. Salvors, delayed by fog, are still on their way. They plan to reheat up to 800,000 gallons of asphalt to a

liquid state before pumping it out and righting the barge. Environmental crews will use riverboats, absorbent booms and workers to hand-clean the shoreline to rid the area of escaped diesel fuel and asphalt, said Bob Mallette, a marine surveyor hired by the barge owners. It could take three to five weeks, he said. Environmental damage is likely to be minimal, since much of the asphalt that escaped solidified and sank, and high water dissipated much of the diesel, a federal environmental official said. Fatigue and other possible causes of the accident will be examined as part of the Coast Guard investigation, Bingaman said. The barge is now stable against the bridge and the river bottom since water levels and the current have dropped.

KERFONS (French Southern Territories)

London, Jan 31 — A Cesam report, dated today, states: Product tanker *Kerfons*: Further to our report of Jan 17, the owners stated that *Kerfons* did not run aground but was merely stopped by a mud-lock in mid-channel at the entrance to the port of Degrad de Cannes. After dredging, the vessel, which was carrying white products, continued sailing without assistance.

KHALED JUNIOR (Cambodia)

Istanbul, Jan 30 — Bulk *Khaled Junior*, contact with c.c. *LT Bianca* at Gelibolu Jan 22: *Khaled Junior* is still lying "as is" without any progress. *LT Bianca* completed necessary repairs by its own means and, upon completion of inspection/formalities, sailed from Canakkale at 1605, local time, today. — Lloyd's Agents.

KHUDOZHNIK PLASTOV (Cambodia)

London, Jan 30 — General cargo *Khudozhnik Plastov* was reported passing through the Dardanelles, in a westerly direction, at 1523 hrs, Jan 27, on passage Yeisk for Ashdod.

London, Feb 1 — General cargo *Khudozhnik Plastov* arrived at Haifa on Jan 31.

KIM JACOB (Liberia)

London, Jan 31 — Following received from the owners of crude oil tanker *Kim Jacob* (81265 gt, built 1998), timed 0935, UTC, today: *Kim Jacob*, loaded, grounded on a muddy/rocky bottom in lat 10 16 11N, long 64 42 43W, Jan 28. Vessel has sustained some damage but there has been no pollution. Vessel is still aground and SMIT Salvage BV have contracted and some cargo is to be removed from the vessel. (Note — *Kim Jacob* operates between Puerto Jose and Hovensa.)

London, Jan 31 — Venezuelan state oil firm PDVSA said yesterday engineers were working to free crude oil tanker *Kim Jacob* after it ran aground heading to the Hovensa refinery in St Croix. *Kim Jacob*, owned by Reederei Ernst Jacob, carrying a cargo of medium and heavy crude, was headed for Hovensa when

it ran around near Isla Borracha off Venezuela's eastern Anzoategui State, PDVSA said in a statement. "Operations to refloat the tanker are expected to start tomorrow," PDVSA said. Engineers found a three-metre-long gash on one part of the tanker and other damage that had affected the vessel's ballast. PDVSA teams were dispatched to ensure the incident caused no environmental damage, the statement said.

London, Jan 31 — A PDVSA press release, dated Jan 30, states: An inspection of crude oil tanker *Kim Jacob* has determined a gash of approximately three metres in length and 15 centimetres wide, in the lateral section of the double bottom of No.1 port tank, and an orifice of about 30 centimetres in another section of the tanker. These damages affected the ballast tanks. It is anticipated that the plan of refloating the tanker will begin tomorrow. A committee of experts will analyse and evaluate the cause of the incident.

London, Feb 1 — A PDVSA press release, dated Jan 31, states: Two barges will be used to unload crude from crude oil tanker *Kim Jacob* aground in the Bahia de Pozuelos. This should allow the vessel to refloat. The lightening of the vessel will be made in the next hours and operations to refloat the vessel will be made during the week. Meanwhile Bahia de Pozuelos is in constant inspection to prevent any environmental impact. Meanwhile, crude oil tanker *Moscow Stars* is loading 700,000 barrels of crude at the terminal at Puerto Jose to maintain the provision of the refinery at Hovensa.

London, Feb 1 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: Crude oil tanker *Kim Jacob*, owned by Ernst Jacob, Flensburg, ran aground on Jan 29, close to the island Borracha, Venecuala, with a load of one million barrels of crude oil. Salvage of the vessel, which so far has sustained no significant damage, will be attempted on Feb 1.

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated today, states: Crude oil tanker *Kim Jacob*, carrying one million barrels of crude, ran aground in Venezuelan waters, but officials said it had not spilled any oil. She was equipped with a double hull, which prevented the oil from escaping into the surrounding waters.

London, Feb 2 — Venezuelan state oil company PDVSA expects by tomorrow to refloat the grounded crude oil tanker *Kim Jacob* carrying 1.1m barrels of crude. "If operations continue at their current pace the refloating of the ship should be finished this week", PDVSA said in a press release. Authorities are using two smaller vessels to remove the vessel's cargo, which is expected to lighten the vessel sufficiently for it to float freely. The accident has not disrupted operations at Jose terminal. There is a three metre gash in the vessel and damage to its ballast tanks.

KINDRED (Bahamas)

See *Wilson Rhine*.

KOJIMA MARU NO. 52 (Japan)

Yokohama, Jan 27 — Chem.tank *Kojima Maru No. 52* (499 gt, built 1993), Omuta, Fukuota prefecture to Iwakuni, ran aground at Mutsurejima anchorage at Shimonoseki, at daybreak Jan 13. Vessel refloated under its own power. No personal injury, oil spill observed. — Lloyd's Agents.

LADY SACHA (Guyana)

London, Jan 26 — Following received from Fort de France MRCC, timed 1545, UTC: Wood general cargo *Lady Sacha*, length 72 feet, Guyana for St Martin with six crew on board, began leaking and subsequently sank 14 nautical miles off Dominica, in lat 15 12N, long 62 03W, at 0848, UTC, Jan 22. The crew was rescued by a British warship and taken to Martinique.

LAS VEGAS

London, Feb 2 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: Yacht *Las Vegas* was destroyed in a fire in Coronado Cays this morning, at one point drifting away from its mooring while firefighters battled the flames. No one was on board when the fire broke out and no injuries were reported. Coronado firefighters arrived at the dock on Buccaneer Way about six minutes after the fire was reported at 0933 hrs to find the luxury boat, *Las Vegas* out of Nevada, fully engulfed in flames. The mooring line burned and it drifted across the channel to Blue Anchor Cay Road. "From the bow to the stern, the vessel was fully involved," said Coronado Fire Chief Kim Raddatz. Firefighters worked to get control of the fire from both sides of the channel. The fire was put out by 1115 hrs. Authorities estimate the damage is \$250,000, officials said. The fire's cause is not known. One boat docked nearby sustained heat damage.

LIBRA (Malta)

London, Jan 31 — General cargo *Libra* was reported arriving at Haraholmen, Sweden on Jan 25, from Brunsbittel and sailing on Jan 27, for Corinth.

LIDER TRABZON (Slovakia)

London, Jan 31 — General cargo *Lider Trabzon* sailed from Marina di Carrara on Jan 25.

LT BIANCA (Italy)

See *Khaled Junior*.

MARE NOSTRUM (Belgium)

See *Sainte Emme*.

MARESEN (Indonesia)

London, Jan 26 — Strong winds and rains caused by a low pressure area drove a Manila-bound Indonesian vessel from Malaysia to run aground at the Apo Reef Natural Park, a protected area in Occidental Mindoro. The 2,003-ton general cargo *Maresen* hit parts of the Apo Reef around 1300

hrs, Monday (Jan 23) and remains about six kilometres from the main reef until this posting as severe weather conditions prevent the vessel from proceeding. The country's weather bureau yesterday said the surge of strong winds associated with the northern easterly will continue in the coming days, affecting parts of Luzon and Visayas. "Moderate to strong winds blowing from the east and north-east will prevail over Luzon and Visayas with moderate to rough seas," the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration said in its 1700 hrs weather bulletin. Rains with thunderstorms will remain the rest of the week, especially in Quezon and Aurora, as the tailend of a cold front affects much of Luzon. Environment Assistant Secretary Vic S. Paragas said divers have been deployed to the anchorage area within the park, where the vessel is stuck, to check the situation. The Indonesian cargo vessel was bound for Harbour Centre, a private wharf in Manila's north harbour to deliver lumber from Malaysia. It has 17 people on board, who remain incommunicado save through radio. Task Force MARLEN, a Sablayan-based multi-stakeholder enforcement group, with the PASU of Apo Reef Natural Park, have tried but failed to board the ship to investigate the incident because of big waves, according to WWF-Philippines.

Manila, Jan 27 — An attempt to free the grounded general cargo *Maresen* will be made tonight by salvage tug *Bauan*, owned by the Manila-based Malayan Towage and Salvage Corp. "This is going to be a difficult operation as *Maresen*, which is not carrying any cargo, will have to be dragged out of the reef where it is caught," a Malayan Towage spokesman said. "Refloating *Maresen* would have been much easier if it was carrying cargo, as it would only require removing the cargo to lighten the vessel," he added. Another tug, *Titan* has been dispatched to assist *Bauan* in freeing the cargo vessel. *Maresen* departed Manila on Jan 22 bound for Bontang, Indonesia. While passing the Mindoro Straits it encountered engine trouble and immediately dropped anchor. Despite the anchoring, stormy weather pushed the vessel towards Apo Reef where it eventually grounded on Jan 26. The 17-man Indonesian crew was safe, however, the Philippine Coast Guard reported. *Maresen* is owned by Indonesian-based PT Armada Sian Tan. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Manila, Jan 30 — Grounded general cargo *Maresen* was refloated at 2000, Friday (Jan 27) by salvage tug *Bauan* with the onset of the evening high tide, Malayan Towage and Salvage Co. reported today. Malayan Towage is the owner of *Bauan* and was contracted to refloat the vessel. The vessel was towed to deeper waters and after inspection was found to have sustained no significant damage. *Maresen* then resumed its voyage to Bontang, Indonesia. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

MARIELLE BOLTEN (Liberia)

London, Jan 26 — Understand general cargo *Marielle Bolten* is still aground at Puerto Plata and salvage services are being rendered to the vessel by SvitzerWijismuller Salvage BV and Resolve Marine Group under Lloyd's Open Form.

Ymuiden, Jan 30 — General cargo *Marielle Bolten* is still aground, in stable condition. Heavy weather over the last few days, with a swell of four metres, has prevented any cargo discharge from being carried out. However, there is a good weather window for the next four to five days and it is hoped that discharge can commence later today or tomorrow. About 2,000 tonnes of cargo will be removed and barges are on scene in readiness for the operation. — Wijismuller Salvage BV.

MARINA IRIS (Panama)

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated today, states: The Singapore High Court has thrown out an insurance claim by the owners of tug *Marina Iris* that sank with all six Indonesian crew off Japan's coast more than three years ago while trying to make a transpacific trip from Kobe to Singapore in gale conditions. The Business Times reports that the court ruled that the owner, Singapore-based Marine Offshore, not only breached a warranty in the policy that the vessel would follow a specific route, but also put the vessel out to the sea in an unseaworthy condition, including the deployment of an unqualified master. The plaintiff claimed against the insurance policy arguing that its loss was caused by "perils of the sea", but the insurers denied the claim because the tug was unseaworthy as it was not properly manned or equipped for the voyage.

MED INTEGRITY (Panama)

London, Jan 27 — Bulk *Med Integrity* arrived Fortaleza Jan 22.

MISS KELLEY (U.S.A.)

London, Jan 30 — A press release from the US Coastguard dated Jan 27, states: The U.S. Coast Guard and California Department of Fish and Game's Office of Spill Prevention and Response (OSPR) are currently conducting pollution response operations as a result of the fishing *Miss Kelley* (62 gt, built 1974) grounding Jan 26. Following the Coast Guard's rescue of two fishermen when the vessel struck rocks near the entrance to Noyo River yesterday, the focus quickly shifted to pollution response. At the time of the grounding, the vessel was suspected to have nearly 2,000 gallons of diesel fuel and other oils onboard, but an overflight yesterday revealed fuel releasing into the water. Late last night, the Coast Guard, OSPR, and the vessel owner formed a Unified Command and developed a response plan that involved assessing and removing any

remaining fuel aboard the vessel. The owner hired Parker Diving, a Sausalito-based pollution response company, to conduct the fuel removal operations. Since the vessel is awash in the surf at high tide, responders waited until today's 1600 low tide to access it. Once on scene, they determined that the vessel still has 500 gallons of diesel fuel and 250 gallons of lubricating oils onboard. In addition, responders observed a breach in the vessel's hull, which allowed fuel to escape into the environment. The Unified Command is currently working on details of the fuel removal plan with operations scheduled to commence at tomorrow's low tide. Due to the vessel's remote location at the bottom of a steep cliff, all response equipment for the operation will be airlifted in and out via helicopter.

London, Feb 2 — A press report, dated Feb 1, states: The US Coast Guard and California Department of Fish and Game's Office of Spill Prevention and Response (OSPR) are ceasing the pollution response operations on board fishing *Miss Kelley*. On Jan 26 the Coast Guard rescued two fishermen from the vessel and began pollution response efforts when the vessel stranded on a beach near the Noyo River entrance. Oil-absorbent pads were placed in the fish hold to remove the oil contained in that space. The pads were removed and properly disposed. Further actions to contain and remove the oil were impossible because of the remote location and high energy surf conditions around the vessel. On Monday (Jan 31), the tanks were sounded again and were found to be empty. The response and clean-up efforts have ended because there is no further threat of pollution. Though the pollution response efforts have ended, salvage efforts are ongoing. The owner has contracted Parker Diving Service to remove the vessel from the shoreline. The Coast Guard and OSPR will continue to monitor the removal and debris clean-up operations to ensure that further environmental damage is prevented. No oiled wildlife have been observed during this incident.

MOL RENAISSANCE (Liberia)

London, Jan 27 — A SvitzerWijismuller Salvage BV report, dated Jan 26, states: After having extinguished the container fires on board c.c. *MOL Renaissance* in the Gulf of Aqaba and having arranged Suez Canal transit a few days ago, SvitzerWijismuller Salvage BV today obtained permission to have the casualty to enter Fos. This was preceded by a swift and uneventful voyage from Port Said to this destination, where after arrival early yesterday morning the French authorities made their inspections. After this inspection the SvitzerWijismuller salvage team was

allowed to move *MOL Renaissance* into the port and alongside early this morning. There the affected containers were in a controlled operation discharged ashore and checked. Upon all confirmed safe and extinguished the vessel was redelivered back to its owners. The SvitzerWijismuller salvage and fire fighting team and their equipment will subsequently be demobilised.

Marseilles Jan 30 — C.c. *MOL Renaissance* sailed from Fos on Jan 27 bound for Singapore. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Feb 1 — A Senator Lines GmbH release, dated Suez Jan 31, states: C.c. *MOL Renaissance*, customer information No.3: *MOL Renaissance* called at the ports of Fos Jan 25 and Genoa Jan 29. Today, Jan 31, the vessel arrived at Valencia and will be expected to call at Gioia Tauro on Feb 2.

MOUNT TROODOS (Cyprus)

London, Jan 27 — According to LMIU AIS, bulk *Mount Troodos* was in lat 29 54 41.13N, long 90 05 41.14W, at 0058, UTC, Jan 26, course 250 deg, speed 9.8 knots.

MS. ANGEL (U.S.A.)

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated today, states: Work crews have removed all of the limestone from a sunken barge (*Ms. Angel*) on the Intracoastal waterway. The damaged barge and tug have been moved to the north shore of the Intracoastal canal. Since the barge is still in the water, traffic on the canal is limited. The coast guard is allowing one-way traffic through Vermilion parish. It's alternating between east-bound and west-bound traffic. The coast guard and the owner of the barge are working on a plan to move the damaged barge to allow for the regular flow of traffic. It will likely be a few more days before traffic is allowed to flow freely on the Intracoastal canal.

NAPOCOR POWER BARGE NO.106 (Philippines)

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

NAPOCOR TUGBOAT NO.1 (Philippines)

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

NAVA ELIZA (Cyprus)

London, Jan 30 — Following received from Bermuda RCC, timed 1425, UTC: Bulk/c.c. *Nava Eliza* (24705 gt, built 1984) reported on Jan 28 that it was proceeding into Bermuda, where ETA Jan 31, to carry out main engine turbo-charger repairs. However, later the same day it advised that it would not be able to come into Bermuda due to bad weather and was instead heading south-south-west for the Caribbean to effect the necessary repairs. (Note — *Nava Eliza*, Umm Qasr for Mississippi, passed Gibraltar Jan 15.)

NORMAND NEPTUN (NIS)

London, Jan 30 — Tug/supply *Normand Neptun* is still at Stavanger.

NORTHERN ORION (U.S.A.)

Portland, Oreg, Jan 31 — Fishing *Northern Orion*: Coast Guard is still continuing investigation. — Lloyd's Agents.

NORWEGIAN SPIRIT (Bahamas)

London, Jan 27 — Passenger *Norwegian Spirit* arrived and sailed New York on Jan 19. Vessel subsequently arrived St. Thomas on Jan 22 and sailed same day for St. John (VIR).

OPDR SEVILLA (Canary Islands)

London, Jan 30 — According to LMIU AIS general cargo *OPDR Sevilla* (4115 gt, built 1999) was at Hansweert at 0848, UTC, today with restricted manoeuvrability. (Note — *OPDR Sevilla* left Rotterdam 1025, yesterday in tow of tug *Fairplay 22* for Hansweert where arrived 2345, same day.)

London, Jan 30 — Following received from the owners of *OPDR Sevilla*, dated Hamburg today: *OPDR Sevilla* is at Hansweert waiting to drydock with steering problems.

ORIENT BRILLIANCE (Panama)

Lima, Jan 30 — We were informed by the Pandi correspondents, that bulk *Orient Brilliance* would be repaired by the end of November 2005, however it appears that there are complications as all repairs have to be carried out by divers. — Lloyd's Agents.

OTTON (Panama)

Bilbao, Feb 1 — Firefighting tug *Otton* is still reported to be carrying out repairs at Bilbao. — Lloyd's Agents.

OUR JAY (Bahamas)

Freeport, Bahamas, Jan 27 — The inter-island passenger ro/ro *Our Jay* (138' x 38') took on water and capsized in the NW Providence channel in the approx position lat 26 03N, long 78 30W, (30 miles SSE of Freeport), at about 0200 hrs, Jan 26. All crew evacuated and were rescued safely. The owners are presently arranging for salvage proposals. The wreck (as per sightings at 1400 hrs, Jan 26) is partially awash and (apparently) stable. It is unlit and/or otherwise marked. Notices to Mariners have reportedly been promulgated by the USCG and/or Bahamas authorities. In our opinion the vessel poses a major threat to shipping in the area being in the probable path of any vessels transiting the NW Providence channel between Florida and Nassau. — Lloyd's Agents.

Freeport, Bahamas, Jan 28 — Despite the efforts of a tug, searching all last night, and two airplanes, searching today, there have been no further sightings of passenger ro/ro *Our Jay*. The presumption, at this time, is that she probably succumbed to the persistent rough seas and sank

somewhere close to here capsized location, in 500 feet of water. — Lloyd's Agents.

P&O NEDLLOYD GENOA (U.K.)

London, Jan 31 — Understand the Marine Accident Investigation Branch are carrying out a preliminary investigation into the loss of containers from c.c. *P&O Nedlloyd Genoa* (31333 gt, built 1998) during passage across the Atlantic Jan 27. (Note — *P&O Nedlloyd Genoa* left Le Havre Jan 24 for New York.)

PETER R. CRESSWELL (Canada)

Troy, Mich., Jan 27 — After a fuel stop in Sarnia Wednesday (Jan 25) night, bulk *Peter R. Cresswell* headed into the new harbour at Goderich, then backed around and took up her position at the Sifto Salt dock yesterday morning. It was on the dock by 1000 hrs with the assistance of the MacDonald Marine tugs. Yesterday afternoon saw the *Peter R. Cresswell* shifting over to the elevator dock with her bow high out of the water and her stern deep, after only loading enough cargo to get the vessel to this draught. Obviously a problem has occurred and some work is under way. — Great Lakes & Seaway Shipping News.

Troy, Mich., Jan 29 — Upon completion of the repairs to its bow at the elevator dock in Goderich, Bulk *Peter R. Cresswell* shifted ahead to the Sifto dock to resume loading its cargo Friday (Jan 27) night. — Great Lakes & Seaway Shipping News.

London, Jan 31 — Bulk *Peter R. Cresswell* departed from Goderich on Jan 28, bound for a lower Lake Michigan port.

PINTAIL (Cyprus)

See *Twin Star*.

POINT HENRY (Canada)

London, Jan 31 — Hydrographic research *Point Henry* (57 gt, built 1980) made contact with hydrographic research *John P. Tully* (2021 gt, built 1985), while alongside north-west of Rachel Islands in Chatham Sound, BC, in lat 54 12.42N, long 130 35.3W, Jan 23.

POLANA

Bucharest, Jan 27 — Pusher tug *Polana* was included in the convoy of the pusher tug *Inovek* at noon today. The convoy is presently at Rousse and will reportedly proceed to Bratislava tomorrow morning. — Lloyd's Agents.

PRIVATIM (Netherlands)

London, Jan 27 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: General cargo *Privatim* sank at 2100, local time, Jan 25, 80 metres off the port of Eemshaven. The ship, which has a length of 73 metres, suddenly disappeared from the radar screens. It had a cargo of 1,200 tons of bitumen and is actually lying in a depth of 14 metres. The master who was the only man on board sprang into the cold water of the river Ems and swam to the shore. A search for the vessel has commenced by rescue

boats *Alfried Krupp* from Borkum, *Jan et Titia Visser* from Eemshaven, pilot ship *Kapit'von Bleker* and buoy layer *Gustav Meyer* from Emden. *Alfried Krupp* searched the area of the so-called Old Ems. Then came the information that the master had reached Eemshaven and no other persons had been on board. The ship was not initially traced despite a search by *Gustav Meyer's* sonar. Later *Jan et Titia Vissier* traced the vessel in the harbour entrance of Eemshaven. *Alfried Krupp* was back in port at 1110 hrs. As the wreck position had to be marked with buoys, the Borkum-Eemshaven-ferry could not leave the port. The waterway has subsequently reopened.

London, Jan 27 — Following received from Den Helder RCC, timed 1205, UTC: General cargo *Privatim* sank in lat 53 24.5N, long 06 11.8E.

London, Jan 31 — It could take another week before general cargo *Privatim* can be salvaged, a spokesman of the river police said. In this salvage operation both Dutch and German authorities are involved. Before vessel can be lifted, her cargo of a 1,000 tons of asphalt scrapings, which destined for Theo Pouw Secundaire Bouwstoffen BV and to be discharged at Eemshaven, has to be taken out of the holds of the ship. This will take several days. The authorities hope that the vessel can be raised at the end of this week, but it might run into next week. The insurance company of the vessel is now looking for a salvage company who can do this job. The salvage plan has to be approved by Rijkswaterstaat and the port authority Groningen Seaports.

QUEEN MARY 2 (U.K.)

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated today, states: Some passengers on passenger *Queen Mary 2* are to get a full refund after damage forced the ship to miss ports-of-call, the operating firm says. Cunard, which had earlier offered a 50% refund, said all those disembarking at Rio de Janeiro would get the money. The ship, which is on a 38-day cruise around Latin America, is expected to arrive at Rio today, a day behind schedule. About 1,000 people are waiting to board, but some of those already on the ship had threatened to lock themselves in their cabins in protest to prevent the vessel continuing its journey. *Queen Mary 2* had to cancel stops at the islands of St Kitts and Barbados and Salvador in Brazil after damaging a propeller pod when it set sail from Fort Lauderdale, on Jan 17. Passengers say Cunard told them the cruise would no longer be calling at the destinations only once they were out at sea. The Cunard spokesman said it had originally been hoped passengers would find "plenty to enjoy" on board, even if the vessel did not stop as scheduled at the three ports. "We're sorry that despite the best efforts of officers and crew this has not proved to be the case for a significant number of people," he said. "We realise that the mood on board

might have further contributed to this." He added that Cunard's managing director was travelling to Rio and would be "personally meeting" passengers as they disembarked. Cunard is owned by Carnival Corporation, and David Dingle, managing director of Carnival UK, said the first 12 days of the cruise had been affected and passengers disembarking in Rio would get a full refund. "Those sailing all the way to Los Angeles will receive a partial refund, acknowledging the fact that first 12 days of their cruise has been affected in this way," he said.

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated today, states: The legal firm representing passengers on board passenger *Queen Mary 2* is to drop its proposed class action lawsuit against the ship's operators. Passengers on the ship, which docked at Rio de Janeiro this morning, are to be offered a full refund, including flight transfers, if they disembark. Capital Law said that it would now withdraw the threat of action against cruise firm Cunard. A statement from the law firm said: "Passengers are delighted that they have at last been dealt with reasonably and have been compensated fairly for their loss. "Capital Law can confirm that in these circumstances it will discontinue its class action against Cunard."

RAMOS III

See "Tropical Cyclone "Jim" under "Weather & Navigation".

REGOR

London, Jan 31 — Early today, fishing cutter *Regor* ran into the dyke of the Eemshaven in the estuary of River Ems. Most probably the cause was a technical failure in its steering gear. No one was hurt in this accident. It seems that there is not much damage to the dyke, but that will be investigated later. The 55-metre long vessel was towed free later today. There has been no delay to the in and out going shipping traffic. An investigation will be made by the local authorities.

REGOR (Georgia)

London, Feb 2 — Ref *Regor* (673 gt, built 1975), 4LIK, went aground on a dyke in Eemshaven at about 2030 hrs, Jan 31. It was refloated on the next tide by the Wagenborg Sleepdienst tug *Waterman*. The vessel had departed from Eemshaven, after discharging a cargo of fish, but after making a wrong manoeuvre, went aground on the dyke. *Waterman* was quickly on the scene, but could not get the vessel off until the next incoming tide. Once refloated the vessel proceeded under its own power to the quay in the Julianaharbour in Eemshaven. The police made an official report and the vessel was then given permission to depart. The vessel was not damaged. The damage to the dyke is to be investigated by Groningen Seaports.

RIGEL (U.S.A.)

London, Feb 1 — Following received from Coast Guard Seattle, timed 2200, UTC: Tank barge *Rigel* (5669 gt, built 1993) reported at 2200, UTC, Jan 30, in lat 45 16N, long 124 42W, with damage to stern and taking on water. Proceeded Portland, Oreg, where now arrived.

SAFMARINE ZAMBEZI (Liberia)

See "Brazil" under "Piracy".

SAINTE EMME (France)

London, Jan 27 — Following received from Coastguard Dover MRCC: Timed 0846, UTC: Trawler *Sainte Emme* (73 gt, built 1989) in collision with unknown fishing vessel in lat 50 36.38N, long 00 41.24E, at 0555, UTC. *Sainte Emme* reports via CROSS Gris Nez that its entire bridge has been demolished, no injuries. *Sainte Emme* making passage towards Boulogne. Timed 0958, UTC: Skipper of trawler *Mare Nostrum* (385 gt, built 1998) reports light contact made with French fishing vessel in lat 50 37.5N, long 00 46.4E.

London, Jan 27 — Following received from CROSS Gris Nez timed 1055, UTC: Trawler *Sainte Emme*, FVXG, 73.4 gt, is proceeding to Boulogne where eta 1500, local time, today.

London, Jan 27 — Following received from CROSS Gris Nez, timed 1640, UTC: Trawler *Sainte Emme* arrived safely alongside at Boulogne at 1400, UTC.

SEA RUNNER (Malta)

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

SEASpan 529 (Canada)

Vancouver, Jan 31 — Advised that repairs to barge *Seaspan 529* complete and it has been back in service for a week. — Lloyd's Agents.

SEEBRISE (Belize)

London, Feb 1 — General cargo *Seebrise* now named *Lady Hesen*, flying the North Korean flag, was reported passing Cape Finisterre on Jan 29, on a voyage Cork for Malta.

SHINSEI MARU NO.3 (Japan)

London, Jan 26 — A press report, dated today, states: The state of Israel today filed an indictment in the Haifa Magistrate's Court against the second officer of c.c. *Zim Asia*, a Montenegrin national, Filestro Zadrabfako, charging him with causing death by negligence for having collided with a Japanese fishing *Shinsei Maru No.3* and causing the deaths by drowning of seven fishermen. Even though he saw several fishing boats in the sea nearby, Zadrabfako allowed the other sailor on the bridge with him to leave his post to do other work. According to the indictment, Zadrabfako acted with over-confidence when he let the other sailor go when there were so many fishing vessels in the nearby waters. The officer's lawyer, Shmuel Keinan, charged that the authorities were discriminating against his client because he was a foreigner. He

pointed out that the state did not file any charges against the master of the vessel.

SICHEM PANDORA (Malta)

London, Jan 29 — Chem.tank *Sichem Pandora* arrived at Everingen, in the Netherlands, at 1000 hrs, Jan 28 and sailed later the same day, at 2140 hrs.

SIGMAGAS (Antigua & Barbuda)

See *Happy Bride*.

SITC BANGKOK (Turkey)

London, Feb 1 — C.c. *SITC Bangkok* was reported arriving at Hong Kong at 1717 hrs, Jan 30 and was today reported at North-west Lamma Anchorage, Hong Kong. (See issue of Dec 30.)

SKALVA (Lithuania)

Montreal, Jan 26 — General cargo *Skalva*: Transport Canada Safety Board requested discharge up to and around the fire area to get to the seed of the fire. Seventy bundles of timber were removed, which were partly charred to complete scrap. The seed of the fire was located seven tiers down and then reloading of the bundles was allowed. Twenty bundles were left behind due to there condition. A request to secured the stow was made and various bundles had to be shifted to fill the void space left by the charred bundles and the cargo discharged in Gaspé, as well as the spaces left by the bundles that shifted during transit. It took the crew three days, to resecure the cargo as crew was not experience in lumber handling. The vessel's owners P & I surveyor, requested the crew to secure the load. So the operation was delayed an extra three days. The vessel sailed for Jacksonville on Jan 18 and should arrive on Jan 26. The complete load of lumber in the hold is in bad shape and it was recommended that charterers P & I, appoint very experienced lumber expert to attend along with the surveyor to inspect the load once it arrives Jacksonville. — Lloyd's Agents.

SLOMAN PRODUCER (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Jan 27 — According to LMIU AIS, ro/ro *Sloman Producer* (7260 gt, built 2004) was in lat 35 49.6N, long 14 31.57E, at 1408, today, stationary and not under command. (Note — Understand *Sloman Producer* was towed to Marsaxlokk today after it had fire on board yesterday.)

London, Jan 30 — According to LMIU AIS ro/ro *Sloman Producer* was moored in lat 35 56 22N, long 14 42 05E, at 0939, UTC, today.

SOFIA (Malta)

Brest, Jan 28 — C.c. *Sofia* sailed from Brest on Jan 27, bound for Istanbul. — Lloyd's Agents.

SPEYBANK (Isle of Man)

London, Feb 1 — Following received from Singapore Port Operations, timed 0915, UTC, today: Ro/ro/c.c.

Speybank (18663 gt, built 1983) had a fire on board while under repair at the Pan-United Shipyard, Singapore, Jan 27. The fire was extinguished with the assistance of the Singapore Civil Defence Force. Extent of damage to vessel not known. (Note — *Speybank* arrived Singapore 1915, Jan 8.)

ST. JOSEPH THE WORKER (Philippines)

Manila, Feb 2 — The Philippine Coast Guard reported that a fire broke out in the cargo deck of passenger ro/ro *St. Joseph the Worker* (6090 gt, built 1976) early today. The vessel with 339 passengers had originated from Cagayan de Oro City in southern Philippines and was on its way to Bacolod City in central Philippines. At around 0330 hrs, while the vessel was off the coast of Hinoba-an and Sipalay City, in southern Negros Occidental, the crew noticed smoke coming from the vessel's wagon deck. As a precautionary measure, the master turned the vessel for the nearest landfall, Balatong Point off Bayawan, Negros Oriental, in case the order to abandon ship had to be given. The crew, however, was able to place the fire under control after four hours of battling the flames. The vessel then resumed its journey to Bacolod City where it is expected to arrive this afternoon. The Coast Guard said that the cause of fire was still to be determined. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

Manila, Feb 2 — Passenger ro/ro *St. Joseph the Worker* arrived at Bacolod Port at 1100 hrs, today. Negros Navigation spokesperson Gian Galvez said that the vessel is now alongside the Bacolod Port pier undergoing repairs to the damaged section of the wagon deck, where the fire originated. "There was only minor damage to the vessel as the automatic sprinkler system doused the fire before it could spread," he said, adding: "We are hoping to complete repairs today and obtain clearance from the Coast Guard for our departure at 1230 hrs tonight."

STAVTANK (NIS)

London, Jan 29 — Chemical/oil carrier *Stavtank* sailed Hamburg 1600, Jan 27, for Rotterdam.

STEFANIA (Malta)

London, Feb 2 — Bulk *Stefania*, which was contacted by another vessel while repairing at Shanghai Nov 23, has since left Shanghai. Vessel was reported under way on Jan 20.

SUAD N. (North Korea)

Tunis, Feb 1 — General cargo *Suad N.* is still in same position at Bizerta roads and it is understood it will be towed to Greece after tomorrow for repairs. — Lloyd's Agents.

SUN DANCER (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Jan 27 — Following received from Barranquilla Port Control Radio

Station, dated Jan 26: General cargo *Sun Dancer* was cut up into scrap in November 2003. (Note — *Sun Dancer* was holed at entrance to Barranquilla in February 1993 in heavy weather. Vessel proceeded to berth but capsized alongside pier. It was then righted but was subsequently arrested and reported abandoned in rusted condition.)

SVIR (Russia)

London, Jan 31 — General cargo *Svir* was reported passing through the Dardanelles, in a westerly direction, on passage Tuzla for Damietta.

SYDSTRAUM (NIS)

Poznan, Jan 31 — Agent informs that repairs to chem.tank *Sydstraum* should be completed by Feb 5. — Lloyd's Agents.

TOBA (Singapore)

London, Jan 30 — Vehicle *Toba* arrived Baltimore 1010, Jan 28, from Savannah and has subsequently sailed from Baltimore. According to LMIU AIS, vessel was in lat 38 04 37.18N, long 76 12 56.36W, at 0507, UTC, today, course 172 deg, speed 14.7 knots.

TOLMI (Greece)

Durban, Jan 30 — Bulk *Tolmi* (21305 gt, built 1989), from India, loaded, (bound Onne) arrived Durban Dec 5 as port of refuge with fishing line in stern tube alleged picked up Dec 2. Vessel entered dry dock at Durban where stern tube bush has been replaced. Vessel is still in dry dock, repairs have been completed but local strike is preventing the vessel leaving but it is hoped vessel will be afloat tomorrow. — Lloyd's Agents.

TOM TOUGH (Australia)

See *Global Peace*.

TONPU

Yokohama, Jan 31 — Barge *Tonpu* and pusher tug *Sumiwaka Maru No.57* were recovered from their capsized situation by a super crane on Jan 26. They were able to proceed under their their own power and they departed from Moji to Universal Shipping Corporation, Innoshima factory in Hiroshima Prefecture, for repairs, on Jan 27. — Lloyd's Agents.

TOR DANIA (NIS)

London, Jan 29 — Ro/ro *Tor Dania* sailed Bremerhaven Jan 27 for Cuxhaven.

TORM ALEXANDRA (Malta)

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated Jan 26, states: Feeder general cargo *Torm Alexandra*, which capsized and sank on its berth in the port of Monrovia in July 2001, is to be the target of new attempts to have the ship salvaged or removed. The vessel was loading containers when it capsized, with the ship taking a strong list to port as a container was lifted from the deck. It subsequently rolled over and sank with its remaining cargo of containers spilling

across the deck and into the water. Now after almost five years a salvage team from Israel is believed to have been contracted to make the latest attempt, after several previous efforts proved unsuccessful. Under the port's new management it seems the sight of a capsized and rusting ship lying on its side next to the container terminal hardly fits the preferred profile and orders have gone out to rid the port of Monrovia of the vessel. .

London, Jan 30 — A press report, dated today, states: At last, all efforts to have general cargo *Torm Alexandra* salvaged from the Freeport of Monrovia have been reached between the Global Security Seal and the National Port Authority. Although the cost of removal of the sunken ship stands at US\$3 million as reported to by the Global Security Seal executives, but their role to save it has been based on a kind gesture of the Operations Manager, Mr. Alexander Brooks. The salvaging of *Torm Alexandra* is expected to start on Feb 1 as the experts from Israel to carry on the operation are already in Liberia. Speaking to newsmen last weekend, the head of the Israeli expert team, Mr. Tsafir Sadeh said the entire exercise will last for six weeks. He said that they first came to Liberia to carry on some assessments for the removal of the sunken ship from the Freeport of Monrovia. Mr. Sadeh, who is also the Project Manager for the removal of *Torm Alexandra*, stated that a team of local divers will help in the process. "The Atlantic Diver Association in the country and Marine General Services will join us on this project," he noted. A ship bringing in the equipment to conduct the salvage operation has arrived in the country last weekend at the Freeport of Monrovia.

TRAMP (St. Vincent & Grenadines)

London, Jan 30 — Following received from Kiel dated today: General cargo *Tramp* (1181 gt, built 1978) and general cargo *Viola III* (2445 gt, built 1970) were in collision at kilometre 30.5, Kiel Canal, at 1135, yesterday, in dense fog. *Tramp* had a machine failure before the collision and drifted into the wrong lane. Both vessels were hit at the bow. Afterwards *Viola III* was able to proceed to Brunsbuettel under own power where it berthed in the Felsenkeller. *Tramp* proceeded to Kiel harbour and was detained there until the machine was repaired and investigated by experts. A crew from Letland meanwhile started to carry out temporary repairs to the damaged port bow by welding. (Note — *Tramp* had sailed Amsterdam 0455, Jan 27 for Norrkoping.)

London, Feb 1 — General cargo *Tramp* sailed Kiel 1900, local time, Jan 30, for Norrkoping, and according to LMIU AIS was reported in lat 57 56.6N, long 17 29.55E at 1040, Feb 1. General cargo *Viola III* was reported arriving at Hull at 1455, UTC, Jan 30.

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

TROY (Netherlands Antilles)

Istanbul, Jan 26 — General cargo *Troy* (1203 gt, built 1976), Canakkale for Constantza, cargo 1,500 lead-zinc compound, transiting Dardanelles, grounded at Marmara Eregli in lat 40 47N, long 28 03E, Jan 23. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Jan 30 — Following received from Ankara MSRCC, timed 1030, UTC: General cargo *Troy* is still aground, with refloating efforts in hand. It is hoped vessel will be afloat by tomorrow morning.

Istanbul, Jan 30 — General cargo *Troy*: Vessel still lying "as is" with no progress. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Jan 31 — Following received from Ankara MSRCC, timed 1250, UTC: General cargo *Troy* refloated at 1500, local time, yesterday and anchored at Tekirdag. Inspections have been carried out, revealing "no problems" with vessel.

TWIN STAR (Panama)

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated today, states: Panamanian bulk *Twin Star* (14437 gt, built 1998) was split in half today after it collided in heavy fog with Cyprus flagged bulk/c.c. *Pintail* (17949 gt, built 1983) near the Peruvian port of Callao, officials said. Twenty-two crew members from the *Twin Star* were rescued, said Roberto Colombo, general manager of ENAPU, Peru's national ports agency. He said a U.S. vessel, the *Alice*, also was struck but was not damaged. The broadcaster Radioprogramas said two crew members were taken to a local hospital, apparently with non-life threatening injuries. Local television broadcast images of the 150-metre *Twin Star* with its stern and bow ends jutting sharply from the water. An expanding fuel slick was visible, emerging from the sinking ship. The Panamanian vessel did not carry any potentially hazardous cargo, Colombo told reporters, "so the problem of contamination is limited to capacity of the ship's fuel tanks." Port officials said the accident occurred around 0717 hrs (1217 UTC) as the ships passed each other and that heavy fog appeared to have contributed to the incident. The *Twin Star* apparently was pulling out of the port, which serves Lima, the capital, when it collided with the *Pintail*, Callao Mayor Alex Kouri told reporters.

Lima, Jan 27 — There was a collision in Callao involving bulk/c.c. *Pintail* and bulk *Twin Star* at 0500 hrs (approx.), when the *Pintail* was departing and the *Twin Star* was arriving at the port. As a result of that collision one of the vessels hit an mv *Alice*. Right now *Twin Star* is sinking. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated today, states: Bulk *Twin Star* (14437 gt, built 1998) collided with two other vessels near the Peruvian port of Callao yesterday, splitting in two and leaving one sailor missing, officials said. Twenty-two crew members from the Panamanian vessel were rescued, said Roberto Colombo,

general manager of Peru's ports agency. Officials said the vessel first collided with bulk/c.c. *Pintail* (17949 gt, built 1983), sustaining heavy damage. It then struck Maltese-flagged general cargo *Alice* (13617 gt, built 1985), causing little damage but knocking one of its crew into the water. Rescue teams were searching for the sailor off Callao, a port city adjoining Lima, Peru's capital. Local television broadcast images of the 500-foot-long *Twin Star* with its stern and bow ends jutting sharply from the water. An expanding fuel slick was visible. Port officials said the accident occurred around sunrise as the ships travelled near each other in heavy fog. They said they didn't know exactly how the vessels collided.

Lima, Jan 28 — On Jan 27, there was a very heavy fog in Callao. Reportedly the fog lasted until this morning. It is our understanding that the bulk/c.c. *Pintail* was leaving the port of Callao when it collided with the bulk *Twin Star*. It is also our understanding that thereafter the *Twin Star* was to enter the port under her own power when general cargo *Alice*, which was leaving the port, collided with it. The understated findings were viewed from a boat near the incident area: - Port of Callao - The port has a traffic separation scheme. Pilotage in and out of the port is compulsory. Traffic on the Callao roads for major vessels is controlled by the Harbour Master. The Harbour Master's office monitors the traffic by radar and communicates by VHF. All communications by the Harbour Master to the vessels on the roads is recorded. The speed limit while entering or exiting the port is five knots. *Twin Star* is partly sunk, approximately on a northerly heading, very close to, or on, the traffic lane. It was sinking this morning and taking on water by the bow till about 1400 hrs, after which time it stabilized. It was noted to be apparently static from 1400 hrs until 1700 hrs. It appears that it has broken into three pieces, or at least suffered severe bending aft of the F'castle and in the middle. It apparently lost at least two hatch cover lids, which appear to be McGregor type, rolling hatch covers. They are double skinned and hollow. Some water appears to have entered the two lids and they are floating vertically on end, with what appears to be water inside which keeps them vertical. They were noted to have drifted about 300 metres, northwards in four, hrs. There are also signs on impact and oil stains on the floating hatch cover lids. There is an oil leak from the vessel. It is dark, medium-heavy oil, apparently an IFO. It has already spread out down stream from the vessel, and has in some parts the consistency of mousse. The Coast Guard has stretched out a couple of sections of contention barriers, but its effectiveness is unknown due to the restrictions in the area imposed on all observers. The prevailing current is from the south, as is the wind. Thus, the slick will head north, in the

general direction that the bow of the sunken ship is pointing to. This area is mostly industrial in nature, and the slick will not pose an immediate threat to flora or fauna. Furthermore, several miles north there are several MPM (multi point moorings), and the water is known to be less than pristine. Furthermore, there is a river to the north of the port whose effluent is contaminated with debris and some chemicals. There is some local fishing in the area by subsistence fishermen, but they should be able to avoid the immediate area of the spill with no difficulty. Some of the spill has slipped past the contention booms stretched out by the navy. The two or three sections already laid out will not suffice, particularly if the wind changes as it sometimes does at night into a northerly. In that case, the wind would blow contrary to the current, with an uncertain outcome. The other two vessels are evidently safe and at anchor. The *Alice* is about one nautical mile west of the sunken ship, and the *Pintail* about 1.75 nautical miles west-north-west of the sunken ship. *Alice* is laden with containers and general cargo. The vessel has relatively minor damage, which as far as we could ascertain consists of: Moderate denting of the bulb, head-on and slightly to port. Small perforation of the bulb, about 35 cms diameter, at about 6.40 m above the keel. The port side lifeboat is hanging partly loose, suspended by only one davit. The vessel is stable and in no apparent risk. There are no signs of oil leakage from the vessel. *Pintail* is afloat and at anchor, with a perforation well above water level. The damage to the vessel appears to be: Moderate to heavy denting of the bulb, between four and nine metres above the keel. A slanting perforation on the hull, running from the bow towards the starboard side. The perforation runs from the midline over a length of about three m along the starboard side. Judging by the dents on the bulb, the angle of incidence of the *Pintail* in relation to the other vessel appears to be head-on. The somewhat horizontal perforation along the starboard side, and heavy dent just forward of the perforation, indicates impact with a strong point on the other vessel, perhaps a horizontal structure. The perforation on the starboard side could be due to the relative movements of the two vessels immediately after the collision. The vessel is stable, with no signs of oil spill or oil stains in her immediate vicinity. No persons were allowed on board any of the vessels involved in the incident and are still not at this time. It has been programmed that the masters of each vessel give their respective manifestations to the Port Harbour Master today at 0830 hrs. However, a formal request for a postponement of this hearing has been requested and we are waiting for the results of the same. — Lloyd's Agents.

Lima, Jan 30 — Bulk/c.c. *Pintail*, bulk *Twin Star*, general cargo *Alice*: The aft part of bulk *Twin Star* has about 85% of its funnel under water and very slowly sinking further. It is possible by tomorrow that the entire vessel will be under water. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Jan 30 — A press report, dated Jan 29, states: Cyprus bulk/c.c. *Pintail* has collided in heavy fog with Panamanian bulk *Twin Star* which split in two on Friday near the port of Callao. Nicolaos Economides, a former master of the merchant navy, who is now the senior marine surveyor of the Ministry of Communication and Works' Department of Merchant Shipping, said yesterday that *Pintail* was empty at the time. He added that it had sustained slight damage to its starboard side but there were no injuries to its Ukrainian crew of 23. "*Pintail* is currently anchored outside the port, waiting for instructions on how to proceed. One of our surveyors will be sent to Peru next week to investigate."

Twenty-two crewmembers from the Panamanian ship were rescued, said Roberto Colombo, general manager of ENAPU, Peru's national ports agency. He said general cargo *Alice*, was also struck but was not damaged. "Apparently there are no fatalities to report," Colombo said. Callao Mayor Alex Kouri said no crewmembers were missing but two were taken to a local hospital with minor injuries. Local television broadcast images of *Twin Star*, with its stern and bow ends jutting sharply from the water. An expanding fuel slick was visible, emerging from the sinking ship.

Ymuiden, Jan 30 — Bulk *Twin Star*, collision with bulk/c.c. *Pintail* and general cargo *Alice*: Wijismuller Salvage BV have been contracted to remove oil from the *Twin Star* and are mobilising personnel and equipment to assist. — Wijismuller Salvage BV.

Lima, Jan 31 — There has been no interim decision about repairs to bulk/c.c. *Pintail*. The classification society has not yet placed a surveyor on board the vessel and it will be their decision as to where and when repairs will take place. The three masters involved in the collisions have still not given their respective manifestations to the Port Harbour Master as bad weather (fog) once again caused the Port to be closed for some time. Currently only the antenna of bulk *Twin Star* is showing above water. However, an underwater survey will be carried out in order to view the hull damage and define the point of impact. — Lloyd's Agents.

TWO DUKES (U.S.A.)

London, Jan 30 — Following received from Coast Guard Boston, timed 1440, UTC: Fishing *Two Dukes* (49 gt, built 1985) was reported disabled due damaged clutch in lat 40 19N, long 68 00W, at 1905, local time, Jan 28. Vessel is being towed to Cape Cod, where ETA 1600, local time, Jan 30.

London, Feb 1 — Following received from Coast Guard Boston, timed 1445, UTC: Fishing *Two Dukes* arrived Cape Cod in tow yesterday morning and moored safely there.

TYUMEN (Russia)

Busan, Jan 30 — According to the Korean Marine Police, about 2,000 logs were washed overboard from Russian general cargo *Tyumen* at about 0800 hrs, Jan 24, in the position lat 37 25.24N, long 129 53.36E, about 49 miles off the east coast of Donghae, Korea. The vessel was seized by the Korean Authorities as it tried to evade the Marine Police's order to arrange removal of the floating logs and tried to flee from the Marine Police. A Marine Police Patrol Boat chased *Tyumen* up to the southern sea of Korea. The vessel was seized "from Jan 27 until today". The vessel was towed to Hwasoon Port, in Jeju Island. The Marine Police commenced recovering the floating logs (50 cm in diameter x five metre length in average) on Jan 25 to prevent any accidents, as the floating logs could pose a danger to fishing vessels and passenger ferries operating between Donghae and Ulneung Island and other vessels. To date, some 800 logs are reported to have been recovered. A Marine Police helicopter located two shoals of logs totalling about 100 pieces today in the vicinity of Ulneung Island. Recovery work is scheduled to be continued until Feb 2. MOMAF are demanding security to the amount of KWon550,000,000.- (about US\$550,000) in exchange for the release the vessel in order to ensure payment of expenses incurred during the recovery of the logs. — Lloyd's Sub-agents.

UMFOLOZI (Cyprus)

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated Jan 26, states: A large floating dry dock arrived in the Walvis Bay harbour yesterday the first of its kind along the western coastline of Africa. "This is a deliberate effort by the Namibian Government through NamPort to intensify ship-repair activities with the aim of job creation and economic development," said NamPort Managing Director Sebby Kankondi. The dock was bought in Malta for some N\$30 million by Elgin Brown & Hamer Namibia, a joint venture between NamPort and Elgin Brown & Hamer, which will do all the repairs. It took the tug Smitwijs 28 days to tow the dock from Malta to Walvis Bay, where it is now docked alongside Berth 8. It will be fitted with equipment before being towed to its prepared basin behind the tanker jetty. The dock will be equipped with three cranes, of which two are currently being refurbished in Durban. Full operation is scheduled to start in May. The dock has been operating under the name *Lara 1* until now, but will soon be renamed *Namdock* to "better suit its location and to reflect its future role in Namibia," said Kankondi. C.c. *Umfolozi*, which sank in the Walvis

Bay harbour after a collision with a dredger in September, could be the first vessel to be repaired at the new dock. *Umfolozi* was said to be too old to be salvaged and was destined to be scrapped. However, the vessel was recently bought by Wesco Salvage and sold to a company based in London. *Umfolozi* will be repaired locally before leaving for the Mediterranean.

UNIMAR (Gibraltar)

St. Petersburg, Jan 30 — At 2130 hrs, Jan 29, general cargo *Unimar* (2820 gt, built 1997), with a cargo of scrap metal, "suffered a wreck" in the Gulf of Finland near Gogland island, due to an explosion in engine room. The cause of explosion is unknown. According to officials, eight crew members were evacuated with assistance of the vessel *Sankt-Petersburg* which was in the area at the time of the accident. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Jan 30 — Following received from Turku MRCC, timed 0710 hrs: General cargo *Unimar* issued a mayday yesterday evening, reporting water in the engine-room. The crew evacuated into lifeboats and were all safely rescued. *Unimar* is currently being towed to Kotka.

Helsinki, Jan 30 — In the evening of Jan 29, eight crew members were evacuated from general cargo *Unimar*, St. Petersburg for Tornio, with a cargo of steel onto *Sankt-Petersburg*, in the Gulf of Finland. No injuries were reported. The 90m long general cargo ship, sailing under Gibraltar flag, got into distress in Russian territorial waters, after water flooded into the engine room. The cause of the flooding is, as yet, undetermined. The vessel was not in acute danger of sinking. A Finnish tugboat will tow the vessel to Kotka for further inspection. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Jan 30 — A press report, dated today, states: The eight crew members of general cargo *Unimar* were rescued late last night in the Gulf of Finland. The crew had abandoned their ship when water was found in the vessel's engine-room, the Finnish Coastguard said. The vessel was moored in Kotka at 1230 today. As the accident occurred in Russian territorial waters, the rescue mission was conducted by Russian authorities. Lieutenant Samu Hiljanen of the Finnish coastguard said as the ship was only carrying its own fuel, there was no risk of considerable oil spills. Traffic manager at the Port of Kotka, Markku Koskinen, stated that the vessel posed no threat to its surrounding environment. "No oil leakage has been identified in the preliminary checks carried out on the vessel," said Mr Koskinen. He further noted that the preliminary checks produced no evidence of an explosion or other such incident. The vessel is reported to be carrying some 3,000 tonnes of steel.

St. Petersburg, Jan 31 — General cargo *Unimar* was towed to Finland yesterday. No spillage of diesel oil at the place of accident was noted. — Lloyd's Agents.

Helsinki, Jan 31 — General cargo *Unimar* was berthed at Kotka at 1220 hrs, Jan 30. — Lloyd's Agents.

Helsinki, Jan 31 — General cargo *Unimar*: According to information available the vessel's engine-room was flooded after an unsuccessful attempt by the crew to repair a leaking seacock (cooling water intake). The owners have signed a salvage agreement with Alfons Hakans Oy. Hakans has also been contracted to clean and preserve the engine and auxiliaries. — Lloyd's Agents.

London, Feb 1 — Following received from Kiel, dated today: The eight crew of *Unimar* arrived at Kiel on board the Netherlands c.c. *OOCL St. Petersburg* on Jan 31. They disembarked from the vessel in the Holtenau locks of the Kiel Canal when it headed for Brunsbuttel. *Unimar* had sustained water ingress in the engine-room in the Baltic off the Finnish port of Kotka on Jan 29. *OOCL St. Petersburg* responded to the Mayday calls and tried to assist, but finally *Unimar* had to be abandoned by the crew which was taken on board by the container vessel. *Unimar* was subsequently taken in tow by a tug and towed into Kotka.

VARANDEY (Russia)

Vladivostok, Jan 30 — Sakhalin Salvage Centre report ro/ro *Varandey* (1491 gt, built 1985), owned by ZAO "Kupets" (Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk), was thrown on the coastal rocks at Olya bight (northern part of Iturup island) during storm weather, Jan 12. The vessel was leaving her berth after discharging at the port of Reidovo. No injuries to crew members, no oil spillage occurred. Salvage vessel *Rubin* arrived the site for assistance early morning, Jan 14. Seven holes in ballast tanks and empty fuel tanks were revealed by the divers. They carried out necessary works to eliminate leakages. Since arrival the site *Rubin* made repeated attempts to heave the casualty off the rocks during high tides. However, all the attempts were failed. As it was discovered, the starboard side of the *Varandey* was in touch with underwater rock, meanwhile its forward part was jammed in a rocky gap. The wrecking operations are complicated by Olya bight navigable area, which is around 200 metres in diameter. Moreover, remainders of two wrecks in the bight are adversely affecting the possibility to manoeuvre. In the circumstances it was decided to engage one more salvage vessel - specialized *Agat*. Vessel carries on board the pumps and other salvage equipment required for maintaining the floatation of distressed vessel. Joint salvage operation presumes that one salvage vessel will rock the distressed one, the other one will try to heave it off from the shoal. *Agat* sailed the port of Korsakov at 1300, Jan 19 and came to northern part of Iturup Island Jan 20. Due to heavy weather conditions no salvage operations were performed till

present time. Reportedly, at 0900, local time, today, *Agat* is entering the bight for assistance. — Lloyd's Agents.

VERTIGO (Jamaica)

London, Jan 27 — Information received from Copenhagen, dated today, states: Bulk *Vertigo* is still at Fredericia, waiting for a tug before it can proceed. (See issue of Jan 26.)

London, Jan 30 — Following received from Aarhus RCC, timed 1025, UTC: Bulk *Vertigo* is still at Fredericia. It is hoped vessel will sail tomorrow under tug escort for Szczecin for repairs.

London, Feb 1 — Following received from Aarhus MRCC, timed 1055, UTC: Bulk *Vertigo* remains at Fredericia, waiting to proceed to Szczecin for repairs.

VIOLA III (Antigua & Barbuda)

See *Tramp*.

WESTERN QUEEN

See "Tropical Cyclone "Jim" under "Weather & Navigation".

WESTERSCHELDEBORG (Netherlands)

London, Jan 30 — General cargo *Westerscheldeborg* arrived at St. Petersburg on Jan 18 and sailed on Jan 20, bound for Hundested, Denmark.

WILSON RHINE (Antigua & Barbuda)

London, Feb 1 — An investigation has been launched after two cargo vessels collided in the port of Immingham on the River Humber. General cargo *Wilson Rhine* (1171 gt, built 1998) was moored at Holme Hook anchorage when general cargo *Kindred* (2206 gt, built 1976) collided with it late yesterday night, a Humber coastguard spokesman said. None of the 13 crew aboard the two ships was injured and the vessels, both coasters, suffered only slight damage. The incident has been reported to the Marine Accident Investigation Branch of the Department for Transport.

London, Feb 1 — Following received from Coastguard Humber MRSC, timed 1232, UTC: At 2305, UTC, Jan 31, general cargo *Wilson Rhine*, at anchor, in ballast, at Holme Hook Anchorage in the River Humber at the entrance to Immingham, in lat 53 39N, long 00 12W, was struck by general cargo *Kindred*, with a cargo of glass, which was outward from the River Trent to bunker in the Holme Hook Anchorage. Both vessels had a pilot onboard at the time of incident and both have since departed, *Wilson Rhine* for Sauda, Norway and *Kindred* for Italy. (Note — *Wilson Rhine* sailed Neap House at 1830 hrs, Jan 31, for Sauda and *Kindred* sailed Grove Wharf at 1914, Jan 31 for Marsala.)

WOLGASTERN (Isle of Man)

London, Feb 2 — Information received from Kiel, dated today, states: Ro/ro *Estraden* (18205 gt, built 1999), on charter to Mann Lines, was in collision with chemical/oil carrier

Wolgastern (14400 gt, built 2000) close to the Rade Bridge, near Schacht-Audorf, in the Kiel Canal this morning.. After the collision *Wolgastern* ran into the embankment, but came free under own power one hour later. The canal was closed until the ship was free. Both ships were damaged above the waterline. (Note — According to LMIU AIS, at 1028 today *Wolgastern* was in lat 53 54 34.44N, long 09 10 21E, and at the same time, *Estraden*, which sailed Turku Jan 31, was in lat 53 54 29.82N, long 09 10 13.32E.)

ZIM ASIA (Israel)

See *Shinsei Maru No.3*.



BRAZIL

London, Jan 31 — C.c. *Safmarine Zambezi* (27322 gt, built 2002) is reported in Brazilian newspapers as having been robbed by thieves while berthed at the Tecondi Container Terminal at the port of Santos, Brazil. According to these reports the thieves arrived alongside in a motor boat and stevedore accomplices on board began throwing cargo taken from one of the containers down to them. An alert guard noticed what was going on and sounded the alarm, leading to a high speed chase across the harbour with the port's water police in hot pursuit. The robbers in the motor boat managed to get away by running their boat into the mangrove swamps on the other side of the bay and escaping on foot. However the accomplices on board the vessel were not so fortunate and have been taken into custody. (Note — *Safmarine Zambezi* arrived Santos Jan 24.)

Santos, Jan 27 — C.c. *Safmarine Zambezi* sailed Santos Jan 25 for Montevideo. — Lloyd's Agents.

SIERRA LEONE

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated today, states: Assistant Inspector General of Police Operations, Richard Miobgeh yesterday stated in their usual Press briefing at Police Headquarter that some pirates attempted to hijack a Korean fishing vessel. The vessel was trawling off Yeliboya while it was attacked. The pirate vessel containing some 13 vigilantes had two of them board the fishing vessel and attempted to hijack it. The police revealed unfortunately for the pirates, Nova/ Maritime Personnel close by came swiftly to their rescue. One of the pirates escaped by jumping overboard after they had shot the Korean Captain in the hand. The other pirate Kasim Sillah was arrested with one Short Machine Gun (SMG), 2 magazines (1 empty the other had 13 rounds in) and was

attired in combat fatigues. Kassim is currently with the police helping with investigation. The Korean vessel captain is responding to treatment.

SOMALIA

London, Jan 26 — A press report, dated Jan 25, states: Armed pirates have hijacked general cargo *Al Manara* off the coast of Somalia, holding 20 of its crew hostage, an ocean crime watchdog says. The attack on *Al Manara* on Sunday (Jan 22) and another launched from a so-called “mother ship” last Friday, come only days after a US Navy warship captured a band of suspected pirates with a cache of arms. Jayant Abhyankar, deputy director of the International Maritime Bureau, said today: “With these attacks we now have a grand total of five vessels and around 100 mariners being held hostage in Somalia, it was as many as 200, and some have been held for four months.” The IMB said gunmen stormed *Al Manara* 150 nautical miles off the east coast of Somalia, threatened the crew, and are now demanding a ransom for their release. One industry newspaper today reported that the crew were low on drinking water and supplies. In a second attack, the IMB said pirates in two speed boats, chased and fired machine-guns at a dry bulk vessel off Somalia’s east coast before giving up on an attempted boarding. The IMB said the speed boats were launched from a “mother ship” similar to one that launched attacks in the Indian Ocean last November. The bureau said there had been 38 attacks since last March, including against oil tankers and cruise ships. The wave of attacks has badly shaken merchant shipping, which relies heavily on key international trade routes that snake down Somalia’s coastline, Africa’s longest. At the weekend the US Navy reported it had pursued and caught a suspected pirate ship after receiving a report of an attempted attack. According to the IMB, the US Navy is interrogating 10 Somali men and 16 Indians found on board. The Indians are thought to be crew from a vessel hijacked near Mogadishu and used to attack a number of other vessels. The US Navy’s Fifth Fleet based in the Gulf has issued a warning to merchant shipping to stay at least 200 nautical miles off Somalia’s coast.

London, Jan 26 — A press report, dated today, states: One of four Taiwanese fishing boats hijacked last year off the Somalia coast has been set free, Taiwan’s government says. “Under the rescue efforts by related government units and ship owners, fishing *Chung Yi 218* has safely set sail from Somali waters and was on its way home,” Taiwan’s Fisheries Administration said in a statement. The *Chung Yi 218* and two other ships were seized separately on August 16. A fourth ship, fishing *Feng Kong*, was hijacked in November. “The crews on the other three ships are safe and we will continue the rescue efforts,” the Taiwanese statement said.

London, Jan 30 — Following broadcast warning issued at 1111, UTC, Jan 29: General cargo *Al Manara* (3053 gt, built 1969) disabled and adrift in lat 03 34S, long 49 56E. Vessels in vicinity requested to keep a sharp lookout and assist if possible. Reports to be sent to Seychelles Radio.

London, Feb 2 — A press report, dated Feb 1, states: Amphibious assault vessel *USS Nassau* embarked units and provided assistance to distressed general cargo *Al Manara* (3053 gt, built 1969) off the coast of Kenya yesterday while conducting maritime security operations (MSO) in the area. *Al Manara* reported a need for provisions, engineering assistance and medical attention. The crew on board *Nassau* responded as part of their MSO mission to provide supplies, medicine and assistance to the vessel’s crew. “We received a report from Coalition Task Force (CTF) 150 stating that the *Al Manara* had had an engineering casualty approximately 680 miles off the coast of Kenya and was in need of provisions until assistance could be provided by another source,” said Cmdr. Edward Murdock, *Nassau*’s operations officer. “Upon arrival, we assessed the situation and, with the embarked units “helicopters, LCUs (Utility Landing Craft), the EOD (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) unit and the ship’s force “we worked together as a team to provide food and water as well as medical care for four of their crew.” The sea state at the time proved challenging, as did the fact that those involved had never worked alongside a cargo vessel like *Al Manara*. After delivering thousands of gallons of water and food to *Al Manara*, *Nassau*’s responders took four *Al Manara* crew members back to *Nassau* to receive medical treatment from the ship’s medical department. *Nassau* supplied *Al Manara* with 10 days of food and water while the ship waited for a tug to pull it into port.

Port State Control



GERMANY

London, Jan 26 — Information received from Kiel, dated today: General cargo *Libra* (4489 gt, built 1984) was detained in the port of Brunsbittel last week. Investigators found that the machine was damaged. A crane was also damaged. The vessel was thus not allowed to continue its voyage. Repairs were carried out until Jan 23, but it remained in Brunsbittel as it was still waiting for some spare parts for the machine. (Note — *Libra* passed Brunsbittel east Jan 14 and, according to LMIU AIS was in lat 57 58.5N, long 18 19.52E at 1300, Jan 23.)

UNITED KINGDOM

London, Jan 27 — A Maritime and Coastguard Agency press release, dated today, states: At 2100 yesterday Port State Control offices from the Maritime and Coastguard Agency detained ro/ro *Sea Runner* (10669 gt, built 1978) at the port of Fleetwood. *Sea Runner* was detained after it was involved in a pollution incident when approximately two cubic metres of fuel oil was pumped into the River Wyre. It has subsequently been found by the attending Port State Control officer that fuel oil had been pumped overboard from a ballast tank. The ballast tank is adjacent to the fuel oil bunker tank. As such it is believed that the division between the tanks has been breached. Due to the breach between tanks the safety of the ship has been compromised. The bilge/ballast system has been contaminated with oil. During loading operations the master of the vessel was required to discharge ballast water due to the tide. Upon noticing that the ballast water was contaminated, pumping operations were immediately suspended and the master of the vessel notified Stena Line, who in turn notified the Maritime and Coastguard Agency. The master of this vessel acted responsibly by notifying the authorities. The vessel has been detained by the MCA until such time that the Maltese flag state authority and Bureau Veritas Classification Society confirm that the integrity of the hull has been restored and or measures put in place to allow the vessel to sail to a repair port. The vessel is currently at a safe anchorage off Fleetwood Harbour. Procedures have been put in place by the Fleetwood Port Authority to deal with the pollution that has entered the water, and all appropriate authorities have been notified.

Seizures & Arrests



AEGEAN I (Greece)

London, Jan 30 — A report in the Jan 27 issue of “Newsfront” states: Passenger *Aegean I* (11563 gt, built 1973), seized in the second half of December by Rivermont Shipping and Trading Inc in pursuit of a Euros 16,167,323.83 claim against the registered owners, Dolphin Hellas Shipping SA, has been listed for auction on Feb 8. Currently lying in Piraeus, the vessel carries a reserve price of Euros five million.

AL BIRUNI (Egypt)

Alexandria, Feb 2 — General cargo *Al Biruni* is still under arrest at Alexandria. — Lloyd’s Agents.

ALBATROS (Cambodia)

Trieste, Feb 1 — Ro/ro *Albatros* remains under permanent detention at Trieste. — Lloyd’s Agents.

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

AUDREY

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated Jan 27, states: Ricarido Jorge, the owner of tug *Audrey* stuck in Bahrain for a year, is due to arrive here next week. He was unable to get to Bahrain on Tuesday (Jan 24) after he was bumped off the flight he was originally booked to take. However, Philippine Embassy officials yesterday managed to secure a seat for him on a direct flight from Manila. Embassy consular assistant Ramon Nerida said that the owner *Audrey*, will be arriving in Bahrain on Feb 3. For the past two weeks, Mr Jorge said, he has been trying to book a seat on board any airline to Bahrain, but experienced difficulty after airlines informed him that all flights were fully booked until Feb 5. Mr Jorge hopes to auction off the 100-ft ship and settle a court case filed against him by the ship's charter. While in Bahrain, Mr Jorge also plans to meet his Bahraini lawyer and officials at both the embassy and the Justice Ministry. A court case was filed against him by the UAE company, Inventra General Trading Dubai, which chartered the ship for a towing job in the Gulf in late 2004. Inventra is now demanding that Mr Jorge pay \$102,000 (BD38,556) for losses incurred. The next court hearing will be on Feb 26. He said he also hoped to settle the unpaid salaries of his nine-member crew, though he disputes their combined claim for over \$34,000 (BD12,852).

BIGA (Canary Islands)

Bilbao, Feb 1 — General cargo *Biga* is still under embargo at Bilbao. — Lloyd's Agents.

BM 2 (Panama)

London, Jan 26 — General cargo *BM 2* (1182 gt, built 1993), HO3778, which arrived at Hong Kong at 0101 hrs, today, is now reported at Western Anchorage No.1, Hong Kong, under arrest.

London, Jan 27 — General cargo *BM 2* is still reported at Western Anchorage No.1, Hong Kong, but it is no longer reported to be under arrest.

BOREAS (Cyprus)

Bilbao, Feb 1 — General cargo *Boreas* is still under embargo at the port of Bilbao. — Lloyd's Agents.

CANADIAN VESSEL DETAINED BY SOUTH AFRICA

London, Jan 29 — A press report, dated Jan 28, states: South African authorities have detained a Canadian-registered anti-whaling vessel that has been harassing Japanese ships in the Antarctic on the grounds that it is not seaworthy. The ship's captain said today that it would be impossible to meet conditions set for the release of the vessel, held since Wednesday (Jan 25), because South Africa has classed it as a commercial vessel and Canada had registered it as a pleasure craft. "The certificates required for a commercial vessel can not be issued by Canada to a yacht," Paul Watson

said in a commentary posted on the website of the Sea Shepherd environmentalist organization. The South African Maritime Authority contends the vessel does not have the necessary safety certificates and so can not be classed as fit for the high seas. "As soon as we entered the port we were ordered detained for not having a security certificate on board," Watson said. "We've never had one for the simple reason that only commercial ships carry this certificate and we are registered as a pleasure craft." The boat docked in Cape Town after spending 50 days in the Antarctic with vessels from Greenpeace on a mission to prevent Japan's whaling fleet from killing 850 minke whales and 10 fin whales. Mr. Watson said he had met officials at the Canadian Consulate in Cape Town and they were looking into the matter.

DAMANIA-1 (India)

Mumbai, Feb 1 — Ferry *Damania-1* is currently reported in the Mumbai Port Trust records as being docked alongside No. 'G', P.D. Mumbai, under High Court arrest. — Lloyd's Agents.

FADELSIA (Marshall Islands)

Mumbai, Feb 1 — Bulk *Fadelsia* (19878 gt, built 2000) is currently reported in the Mumbai Port Trust records as being "anchored in stream", detained by the M.M.D. — Lloyd's Agents. (Note — *Fadelsia* arrived at Mumbai on Jan 16.)

FARLEY MOWAT (Canada)

London, Jan 26 — A press report, dated today, states: The anti-whaling ship, research *Farley Mowat* (648 gt, built 1958), which has spent six weeks harassing Japanese whalers in the Antarctic, has been detained in Cape Town harbour by South African authorities. The Canadian-registered ship, which belongs to the activist Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, was detained when it docked yesterday afternoon after returning from the Antarctic. The ship, according to a statement it released, has been "ambushing" Japanese whalers, "hitting them and then chasing them again". It has been placed under guard for the duration of its indefinite detention. "This action is very detrimental" The captain, Paul Watson, and first mate Paul Cornelissen have also been detained. The authorities say the detention is because of inadequate safety measures on board, but Sea Shepherd believes it is a ploy by Canada and South Africa, under pressure from Japan, to keep the vessel from harassing Japan's whaling fleet. On Wednesday the department of transport served papers on the vessel that said it "appears to be inadequately manned and is without any safety certification" and was in contravention of the Merchant Shipping Act. The South African Maritime Safety Authority (Samsa) served papers that said the vessel was "not in possession of an international ship security certificate or a ship

security plan". Samsa ordered that a guard, approved by the port security officer, be permanently stationed at the gangway of *Farley Mowat* and that another "continuously patrol the deck" during the ship's stay. Herbert Henrich, an adviser to the board of Sea Shepherd, said: "This is obviously because of pressure from Japan on Canada. They want to make things difficult. "They say the vessel is inadequately manned by referring to some Canadian regulation that says the captain and first mate must be Canadian. The captain is, but the first mate is Dutch. Normally this rule would not apply outside Canada. "This action by the South African government is a most amazing step and very detrimental in terms of its environmental record." Japanese whalers are catching more than 900 whales, purportedly for "scientific" purposes, in the Antarctic this summer. The whale meat is sold as an expensive delicacy after scientific samples have been taken. Anti-whaling groups believe Japan's scientific claims are a cover for commercial whaling, which is not allowed under International Whaling Commission rules. Watson said in an emailed statement this week that his mission in the Antarctic, where he had been working for six weeks with Greenpeace ships, was not to protest against whaling, but "to aggressively shut down the outlaw activities of this Japanese whaling fleet". "Because we are slower than the whalers, we have to rely on ambushing them, hitting them and then chasing them again." When one Japanese whaler refused to move out of the Antarctic Whaling Sanctuary, "*Farley Mowat* slammed into their starboard side to convey that this was a serious matter. They began to run and we have not seen them since." Samsa was not available for comment. The Canadian High Commission was asked for comment, but failed to respond.

Cape Tow, Jan 26 — South Africa has detained anti-whaling vessel, research *Farley Mowat*, and its master in Cape Town harbour over safety concerns after the Canadian vessel spent weeks harassing Japanese whalers in Antarctic waters. An official from the South African Maritime Safety Authority (SAMSAs) said the vessel did not have the required certification. "They don't have the right certificates for the master, the first mate or the chief engineer," the official said today. The *Farley Mowat* docked in Cape Town yesterday after seven weeks at sea during which it harassed Japanese whaling vessels in the Antarctic seas. It departed Melbourne, Australia, on Dec 6. The official said the detention was in line with Canadian maritime laws and followed correspondence from Canada requesting the authorities to check the vessel. — Reuters.

London, Jan 31 — Canadian government is investigating the crew structure and the use of the research *Farley Mowat* "as a pleasure craft"

following its detention in South Africa and its recent alleged ramming of a Japanese whaling vessel in the Antarctic. Operated by the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, the vessel, its master and the first mate were detained by the South African authorities when it docked in Cape Town harbour last Wednesday over safety concerns. The vessel, which originally departed from Melbourne, Australia on Dec 6, spent six weeks harassing Japanese whalers, and on Jan 9 used a device called a "can-opener" attached to its hull to slam on to the starboard side of the New Shipping Kaisha-managed *Oriental Bluebird*. This already prompted an investigation by Transport Canada that could lead to criminal charges based on the collision regulations of the Canada Shipping Act. The South African Maritime Safety Authority (Samsa) served papers that affirmed the vessel "was not in possession of an international ship security certificate or a ship security plan." *Farley Mowat* master Captain Paul Watson and first mate Paul Cornelissen have been detained while the vessel has been placed under guard. The vessel can also be detained if it doesn't meet Canadian requirements, which is the case in this instance. Under Canadian regulations, the vessel is of a tonnage requiring both a certified master and first mate to be Canadian nationals. But, according to the crew list provided, the master is Canadian and the first mate is Dutch and neither has Canadian certificates of competency. The Canadian federal transport department confirmed that the *Farley Mowat* is registered in Canada as a pleasure craft.

Cape Town, Jan 31 — Research *Farley Mowat* was detained by the S.A. Maritime Safety Authority due to discrepancies in respect of Safety Certificates and officer's certification. The vessel remains detained at Cape Town. — Lloyd's Agents.

JAVA BASSET

See *Java Beagle*.

JAVA BEAGLE (Singapore)

Karachi, Jan 28 — Anchor handling tugs *Java Beagle* and *Java Basset* are still inport, at Baba Bhit Mooring, due non-payment of Karachi Port dues. — Lloyd's Agents. (See issue of Jan 20.)

NOVOMOSKOVSK (RUSSIA)

Buenos Aires, Jan 24 — General cargo *Novomoskovsk* is still berthed at the port of Ibicuy. The vessel remains under arrest and abandoned with no prospects of release in the near future. The vessel is in apparent sound condition. — Lloyd's Agents. (Note — *Novomoskovsk* was reported on Mar 10, 1997, under arrest at Ibicuy.)

PAN YUN BO 1 (China)

London, Jan 28 — General cargo *Pan Yun Bo 1* is still reported at Western Anchorage No.1, Hong Kong, under detention.

PROTON (North Korea)

London, Jan 30 — A report in the Jan 27 edition of "Newsfront" states: General cargo *Proton* has been listed for auction on Feb 1. Lying in Ambelakoa, Salamina, the vessel carries a start-up price of \$80,000. (See issue of Nov 19.)

RAMEY TIDE (India)

Mumbai, Feb 1 — Anchor handling tug/supply *Ramey Tide* (851 gt, built 1979) is currently reported in the Mumbai Port Trust records as being "anchored in stream", detained by the Mumbai Police Authorities. — Lloyd's Agents.

SALEM TWO (Egypt)

Alexandria, Jan 14 — General cargo *C.H.M.T.*, ex *Salem Two*, remains under arrest at Alexandria. — Lloyd's Agents.

SANDRIEN (Bolivia)

Amsterdam, Feb 1 — Chem.tank *Sandrien* is still at Amsterdam Shipdock, under embargo. — KVSA Rapportage.

SEA EMPEROR (Georgia)

Kochi, Jan 30 — Bulk *Sea Emperor* is still at Kochi Port. Understand outstanding crew wages settled by the owners. However, sailing of vessel from Kochi is still not finalised. — Lloyd's Agents.

SUN DANCER (Antigua & Barbuda)

See under "Marine."

TURAMAN (Panama)

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated today, states: Almost 150 tonnes of patagonian toothfish seized from a foreign fishing trawler is up for sale. The Australian Fisheries Management Authority is seeking tenders from people interested in buying the highly sought after fish. The catch was seized when customs and fisheries officers boarded the fish factory *Turaman* in the Southern Ocean in September. It is alleged the fish were caught illegally. The ship was escorted to Hobart and charges have since been laid. Proceeds from the sale will be held by the Commonwealth until the legal proceedings have finished.

TYUMEN (Russia)

See under "Marine."



GUDERMES, RUSSIA

London, Jan 27 — An accident damaged a pipeline running through the southern Russian region of Chechnya, cutting off gas supplies to parts of the capital Grozny and the districts of Shali and Kurchaloi, the Emergency Situations Ministry said

today. The pipeline ruptured late yesterday outside the northern Chechen city of Gudermes. Experts were trying to determine the cause, said Vladimir Gerasin, a ministry official in the southern regional headquarters in Rostov-on-Don. Specialists from the ministry and the gas utility were at the site, he said, but there was no mention of any representatives of law enforcement agencies - suggesting authorities have discounted the possibility of sabotage or terrorism.

PENZA REGION, RUSSIA

London, Jan 26 — A press report, dated today, states: An oil spill on the damaged Druzhba (Friendship) main pipeline in the Penza region has been localised, sources in the Volga-Urals regional centre of the Russian Ministry of Emergency Situations told Itar-Tass on Thursday. There have been no casualties and hurt. The damage done to the environment is being specified. According to rescuers, the distance from the oil spill to residential houses is two-three kilometres. The emergency aftermath is to be liquidated tentatively before 17:00, Moscow time on Thursday. The emergency on the oil pipeline main occurred on Wednesday due to a gate flange breakdown resulting from violation of safety rules during scheduled maintenance. Some 20 tonnes of oil were spilt on an area of 1,200 square metres near the city of Kuznetsk in the Penza region. The pipeline stretch between the two gate valves is currently shut off.

SOUTHERN RUSSIA

London, Jan 26 — Restoration work on the natural gas pipeline leading to Georgia that was severely damaged in explosions over the weekend are expected to be completed on Saturday (Jan 28), the press centre of the Georgian president's envoy to the region said today. "The meeting [between the envoy and a Georgian repair company] focused on speeding up the repairs on the gas pipeline and resuming natural gas deliveries to Georgia in [their] previous volumes." The energy crisis began January 22 when explosions in a natural gas pipeline and a power line in southern Russia cut off Russian gas and electricity supplies to Georgia and Armenia. The crisis escalated when a major power failure in the early hours today in Georgia left the country's capital of Tbilisi without electricity. Currently, 95% of consumers in Tbilisi are without power, while electricity in the country's western region has been restricted to vital facilities. The east has been almost entirely cut off from power supplies.

London, Jan 30 — A press report, dated Jan 29, states: A week after three major energy arteries were severed, Georgian officials announced this weekend they have broken through the 'energy blockade' as direct gas shipments from Russia were restored yesterday. "In different towns and villages of Georgia the gas

delivery will be restored within six days," Energy Minister Nika Gilauri stated at Sunday a press conference. "We started gas delivery in the capital and will start in regions tomorrow," he said. Gas through the patched pipeline was scheduled to arrive in Tbilisi at 1600 hrs, today. The Director General of the Tbilgazi distribution company Giorgi Gvichiani said gas supplies will first be restored in the Nutsubidze, Vazha-Pshavela and Isani districts, followed by Didi Digomi, residential areas of Vazisubani Digomi and Gldani, Varketili and Samgori. The final stage will be the restoration of gas to the Avchala, Avlabari, Chugureti, Nadzaladevi and Mount Lotkini districts. Repairs on the Mozdok-Tbilisi pipeline were finished yesterday, and the damage caused by the explosions has been fully patched over, the Gazprom press service stated yesterday. The refilling of the pipeline - which takes approximately six hours - started as soon as the repairs were completed. Gazprom reported 76 employees used 40 vehicles and special equipment to mend the damaged part of the pipeline. A second, smaller pipeline was also severed by an explosion last Sunday (Jan 22). The pipe serves as a back-up and was not in use at the time. Gazprom reports they plan to start repairing that pipeline in the summer.



BEI RIVER, GUANGDONG PROVINCE, CHINA

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated today, states: Fifteen people have been confirmed responsible for the toxic cadmium slick in the Beijiang River in south China's Guangdong Province last month, according to the China Daily reported today. Ten employees of the Shaoguan Smelting Plant and the Shenzhen Zhongjin Lingnan Nonfemet Co have been punished accordingly by the government and the Communist Party of China. The CPC's Guangdong Provincial Commission for Discipline Inspection and the Provincial Department of Supervision made the announcement on Wednesday (Jan 25). Three other employees of the plant held directly responsible for the accident and suspected of criminal offences have been handed over to the public security authorities for further investigation. They are a deputy head for production safety, the chief for drainage of a subsidiary of the plant and a division chief of the sewage treatment station of a subsidiary. The slick was caused by the spilling of more than 1,000 tons of heavy cadmium-contaminated water from the smelting plant on Dec 15.

GLADSTONE, QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA

Brisbane, Jan 24 — The oil spill from product tanker *Larcom* remained around the vessel due to calm conditions and was immediately cleaned up with no pollution problems. However, there is concern in regard to the integrity of the fuel tanks which are being checked out. — Lloyd's Agents.

ISLAND END RIVER, MASSACHUSETTS, UNITED STATES

London, Feb 2— A press release from the US Coastguard dated Jan 31, states: Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, and Clean Harbors Incorporated have overseen the cleanup operations of Island End River for the past three weeks. Cleanup efforts have resulted in 3,500 gallons of low sulfur diesel recovered from the Island End River. To date, the Coast Guard has spent more than \$140,000 from the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund toward the cleanup effort. Coast Guard Sector Boston will continue to monitor the cleanup of the site. During the course of the extensive investigation to locate the source of the spill, numerous samples were collected from suspected sources within the affected area, including ExxonMobil. The collected samples were sent to the Coast Guard Marine Safety Lab for analysis. Several of the samples collected from the affected waterway matched the sample removed from ExxonMobil property. The Coast Guard has designated ExxonMobil as the responsible party and will pursue potential civil penalty action against the company.

LIGURIAN SEA

London, Jan 24 — Following received from the managers of product tanker *Mar Elena*, dated Jan 23: *Mar Elena*, incident at ERG refinery: The incident was the entire responsibility of the terminal. The incident involved a concrete pier collapsing at the terminal, both ERG property. We have issued a letter of protest to ERG for any possible damages on our vessel caused by this incident for which they are responsible.

Genoa, Jan 26 — Product tanker *Mar Elena* eventually berthed at Petrolog terminal, Vado Ligure, Savona, at 1600, local time, Jan 25, to complete the discharge of oil remaining on board. The vessel sailed for Genoa at 1530, local time, today, for Genoa. — Lloyd's Agents.

RIVER WESER, GERMANY

See *Andreas K.* under "Marine".



BOLIVIA

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated Jan 27, states: Newly elected

Bolivian President Evo Morales declared a state of emergency today after floods killed 50 people in the San Borja region in the northern part of the country. The rainstorms and flood have affected six of the country's nine departments, and Morales ordered aid for 800 displaced families in the worst-hit region. The government is also considering to offer help for another 3,600 families badly affected in Cochabamba, Santa Cruz, Pando and Tarija, Defense Minister Walker San Miguel said. The wealthy area of Santa Cruz is on high alert due to the high water level in the Rio Grande river. In El Alto, a city close to La Paz, torrent from a river which normally has little water washed two public buses off the roads, killing a 16-year-old girl.

La Paz, Feb 2 — Devastating floods have killed at least 13 people in Bolivia and brought misery to more than 12,000 families following heavy seasonal rainfall in recent weeks, government officials said today. President Evo Morales declared a state of emergency across the impoverished country and has led rescue operations, which have been concentrated in the eastern lowlands. General Gustavo Gandarillas, civil defence director, said more than 12,000 families had lost homes and crops due to the floods and that thousands more had been affected by the above-average rainfall that is forecast to continue. Some of the worst-hit areas are in eastern Santa Cruz province where the Eastern Agricultural Chamber reported that some 60,000ha of soy crops had been wrecked, though export targets would still be met. About \$US2 million in aid has been pledged to help the flood victims following an appeal for international help by Morales, local media said.

BRAZIL

Rio de Janeiro, Jan 28 — Six people drowned in an underground parking garage in Rio de Janeiro and at least three more died in other parts of the city when it was hit by torrential rain, firefighters said today. The tropical downpour last night lasted for two hours, shutting both airports in Brazil's second-biggest city and two main thoroughfares. Both airports have since reopened. Water flooded homes in some parts of western Rio, rising as high as 5 feet. In the Penha shopping mall in northern Rio, streams of water flooded the lowest garage level, trapping and killing six people, a fire brigade spokesman said. A woman died under the rubble of a house that collapsed in northern Rio and a man was electrocuted on the outskirts. Earlier today the body of a man was found in a river in the Sao Goncalo district. He had drowned, a fire brigade official said. The storm caused traffic chaos last night, with long jams forming. Trains stopped running and the Tom Jobim International Airport and Santos Dumont domestic airport were closed. — Reuters.

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CANADA

London, Feb 2 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: Nova Scotians are digging out from a winter storm that brought much of the province to a standstill today. Many people woke up to whiteout conditions, as snow and high winds battered the region. Blizzard and storm-surge warnings were posted for communities along the Atlantic coast and southeastern Cape Breton. Soon, all public schools in Nova Scotia were shut down for the day, as well as most provincial government offices and businesses. The Department of Transportation and RCMP urged motorists to stay off the roads to allow crews to clear snow-clogged streets. In Halifax, Metro Transit pulled its buses off the road after several of them got stuck. All flights in and out of the Halifax and Sydney airports were cancelled or delayed. The storm also disrupted ferry service to Newfoundland. Between 500 and 700 homes were without power, mostly in Shelburne, Canso, Mabou, Sydney and River Bourgeois. Cape Breton was expected to bear the brunt of the storm, with 50 centimetres of snow and wind gusts of 90 km/h forecast. By late afternoon when the rest of the province was digging out, snow was still falling on the island.

CHINA

London, Feb 1 — Dozens of flights were delayed or even cancelled in Guangzhou, capital of south China's Guangdong Province, on Monday (Jan 30) because of bad weather in the northern regions of the country. According to a report on yesterday's Nanfang Daily, Flight 9312 from Guangzhou to the eastern municipality of Shanghai and Flight 1328 from Guangzhou to Beijing were cancelled on Monday. Other delayed flights included Flight 3519 from Guangzhou to Huangshan, Flight 3539 from Guangzhou to Nanchang, Flight 3521 from Guangzhou to Hangzhou, Flight 303 from Guangzhou to Hong Kong and Flight 5238 from Guangzhou to Ningbo. Strong winds have caused dropping temperatures, rain and snow in the northern regions of China in the past couple of days, when the country of 1.3 billion people is celebrating its most important holidays in a year, the Spring Festival or the Chinese Lunar New Year, according to the national meteorological bureau.

EUROPE

Athens, Jan 25 — Freezing weather has killed scores of people in eastern Europe and snowstorms forced the closure of the Acropolis in Athens and blanketed parts of Sicily and Turkey today as the Arctic air pushed south. Ukraine said 66 people had died there since the freeze set in last week. Neighbouring Russia has asked it to restrict gas usage as demand has rocketed during the coldest winter in a generation in the region. The Romanian Health Ministry said extremely low temperatures in the

country had caused 27 deaths in the past three days. In a statement it said the victims, ranging in age between 33 and 86, died of heart attacks and hypothermia caused by temperatures of about -20 deg Celsius. Ten people froze to death or died of burns while trying to keep warm in the Czech Republic in recent days after temperatures fell below -30 deg, media said. Police said another 14 people had died of exposure in Poland over the past 24 hours. The bitter cold has spread to the far south of Europe, regions which normally enjoy milder winters. In Greece, more than 400 villages and towns were cut off after 36 hours of continuous snowfall and hundreds of snow-clearing vehicles struggled to keep main routes open. Ports across the country stayed shut as icy gale-force winds swept across the Aegean, casting a carpet of snow over the islands. In Turkey, Education Minister Huseyin Celik said the country's schools, due to resume classes after a mid-year break next week, would remain closed until Feb 6 because of the freezing weather. Much of Turkey, including Ankara and Istanbul, was covered in snow while shipping was halted on the Bosphorus because of hazardous conditions. Bulgarian officials said the country's two main ports of Varna and Bourgas on the Black Sea had been closed because of high winds and heavy seas. Bulgarian media reported that three people had died of exposure since the cold spell began yesterday, with temperatures falling to between -10 and -20 C deg. Italy was also suffering from the cold snap, with temperatures falling to -35 deg in mountains in the north-east. At the other end of the country, heavy snow swept parts of the Mediterranean island of Sicily early today. Newspapers reported that two people died of exposure near Imola in the north of the country, while cities around Italy opened metro stations and railway waiting rooms overnight to provide shelter for the homeless. The harsh winter has led to a surge in demand for gas as Italians try to keep their homes warm, forcing the government to introduce emergency measures to preserve dwindling gas stocks. The famous canals in the Dutch city of Amsterdam froze briefly and television news showed footage of commuters on bicycles skidding on black ice, which also caused hundreds of car accidents, ANP news agency reported. — Reuters.

London, Jan 26 — Shipping on Europe's waterways has been hit as many central and eastern parts of the continent face some of the lowest temperatures on record. The Black Sea coast at one point had as much as a one-km stretch of ice covering it in some places. The River Danube has been hardest hit. In Romania, authorities stopped smaller vessels travelling as thick ice formed on the river and they battled to prevent icebergs forming and endangering larger ships. Authorities said the situation near Grindu in south-

eastern Romania where the Danube takes a near 90-degree turn was critical as there were fears that floating chunks of ice could get stuck there and block up the river. Navigation between the ports of Galati and Tulcea was being kept open using icebreakers. There were also problems further up the river as Serbian port authorities reported shipping had been stopped for up to five hours at one point as a security measure while icebreaking vessels in the port of Prahovo were put on constant alert. In Slovakia, shipping was halted indefinitely yesterday between the capital Bratislava and the port town of Komarno near the Hungarian border as large pieces of ice which had formed further upstream began to block the river. Ice also forced the closure of the Danube-Rhine canal in Germany as well as the Elbe side canal in Lower Saxony, and 18 vessels were yesterday stuck in part of the Danube canal near Nuremberg in 35-cm ice. Since yesterday, the dock at Stralsund on the Baltic coast has only been approachable from an easterly direction due to 20-cm-thick ice. Icebreakers were dispatched on a number of canals to keep traffic moving.

Bucharest, Jan 26 — Freezing temperatures have killed more than 50 people across parts of Europe in recent days and badly disrupted road, air and sea travel today. Romania blamed the bitter cold for the deaths of 37 people this week. At least nine of the victims were homeless, mirroring a trend in Russia which is experiencing the coldest winter in a generation and where the current cold snap originated. Five people, most of them homeless, froze to death in Croatia in the past two days, the leading daily Vecernji List reported, quoting police sources. Most of Georgia was without electricity when its power network went down, leaving the tiny state shivering in sub-zero temperatures. High winds and bad weather cut a power line, pitching the eastern half of the country into darkness. The capital, Tbilisi, was also without electricity after a unit at a power station collapsed under the strain of having to work at full capacity. Romania and its southern neighbour Bulgaria have closed Black Sea ports because of high winds, heavy seas and ice. Freezing temperatures and snowfall disrupted road traffic and flights in Italy and Germany. Frankfurt airport, continental Europe's busiest, had to cancel around 20 inbound and outbound flights and early morning flights were delayed by up to an hour. At Stuttgart in south-western Germany, a Swiss airline Embraer 145 jet with 40 passengers on board skidded off the runway after landing. No one was injured but the airport was closed to incoming planes for around two hours. Canals and rivers in Germany and a number of neighbouring countries froze, disrupting transport of grain and

other cargo. The freeze has taken a heavy toll on lives across eastern and northern Europe and has now pushed south. Eight people have died over the last three days in Bulgaria in temperatures of around -20 deg Celsius. Three people froze to death in Serbia, where temperatures have hovered around -15 deg. In the mountainous northeast of Montenegro, morning temperatures dropped to -30 deg and there was snow even on southern Albania's Ionian coast. Much of northern Italy was blanketed by snow in freezing temperatures. — Reuters.

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated today, states: Europe's winter death toll continued to mount yesterday as conditions eased in eastern countries frozen solid by this week's Arctic snap and heavy snowfalls paralysed airports and road traffic in Switzerland and Italy. Another 39 people died of cold in Ukraine in a 24-hour period, taking to 220 the number of those succumbing to the past week's extreme weather, the former Soviet republic's health ministry said. In neighbouring Poland, police announced six more people had died, taking the toll since Saturday to 69. This year's total of 191 deaths has already surpassed last winter's toll of 190. The cold snap has so far killed 50 people in Romania and 18 in Bulgaria, according to official figures, while the death of a homeless man in the western city of Gelsenkirchen took Germany's toll to seven over the past week. In Russia, which has borne the brunt of the deep freeze that drove temperatures down to minus 35 degrees Celsius (minus 31 Fahrenheit) across eastern Europe, seven people including two children were asphyxiated in a village in the southern Stavropol region. In western Europe 24 hours of heavy snow caused chaos to air, road and rail traffic in northern Italy and southern Switzerland. Milan was covered in a 40-cm blanket of snow overnight. The city's two airports were closed until 0500, GMT, today. With forecasters predicting more snow into today, deputy deputy mayor Riccaro De Corato called on residents not to use their cars and schools were preparing to cancel classes. Some schools and highways throughout the region were closed and train services were cancelled between Milan and the central city of Florence and Turin and Venice. In Turin many flights were delayed or cancelled. In the Swiss district of Ticino, traffic on the main north-south highway was paralysed by the heaviest snow recorded in the past 21 years. Across the border in south-eastern France, authorities warned drivers to take care on icy roads blanketed by thick snow and to be equipped in case they became stranded. Meanwhile, Georgians endured their sixth day without gas and electricity as their leaders blamed Russia for sabotage that cut a gas and electricity conduits between the two countries. Turkey too expressed concern about possible energy

shortages after a reduction in natural gas supplies from Iran and Russia. Authorities were forced to reduce the flow to several factories in Turkey's north-western industrial belt for several hours on Thursday after a four-day blizzard prevented a tanker unloading its cargo of Algerian liquified gas.

FIJI

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: Many families and shopowners spent yesterday cleaning up their properties from the havoc wreaked by overnight flash floods. The widespread floods in the Western Division were the result of heavy rain that began on Saturday night and lasted until yesterday morning. Low-lying areas were the worst affected, with flooding even disrupting power supply. Parts of Lautoka, Ba Town and Rakiraki were flooded, with shop owners spending yesterday cleaning up their shops. Many of their goods are now water damaged. The shop owners said it was not the first time their shops had been flooded but they generally agreed it was the worst flood since Cyclone "Kina" in 1993. Residents of Luvu Seaside Settlement, which is five minutes from Lautoka, were keeping a close eye on the rising water level as it coincided with high tide and threatened to flow into their homes. Livestock had already been moved to higher ground. Residents said flooding in the area was not new and it was all the more reason why the Government needed to do something about the frequent flooding. The District Officer Lautoka Samuela Delai and DISMAC officer Ba, Isireli Tawake, were monitoring the situation. Lovu Sangam School is the only school activated as an evacuation centre for Lautoka. Vunato Village, outside Lautoka, faced the brunt of the floods as the river beside it burst its banks, flooding the homes of unsuspecting villagers. Power disruptions occurred in some parts of the Western Division, from Lautoka to Rakiraki, as a result of the heavy rain on Saturday night. The Fiji Electricity Authority said the heavy rain damaged some power poles and the work on repairs was slowed because floods restricted access to the areas they needed to carry out repairs in. Power supply to most areas had been restored by yesterday afternoon. The Fiji Meteorological Service said more rain should be expected because of a nearby trough of low pressure.

HURRICANE "KATRINA"

London, Jan 30 — Estimated catastrophe losses from hurricane "Katrina" have jumped \$3.7bn from the figure previously announced to \$38.1bn. Statistics produced by risk analyst ISO's property claim services said that US property/casualty insurers are expected to pay homeowners and businesses a record \$56.8bn for insured property losses for 24 catastrophic events.

HURRICANE "WILMA"

London, Jan 29 — A press report, dated today, states: A barge that came ashore in the North End of Florida's Palm Beach during hurricane "Wilma" will be removed tomorrow, weather permitting. The unclaimed, derelict vessel has been breaking apart during its three months on land. Wind has sent its interior Styrofoam, used to keep it buoyant under normal conditions, blowing onto the beach off of Palmo Way. Public Works Director Paul Brazil said town crews have been scooping up the debris, awaiting the barge's removal. Once the 60-ft vessel is removed, workers will pick up whatever Styrofoam remains. The ultimate responsibility for getting the deteriorating work platform off of the beach falls to the state. The actual work, however, will be done under the authority of Palm Beach County's Department of Environmental Resource Management. According to Eric Brown, Palm Beach's assistant public works director, the county has hired Sea Tow to manage the barge's removal. Vance Construction will dismantle what remains of the rusty barge and haul it off of the beach. The plan is to use a front loader and dump truck on the beach, according to information provided to the town by the county. "The front loader will dismantle the barge, loading the debris into the dump truck," Brown said. "The dump truck will transfer the debris to a Dumpster. Several trips will be necessary to remove the barge. The work is expected to be accomplished within a week." The barge has no visible registration or identification. No one has come forward to claim or recover the barge since it came ashore during the storm that hit Palm Beach on Oct 24.

Cancun, Mexico, Feb 1 — Mexico is currently "rebuilding" a famous shoreline that was reduced to a narrow ribbon last year by hurricane "Wilma". Huge storm waves washed away much of the resort's white sand beaches. A government-funded salvage operation seeks to dredge 448.5 million cubic feet of sand from the Caribbean and spread it over an eight-mile stretch of hotel-studded beachfront in Cancun by late April. Elizondo said the project — carried out by a Belgian firm at a cost of \$20 million — would improve the original state of the beaches before the storms hit last year. Hotel damage in the Mexican state of Quintana Roo, home to the cobalt-sea resorts of Cancun and Cozumel, was estimated at up to \$1.5 billion, with rooms smashed by winds and rain and lobbies and restaurants flooded. Teams of workers have been toiling to rebuild storm-battered hotels and restaurants in the past three months and replant thousands of palm trees ripped from city boulevards by howling winds. — Reuters.

INDONESIA

London, Jan 30 — A press report, dated today, states: Days of monsoonal rains triggering floods and

landslides have killed at least seven people on the north coast of Indonesia's densely-populated Java island, a report said today. Landslides caused by incessant rains killed three people in Rembang district's Lasem in Central Java, while floods in the same district drowned three others over the weekend, Media Indonesia reported. The daily said heavy rains in the neighbouring district of Demak had killed one person, while a main road across the north was severed in several places and delays in air and rail transport had occurred. At least six people were killed last week by flash floods and landslides on other islands in the archipelago nation, where monsoon rains hit a peak in January. More than 150 people were killed on Java in two separate landslides earlier this month, with activists warning of more disasters unless extensive areas are reforested on the island.

London, Feb 1 — Floodwaters from three days of heavy rain were still inundating most parts of the Semarang city, with Ahmad Yani Airport and Tawang railroad station still not fully back to normal. Garuda Indonesia's general manager in Semarang, Arjo K. Bardijan, said on Sunday (Jan 29) that the airline was still transporting passengers scheduled to depart from Semarang to Adi Sumarmo Airport in the neighbouring city of Surakarta. "Only 1,400 metres of runway have dried but this is not enough for our big planes like Boeing 737-500s, 737-400s and 727-300s. (We have) shifted six flights, including one heading to Singapore," Arjo said. He said the shifting of flights to Adi Sumarmo Airport meant that Garuda had to rent buses to transfer passengers between Semarang and Sukarta and vice versa. "This is costing us a lot of money, especially as we have to provide food. But, it's all part of our service. We also have to explain why Garuda planes cannot land in Semarang and apologize to the passengers," Arjo said. Small planes, like the 737-200s belonging to Mandala and Sriwijaya airlines, can still land at Ahmad Yani. "We'll keep monitoring the runway's condition. If the water has dried out ... we'll return to our normal schedule at Ahmad Yani Airport," Arjo said. The manager of airport operator PT Angkasa Pura in Semarang, Purnomo, said the firm had tried to pump the floodwater from the airport environs, but three days of rain rendered the effort useless. As of Sunday, the floodwaters were still 20 centimetres deep on most parts of the runway. In Tawang railroad station, the floodwaters, almost a metre deep early on Saturday, started to recede on Sunday afternoon. The arrival and departure of many trains were shifted to Poncol station, usually reserved for economy-class trains, which was not affected by the flooding. Train company PT Kereta Api Indonesia spokesman in Semarang, Suprpto, said passengers had been given the option of leaving from Poncol station

because of the flooding. "Executive-class trains are still leaving from Tawang although the water is 12 cm deep on the tracks," he told Antara on Sunday. Nine of the city's districts were also inundated, forcing some 4,000 residents to pack up and abandon their homes. The floods also collapsed 44 houses in the Ayodya housing complex in Sekarang, Gunungpati district, but no casualties were reported. Landslides and flood sin Central Java have claimed seven lives Saturday, six in a landslide in Rembang regency and another one in the flooding in Pati regency, Antara reported.

MALTA

London, Feb 2 — The ports have been at a complete standstill over the past three days because of the strong wind and rough sea, with no less than 25 ships, including one carrying a consignment of gas cylinders, waiting to enter Grand Harbour. On Tuesday (Jan 31) night, when wind gusts reached Force 11 (violent storm), several ships in port broke their mooring. Ports Director Charles Schembri said the service of tugs and patrol boats was required to assist the ships. Contacted yesterday, Mr Schembri said weather conditions over the past three days were adverse to normal port operations in view of the safety of personnel and ships. Conditions were no better yesterday although it is forecast that the weather will improve today, Mr Schembri said. LPG *Avgaz 5*, carrying a consignment of gas, has been waiting at Marsaxlokk outside port since last Saturday. Mr Schembri said that weather permitting, the ship would hopefully enter port today. The weatherman yesterday afternoon had good news, saying the wind will abate during the night and today should be a relatively nice day, with sunny periods albeit with some clouds. The duty officer at the Meteorological Office of Malta International Airport said the strong North East wind which reached Force 8 yesterday morning was expected to drop to Force 4 this morning and shift to West North West later in the day. Some minor damage caused by the strong wind was reported during the night in various localities where trees and electricity poles were knocked down.

PHILIPPINES

London, Jan 26 — A press report, dated today, states: Torrential rains triggered flash floods, disaster response officials said. The province of Nueva Ecija in the north was the most heavily affected, with more than 7,000 people forced to evacuate to higher ground after a dyke broke. In Kalinga province, also in the north, at least 20 houses were underwater and almost 1,500 people were evacuated, the Office of Civil Defense said. Flooding was also reported in the provinces of Cagayan, Abra and Aurora, stranding hundreds of commuters. In the southern city of Davao, flash floods washed out at least two houses,

officials said. Rescuers and emergency medical teams have been dispatched to affected areas while the state public works office was asked to begin clearing operations, they said.

ROMANIA

Bucharest, Jan 26 — Constantza port was re-opened at 0700, local time, today. Sulina channel and Midia and Mangalia ports are still closed. — Lloyd's Agents.

Bucharest, Jan 26 — Midia port was re-opened at 1210, today. Mangalia port and Sulina channel are still closed. — Lloyd's Agents.

Bucharest, Jan 27 — Mangalia port was re-opened at 1515, local time, Jan 26. Sulina channel was re-opened at 0600, local time, today. — Lloyd's Agents.

RUSSIA

London, Jan 27 — Loading and berthing operations resumed at Novorossiysk port, as well as at the nearby Sheskhari's Oil Terminal and CPC-R Marine Terminal, yesterday. Operations had been halted earlier this week due to severe winter weather conditions.

SOUTH AFRICA

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated today, states: Strong winds are continuing to delay ship movements and cargo working operations at Cape Town harbour. Yesterday morning eight ships were at anchor in Table Bay including five container ships. With a build up of ships expected outside Durban because of the three-day strike at that port, some bunching of container ships can also be expected at both ports. Altogether about 150 hours has been lost at Cape Town during January owing to the Cape's notorious south-easter.

SPAIN

Madrid, Jan 28 — Seven people were killed in two bus crashes on snowy roads today as a severe winter storm caused traffic chaos across Spain. The storm blanketed much of northern and eastern Spain with snow and ice, forcing the closure of dozens of roads and mountain passes. Five women, on an organised trip for a widows' group, died when the bus they were travelling in overturned on a snow-covered road 50 km from Alicante, the fire department said. Another 15 of the 52 passengers were hurt, eight seriously, regional officials said. The bus skidded and overturned, blocking the road, after overtaking several cars, a government official in the region, Etelvina Andreu, said. Police arrested the bus driver on suspicion of reckless driving, Andreu said. Two people died when another bus overturned near Campomanes, 350 km north of Madrid, in another area where it had been snowing heavily, the emergency services said. The bus, carrying 15 people, was going from Pontevedra on the west coast to Gijon on the north coast. Three of the passengers were seriously injured and nine slightly injured, the emergency

services said. Civil protection authorities put 15 of Spain's 17 regions on alert for snow, rain or high winds and recommended people not drive if they could avoid it. Twenty villages near Palencia, 200 km north of Madrid, were cut off by road and it was hard to reach a further 18 villages in the Cantabria region of northern Spain, state radio said. — Reuters.

TROPICAL CYCLONE "JIM"

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated today, states: Queensland's first tropical cyclone of the season is buffeting a weather station off the north tropical coast. Category 1 Cyclone "Jim" is nearing Willis Island about 320 km north-east of Townsville. Weather bureau spokesman Geoff Callaghan says it is heading north-east and is unlikely to impact coastal communities. But he says staff on Willis Island are feeling its force. "Usually manned by four people but at the moment undergoing rebuilding, so there's a few people out there," he said. "Conditions out there fairly windy and causing a bit of damage - apparently should pass there late tonight and after that its effect with Australia will be finished as it moves towards New Caledonia."

London, Jan 28 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0600, UTC, today, the centre of tropical cyclone "Jim" was located near lat 17.3S, long 150.8E, approximately 290 nautical miles east of Cairns, Australia, and has tracked eastward, or 80 degs, at 10 knots over the past six hours. The position is accurate to within 60 nautical miles and is based on the centre being located by satellite. Present wind distribution: maximum sustained winds: 45 knots, gusts 55 knots. Radius of 34 knot winds: 50 nautical miles in the north-east and north-west quadrants and 60 nautical miles in the south-east and south-west quadrants. The maximum significant wave height is 16 feet. At 0600, UTC, Jan 29, the centre is predicted to be near lat 16.8S, long 154.2E, with maximum sustained winds of 55 knots and gusts to 70 knots.

London, Jan 29 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0900, UTC, today, the centre of tropical cyclone "Jim" was located near lat 16.3S, long 156E, approximately 560 nautical miles east of Cairns, Australia, and has tracked east-north-eastwards at 13 knots over the past six hours. Position accurate to within 40 nautical miles, based on centre located by satellite. Maximum sustained winds 60 knots with gusts to 75 knots. Radius of 50-knot winds 25 nautical miles. Radius of 34-knot winds 70 nautical miles. At 0600, UTC, Jan 30, the centre is predicted to be near lat 17.6S, long 160.4E, with maximum sustained winds of 65 knots and gusts to 80 knots.

London, Jan 30 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0600, UTC, today, the centre of tropical cyclone "Jim" was located

near lat 19.9S, long 160.8E, approximately 475 nautical miles north-west of Noumea, New Caledonia, and has tracked east-southeastward, or 110 degs, at 19 knots over the past six hours. The position is accurate to within 60 nautical miles and is based on the centre being located by satellite. The storm is rapidly tracking southeastward under the shared influence of an equatorial ridge axis north of the system and a subtropical upper level low south of New Caledonia. The cyclone is forecast to weaken as it traverses lower sea surface temperatures. Present wind distribution: maximum sustained winds: 70 knots, gusts 85 knots. Radius of 64 knot winds: 20 nautical miles in all four quadrants. Radius of 34 knot winds: 85 nautical miles in the north-east quadrant and 80 nautical miles in the remaining three quadrants. The maximum significant wave height is 18 feet. At 0600, UTC, Jan 31, the centre is predicted to be near lat 20.0S, long 166.6E, with maximum sustained winds of 55 knots and gusts to 70 knots.

London, Jan 31 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0600, UTC, today, the centre of tropical cyclone "Jim" was located near lat 20.0S, long 166.7E, approximately 135 nautical miles north-west of Noumea, New Caledonia, and has tracked southeastward, or 125 degs, at 19 knots over the past six hours. The position is accurate to within 60 nautical miles and is based on the centre being located by satellite. Present wind distribution: maximum sustained winds: 80 knots, gusts 100 knots. Radius of 64 knot winds: 20 nautical miles in all four quadrants. Radius of 34 knot winds: 65 nautical miles in the north-east and north-west quadrants and 75 nautical miles in the south-east and south-west quadrants. The maximum significant wave height is 22 feet. At 0600, UTC, Feb 1, the centre is predicted to be near lat 23.8S, long 170.6E, with maximum sustained winds of 75 knots and gusts to 90 knots.

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated today, states: The current weather situation experienced in the country is expected to persist for the next two days, the National Weather Office says. Weather Forecaster Michael Siau said the weather conditions may improve later in the week with the feeder bands moving gradually, however people should refrain from going out to seas. The weather situation is associated with Tropical Cyclone "Jim", which is situated south of Solomon Islands in the Coral Seas. Yesterday, the cyclone with winds of 60 knots at its centre is moving east towards Vanuatu at 20 knots. With the current speed, the cyclone is expected to reach Port Vila last night. Mr Siau said although Solomon Islands faces no direct threat from Tropical Cyclone "Jim", the country will continue to experience heavy rains, strong winds and rough

sea. He said the bad weather, including the northwest winds that cause the seas to rough, is caused by the feeder bands. "These feeder bands are currently over Solomon Islands, which caused the current weather condition. Further rain is expected across the country for the next two days with more frequent and heavier falls," he said yesterday afternoon. Mr Siau cautioned travelers to consider safety and refrain from travelling. In Honiara, the battering wind and rough sea have forced few ships to shore. The Malaita Shipping Company owned passenger *Ramos III* has taken its position next to ferry *Western Queen* (515 gt, built 1965) at the Ranadi Marine School beach. Eight fishing boats belonging to the Solgreen have also been forced to shore. Not only that, sections of the main and feeder roads in the capital were also flooded, forcing motorists to take illegal but sound detours. In the meantime, "Jim" is expected to pass to the north of New Caledonia this morning. On its current course east-northeast, New Caledonia is expected to be feeling some effects of the storm by about midnight last night. Oceania Flash reports that early yesterday, "Jim" was packing winds gusting at 85 knots and classified category two. It is maintaining a South-easterly direction and is moving at about 15 knots, which would place it above New Caledonia. At its current moving speed and track, "Jim" is taking a direct aim at New Caledonia northernmost tip of the main island and would align itself in a parallel line to the French Pacific's main island's north-eastern coast. (Note — Understand *Ramos III* is in bad state of repair and Malaita Shipping Company (MSC) are bankrupt.)

London, Feb 1 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0600, UTC, today, the centre of tropical cyclone "Jim" was located near lat 25.7S, long 173.3E, approximately 430 nautical miles south-east of Noumea, New Caledonia, and has tracked southeastward, or 145 degs, at 21 knots over the past six hours. The position is accurate to within 60 nautical miles and is based on the centre being located by satellite. Present wind distribution: maximum sustained winds: 45 knots, gusts 55 knots. Radius of 34 knot winds: 40 nautical miles in all four quadrants. The maximum significant wave height is 12 feet. At 0600, UTC, Feb 2, the centre is predicted to be near lat 29.3S, long 174.8E, with maximum sustained winds of 20 knots and gusts to 30 knots, dissipated as a significant tropical cyclone over water.

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated today, states: The washing ashore of Malaita Shipping Company's passenger *Ramos III* had been described as a setback for the province. Speaking yesterday from Auki, Malaita provincial secretary Harold Leka said the incident which happened on Monday to the province's only boat is a draw back to plans to

have it repaired and resumed operation. "There are plans to have the boat refixed but lack of funds have resulted in the continuous delay to allow repair work to start," Mr Leka stated. According to Mr Leka, it could cost the province several millions of dollars just to get the boat on the slipway. However, he said the current financial position of the province could not enable this operation to take place instead the province sort assistance from the national government and donors. "There have been requests and submissions made to the national government and the various overseas funding agencies to help in the maintenance of the boat. But despite these pleas there were no positive response to the requests, the provincial secretary said. He highlighted that the provincial government's initial plan was to transport the vessel to Auki to harbour it from cyclones. "This, however, failed to eventuate once again due to insufficient funds although little amount of funds have been allocated by the provincial government to refill the boat and have it sailed over to Auki." The other option was to have it towed to Auki. But he said lack of support from the national government and aid donors delayed the plans, which resulted in the incident on Monday. "Had the national government respond to our submissions *Ramos III* will not be where it is today." On Monday *Ramos III* was washed ashore and today it is now lying beside *Western Queen* at the Ranadi Marine School's beach. Mr Leka said with the ship's current position it would be another expensive task to salvage it. "Salving the boat itself will cost several thousands of dollars - a thing which the provincial government can't even afford at this time," Mr Leka said. However, he said any plans for the future of the vessel would depend on the outcome of any meeting, which the provincial executive will hold in the near future.

TROPICAL STORM "BOLOETSE"

London, Jan 26 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today, states: Severe tropical storm "Boloetse" in lat 22.9S, long 50.7E at 1200, UTC, today. Storm force winds 50 knots and high seas near the centre. Gale force winds 35/45 knots and very rough seas within 20 nautical miles. Forecast position lat 23.9S, long 50.8E, maximum winds 40 knots at 0000, Jan 27. Forecast position lat 24.2S, long 50.3E at 1200, UTC Jan 27, maximum winds 35 knots.

London, Jan 27 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today, states: Tropical Cyclone "Boloetse" near position lat 22.7S, long 51.0E, today. Maximum winds 40 knots. Forecast position lat 22.4S, long 50.7E, at 1800, UTC, today. Forecast position lat 22.4S, long 50.2E, at 0600, UTC, Jan 28.

London, Jan 28 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated

today: At 0600, UTC, today, the centre of tropical depression "Boloetse" was located within a 40 nautical mile radius of lat 21 5S, long 49 6E, today. Maximum sustained winds are 30 knots. The system is now tracking slowly westwards and is expected to reach the Malgasy coastline within about 12 hours, in the vicinity of Mananjary, before crossing Madagascar, tracking southwards towards the next trough. At 0600, UTC, Jan 29, the centre is predicted to be near lat 22.0S, long 47.4E, with maximum sustained winds of 25 knots, overland.

London, Jan 30 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0600, UTC, today, the centre of tropical depression "Boloetse" was located within a 60 nautical mile radius of lat 18 5S, long 43 4E, today. Maximum sustained winds are 20 knots. The system seems to be over sea again, since last night after crossing over Madagascar. Low level circulation is badly defined now so there is no clear evidence about its estimated and approximate position. Convective activity weakened over Madagascar and concerns only Besalampy-Mahajonga area but keeps on over the Mozambique channel (Juan de Nova island is concerned about associated convective activity). At 0600, UTC, Jan 31, the centre is predicted to be near lat 19 1S, long 40 9E, with maximum sustained winds of 25 knots.

London, Jan 31 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0600, UTC, today, the centre of tropical depression "Boloetse" was located within a 20 nautical mile radius of lat 19.5S, long 40.4E, today. Maximum sustained winds are 30 knots. The system has reintensified regularly over the Mozambique Channel, thanks to a favourable environment. In the upper levels windshear is weak and divergence is good. Monsoon and trades winds are forecast to strengthen over the next 12 hours. The system should keep on intensifying, and track southwards beyond 36 hours, under the steering of the mid-level high building over the Mascarenes Islands. At 0600, UTC, Feb 1, the centre is predicted to be near lat 19.7S, long 38.7E, with maximum sustained winds of 45 knots.

London, Feb 1 — Following received from Reuters, dated today: Tropical storm "Boloetse" is forecast to strike Mozambique at about 1800, UTC, today. Data supplied by the US Navy and Air Force Joint Typhoon Warning Centre suggest that the point of landfall will be near lat 18.9S, long 37.3E. "Boloetse" is expected to bring one-minute maximum sustained winds to the region of around 40 mph. Wind gusts in the area may be considerably higher.

London, Feb 1 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0600, UTC, today, the centre of tropical cyclone "Boloetse" was located near lat 19.2S, long 38.0E, approximately 505 nautical miles

north-east of Maputo, Mozambique, and has tracked west-northwestward, or 300 degs, at four knots over the past six hours. The position is accurate to within 60 nautical miles and is based on the centre being located by satellite. Present wind distribution: maximum sustained winds 35 knots, gusts 45 knots. The maximum significant wave height is 12 feet. At 0600, UTC, Feb 2, the centre is predicted to be near lat 18.9S, long 36.8E, with maximum sustained winds of 40 knots and gusts to 50 knots.

London, Feb 2 — Following received from the Meteorological Office, dated today: At 0600, UTC, today, the centre of tropical cyclone "Boloetse" was located near lat 19.6S, long 38.6E, approximately 475 nautical miles west of Antananarivo, Mozambique, and has tracked southward, or 180 degs, at two knots over the past six hours. The position is accurate to within 40 nautical miles and is based on the centre being located by satellite. "Boloetse" has begun to track more poleward during the last six hours. Over the next 24 to 36 hours, the anticyclone situated to the east will build over northern Madagascar and cause "Boloetse" to track southeastward. The intensity of "Boloetse" will strengthen through the next 24 hours as outflow is sustained and vertical wind shear remains low. However, thereafter, vertical wind shear is forecast to increase ahead of an approaching midlatitude major shortwave trough. "Boloetse" will slowly weaken through the next 24-48 hour period and begin to quickly weaken thereafter as the system merges with the mid-latitude westerlies. Present wind distribution: maximum sustained winds 65 knots, gusts 80 knots. The radius of 34 knot winds: 70 nautical miles in the north-east, south-east and north-west quadrants and 80 nautical miles in the south-west quadrant. The maximum significant wave height is 12 feet. At 0600, UTC, Feb 3, the centre is predicted to be near lat 21.9S, long 40.2E, with maximum sustained winds of 90 knots and gusts to 110 knots.

TROPICAL STORM "DELTA"

London, Jan 26 — A press report, dated today, states: Floating crane *GPS Atlas* left Rotterdam for Tenerife, yesterday in tow of the tug *Alexandra*, to recover tug *Tarifa*, which sunk in heavy weather last year. Seasalvage received the order to recover *Tarifa* and hired *GPS Atlas* from GPS Marine Services BV. *Tarifa* is laying at a depth of 27 metres upside down.

TROPICAL STORM "KAJIKI"

London, Jan 25 — A press report, dated today, states: Congress was asked yesterday to investigate the oil spill from barge *Napocor Power Barge No. 106* that threatens marine life in Semirara town in Antique. The Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas

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

(Pamalakaya) also asked the National Power Corp. (Napocor) to co-ordinate with the military so soldiers on Panay Island and Mindoro could be tapped to help in the clean-up drive. "We are asking Congress to conduct a full-blown investigation. It could be the House committee on natural resources. We have no trust on the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the office of the President, so they should not intervene in the investigation," said Gerry Corpuz, Pamalakaya information officer. He said the group wants the source and "end-user" of the bunker fuel identified to make them also liable for the spill, along with Napocor. Corpuz said they wanted to know why Napocor did not disclose where the fuel came from and where it should be delivered. Pamalakaya, he added, suspected that Napocor only wanted to own up to the destruction brought about by the oil spill to protect its clients. Corpuz said they were counting on the party-list representatives of Bayan-Muna, Anak-pawis and Gabriela to heed their call.

Manila, Jan 31 — National Power Corporation (Napocor) spokesman Dennis Gana today reported that barge *Napocor Power Barge No.106* and *Napocor Tugboat No.1* are still being repaired at Keppel Batangas shipyard in Bauan town, south of Manila. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated today, states: The Coast Guard has intensified its clean up operation at Semirara Island as thick oil continued to spread in waters off Semirara Island in Antique. The operation was intensified after thick oil stayed at the beach and affected marine life in mangroves and coral reefs at the island. Lt. Cdr. Joseph Coyme, Coast Guard information officer, said the oil came from tug *Napocor Tugboat No.1* and barge *Napocor Power Barge No.106* that ran aground in shallow waters of Sitio Bobog in Barangay Semirara in Caluya on Dec 19. "Oil spills can have a serious economic impact on coastal activities and on those who exploit the resources of the sea. The impact on the marine life is compounded by toxicity and training effects resulting from the chemical composition of oil, as well as by the diversity and variability of biological systems and their sensitivity to oil pollution," said Coyme. Coast Guard commandant Vice Adm. Arthur Gosingan recently summoned representatives of the Napocor together with their insurance company to shed light on the incident. Napocor officials, for their part, assured the authorities that they will co-operate fully with the Coast Guard in cleaning the oil spill. So far, Coast Guard composite work force, hired workers, civilian volunteers and Napocor employees have already collected 2,480 sacks of contaminated

debris. Coyme said various equipment and materials are being employed in the clean-up operation like high pressure and transfer pumps, vacuum system, fast tank, fence boom and other cleaning equipment. According to Coyme, the operations will likely take four months to complete and require a large work force backed up with sufficient clean up equipment and materials.

TURKEY, GREECE AND BULGARIA

London, Jan 25 — A press report, dated today, states: General cargo *Hera* sunk probably because it had not been properly repaired and maintained, reads Turkey's report on the wreckage, which occurred on Feb 13, 2004. The Executive director of Maritime Administration Executive Agency, Ventsislav Ivanov delivered the report today. According to the Turkish authorities, the ship might have had a small hole and because of that it sunk very quickly. Another conclusion of the report is that the master issued a distress signal too late and the local authorities did not have time to react. No one survived the wreckage because the ship sunk very quickly and the crew was not ordered to leave the ship. Besides, the ship did not have enough radio equipment, the report says.

UNITED STATES

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: Avalanches and mudslides closed a major highway overnight and blocked Amtrak train service Monday amid the latest in a series of storms that have drenched the Northwest since December. The storm that hit yesterday also knocked out power and phone service in north-west Oregon. Interstate 90, Washington state's main east-west artery, was closed yesterday evening by two snowslides in the area of 3,022-foot Snoqualmie Pass. A 72-mile stretch of the interstate remained shut down until late this morning, the state Transportation Department said. No injuries were reported. Nearly 40 inches of snow fell at the pass in four days. Mudslides during the night north of Seattle halted Amtrak passenger service and Sounder commuter trains between Seattle and Everett, Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad spokesman Gus Melonas said. That affected service from Portland, Ore., to Vancouver, British Columbia. Passenger service won't resume until at least Wednesday because of a 48-hour minimum slide closure restriction, Sound Transit and Amtrak officials said. Local commuter service remained in operation between Seattle and Tacoma. The Northwest is dealing with an unusually wet winter. Earlier this month, Olympia set a record with 35 consecutive days of measurable rainfall, two days more than the old mark set in 1953.

Earthquakes



BANDA SEA

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated today, states: Darwin residents have been shaken from their sleep by an earthquake in the Banda Sea measuring 7.7 on the Richter scale. The quake happened about 830 km north-north-west of Darwin and the United States Geological Survey says it was about 340 km deep. Tremors shook furniture and rattled windows for a minute at 0230, ACST. Geoscience Australia spokesman Dr David Gepsom says there is no sign of any damage in northern Australia. "No reports of damage, however that's not to say that if there was - there could be from such an earthquake, there may be some localised damage near the earthquake somewhere in the Indonesian Archipelago, but it was a deep earthquake but it would be only localised in general," he said. The quake occurred in the Banda Sea, around 195 km south of Ambon city, USGS says on its website. The Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre in Hawaii, which monitors seismic events and their tidal wave-generating potential, put out a bulletin following the quake, but says no tsunami is expected. An official with the Jakarta meteorological office says it recorded the quake at 7.3 on the Richter scale. It was felt in Ambon and the towns of Tual and Saumlaki, also in the Maluku island chain, as well as in Sorong in Papua province, Kupang in East Nusa Tenggara province and the South Sulawesi provincial capital of Makassar, all of which encircled the epicentre of the quake, he told AFP.

COLOMBIA

London, Jan 24 — A press report, dated Jan 23, states: A strong earthquake rattled Colombia's west coast today, but there were no immediate reports of injury or damage, officials said. The magnitude 6.3 quake struck at 1350 hrs deep under the Pacific Ocean floor, just off the Pacific coast near the town of Jurado, in Choco state, 260 miles north-west of Bogota. Colombia's National Seismological Centre said there was no danger of a tsunami. Civil Defence authorities said they had no immediate reports of any damage from the earthquake.

INDONESIA

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated today, states: A strong earthquake measuring 5.7 on the Richter scale today jolted the Indonesian town of Bengkulu on Sumatra island, causing panic but no damage or casualties, the meteorology office said. The quake struck at 0657 hrs with its epicentre 33 kilometres beneath the Indonesian Ocean, some

142 kilometres north-west of Bengkulu, the Jakarta-based office said.

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated today, states: A massive underwater earthquake, with a magnitude of 7.7, has struck off the eastern coast of Indonesia, according to the US Geological Survey. The quake reportedly took place at 0158, local time, Jan 28 (1658 UTC, Jan 27), in the Banda Sea. There are no immediate reports of damage or injuries. There is no immediate risk of a tsunami from the latest quake, the Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre reports. According to the US Geological Survey, the epicentre of the quake was at a point some 195km (120 miles) south of the city of Ambon, at a depth some 342km (212 miles) below sea level. People in Ambon fled their homes in panic when the two-minute long quake struck.

MYANMAR

London, Jan 25 — A press report, dated today, states: A 5.7-magnitude earthquake in Myanmar's Shan State was felt in several provinces of northern Thailand, the Thai meteorology department said today. The epicentre of last night's quake was in eastern Myanmar, about 120 miles north of Chiang Mai, Thailand, said a meteorology department announcement. It was felt in Chiang Mai and other Thai provinces including Chiang Rai and Mae Hong Son. The meteorological department said there were no reports of damage from the quake, which occurred at 2042 hrs.

VANUATU

London, Jan 23 — A press report, dated today, states: A magnitude 6.2 earthquake has struck near the Pacific Island of Vanuatu, the US Geological Survey said today. There were no immediate reports of damages. The earthquake struck at 0602, UTC, approximately 45 miles north-west of Port Vila on the island of Efate, which lies approximately 1,175 miles east of Australia.

London, Jan 23 — A report, dated today, states: A strong earthquake occurred at 0602, UTC, today. The magnitude 6.2 event has been located in Vanuatu in lat 17 35N, long 167 77E, depth 33 km.



MOUNT AUGUSTINE, ALASKA, UNITED STATES

London, Feb 1 — Augustine Volcano continued to erupt yesterday, with the volcano producing a continuous crescent-shaped plume of steam, and ash and gas speeding down the flanks of the island mount and into the sea. The Alaska Volcano Observatory made hourly updates early yesterday on its

Web site with each one beginning the same way - "Eruption is in progress." The volcano on an uninhabited island has been erupting since Saturday (Jan 28), with explosions thrusting particles almost five miles into the skies around south-central Alaska. With winds shifting the ash away from major air routes, airlines cautiously resumed dozens of flights that had been cancelled as a precaution. Ash particles can damage engines. Alaska Airlines yesterday resumed all flights to and from Kodiak Island and Anchorage, the state's largest air hub, said spokeswoman Amanda Tobin. The airline had cancelled all of its 36 Anchorage flights Monday night as a precaution. Flights to and from Kodiak had been cancelled Sunday and Monday. Era Aviation also was back to a normal schedule after canceling five flights to Kodiak Monday, according to President Paul Landis.



AFGHANISTAN

Kabul, Jan 26 — Two US servicemen were wounded when their vehicle was hit by a bomb blast while on patrol in a restive eastern province of Afghanistan, the US military said today. The US patrol came under rocket-propelled grenade and mortar fire after the blast on a road in Kunar Province yesterday and they called in Apache helicopters and A-10 aircraft for support, the military said in a statement. The wounded men were evacuated to a nearby base. A Taliban spokesman claimed responsibility for yesterday's blast and said Taliban fighters had also attacked US military convoys in Uruzgan and Kandahar provinces. In a separate incident, two policemen were killed when attackers fired a rocket-propelled grenade and rifles at their remote checkpoint near the Pakistani border in the south-eastern province of Paktika, police said. The gunmen fled towards Pakistan after the attack Tuesday night (Jan 24), a provincial police officer said. — Reuters.

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated Jan 27, states: Police in Afghanistan say they have shot dead seven suspected Taleban rebels who attacked a police headquarters in Kandahar province. Five police were injured in the two-hour gun battle. Two Afghan policemen were killed and two others injured when their vehicle was hit by a bomb in Helmand province. Scores have died in a recent spate of attacks in southern Afghanistan, much of it blamed on remnants of the hardline Taleban movement.

Kandahar, Jan 28 — Taliban insurgents have torched three schools in a restive southern province of

Afghanistan, the latest attacks in the militants' campaign against the U.S.-backed government and its efforts to promote education. The three newly built schools, where 1,000 boys and girls studied, were gutted yesterday night in different parts of Nawa district in Helmand province, said provincial education chief Mohammad Qasim. The Taliban banned girls from school during their rule. Since then, insurgents battling U.S. and government forces have launched numerous attacks on schools and teachers, including deadly attacks in recent weeks in Helmand, where British troops will soon be based. Suspected Taliban gunmen dragged a teacher from his classroom and shot him at the gates of his school in December after he had ignored warnings to stop teaching boys and girls, officials said. In a separate attack, also in December, gunmen shot and killed an 18-year-old male student and a guard at another school in Helmand. The gunmen opened fire on teachers and said they would be killed unless the schools were shut down, police said. In Zabul province, also in the south, a teacher was dragged from his home and beheaded last month. On Thursday (Jan 26) Britain announced it would send 3,300 more troops to Afghanistan, bringing its total there to 5,700 after it takes over command of the NATO mission in May. The new troops include a so-called Provincial Reconstruction Team, which will aim to establish security for development in Helmand. — Reuters.

Kandahar, Jan 29 — Afghan security forces arrested nine people suspected of plotting attacks including two Pakistanis preparing to become suicide bombers, a provincial governor said today. "They were captured in three separate raids over the past 48 hours in Kandahar," the restive southern province's governor, Assadullah Khalid, told a news conference. Seven of the suspects, who were believed to be working for the Taliban and al-Qaeda, were Afghan and two were Pakistanis preparing to become suicide bombers, he said. The two had identified themselves as Pakistanis, he said. A vehicle rigged up as a car bomb was seized in one of the raids, Khalid said. — Reuters.

Khost, Feb 2 — A suicide bomber detonated a car packed with explosives in Afghanistan, killing three government soldiers and wounding three others, police said today. The attack occurred at a checkpoint in the southeastern province of Khost yesterday when Afghan soldiers and U.S. troops were checking vehicles, a police official said. "Apart from the suicide bomber, three national army soldiers were killed," senior provincial police official Mohammad Zaman told reporters. Taliban guerrillas were believed to be responsible for the attack, he said. There were no casualties among the U.S. troops. — Reuters.

BURUNDI

Bujumbura, Jan 27 — Burundian troops have killed 10 fighters from the only remaining Hutu rebel group in clashes in the central African country's northwest, the army said today. "There was contact yesterday in Kibira forest between government troops who were patrolling and a group of FNL (Forces for National Liberation) rebels hidden there," Major Adolphe Manirakiza told Reuters. "During the clashes 10 rebels were killed and three soldiers wounded," he said. The FNL could not be contacted for comment. — Reuters.

COLOMBIA

London, Feb 2 — A press report, dated Feb 1, states: More than 20,000 paramilitaries have now laid down their arms in Colombia following the latest disarmament drive under the peace process, officials say. Over 2,500 fighters of the Central Bolivar Bloc surrendered their weapons at a ceremony in the town of Santa Rosa, north of Bogota. The government believes this faction controlled a coca production area. Under the peace process, those who have committed crimes and agree to disarm face reduced prison terms. Most of the rank-and-file paramilitaries are expected to be pardoned and can be eligible for job-training programmes and a monthly government stipend for two years. However, human rights groups are concerned that paramilitaries who have committed atrocities will go unpunished. The Central Bolivar Bloc belongs to Colombia's biggest paramilitary group, the United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia (AUC). Its commander, Carlos Jimenez (known as Macaco), is wanted in the United States for drug-trafficking, but he will avoid extradition. The fighters handed over their weapons in the presence of Colombian officials and international observers. As part of the ceremony, they turned over 900 rifles, 90 pistols, 40 revolvers and eight trucks, according to AP news agency. In a separate development, a Colombian prosecutor issued arrest warrants against two demobilised paramilitary leaders, Carlos Castano and Salvatore Mancuso, in connection with a massacre in the year 2000. Correspondents say they are unlikely to be arrested provided they observe the terms of the peace process.

FRANCE

London, Jan 25 — A press report, dated today, states: Explosions badly damaged a holiday village and a campsite in northern Corsica yesterday, police said. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attacks, which came two days after a suspected Corsican separatist died when a bomb he was placing at a mainland tax office in Aix-en-Provence, southern France, detonated prematurely. The first blast, after midnight, damaged a building in a holiday village 40 miles south of Bastia. An hour later, an explosion

and fire ripped through about 15 bungalows. Both holiday sites had been closed for the winter.

INDIA

London, Jan 25 — A press report, dated today, states: Separatists in India's northeastern Assam state were suspected of carrying out an overnight bomb attack on an oil installation, officials said, amid violence ahead of Republic Day. "There was a big blast near a crude oil storage site although the damage was minimal, police chief of Sivasagar district B.P. Rabha told the AFP today. The facility belongs to India's state-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation, the country's largest company by market capitalisation. Police blamed the attack on militants of the outlawed United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA), who are suspected of being behind at least 16 explosions since Friday (Jan 20) that have killed three people and wounded 31, besides damaging six oil and gas installations and three power plants. The fire from the blast was extinguished. "The fire has been put out, although we are yet to ascertain if the blaze was a result of some attacks by miscreants or an accidental one," senior Oil and Natural Gas official T. Hussain said. ULFA rebels have not claimed responsibility for the attacks. Republic Day — when the country marks the signing of India's constitution on 26 January, 1950 — often sees a surge in violence, with rebels in Assam and other six northeastern states striking crude oil pipelines, transport and targeting federal soldiers. The Indian government has invited representatives of the ULFA for peace talks on February 7 in New Delhi. The ULFA and five other groups have called a 17-hour general strike from early tomorrow to protest the Republic Day celebrations. Militant groups in seven insurgency-racked northeastern states have, for years, boycotted national events to protest New Delhi's rule over the oil and timber-rich region. There are some 30 rebel groups operating in the region with demands ranging from secession to greater autonomy and the right to self-determination.

London, Jan 29 — A press report, dated today, states: An Indian Army major and seven militants were killed in a fierce gunbattle in the border district of Poonch early yesterday. The encounter started in the early hours of yesterday in Salotari, some 250 km from Jammu, when security forces spotted a group of infiltrators sneaking from across the Line of Control. Defence spokesman said that the militants were trying to cross the barbed fencing near the LoC when they were faced with the security forces. They opened heavy fire on the surrounding troops which was returned. This is the first and the biggest encounter of this year so far.

Bangkok, Jan 31 — A powerful separatist group in the eastern Indian state of Nagaland agreed today to extend a cease-fire with the

government by six months and resume peace talks soon, an Indian negotiator said. "The ceasefire has been extended by six months," Indian negotiator K. Padmanabhaiah told Reuters after four days of talks in Bangkok. Delegates from the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Issac-Muivah) or NSCN (I-M) had agreed to meet government negotiators again, but no venue had been set, he said. A joint statement said the two sides had agreed to "reactivate and make effective mechanism to address all ceasefire issues, including modification of ground rules". More than 20,000 people have died in fighting for the independence of Nagaland, a mainly Christian state of two million people on India's far eastern border with Myanmar. The NSCN (I-M) has met Indian officials on several occasions since it started a ceasefire in 1997, but there has been little progress on the central rebel demands — unification of Naga-dominated areas in northeast India, something fiercely opposed by other ethnic groups in the region, and ultimately independence. — Reuters.

IRAN

Tehran, Jan 29 — A percussion bomb exploded in the restive south-western Iranian oil city of Ahvaz late yesterday evening but caused no injuries, the official IRNA news agency reported. People went into the streets in panic after the blast, the agency said. Eight people were killed on Tuesday (Jan 24) when bombs ripped through a bank and government building in Ahvaz, capital of the mainly Arab province of Khuzestan. "An initial investigation found the exploded object was a percussion bomb," Khuzestan Governor Amir Hayat Moqaddam told IRNA, referring to the device designed to create more noise than damage. A little-known group campaigning for independence for Iran's Arab minority claimed responsibility for Tuesday's attacks in a Web statement. The claim could not be verified. — Reuters.

IRAQ

Baghdad, Jan 29 — A bomb killed 11 people in a shop selling sweets in the town of Iskindiraya south of Baghdad overnight, Iraqi police said today. The bomb, which had been planted just outside the shop, also wounded five people, the police said. They said the blast occurred in a mostly Shi'ite Muslim area of the town. Sunni Arab insurgents are waging a campaign of bombings and shootings in a bid to topple Iraq's Shi'ite-led government. — Reuters.

London, Jan 30 — A press report, dated Jan 29, states: U.S. troops killed three suspected insurgents wearing Iraqi police uniforms today in the northern city of Kirkuk, the military said. The U.S. military also announced the death of an American soldier in roadside blast in Baghdad. U.S. spokesman Maj. Jeff Allen said a gun battle broke out at a checkpoint in Kirkuk, 180 miles north of

Baghdad, and three men wearing Iraqi police uniforms inside a car were shot dead. American troops captured a fourth man in the car, but found no police identity documents on the men. Iraqi police Brig. Serhad Qadir said the four were suspected insurgents disguised as policemen. The U.S. military was investigating the situation. The U.S. soldier was killed when a roadside bomb struck his vehicle yesterday evening in Baghdad, the military said today. The military had previously reported the death of another soldier in a similar but separate attack yesterday in Baghdad. Gunmen attacked an Iraqi police patrol today near the prison in Baqouba, 35 miles northeast of Baghdad, killing one policeman and wounding another, Diyala police's Joint Coordination Center said. A civilian was also wounded. A mortar round was fired toward Baqouba's police headquarters but exploded in a nearby residential area, wounding two civilians and two policemen, police said.

London, Jan 31 — A British soldier was killed by an explosion in southern Iraq today, becoming the 100th British service member to die in the campaign. The Ministry of Defence said three other soldiers were hurt, one seriously, in the blast, which took place this morning in the southern port of Umm Qasr in Basra province. It gave no further details of the incident, nor of the identities of the soldiers, who were from the 7th Armoured Brigade, the main British force in Iraq. "I can confirm that a British soldier died from injuries sustained as a result of an explosion at approximately 0834 local time in Basra province," a ministry spokesman said. — Reuters.

Baghdad, Feb 1 — At least eight people were killed today when a suicide bomber strapped with explosives attacked a crowd of labourers in central Baghdad, an Interior Ministry source said. Hospital sources said at least 65 people were wounded. The attack took place in New Baghdad. Police sources said earlier the explosion hit the Baab al-Sharjee area of Baghdad. — Reuters. (See issue of Feb 1.)

Baghdad, Feb 2 — Gunmen kidnapped two Iraqi correspondents working for an independent satellite television channel, police and station officials said today. Reem Zaid, 23, and her colleague Marwan Khaza'al, 25, were returning to the offices of Sumariya TV in Baghdad yesterday after attending a press conference when they were kidnapped, said a station official who spoke on condition of anonymity. Sunni militants frequently target journalists working for U.S.-backed or other foreign news outlets in Iraq. As a result many have quit their work or take great precautions not to be identified with their employers. Many Iraqi media outlets are also controlled by various political factions inside and outside the government, but the Sumariya official stressed the station was

privately owned by Iraqis and had no links to any political group. In New York, the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) said it was alarmed by the report of the abductions. Executive director Ann Cooper said armed groups had kidnapped at least 37 other journalists in Iraq since April 2004; most had been freed but six had been killed. American reporter Jill Carroll, who was abducted by gunmen in Baghdad on January 7, is still being held hostage. Her kidnappers have threatened to kill her unless women detainees held by U.S. forces and the Iraqi Interior Ministry are freed. — Reuters.

ISRAEL

Gaza, Jan 22 — At least one person was killed and two were wounded in an explosion in the Gaza Strip today and a Palestinian militant group accused Israel of trying to kill its fighters in a strike on their car. The Israeli army denied involvement but said it carried out an air strike on gunmen it believed were trying to penetrate the fence around the Gaza Strip and had hit one militant. Palestinian witnesses said there was a small crater and what looked like pieces of a missile near the car. They said Israeli helicopters were hovering over the area — near to where the army acknowledged opening fire. The Palestinian Popular Resistance Committees umbrella militant group said its fighters had been travelling in the car but escaped the explosion. A spokesman for the group said a bystander was killed. Medics confirmed one civilian was dead. "The army stresses that it had no involvement in the blast," an army statement said. Israel had been considering its response after a suicide bombing by the Islamic Jihad faction wounded 30 people in Tel Aviv last week. — Reuters.

London, Feb 1 — An Israeli soldier has been seriously wounded and two Palestinian militants killed in a gun battle in the West Bank. Israel says one of the militants was responsible for masterminding the last six suicide bombings against its civilians. Surrounding a house in the West Bank city of Arraba, Israeli troops ordered wanted Islamic Jihad militants inside to surrender. The Israeli military says the Palestinians opened fire, seriously wounding one of its soldiers in the head. The troops then returned fire killing two of the militants, including Nidal Abu Saada. Israel says the 27-year-old was a senior Islamic Jihad commander responsible for planning the last six suicide bombings against Israeli targets.

IVORY COAST

Abidjan, Jan 26 — The United Nations is evacuating around 100 of its staff from Ivory Coast, a U.N. official said today, a week after riots targeted the world body's bases and property in the war-divided West African country. Hundreds of pro-government demonstrators brought

four days of chaos to the streets of the main commercial city Abidjan and other towns upcountry last week, hurling rocks and petrol bombs at U.N. offices and forcing some aid agencies to halt operations. Four youths were shot dead by U.N. troops when protesters burst into their base in Guiglo trying to seize weapons and vehicles. Hundreds of peacekeepers then evacuated Guiglo and three other bases in the western region near Liberia. "Following the attacks on our installations in the west, it was decided to evacuate some of the civilian staff to Gambia," a U.N. official told Reuters. "The staff are traumatised. They need a step back to recuperate. This is a temporary measure." The world body has nearly 7,000 peacekeeping troops in Ivory Coast as well as hundreds of civilian staff, many working for U.N. aid agencies. The U.N. World Food Programme, which had been helping feed 13,000 refugees from Burkina Faso and Liberia in Guiglo, withdrew staff from there after its offices were looted and its warehouses robbed of 683 tonnes of food aid. The U.N.'s refugee agency UNHCR also removed staff from the town, where armed government militias wield a lot of power. Pro-government rioters who were summoned into the streets by local radio burned down the UNHCR's local offices and destroyed the agency's cars and equipment in last week's unrest. Many in the country fear more violence in the coming days or weeks as international mediators push the government and rebels to cooperate on a peace plan aiming to reunite the country by October and the U.N. Security Council threatens to slap sanctions on anyone blocking the process. — Reuters.

United Nations, Jan 26 — The United Nations has pulled nearly 400 civilian staffers out of restive Ivory Coast, fearing fresh unrest when the Security Council slaps sanctions in the next few days on people blocking the peace process, UN officials said today. The temporary evacuation leaves another 800 UN civilians still in the country along with some 11,000 UN and French peacekeepers, said Pierre Schori, the UN special envoy for Ivory Coast. "This is a temporary measure we are taking," Schori told reporters after briefing the Security Council. "Given the vitriolic messages we hear on the radio and in the media, we think that the next few days are not going to improve the situation very much." Several Security Council members, meanwhile, predicted long-delayed asset and travel freezes would be imposed within the next few days against two or three individuals. While council diplomats have said repeatedly in recent days that sanctions were in the works, they said the latest delay was to allow for the evacuation of non-essential UN staff in case of violence when the targets of the sanctions are announced. "No decision has been taken today but I think that we are very close to a

decision," French UN Ambassador Jean-Marc de la Sabliere said. Youth leader Charles Ble Goude was still expected to top the list of sanctions targets, said several council diplomats. Ble Goude heads the Young Patriots group, fiercely loyal to President Laurent Gbagbo, that helped spark four days of chaos across southern and western Ivory Coast last week, aimed at pressuring UN and French personnel to flee the country. Four youths were shot dead by UN troops when protesters burst into their base in Guiglo trying to seize weapons and vehicles. Hundreds of peacekeepers then evacuated Guiglo and three other bases in the western region near Liberia. The World Food Programme, which had been helping feed 13,000 refugees from Burkina Faso and Liberia in the town of Guiglo, withdrew staff from there after its offices were looted and its warehouses robbed of 683 tonnes of food aid. The UN refugee agency UNHCR also removed staff from the town, where armed government militias wield a lot of power. Pro-government rioters who were summoned into the streets by local radio burnt down the UNHCR's local offices and destroyed agency cars and equipment in last week's unrest. The anti-UN protests began after foreign mediators overseeing the implementation of a UN peace plan advised against renewing the expired mandate of the parliament, made up largely of Gbagbo supporters. The protesters condemned this as foreign meddling in Ivory Coast's affairs. — Reuters.

Guiglo, Jan 31 — Militia loyal to Ivory Coast President Laurent Gbagbo say they will oppose the return of United Nations peacekeeping troops to bases in the west which were evacuated during recent violent anti-U.N. riots. The warning poses yet another challenge to the authority of the U.N. mission, which is struggling to enforce a long-delayed peace process in the volatile West African nation, divided into rebel and government zones since a 2002 civil war. "We don't want these trigger happy (U.N.) soldiers who kill without any punishment," local militia chief Denis Maho Glofiehi told Reuters in Guiglo, a western town where Bangladeshi U.N. troops shot dead five pro-Gbagbo protesters two weeks ago when a mob stormed their base. U.N. officials said the Bangladeshis were forced to open fire when the protesters tried to seize their weapons and armoured vehicles. The U.N. peacekeepers subsequently pulled out of Guiglo and three other bases in the violence-prone west. "We demand apologies from the U.N. force ... and until that's done, no discussion about any eventual return of the U.N. is possible," Maho said in an interview at Guiglo at the weekend. He was surrounded by young militia members toting Kalashnikov automatic rifles and wearing military uniforms. The protesters, "Young Patriot" militants who attacked U.N.

bases, vehicles and staff across the government-controlled south during four days, demanded the withdrawal of U.N. and French peacekeepers they said were meddling in Ivorian affairs. Nearly 11,000 U.N. and French troops in Ivory Coast maintain a 2003 ceasefire, keeping rebel and government forces apart. The anti-U.N. riots by pro-Gbagbo loyalists wielding stones, sledgehammers and petrol bombs paralysed Ivory Coast's economic capital Abidjan and other cities, temporarily disrupting exports by the world's top cocoa grower. A Reuters reporter who visited Guiglo said the Bangladeshi U.N. base here was wrecked and parts of it set on fire. The protesters daubed "U.N. Out" on walls. Local offices of U.N. humanitarian agencies and other relief NGOs were also looted, forcing the evacuation of 400 U.N. civilian staffers out of the Ivory Coast. "We were not prepared ... we are under attack, under siege, having to temporarily relocate personnel," said Pierre Schori, the head of the U.N.'s mission in Ivory Coast. Maho leads the pro-government Great West Liberation Front (FLGO) militia which has fought with anti-Gbagbo rebels holding the north of the country. The rebels demand disarmament of such militias as a condition for themselves laying down their arms under the U.N. peace plan that foresees elections by October. Guillaume Soro, leader of the New Forces rebels, called on the international community to restore security to the west. "Now it's the (pro-government) militias that are imposing their law in Guiglo, looting and killing," he told local people on Monday (Jan 30) in the rebel-controlled western town of Man. He said the U.N. was "hesitating too much" about slapping sanctions on Ivorian political figures judged to be impeding the peace process. The U.N. Security Council is weighing possible travel bans and asset freezes on such individuals. But no sanctions have been applied so far. While opposing U.N. troops, Maho called on U.N. relief agencies and humanitarian NGOs to return to the west, where thousands of refugees from local fighting and from a past war in neighbouring Liberia had been receiving foreign food aid. — Reuters.

NEPAL

London, Jan 21 — A press report, dated today, states: More than 200 activists and opposition party members were arrested across Nepal today as they organized pro-democracy rallies, the parties said. Three hundred other activists were arrested yesterday, and another 100 on Thursday (Jan 19), according to opposition party members. There were some injuries, but it was not known how many were hurt. The rallies were in protest of King Gyanendra's taking absolute control of the country in February, suspending Parliament and sacking the government. The king cited a threat from the Maoist

insurgency as justification for his actions. The king has promised to restore multi-party democracy and basic civil and human rights, but he is under international pressure to move quickly. Municipal elections are scheduled for next month, but less than 15% of Nepalese are eligible to vote. Protesters claim the upcoming election is a sham as the king will still hold absolute power. They want the election to be canceled and a constitutional assembly to take place. Protesters included artists and writers. A popular folk singer and a well-known student leader were among those arrested. A reporter from CNN-IBN, CNN's affiliate in India, who is in Nepal, said her tapes were confiscated by Nepalese security forces. When the tapes were returned, they had been erased.

Kathmandu, Jan 22 — Seventeen Maoist guerrillas and six security personnel were killed in the deadliest gun battle in restive Nepal since the rebels ended a four-month-old truce three weeks ago, an army officer said today. The news came as an alliance of Nepali opposition parties vowed to continue their protests, just hours after police in Kathmandu clashed with crowds demanding that King Gyanendra restore democracy to the Himalayan nation. The army officer said the bodies of the 17 dead Maoists and some of their weapons had been recovered from the site of the overnight clash at a remote village in Makawanpur district, 100 km east of the capital Kathmandu. "We suffered six casualties," he said. The latest violence comes a week after the guerrillas carried out co-ordinated attacks around the capital, killing 12 policemen. At least 73 people have been killed in insurgency-related violence since the Maoists, fighting a 10-year revolt to overthrow the monarchy, ended a unilateral ceasefire on Jan 2 after Gyanendra's government failed to respond. Riot police kept a strict vigil in the capital today, guarding the sites of yesterday's protests. Police said most of the 236 activists detained yesterday had been freed. Former Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala was released from house arrest, his aide said today, three days after he was detained along with other political leaders during the clampdown to thwart yesterday's rally. — Reuters.

London, Jan 23 — A press report, dated today, states: Suspected Maoist rebels have shot dead a Nepali politician who had vowed to contest municipal elections called by King Gyanendra but opposed by the guerrillas, officials say. Police said two young men walked into the office of the Nepal Sadbhavana Party (NSP) in the south-eastern town of Janakpur on Sunday (Jan 22) and sprayed bullets at Bijay Lal Das. "He died while being rushed to the hospital," a government official said.

London, Jan 24 — A press report, dated today, states: Nepal has lifted a ban on protests and a week-old night

curfew in the capital Kathmandu, as opposition groups promised new anti-king rallies after days of violent clashes. A mobile phone blackout was also partially eased as the royal government called for dialogue with opposition parties following a four-day crackdown that resulted in hundreds of arrests. Kathmandu has seen days of running battles between protesters and police breaking up demonstrations against King Gyanendra, who threw out the elected government last February. Student groups and opposition parties however pledged to continue their protests, including the staging of a rally here today and a nation-wide strike on Thursday (Jan 26). Aside from an increased police presence in the New Road area near central Durbar Square where the protest was slated to begin mid-afternoon, life appeared normal in the capital today. State television announced late yesterday that the night curfew and a ban on public protests slapped on Kathmandu a week earlier had been lifted. The curfew would remain in the neighbouring city of Bhaktapur, it said.

London, Jan 25 — A press report, dated Jan 24, states: Police fired tear gas and beat pro-democracy activists with batons today, hours after authorities lifted a ban on demonstrations in Kathmandu. The protest was organised by an alliance of Nepal's seven largest political parties, which is demanding that King Gyanendra hand back power he seized in February, 2005, and restore democracy. Police moved against demonstrators shortly after protesters began to gathering. Tear gas quickly filled the crowded streets around a shopping area about two miles from the heavily guarded royal palace complex. Police also used water cannons to disperse the protesters. At least three demonstrators were hurt after being hit on the head with batons, and they were taken to a hospital. At least 13 were arrested. "The government may put a few of us in jail, but the movement for democracy will continue," Dilli Sitaula said as he was loaded into a police van. Nepalese authorities lifted the protest ban in the capital after successfully heading off a mass rally a few days ago. The royalist government last week banned rallies, jailed activists, imposed a night-time curfew and cut cell phone service to quash plans for an anti-government rally that organisers hoped would draw hundreds of thousands last Friday (Jan 20). That rally failed to materialise, and a protest the following day drew only a few thousand activists. By late yesterday, the government announced that the security situation had improved enough to lift the restrictions. Demonstrations in high-security areas, such as near the palace and ministry buildings, remained banned. The seven-party alliance wants the government to stop planned municipal elections on Feb 8 and is boycotting

the polls, saying participation would legitimise the king's power grab. The government said it had no plan to comply and would go ahead with elections. "The government is not thinking of postponing the elections. The security situation has improved," Home Minister Kamal Thapa said. The government said the municipal elections, the first step in restoring democracy, will be followed by parliamentary elections within a couple of years. No date has been set. The Red Cross said today that rebels had freed three civilians and a policeman taken hostage this month after an attack on a police post near Kathmandu.

Kathmandu, Jan 25 — At least seven people were killed when Maoist rebels raided a major commercial town in west Nepal, setting off a string of explosions at government buildings and police posts, officials and residents said today. The victims included four Maoists, two policemen and one soldier, officials said. The assault came hours after riot police clashed with pro-democracy protesters across the country yesterday, firing tear gas, using water cannons and employing baton charges to break up anti-king demonstrations. Coordinated attacks began late yesterday in Nepalgunj, about 500 km west of the capital, Kathmandu. — Reuters.

Kathmandu, Jan 26 — Nepali police shot and wounded a protester today during a nationwide strike against municipal elections and King Gyanendra's refusal to restore multi-party democracy, doctors and witnesses said. They said the incident took place in the resort town of Pokhara, 200 km west of the capital Kathmandu. "One person has received a bullet injury in his right leg," a doctor at Phewa City Hospital said. Dozens of Nepalis were detained today and baton-wielding riot police guarded government buildings and patrolled largely deserted streets across the Himalayan kingdom. The dawn-to-dusk closure was called by the country's main political parties, who have organised fierce, often violent, street protests to press the monarch to restore full democracy. While private and public transport stayed off roads in major cities, government workers walked to work today. Schools, colleges, shops and businesses were shut across the country. Coinciding with the unrest, contestants for Feb 8 elections for 58 municipal councils are expected to file nomination papers today. About two dozen people had been detained in Kathmandu since the strike began, police said, adding about three dozen were detained in other parts of the troubled country. Witnesses said police used batons to break up a rally of about 300 people in Pokhara and arrested nearly a dozen people. Hundreds of activists have been detained and dozens injured since last week as police used batons and fired teargas shells in anti-king rallies. The government has ordered businesses

and transporters to ignore the strike, promising compensation if they are attacked. — Reuters.

London, Jan 29 — A press report, dated today, states: Eleven Maoist rebels fighting to overthrow Nepal's monarchy and two soldiers have been killed in a battle in the eastern part of the Himalayan kingdom. The clash, which began late Friday (Jan 27), was the latest violence ahead of the first anniversary on Wednesday of the seizure of power by King Gyanendra. "Eleven Maoist bodies were recovered from the clash site at Hatuwagadhi area in Bhojpur, during a search operation yesterday," said an official at Royal Nepalese Army headquarters in Kathmandu. The clash, in which two soldiers were also killed, lasted until 0200, local time, yesterday, the official said. Troops yesterday were scouring the rugged area, located 260 kilometres east of the capital Kathmandu, for signs of more rebels. "Additional troops have been mobilised to intensify the search operations in the area," the officer said. The battle came after the army said five rebels blew themselves up Thursday while making a bomb in Siraha district, located 420 kilometres south-east of Kathmandu.

Kathmandu, Feb 1 — A year after he seized power, Nepal's King Gyanendra vowed today to hold national elections by 2007, as Maoist rebels attacked a western town and killed at least 19 soldiers and police. The army said dozens of soldiers and government officials, including the district administrator, were missing after the overnight raid on the western town of Palpa, which targeted army barracks, police posts and government buildings. Hours after the attack, Gyanendra, who sacked the government and seized power on February 1, last year, promising to bring peace and prosperity, reiterated his call to communist guerillas to shun violence and join the mainstream. "Let us unite to establish a meaningful democracy by burying bitter differences of the past," he said, speaking in Nepali. "All Nepalis want lasting peace and ... this is possible only through peaceful and constructive efforts." The guerillas attacked Palpa late yesterday and fighting continued through the night. "Sixteen policemen, besides the three soldiers, have also been killed," the officer told Reuters. The army had said earlier three soldiers had been killed and one wounded. Soldiers were said to be searching for rebel fighters and bodies. The independent Kantipur radio station said prisoners from a nearby jail had been freed by the guerillas. Communication links to the region were cut off. Nepal's seven mainstream political parties, citizens' groups and professional organizations have planned nationwide rallies to mark today as "black day". Political parties plan to hoist black flags and burn effigies and there are fears of violence if activists try to defy a ban on rallies in the heart of Kathmandu. In the capital, residents reported 20

armored personnel carriers patrolling the capital, the first time such a large number had been seen in the city. Although some of the king's tough curbs have been eased, analysts say he is nowhere close to fulfilling his promises to crush the Maoists, bring peace and good governance, and then restore democracy within three years. The king has called municipal elections for February 8 in what his ministers say is a first step toward restoring democracy, but the political parties, sidelined in planning the polls, have vowed to boycott a vote they see as another confrontational move to sideline them, and have entered into a loose alliance with the rebels.

NIGERIA

Abuja, Jan 22 — Nigerian officials raised hopes a Briton and three foreign hostages could soon be released after receiving a recent photograph of the oil workers at a meeting today with a representative for the militants holding them. The hostages were abducted from an offshore oilfield on Jan 11 by militants who have demanded the release of two ethnic Ijaw leaders and waged a month-long campaign of sabotage against oil facilities in the world's eighth largest exporter. Diplomats were cautiously optimistic the photograph and meeting signified progress in the 11-day-old hostage crisis, but expressed some doubts about government assurances that it would be over within days. "The state governor is saying that it should be resolved in 12-24 hours, but they have been saying the same thing for the last 10 days," one diplomat said. "It sounds very good. It looks very positive, but I'm still suspicious." Another diplomat said he had been informed after the talks the hostages would be freed soon if the government promised no military reprisals against the militants, whose attacks have cut a tenth of Nigeria's oil output. The militants have promised to carry out more attacks very shortly. The photograph showed the hostages — an American, a Bulgarian and a Honduran as well as the Briton — in apparently good health and sporting beards, indicating it was taken recently, diplomats said. A spokesman for the Bayelsa state government said authorities were using community leaders as go-betweens because the militants did not want to talk directly to authorities. "We are making progress. We hope the hostages will be released in the next few days," the spokesman said. The hostages complained in a call on Thursday (Jan 19) of diarrhoea and fatigue from being constantly moved around the humid mangrove swamps. The militants had threatened to kill all the hostages if US hostage Patrick Landry, who was ill, died. Landry's health has apparently improved and the threat of execution has abated. In an email sent before today's meeting, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta said it could hold the

hostages for years. The group's key demand is the release of militant leader Mujahid Dokubo-Asari and former Bayelsa state governor Diepreye Alamieyeseigha. Oil unions have threatened to leave Nigeria's restive delta, which produces almost all the nation's oil, if the security situation deteriorates. Dozens of people have been killed in the well-organised raids and bombings by the militia. The campaign has helped push world oil prices to four month highs and oil industry sources say the political aims of the militants mean unrest may last until elections next year. An uprising before 2003 polls hit 40% of Nigeria's oil production. "Even if the hostages are released, their demands cannot be met, so will they give up the attacks or carry on?" said a senior oil industry source. The militants are also seeking \$1.5 billion from Royal Dutch Shell in compensation to villages for oil spills and more local control over the Niger Delta's oil wealth. So far, Shell is the only oil major to say it has suffered. It has cut its production by 210,000 barrels a day and pulled out 500 staff. Hundreds of contractors have also fled. France's Total and Italy's Agip, a unit of ENI, have both denied militant claims they were attacked. — Reuters.

Yenagoa, Jan 23 — Militants attacked an oil platform in Nigeria operated by Agip, the state police chief said, in what appeared to be a continuation of a month-long campaign of sabotage and kidnapping. A source at Agip, a unit of Italy's ENI, said the attackers were repelled by security forces and output was unaffected. "There was an attack on an Agip installation this morning by some youths," Bayelsa State Police Commissioner Hafiz Ringin said. The militants, who are also holding four foreign oil workers hostage, have been promising to launch more attacks since a raid on a Shell platform on Jan 15 in which about 14 soldiers were killed. "Security men fired in the air and they ran away. Nothing was damaged and production has not been affected," the company source said, asking not to be named. — Reuters.

Port Harcourt, Jan 24 — Eight policemen and one civilian were killed today when an armed gang in military fatigues attacked the offices of the Italian oil company Agip in Nigeria and robbed a bank. It was not clear if the attack, in Port Harcourt, was carried out by the same group that has kidnapped four foreign oil workers and crippled Nigerian oil output by a tenth during a month-long campaign of violence in the world's eighth largest exporter. "An armed gang in military attire attacked the Agip offices," a security source said. "The armed gang exchanged fire with the local security forces and made their way to a banking facility which is located on the base," Agip's parent company, ENI, said in a statement from Italy. The group of 20 to 30 men, armed with AK-47 assault rifles, arrived at the company's compound in two speedboats and engaged police in

a gun battle. A Reuters witness who arrived at the scene shortly after the gunfight saw the bodies of eight police and one civilian being loaded into ambulances. Other people were injured. The company confirmed the nine deaths and said it had "temporarily evacuated staff and contractors from the area of the base affected by the incident and the situation is currently under control". Asked about the attack in Port Harcourt, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) said in an email response to Reuters that it was checking with its units in the area, but it had not planned any such action. "All our units have been specifically instructed not to attack banks yet. When we do, it will not be for financial gain," the group said. Nigeria's secret service said it arrested a leader of the movement today, a day after detaining two suspected accomplices of the kidnappers, raising hopes of a breakthrough in the 13-day-old hostage crisis. "We have arrested the secretary-general of MEND. We are making headway right now," said State Security Service director Adebayo Babalola. Government officials have expressed confidence the captives will be released soon as negotiations progress on a ransom payment with someone they believe to be a credible representative of the kidnappers. However, the militants have said they are not in talks to release their American, British, Honduran and Bulgarian captives and have denounced the negotiators as bounty hunters. They have made political demands, including the release of two ethnic Ijaw leaders. "The hostages are going nowhere!" the group said in an email today. An Ijaw activist said the previously unknown movement contained two different groups: a politicised faction carrying out the attacks on oil installations and a more commercially minded gang holding the hostages. Nine days after its last confirmed raid, the group has repeated threats to broaden its attacks on oil workers and installations across the delta. Dozens of people have already been killed in a campaign that helped push world oil prices to four-month highs last week. Shell has evacuated about 500 workers, hundreds more contractors have left and unions have threatened to withdraw completely from the delta if security deteriorates. The militant group said it was preparing for an assault by the Nigerian army and had moved the four hostages deeper inside the delta's maze of mangrove swamps for their own safety. It reiterated that it would keep the hostages until it won the release of two high-profile Ijaw prisoners: militia chief Mujahid Dokubo-Asari and former Bayelsa state governor Diepreye Alamieyeseigha, impeached for money laundering last month. It is also seeking \$1.5 billion from Shell to be paid to delta villages in compensation for oil spills. — Reuters.

Warri, Jan 25 — Villagers fled Nigeria's lawless delta today amid fears of military reprisals after a wave of attacks on foreign oil companies by ethnic Ijaw militia. The army deployed more troops to key installations and oil companies tightened security around offices a day after heavily armed men stormed the headquarters of Italian oil firm Agip, robbing a bank on the premises and killing eight policemen and one civilian. It was not clear if the attack on Agip, a unit of Italy's ENI, was the work of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta, whose five-week campaign of sabotage and kidnapping has helped push world oil prices to four-month highs. The movement said it would make Royal Dutch Shell suffer unless it paid \$1.5 billion to delta villages in compensation for decades of oil pollution, which is one of its demands for releasing four foreign hostages. The government has set up a committee to negotiate the release of the four oil workers — an American, a Briton, a Bulgarian and a Honduran — kidnapped from a Shell oilfield on Jan 11. "In principle, we have assurances the hostages will be released. We believe it will be this week," said a spokesman for the state of Bayelsa, one of six delta states. "There will be no military reprisals." However, diplomats say the government has given similar hopeful messages every day since the abduction and the militants have consistently denied being in any talks. "The hostages are in good health and are going nowhere for as long as our demands are not met," said the group, which also demands the release of two imprisoned Ijaw leaders and more local control over the delta's huge oil wealth. At the riverside in the delta city of Warri, villagers arrived in boats packed with household possessions from outlying villages, fearing military attacks to avenge the killing of a dozen soldiers in a raid on a Shell oil platform on Jan 15. Shell has already withdrawn 500 staff and cut its output by 221,000 barrels per day, or one tenth of Nigerian exports. Hundreds of contractors have also fled as the military deploys extra troops to platforms and shipping terminals across the vast region of mangrove swamps and tidal creeks. The violence will push up costs for companies in the delta, making it harder to attract foreign staff and jeopardising major oil projects, political risk consultants Eurasia Group said. The political context of the attacks — the detention of ethnic Ijaw leaders and regional rivalry for the ruling party's presidential nomination in elections next year — means the violence is likely to continue into 2007, they said. Oil unions have already threatened to pull out from the delta, which produces almost all Nigeria's 2.4 million bpd, if security deteriorates further. — Reuters.

Lagos, Jan 30 — Four foreign oil workers held hostage by Nigerian militants were released today and

were well, a government spokesman said. The hostages — an American, Briton, Bulgarian and Honduran — were abducted from an offshore oilfield in the Niger Delta operated by Royal Dutch Shell on Jan 11. "They have all been released. They are all alive and well," said the spokesman for Nigeria's southern state of Bayelsa. The militants had demanded more local control over the delta's oil wealth, compensation for pollution to villages and the release of two ethnic Ijaw leaders. They have staged several attacks on oil installations in the world's eighth largest oil exporter, denting output by 10 percent. A militant Ijaw group with apparent links to the kidnapers had sent an email yesterday agreeing to the hostages' release as a goodwill gesture to the international community. — Reuters.

London, Jan 30 — A press report, dated today, states: Four days after a suspected armed robbery attack on a multinational oil company in Port Harcourt, the capital of Nigeria's southern state of Rivers, another armed raid has been carried out on an oil servicing company in the capital city. According to a statement from the state police command yesterday, about 20 men, suspected to be armed robbers, stormed the premises of Deawoo, an oil servicing company situated in Abam, Okrika local government area of Rivers State and got away with about 40 million naira (about \$30,700). The armed men, armed with deadly weapons like general purpose machine gun and AK47, reportedly came into the company from the waterfront in four speedboats. Ireju Barasua, public relations officer of the Rivers State Police Command, said the robbers "were engaged in a shootout with a combined team of police, navy and soldiers on patrol and guard duty along the jetty." Last Tuesday (Jan 24), nine people, including at least seven policemen were killed as gunmen attacked the offices of the Italian oil company Agip in the capital city.

PAKISTAN

London, Jan 26 — A press report, dated today, states: A landmine planted by suspected tribal rebels exploded beneath a minibus in troubled south-western Pakistan yesterday, killing six passengers. Another five people were wounded by the blast in the remote village of Kharcha in volatile Baluchistan province, district coordination officer Abdul Samad Lasi said. "Six people were killed and five injured when a minivan struck a landmine in Kharcha," Mr Lasi said. "The landmine was planted by miscreants." Miscreants is the official Pakistani shorthand for ethnic Baluch tribal militants who are waging a sporadic revolt against the Government. Two women, three children and the male driver were killed in the explosion, Lieutenant Colonel Furqan-ud-Din of Pakistan's paramilitary frontier corps

said. The site of the explosion is 112 kilometres from the town of Dera Bugti, where security forces and tribesmen have been engaged in a month-long standoff. Another landmine planted by the rebels was defused on Tuesday (Jan 24) by security forces at Pirkoh near Dera Bugti, Lieutenant Colonel Furqan-ud-Din said. (See issue of Jan 20.)

London, Jan 26 — A press report, dated today, states: Suspected tribal militants blew up a stretch of railway track in southwestern Pakistan today, severing train links with rest of country, officials said. Javed Mohammed, an official at Pakistan Railways, said the attack happened this morning near the town of Mach, about 30 miles south-east of Quetta, capital of southwestern Baluchistan province. Nobody was wounded. Two trains carrying 1,400 passengers were scheduled to pass the damaged stretch of track hours after the attack, but were halted in Quetta, Mohammed said. It was unclear when rail traffic would resume, he said. About six trains, with about 4,000 passengers, pass through the stretch everyday. The track links Baluchistan with Pakistan's three other provinces.

London, Jan 29 — A press report, dated today, states: A gas pipeline was blown up by suspected militants in Pakistan's restive south-western province of Balochistan today, disrupting gas supply to a nearby town, a senior local government officer said. He blamed the private militia of a rebellious tribal chief, Nawab Akbar Bugti, for the attack that occurred near Loti gas field in Sui, some 500 km east of Balochistan's capital Quetta. "They (militants) were Nawab's (Bugti's) men who also fired rockets on one of the gas wells there and damaged it," Abdul Samad Lasi, district co-ordination officer, said. He said the explosive, fixed under the pipeline, damaged an 18-ft section causing suspension of gas supply to about 15,000 people of Loti village.

Karachi, Jan 30 — The Uch power plant was shut down while operations of the Loti gas purification plant were affected when significant portions of the pipelines supplying gas to the two units were blown up by outlaws in separate incidents yesterday. It is the third time in a month that the pipeline to the Uch plant has been blown up in the Nasirabad district. — Lloyd's Agents.

Karachi, Jan 30 — A second bomb blast in less than two days suspended rail traffic between Multan and Jacobabad yesterday night. The site of the fresh blast is close to the Shadan Lund railway station, 29km in the North. The blast took place at 2100 hrs. — Lloyd's Agents.

PHILIPPINES

London, Jan 24 — A press report, dated today, states: Another Filipino journalist was gunned down in the Philippine town of Morong, west of Metro Manila, who was the second newspaperman killed within one

week, police said today. A newspaper columnist, identified as Graciano Aquino, was shot dead by gunmen at a cockfight in Morong town, west of Metro Manila over the weekend. The 40-year-old columnist of the Central Luzon Forum newspaper was another media victim following a radio broadcaster, Rolly Canete. Police said that they suspected the rebel group of the New People's Army as being behind the killing. On Friday (Jan 20), Rolly Canete, a part-time radio journalist was shot dead by unidentified gunmen in the southern city of Pagadian. (See issue of Dec 23.)

London, Jan 24 — Following received from LaSalle, Quebec, datelined Bagac, Bataan, Jan 23: About 30 heavily armed men believed to be members of the New People's Army (NPA) operating in southern Bataan set on fire the cellsite of Globe Telecom in the upland village of Ibis here yesterday night. Superintendent Arnold Gunnacao, Bataan deputy police director for operations, said the communist guerrillas raided the Globe tower at around 2305 hrs and overpowered the three security guards who were on duty. They disarmed the guards before pouring gasoline at the radio room and the security guards quarters. Gunnacao said security guards Gil Mendoza, Levy Bonife and Ray Bruno were caught by surprise by the rebels wearing fatigue uniforms and brandishing Armalite rifles who introduced themselves as government soldiers. The suspects reportedly fled on foot to an unknown direction but the guards were able to free themselves and put off the fire before the place was totally burned. Reports said the rebels often struck Globe communication facilities because of the management's alleged refusal to pay revolutionary tax. The Globe cellsite in Bagac town was the third Globe tower set on fire by the rebels in the past four years. The two others were located in Abucay and Hermosa towns. Police and Army troopers were dispatched to four barangays in this town to apprehend the rebels who escaped under cover of darkness in the villages of San Antonio, Pagasa, Paysawan and Saysain. Several Army crack platoons are now scouring the coastal villages to check reports from residents of the presence of armed groups in their secluded communities.

Manila, Jan 26 — Fighting broke out between rival factions of the largest Muslim separatist group on Mindanao island in the southern Philippines today, highlighting what analysts have said could be a split in the rebels. Hundreds of people have fled a remote village in Maguindanao Province on Mindanao after some 200 members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) occupied the area following two days of fighting, a rebel spokesman and army officials said today. Army spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Franklin del Prado said the fighting was between MILF's radical faction with ties to foreign and local militants and its

larger moderate group. Eid Kabalu, an MILF spokesman, said the two factions were fighting over a corn farm in the village, adding that it would not affect peace talks with the government. Government and MILF peace negotiators are due to resume informal talks this month in Malaysia, part of efforts to set up an ancestral homeland for four million Muslims in the southern part of the mostly Catholic nation. The army's commander in the area said the latest fighting violated the truce, adding that government troops were placed on alert to stop the rebels from moving to more populated areas in the province. "We have warned them to return to their respective camps as soon as possible," Major-General Agustin Dema-ala said. "We could not allow this to continue. This is a violation of the ceasefire agreement." The International Crisis Group, an organisation active in conflict prevention and resolution, said in December that moderate and militant factions in the MILF have been contending for influence over the direction of the separatist movement. The group said if a final peace deal with the government failed to satisfy some MILF commanders, they may form an alliance with foreign and domestic militants and continue the struggle for an independent and separate Islamic state. — Reuters.

Manila, Jan 29 — Twenty people were wounded when two gunmen on a motorcycle fired at a crowd leaving a mosque on the southern island of Jolo, said an army general and witnesses today. Brigadier-General Alexander Aleo, the army commander on the island, said people were coming out from the main mosque after the evening prayers when two gunmen opened fire at them yesterday. "We're still trying to establish the motive for the drive-by shooting," Aleo said. "We've counted at least 10 people wounded in the incident, the first attack on a place of worship on the island." However, witnesses at the scene said about 20 people were hit by the indiscriminate firing. Dozens were also hurt by a near stampede as people scampered for safety after the first burst of gunfire. "We were shocked," said Amirah Lidasan, a leader of a Muslim activist group Suara Bangsamoro. She said there were suspicions that soldiers could be behind the shooting to avenge the death of a Marine sergeant two weeks ago near the mosque. — Reuters.

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated today, states: Philippines troops killed at least 18 communist rebels today in their bloodiest clash in months, a military spokesman said. There was no immediate word on government casualties. The fighting began around 0500 hrs, after civilians tipped off soldiers to the presence of New People's Army rebels in the area, Lt. Col. Preme Monta said. The clash happened outside Santa Ignacia town in Tarlac province, about 80 miles north of Manila.

SOMALIA

Nairobi, Jan 29 — Five people were killed in fighting today between two Somali sub-clans over control of land where trees are burnt for charcoal for export, a militia grouping said. The fighting north of Somalia's port city of Kismayo was the latest in a series of clashes that have killed dozens in Somalia, which has been without a functioning government during the last 14 years and is run by various clan-based militias. A spokesman for the Jubba Valley Alliance, a loose militia grouping which controls Kismayo, said the two factions clashed in the village of Bula Haji 85 km from the city. "So far five have been killed and ten wounded," Bile Abdulle said by phone. "We are trying to reconcile the two warring sub-clans. Talks are under way and we hope to end the conflict between them as soon as possible." — Reuters.

SRI LANKA

London, Jan 26 — A press report, dated today, states: Tamil Tiger rebels say one of their senior officers has been killed after the Sri Lankan army shelled one their camps in the east of the country. An army officer said several rebels had died in the clash in Batticaloa, but he did not say if the army was involved. The rebels say that in the latest incident in the Vadamunai area in Batticaloa district, the military entered into a Tamil-Tiger controlled area to attack them. They say that one of their senior officers, Major Kavilan, died in the attack. A local army officer said that seven rebels had died in a clash in the rebel-held area and a vehicle carrying some wounded rebels had also been attacked. He did not make it clear who was involved in the incident. In Colombo an army spokesman denied the army had entered Tiger-controlled territory. The Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) says it is investigating the incident. In a separate development, a police officer detained by the rebels was released this morning, a statement by the SLMM said. (See issue of Jan 22.)

London, Jan 26 — A press report, dated today, states: The Sri Lankan navy says it has arrested five Indian nationals and confiscated their trawler carrying 61,000 bomb detonators. A navy spokesman said the five men were detained late yesterday off the island's northern coast, an area under Tamil Tiger rebel control, and were handed over to police. He said authorities are trying to determine if the shipment was meant for the rebels.

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated Jan 27, states: Tamil Tiger rebels say one of their senior officers has been killed after the Sri Lankan army shelled one their camps in the east of the country. An army officer said several rebels had died in the clash in Batticaloa, but he did not say if the army was involved. The incident comes a day after the government and the rebels agreed to hold talks in Switzerland to shore up a shaky

truce. A recent surge in violence have raised fears of a return to all-out war. Both sides have accused each other of violating a ceasefire deal struck in 2002. The Tigers allege that the government is backing paramilitary groups, while Colombo is demanding the rebels end attacks on its soldiers. The rebels say that in the latest incident in the Vadamunai area in Batticaloa district, the military entered into a Tamil-Tiger controlled area to attack them. They say that one of their senior officers, Major Kavilan, died in the attack. A local army officer told the BBC Sinhala service that seven rebels had died in a clash in the rebel-held area and a vehicle carrying some wounded rebels had also been attacked. In Colombo an army spokesman denied the army had entered Tiger-controlled territory. The Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission says it is investigating the incident. The United States has welcomed the agreement between the Sri Lankan government and the Tamil Tiger rebels to hold peace talks in Geneva in February.

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated today, states: A breakaway Tamil Tiger faction said it has offered its rival mainstream rebel group a ceasefire ahead of the Tigers' talks with the government, hoping to bring Sri Lanka permanent peace. The government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, or LTTE, agreed last week to meet for the first time in about four years to try saving a ceasefire, which is under severe pressure from violence that has killed at least 150 people since December. "This unilateral ceasefire is declared to create a conducive environment for the Sri Lankan president (Mahinda Rajapakse) to continue with his negotiations to bring about a permanent end to the civil war, the breakaway Peoples Liberation Front of Tamil Eelam said in a statement made available today. The government-LTTE talks are set to be held in Switzerland in February. An exact date has not been confirmed. However, rebel officials said today that the Tamil Tigers have threatened to pull out of peace talks. The LTTE did not immediately respond to its rival's offer. Instead, it accused unspecified paramilitary personnel of kidnapping five ethnic Tamil relief workers. Yesterday, five Tamils Rehabilitation Organisation employees, travelling ... for a training programme were stopped and kidnapped by unidentified paramilitary personnel near (a) Sri Lankan Army's checkpoint, the rebels' website said. The Tamil Tiger rebels said they will pull out of the peace talks unless the government takes greater steps to protect Tamils against abductions. Participation in the talks will depend on what steps the government takes to stop abductions of Tamil relief workers, top rebel official Seevaratnam Puleedevan said.

SUDAN

London, Jan 26 — A press report, dated today, states: Fighting is continuing in Sudan's war-torn Darfur province, where rebels are trying to take a government-held town, the UN says. The clashes have prompted aid agencies to pull out of the area around Golo. The US has condemned the rebel attacks. One of the Sudanese aid workers being evacuated was killed yesterday when a UN helicopter crashed. More than two million people have been forced from their homes and at least 180,000 have died in the conflict. "Fighting is still continuing with heavy weapons" in the West Darfur town of Golo, said UN spokeswoman Radhia Achouri. She urged all sides to cease hostilities. The town has changed hands several times during the conflict. Some 100 aid workers - including 15 survivors of the helicopter crash - have now left the area. There are also clashes in South Darfur, near Shearia. Without aid workers in the region, details on casualties are sketchy but almost 30 soldiers and policemen were reportedly killed yesterday. The government used to be generally blamed for the violence but now the US has condemned the rebels for launching their twin offensives. Peace talks in Nigeria have been complicated by rows between different rebel groups and factions. The new head of the African Union, Congo's Denis Sassou Nguesso, has meanwhile insisted that the AU should retain control of the peacekeeping operation in Darfur. Some 7,000 AU troops are in the region but the mission is underfunded and some have suggested that the UN take control. British MPs yesterday urged Prime Minister Tony Blair to support tougher action to stop the violence in Darfur.

THAILAND

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated today, states: Three people were injured today when a small bomb exploded in the courtyard of the Bangkok office building that houses the justice ministry, police said. The bomb went off after midday at a food stall in the courtyard of the Software Park building. The blast occurred just below the second-floor office of Thailand's leading forensics expert, pathologist Porntip Rojanasunan. Police said the bomb caused little damage to the building, but destroyed part of the wall surrounding the property.

London, Jan 31 — Five people were killed in the latest violence in Thailand's south, including two railway guards shot when about 20 militants attacked a train station, police said. The militants, armed with assault rifles, yesterday launched a wave of three attacks on the Rue Soe district train station in Narathiwat province. They fired at the security guards as a train arrived, then escaped in pickup trucks as the two victims were being evacuated to hospital, only to be replaced by two more groups of attackers, police said. "In the third wave, gunmen using AK-

47s and M-16 machine guns attacked police as the guards were travelling to hospital," Police Lieutenant Pibbon Kanitkul of Rue Soe police station said.

Joh Airong, Feb 2 — Three bombs exploded in Thailand's restive Muslim south today, killing three people and wounding six, police and hospital staff said. The first bomb, estimated to weigh at least 11 lbs and hidden in a truck's fuel tank, was thought to be triggered by mobile phone as it entered the city hall compound of the violence-prone district of Joh Airong, police said. The explosion threw the driver out of the truck alive but killed and charred his two assistants instantly, they said. The phone's SIM card was found among the shattered remnants of the truck, police said. A couple of hours later, a second bomb, detonated by the alarm clock in a mobile phone, went off in the nearby district of Sungai Padi while troops were sweeping spikes off a village road, police said. Nobody was hurt. Militants often scatter spikes on roads to aid their getaways. The third bomb, hidden in a fire extinguisher, exploded when 12 police and soldiers were escorting teachers in a small motorcade home from school in nearby Janae district, police said. A Buddhist police sergeant died in hospital while five other members of the team were being treated, they said. Despite daily attacks on troops and civilians, Buddhists and Muslims alike, the government says it is gaining more help and support from the people, which has led to more detentions of suspects and findings of guns and bombs. — Reuters.

VENEZUELA

Caracas, Jan 31 — Seven people were wounded today when a grenade exploded in a Venezuelan town near the Colombian border where violence often spills over from the neighboring country's conflict, officials said. Two children were among the wounded when the explosive was fired into a crowd during a public event in Maroa municipality in remote Amazonas State, the Venezuelan attorney general's office said in a statement. "It is still not confirmed whether it was action by Colombian guerrillas or a clash between paramilitaries and guerrillas from the neighboring country," the statement said. Venezuela's frontier region is often plagued by kidnapping, drug smuggling and spillover from Colombia's four-decade-old war involving leftist rebels and right-wing paramilitaries. — Reuters.



HAITI

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: Two French

missionaries and two Haitians were kidnapped near a volatile slum in Haiti's capital, a U.N. official said today. The four were seized on Wednesday (Jan 25) as they travelled on a road near Cite Soleil, a sprawling slum on the outskirts of Port-au-Prince used as a base by heavily armed gangs blamed for a wave of kidnappings and violence in the capital, said David Wimhurst, a U.N. spokesman. The captors have demanded a ransom, and Haiti's anti-kidnapping squad was working to secure the hostages' release, said Wimhurst, who did not identify the two French nationals other than to say one was a priest and the other a nun. He said he had no information about the identities of the kidnapped Haitians.

NIGERIA

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

Labour Disputes



BANGLADESH

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: Exports and imports through Sona Mosque land port in Chapainawabganj have been closed for seven days over police firing on local people, the border trade at Hili land port in Dinajpur went off for indefinite period too from yesterday. In Hili, local exporters and clearing and forwarding (C&F) agents called the indefinite strike from a meeting last night protesting new rules of export from India. Government will lose some Tk 80 lakh daily in average revenue income at Hili port for the closure. Indian exporters and C&F agents recently imposed the new export rule for carrying not more than 10 metric tons of goods on a truck creating losses for Bangladeshi importers. Shahinur Rahman, general secretary of Bangladeshi Hili Importers and C&F agents' Association told that importers were counting over Tk 10,000 additional costs per truck for the new rule. "Traders usually bring in goods on nearly 150 trucks daily through the port from India and they are counting loss as they used to bring upto 20 tons of goods on a truck earlier", he explained. The traders were following the previous rule since 1987. But a section of local traders at Indian Hili who also own trucks arbitrarily changed the rule for their own benefit, said a sources at Hili. A number of meetings between traders of both sides following demands of withdrawal of the rules were foiled in recent weeks. The situations at Sona Mosque land port remained unchanged as Kansat villagers on the port road indefinite strike demanding immediate release of arrested leaders of rural power subscriber.

CROATIA

London, Jan 31 — Staff at the Croatian national ferry company Jadrolinija have gone on strike after the government continued to press ahead with new legislation on the country's ferry transport industry which experts say could see Jadrolinija lose its monopoly. Union spokesmen said the strike, which began yesterday morning, would be repeated for two hours per day every day in different ports for the rest of the week. But they said operation of the company's ferry routes would not be disrupted. "We went on strike because the Croatian parliament did not withdraw what we see as bad and inappropriate legislation, and furthermore they did not listen to our arguments about it properly," Marica Njegovan, head of workers union at Jadrolinija, said. In a statement to employees, the company's board of directors said staff had no reason to fear for the future of the company.

FRANCE

St. Malo, Jan 31 — National strike in St. Malo Feb 2. No lock from 0725, Feb 2, to 0047, Feb 3. — Lloyd's Agents.

Paris, Feb 1 — A planned strike by air traffic controllers and other public sector workers could disrupt French flights tomorrow, the DGAC civil aviation authority said. Trade unions representing civil servants have issued strike notices to protest tomorrow against a pay offer from the government that was less than inflation. "The impact of these strike notices on air traffic is currently difficult to foresee but disruptions are expected, especially at the start of the day," the DGAC said in a statement. A DGAC official said the largest air traffic controllers' union had not called its members out to strike but that others had. Passengers should check with their airlines whether flights were on time, the aviation authority said. — Reuters.

London, Feb 2 — A press report, dated today, states: A number of France's public servants have gone on strike today, disrupting school classes and delaying some flights to demand higher wages. At least seven unions called for public workers, such as teachers and flight controllers, to walk out after the government granted them a 0.5 percent increase for the year, compared with forecast inflation of 1.8 percent. "We're losing 1.3 percent," said Elisabeth David, secretary general of the civil servants' federation within Union Nationale des Syndicats Autonomes. "For us, it's unacceptable, this situation has repeated itself for several years." The strike, to be followed next week by student protests against the government's attempt to further deregulate the labour market, is putting pressure on Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin, who may run in next year's presidential election. The government decided to go ahead with the pay raise last week after three unions agreed on a benefits

package that unions say was independent of salary talks. It also promised an additional 0.5 percent increase in February 2007. "Striking is a right in our country but striking days are not paid," Finance Minister Thierry Breton said on Europe1 radio today. France has five flight control centres. Florence Legrin, a spokeswoman for the Direction Generale de l'Aviation Civile, said today 15 flights into the southern town of Marseille were cancelled because of the strike. The walkout there is also delaying other flights by about two hours. A spokesman for Air France SA said "a few" short-haul flights were cancelled, with passengers put on other flights. Employees at Regie Autonome des Transports Parisiens, the operator of the capital's public transport system, and at railway operator Societe Nationale des Chemins de Fer will not take part in the protest because the companies have their own wage negotiations. The public service ministry will release estimates of strike participants around midday today. Unions have also called for protests next week to ask for the withdrawal of de Villepin's plan on youth employment. The new measures, which are being discussed in Parliament, will allow companies with more than 20 employees to fire workers aged 25 or younger within their first two years on the job with little notice.

INDIA

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated today, states: More than 2,500 Airports Authority of India employees went on an indefinite strike at the Chhatrapati Shivaji International airport in Mumbai today demanding that government stop privatisation of Mumbai and Delhi airports. "More than 90% of the total employees of Mumbai AAI is participating in the strike," AAI Employees Union All India Joint Secretary Nitin Jadhav, told PTI. The employees belonging to all departments irrespective of the unions have joined together for the strike, he added. Meanwhile, Airport Director Sudhir Kumar, said the air traffic would not be affected. The passenger traffic from Mumbai airport would not be affected as the air traffic crew is not participating in the strike today, according to a senior ATC official. Meanwhile, Sudhir Kumar said the AAI had already worked out a contingency plan and would make sure that the strike does not disrupt air traffic. More than 2,500 employees belonging to administration, ground handling, and others are participating in the strike. The Central Industrial Security Force officials, in charge of Airport security, said they have deployed additional force to preserve the security at the airport.

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated today, states: Cargo movement at the Mumbai domestic airport came to a virtual standstill with a minimum loss of Rs 45 lakh as a result of the strike called by Airport

Authority of India Employees Union to protest privatisation of Mumbai and Delhi airports. "Normally, the average movement of cargo from Mumbai Airport is around 350 million tonnes...however, today the strike has almost stalled the movement," a top airport official told PTI. The freezing of activities at the cargo division of the airport has forced minimum loss of Rs 45 lakh, which is the amount of perishable goods transported via Mumbai Airport. The member employees of AAI, belonging to the cargo division, joined the strike this afternoon after which the goods movement was almost frozen. The strike had no effect on operations as well as cargo movement at the Pune International Airport.

London, Feb 2 — A press report, dated today, states: A strike by Indian airport workers has entered its second day today making life difficult for passengers. Workers have been picketing Delhi and Mumbai airports amid tight security. No flights have been cancelled so far. Flights have also resumed at Calcutta airport in the east, which is the worst hit by the strike. The workers are protesting against the government's decision to privatise the country's two biggest airports in Delhi and Mumbai (Bombay). The workers launched an indefinite strike yesterday in protest against the government's decision to privatise the country's two biggest airports in Delhi and Mumbai (Bombay). Two Indian construction firms won bids on Monday (Jan 30) to modernise Delhi and Mumbai airports along with their foreign partners. The airports will be leased to the private companies as part of the deal. The move is opposed by trade unions and the government's communist allies who say it will lead to job cuts. The federal cabinet approved the deal after a meeting yesterday. A spokesman for the Delhi airport told the AFP news agency that the "flights are running according to schedule at Delhi airport", but passengers were inconvenienced as striking workers obstructed the terminal gates. News channels showed striking workers shouting slogans and squatting outside Mumbai airport as riot police kept watch. Reports said the airport was littered with garbage and as the cleaners joined the striking workers. Demonstrators in Mumbai say no one is working in the airport, apart from air traffic controllers. Flights resumed partially at the worst-hit airport in Calcutta after a temporary suspension yesterday. Airport officials say only 30% of the flights had departed this morning. Businessmen complained that perishable cargo which had arrived at the airport was rotting on the tarmac as there was nobody to move it out. Delays and inconvenience to passengers are being reported from different airports across the country. Federal minister Priya Ranjan Dasmunshi said the government hoped the situation would normalise soon. "In a democracy it is everybody's right to protest peacefully, but we are

hopeful that the situation would not get out of control," he said. The Delhi and Mumbai airports handle almost 65% of India's international traffic of 19m passengers a year.

ITALY

London, Jan 25 — A press report, dated today, states: Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi slammed striking Alitalia workers today, saying their efforts to hobble Italy's largest airline were part of a leftist plot ahead of April elections. Alitalia said it could be forced to cancel up to 220 flights today, the seventh straight day of crippling labour unrest involving workers opposed to splitting off the airline's ground operations. By midday, 85 flights had been cancelled. Unions, after failing to reach a deal with management, had hoped to appeal to the centre-right Italian government at a meeting this afternoon. The Italian state controls Alitalia with a nearly 50% stake. The prime minister hinted yesterday at sending in the military to break up the protest, but backed off today. Pier Ferdinando Casini, the speaker of the lower house of parliament, said the strikers risked pushing Alitalia into bankruptcy.

NEPAL

London, Jan 26 — A press report, dated today, states: Life across Nepal has been disrupted by a strike called by a seven-party alliance of opposition groups. Schools and businesses are shut and very few vehicles can be seen on the road in the cities. Riot police have been deployed in case of unrest. The opposition is protesting against local elections due next month, which it says are intended to legitimise the royal regime of King Gyanendra. He seized direct control of Nepal last year, prompting international concern. Today was the first day for candidates to file their nominations for the local elections. But the opposition says it will boycott the polls. Maoist rebels have also vowed to disrupt the elections.

SCANDINAVIAN AIRLINE PILOTS

London, Jan 25 — A press report, dated today, states: Striking pilots at Scandinavian airline group SAS have agreed to return to work, ending an industrial action that had grounded flights across the region. The pilots, mainly from Denmark, plan to be back at work tomorrow morning. Earlier today, SAS had turned to the courts in an effort to have the strike declared illegal and had sought to extract damages from the pilots. Hundreds of flights had to be cancelled and the company reckoned it was losing about 30m kroner (\$5m; £2.8m) a day. "According to the pilots, the wildcat strike is over," SAS said in a statement. The strike action was fragmented because SAS is a pan-Scandinavian airline, covering Sweden, Norway and Denmark. Most of the industrial unrest has come in Denmark, where pilots called a wildcat strike, and in Norway, where a large number called in sick.

SOUTH AFRICA

London, Jan 30 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: South African transport, including the ports and rail services, faces massive strike action involving up to 85,000 workers from tomorrow. The dispute between Transnet and the four joint unions within the government-owned company over its restructuring plans worsened today following a statement from the four - Satawu, Utatu, Sarwhu and Uasa, that they intend "rolling out their plans for action." The statement said that from tomorrow union members in KwaZulu Natal will begin a three-day strike while Free State members will go out for just the one day. KZN's three days of strike action, involving the country's two major ports (Durban and Richards Bay) as well as South Africa's busiest railway lines, will culminate with a mass march in Durban Feb 1. A second block of Transnet workers will go out on strike in the Eastern Cape Feb 13 February, followed by the Northern Cape and Western Cape on Feb 14.

London, Jan 30 — A press report, dated today, states: Almost 3,500 workers from Transnet in the Free State laid down their tools today as part of a strike by four trade unions who accuse management of not consulting them over the restructuring of Transnet. The parastatal wants to dispose of non core assets, including Metrorail and South African Airways. The strike in the Free State is scheduled to last two days. The Transnet workers at the depots in Bloemfontein, Bethlehem and Kroonstad in the Free State, decided to lay down their tools. Business units that are affected by the strike include rails, transworks, carriage and wagon, infrastructure, loco and autopax. The three unions taking part in the Bloemfontein protest action was the United Transport Allied Trade Union (Utatu), the South African Railways and Harbour Workers Unions (Sarwhu) and the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (Satawu). They say they stand together and today's action is only the beginning. Enrolling mass action might follow if their demands are not met. Early this morning trains were running as usual via the Bloemfontein station, although some were late. Spoornet however said that this had nothing to do with the strike. The local Transnet office did not want to comment and said the National office will react to the strike.

London, Jan 30 — A press report, dated today, states: Thousands of workers at South African rail and logistics group Transnet went on strike today, bringing operations at the country's busiest ports to a standstill and disrupting train services, unions said. The workers are protesting against the restructuring of state-owned Transnet, which will see the disposal of non-core assets. Unions claim this will cost 30,000 jobs. But the government has denied

there would be "massive" job losses. "Everything is at a standstill at the harbours. The strike started at 0600 today, 0400, GMT. We are not going back until something comes up within the next three days," said a spokesman for one of striking unions. The industrial action, planned for three days, affected the Durban Container Terminal and the Richards Bay port, two of the country's busiest, hitting the export sector which accounts for about a third of the country's gross domestic product. Analysts estimate that the strike could cost the country about 100 million rand a day. An estimated 8,500 workers in the KwaZulu-Natal province, where the strike started, are participating in the work stoppage. Transnet spokesman John Dlodlu told Reuters that the two harbours were operating at 60% capacity. "We are running at 60% and have contingency plans in place. It's not a standstill, the problem we have is that unions want to march in areas which are not designated," said Dlodlu.

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated today, states: A rolling strike by members of four Transnet trade unions began across the provinces of Free State and KwaZulu Natal yesterday with greatest attention focused on the ports of Durban and Richards Bay where many Transnet workers downed tools on the first of three days of industrial action. As thousands of workers failed to turn up for work yesterday morning Transnet attempted to paint a positive picture by saying that contingency plans had been put in place to ensure normal operations at the ports and with commuter services. Unions on the other hand claimed success in keeping large numbers of workers away and issued statements that everything is at a standstill at the harbours (Durban and Richards Bay). Ports & Ships own observations suggest that both claims are overstated the affected areas in the ports appeared to be confined to areas operated by the NPA and SA Port Operations only, with the exception of the Durban car terminal which was seen to be working, while independent terminals and stevedores were also working normally other than for a reduced movement of ships. Ship arrivals in Durban were restricted to a mere six vessels including one cruise ship, while 14 sailings took place. However any stoppage or delay has its effect and the knock-on effects are not good news for business or the economy. The two Durban container terminals were the most affected areas with road gates shut and no traffic being admitted. At Richards Bay port operations appeared to be less affected than at Durban and the coal terminal remained in full operation, although there is no confirmation as to whether RBCT is receiving coal trains. The terminal will however have a stockpile (usually about 3 million tonnes) on hand to tide things over should the trains stop running. Metrorail, the commuter train service

in Durban, came to a virtual standstill all day with commuters having to be diverted to buses employed by the company. Freight train services were also affected although its effect is more difficult to determine. The strike in KZN is expected to continue today and will culminate tomorrow with a mass march through Durban. It then moves to the Eastern Cape (Monday Feb 13), Western and Northern Cape on Tuesday, Feb 14, and affects the remainder of the country on Feb 20. If the dispute has not been resolved by that time the unions have threatened a national strike on Mar 6.

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated today, states: Transnet workers in KwaZulu-Natal and the Free State ended their second day of strikes today with unions claiming success. "No matter which way you try and spin it, there's no doubt the strike has been effective," the SA Transport and Allied Workers Union's (Satawu) Randall Howard said. Following the start of the strike yesterday against the way restructuring at the parastatal was being handled, Howard said management was listening to them "with a slightly different ear." Between 4 000 and 5 000 workers went on strike nationwide, with the Durban container terminal bearing the brunt of the action. It operated at only 40% capacity, Transnet's executive manager for strategy Pradeep Maharaj said. Unions claimed participation by between 10,000 and 15,000 workers. Metrorail spokesperson Thandi Mlangeni said trains in Durban ran at 32% capacity this morning. No jobs would be lost during Transnet's restructuring into a concentrated rail and freight company, Maharaj said today. "In exiting Transnet, those employee benefits will be protected and are protected by the Labour Relations Act." The first wave of strikes was due to end tomorrow, culminating in a march in Durban on that day.

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated today, states: As the Transnet strike entered its third day in KwaZulu Natal today large areas of the ports of Durban and Richards Bay remain effectively closed to business. While Transnet continues to downplay the effect of the strike, saying that the two ports were "working normally, and that more trains are running" port clients report otherwise and it is clear that the areas under operational control of SA Port Operations are unable to perform a full normal days work. The most telling evidence comes with the closed gates outside Durban Container Terminal (DCT), where inside a handful of people are trying to keep things moving on a skeleton staff basis. Eyewitnesses report that three gangs appeared to be in operation yesterday at DCT, compared with the usual 12 or 14 per shift. The three gangs were spread thinly across three berths meaning three ships were able to have limited cargo working. On the landside no

containers were seen entering the terminal and none leaving. According to SA Port Operations (SAPO), clients will be exempted from paying import storage against ships delayed by the strike although boxes already in the terminal remain subject to storage fees. The situation at DCT (and including Pier 1 Container Terminal) is expected to remain unchanged today as the final day of the strike in this province runs its course. The action will conclude later today with a march through the streets of Durban and workers may begin returning to duty from the evening shift, although things are only expected to be back to normal by tomorrow. Elsewhere in Durban the car terminal, which is not particularly labour intensive, was able to continue operations. The ferry crews who drive the vehicles on or off the vessel do not form part of SAPO/Transnet. In other terminals operated by SAPO such as the City, Multi Purpose (Pier 1) and Maydon Wharf breakbulk terminals, there was little or no work being done except that by private stevedores. Few gantry cranes were in operation yesterday at the Durban Container Terminal as the Transnet strike hit home. Privately operated terminals on the other hand were working in so far as they had ships. Marine services appeared to be almost back to normal with 23 ship movements — 12 sailings and 11 arrivals, which is a little less than on a normal day. Operations at the port of Richards Bay were similarly affected at the dry bulk and breakbulk terminals which are operated by SAPO. Over at the Richards Bay Coal Terminal (RBCT) it was work as usual, with vessels on the berths and coal being loaded. Although coal deliveries have been affected by the Spoornet strike, RBCT carries a stockpile of between 2.5 and 3 million tonnes at any given moment. Rail services have also suffered although a Spoornet spokesman yesterday was unable or unwilling to quantify how many freight trains had been affected. He said he "thought that goods trains were running on the KZN main line between Durban and Gauteng.". Metrorail, the commuter service had only a few trains in service and continued with the hiring of private buses to convey passengers.

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated today, states: A march by thousands of Transnet workers in Durban ended today, bringing to a close the first in a threatened series of strikes at the parastatal, a trade-union spokesperson said. "The march and the call to members [to strike] were very successful. We handed a memorandum to the chief executive of the South African Port Operations," said United Transport and Allied Trade Union (Utatu) general secretary Steve Harris. Durban metro police spokesperson Superintendent Alex Wright said marchers were well behaved. He estimated between 2,000 and 3,000 people took part. Unions put the figure at close to 10,000. The march brought to an end a three-day

strike in KwaZulu-Natal and a one-day strike in the Free State. It was the first in a series of unions have threatened in protest over the manner of Transnet's getting rid of some of its business units. Durban's container terminal bore the brunt of the strike, while the city's commuter trains and Richards Bay harbour were also affected. The four unions involved are Satawu, Utatu, the South African Railway and Harbour Workers' Union and the United Association of South Africa.

London, Feb 2 — A press report, dated today, states: Hailing the industrial action as a complete success in spite of the short amount of time available to organise it, the four Transnet trade unions Satawu, Uasa, Utatu and Sarwhu yesterday concluded three days of strike action across KwaZulu Natal to an end with a march through the streets of Durban. Between 2,000 and 3,000 union members took part in the proceedings, much less than forecast by the unions. Last night shift workers began trickling back to duty but the ports and commuter rail services were only expected to be back to normal from the start of this morning's shifts. Total production lost during the three days this week when important sections of the ports of Durban and Richards Bay were closed or reduced in activity has still to be measured, if it ever can. The container terminal, which handles over 65% of South Africa's containerised cargo lost probably in excess of 80% of production during the stoppage. The less labour intensive Durban car terminal was much better off with ships being worked and cargo moving in and out of the terminal albeit at a slightly reduced rate. New Pier, Maydon Wharf and City breakbulk terminals were also adversely affected. Leaseholder areas of the port continued with almost normal operations, subject only to the availability of ships but the marine services kept going throughout the three days. At the port of Richards Bay all terminals were working but at greatly reduced levels while the coal terminal was reported to have remained in "full production" thanks to a stockpile of coal. Trade unions said they considered the strike had achieved all that it set out to do, and will be continued in the other provinces as previously announced, Eastern Cape Feb 13, Western and Northern Cape Feb 14, and remainder of country including Gauteng on Feb 20, unless agreement is reached with Transnet beforehand. Failing that the country faces a national one day strike on Mar 6. The unions are due to meet with Transnet again today.

UNITED KINGDOM

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated today, states: Workers building a new terminal at Heathrow are staging a three-day walkout in a row over pay. Scaffolders, labourers and others went on strike today after a new offer to increase bonus pay by

80p an hour was rejected. Workers at the £4bn west London site are demanding a £1-an-hour rise in bonuses and have already taken part in strikes in December and January. Employers Laing O'Rourke had previously offered an extra 67p-an-hour. Their latest offer had been recommended for acceptance by union shop stewards but was overwhelmingly rejected at a series of meetings. Phil Davies, of the GMB union, said: "Laing O'Rourke have misjudged the mood of the workforce right from the start of this dispute." Heathrow Airport said previous industrial action had not disrupted building at the terminal which is due to be completed in 2008.

UNITED STATES

London, Jan 30 — A press report, dated today, states: Pilots of Georgia-based World Airways began a strike against the carrier during the weekend (Jan 28-29), after rejecting a revised contract from the airline. Weeklong talks between the company, a unit of World Air Holdings Inc., and the pilots' negotiating team ended after a 30-day cooling-off period set by the National Mediation Board expired late Friday. The 58-year-old airline, which operates 17 wide-body jets, has about 430 pilots. They are not permitted to interrupt U.S. military flying, which is the largest part of World Airway's business, so the strike affects only commercial passenger and non-U.S. government cargo flights, the airline said. "The company offered our pilots two compensation options," said Charlie McDonald, World Airways chief operating officer. "The first provided a 10% signing bonus and a pay increase of 3% in the first year and 4% annually for each of the next two years. The other option offered a 7% signing bonus and a 5% pay increase in the first year, followed by 3% annual increases for each of the next two years."



ASBESTOS LIABILITY CLAIMS, UNITED STATES

London, Jan 30 — A press report, dated today, states: USG Corp., the No. 1 maker of gypsum wallboard, agreed to pay as much as \$3.95 billion to settle asbestos liability claims and emerge from 4 1/2 years of bankruptcy. USG's shares rose as much as 24% after it said the settlement would be financed by selling \$1.8 billion in new shares, underwritten by Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway Inc., owner of 14.6% of Chicago-based USG. Berkshire Hathaway will buy whatever stock isn't purchased by current shareholders, who will be offered shares at \$40 each, USG said. The accord will enable USG to exit

bankruptcy this year, the company said. Since 1982, at least 77 companies have cited asbestos liability in filing for bankruptcy. Compensating present and future asbestos plaintiffs may cost companies between \$140 billion and \$300 billion, according to private and public studies. Congress is weighing whether to establish a national asbestos trust to erase the related personal injury suits.

ASBESTOS-RELATED ILLNESS, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Jan 26 — A press report, dated today, states: The Court of Appeal has overturned a ruling that thousands of people suffering from an asbestos-related condition should receive compensation. Insurance companies had appealed against a judgement that pleural plaques, a scarring of the lungs, often resulted in a more serious illness. Judges said its presence did not mean a person was suffering from any disease and therefore could not make a claim. Insurers potentially faced £1bn worth of claims after the earlier ruling. The appeal ruling was described as "dreadful" by trade union Amicus. Solicitor Ian McFall, representing the union, said it overturned 20 years of established legal practise. "For many of our clients I think they will be outraged and offended that the Court of Appeal has trivialised their injury in this way by deciding that it is not worthy of any compensation. The condition which they have developed represents irreversible damage to the lining of their lungs, associated with an increased risk of developing a potentially fatal asbestos-related illness."

COLLAPSE OF SCAFFOLDING, UNITED STATES

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated today, states: Almost four years after a scaffolding accident at the Hancock building took three lives, 10 surviving victims are being awarded \$75 million. Attorney Robert Clifford confirmed that a settlement has been reached with the skyscraper's owner and other companies involved in a joint lawsuit. The 10 victims and their families will share the settlement money. In March of 2002, high winds blew the scaffolding loose. One section fell onto a passing car, killing two women inside. A third person was also killed and another woman was left paralysed.

EXPOSURE TO TOXIC HERBICIDE, SOUTH KOREA

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated Jan 26, states: A South Korean court today ordered two US manufacturers of the defoliant Agent Orange to pay \$62 million in medical compensation to local veterans of the Vietnam War and their families. The Seoul High Court ordered Dow Chemical in Midland, Michigan, and Monsanto Co in St. Louis to compensate about 6,800 people. It was the first time a South Korean court

has ruled in favour of people seeking compensation from the makers of Agent Orange. Park Sang-il, a lawyer representing Dow Chemical, said the company was reviewing the ruling and would probably appeal. The herbicide was widely used to destroy jungle cover for communist troops during the Vietnam War. South Koreans, Vietnamese and many US veterans later blamed their exposure to the chemical for a variety of illnesses and reproductive disorders, including miscarriages, birth defects, cancers and nervous disorders. "It is acknowledged the defendants failed to ensure safety as the defoliants manufactured by the defendants had higher levels of dioxins than standard," the court said in its ruling. Citing a report from the US National Academy of Science, the court said there is a "causal relationship" between the toxic defoliant and 11 diseases, including cancers of the lung, larynx and prostate. The judges, however, did not acknowledge the relationship between the chemical and peripheral neuropathy, the disease most widespread among Agent Orange victims. South Koreans made up the largest foreign contingent of US allies fighting in Vietnam, contributing some 320,000 troops. South Korea lost 5,077 soldiers and suffered 10,962 wounded. US records show that the US military sprayed 19 million gallons of defoliants over southern Vietnam between 1962 and 1971. About 55% of that was Agent Orange. In an out-of-court settlement in 1984, Agent Orange manufacturers paid Australian, Canadian and New Zealand veterans, but not South Koreans. About 20,000 South Koreans filed two separate lawsuits in 1999 against the US companies, seeking more than \$5 billion in damages. In 2002, they lost a decision in a lower court and appealed. The appeals court today issued a combined ruling in the two cases, awarding damages ranging from \$6,200-\$47,500 to about 6,800 veterans and relatives of deceased victims. The court, however, rejected a related lawsuit against the American companies filed by 15 children of Agent Orange victims claiming they suffer from peripheral neuropathy because their fathers were exposed to the chemical. Peripheral neuropathy describes damage to the peripheral nervous system. Symptoms range from temporary numbness, tingling, and pricking sensations to muscle wasting and paralysis. The plaintiffs called today's ruling "positive" and "encouraging" but not satisfactory, leaving open the possibility of appealing again.

GAS EXPLOSION, MASSACHUSETTS, UNITED STATES

London, Jan 25 — A press report, dated today, states: The parents of two girls killed in a 2002 gas explosion at their home have received a \$17.2 million settlement from the gas company and others. Heath and Tara Carey and their daughters, 4-

year-old Iris and 5-year-old Violet, were asleep in their second-floor apartment in Hopkinton when the early-morning blast buried them in the rubble. The parents suffered only minor injuries. The source of the leak was never identified, but the couple's lawyers blamed a rusted gas company pipe in the damp basement. A state investigation in 2003 found that NStar Gas Co. may have violated state and federal pipeline safety regulations. The company was fined \$200,000. Under the settlement announced yesterday, NStar is paying \$12.5 million but denies any wrong doing. NStar said Inner-Tite Corp., the manufacturer of the equipment that rusted, will pay \$4.5 million and the Careys' landlords will pay \$175,000.

MEDICAL MALPRACTICE, UNITED STATES

London, Jan 25 — A press report, dated Jan 24, states: A group of surgeons from Redding Medical Center who settled a case accusing them of performing unnecessary heart procedures have not yet paid the \$21 million required by the settlement. Lawyers for the patients say payment was due a week after Shasta County Superior Court Judge Jack Halpin signed the settlement order on Nov 18. Attorney Robert Simpson said his hundreds of clients have yet to see any money from surgeons Fidel Realyvasquez Jr., Kent Brusett and Ricardo Javier Moreno-Cabral. Simpson said he plans to file a court motion next week if the payment is not made by then. Halpin on Monday renewed an agreement that declares the settlement was reached in good faith. Defense attorneys blamed the payment delay in part on continued negotiations between federal lawyers and Realyvasquez's legal counsel. After three years of criminal investigation and hundreds of civil lawsuits, federal attorneys on Nov 15 announced their own sweeping settlement. But the lawyer who represented the U.S. Attorney's Office in the settlement has since left to go into private practice. Part of the federal agreement required Realyvasquez, Brusett and Moreno-Cabral to authorize their insurance company to settle the lawsuits at the limit of their insurance policies, for a total of \$21 million.

PATENT INFRINGEMENT, UNITED STATES

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated Jan 26, states: The Federal Circuit court of appeals in Washington has upheld a \$64.5 million judgment for patent infringement against Tyco International Ltd's US Surgical Corp unit. A California law firm representing Applied Medical Resources Corp said in a statement on Tuesday (Jan 24) that the court affirmed a \$43.5 million damages award, and said the \$64.5 million included increased damages and attorney fees. Applied Medical

Resources, a Rancho Santa Margarita, California, surgical-products company, had sued Tyco over a patent related to a device used to perform laparoscopic surgery. The Los Angeles Times reported in July, 2004, that Applied Medical filed three patent lawsuits against US Surgical, receiving a \$15 million jury award in 1997 in the first of the three suits.

PERSONAL INJURIES, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated today, states: A man attacked with a hammer at a young offenders' institution (YOI) has won £1.5m from the Home Office. Paul Gruncell, 25, of St Francis Road, Cheriton, Kent, was attacked by two inmates who were trying to escape from HM YOI Dover on January 27, 1999. He said he should have been given better protection while he was employed as an instructor in the workshop there. His compensation claim against the Home Office ended with a £1,567,000 out-of-court settlement being agreed. A five-day hearing at the High Court in London ended today. Mr Gruncell had his head "caved in" during the attack as the inmates struck him twice with a clawhammer. Other inmates joined in and broke his jaw by kicking him with steel-toecapped boots, the court was told. Mr Gruncell, who is married with children, suffered brain damage and has continuing problems with speech, vision, mood swings and sleeping. The Home Office accepted 95% liability for the incident. A spokesperson said: "The Prison Service agreed to settle Mr Gruncell's personal injury claim out of court. "The decision was made on the merits of the case and represents an amicable outcome for both parties in these proceedings."

PERSONAL INJURY, UNITED STATES

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated Jan 27, states: A Tualatin onion processor and two contractors have agreed to pay \$1.1 million to settle a lawsuit brought by a Kansas man injured when he fell 13 feet through an unmarked access hole at the processor's plant in Hermiston. Joseph McKinley, who suffered a brain injury in the fall, accepted the settlement offer yesterday from Rivergate Farms of Tualatin, Idaho-based Teton West of Washington and Inline Steel Erectors Inc. of Washington, said Tim Jones, McKinley's attorney in Portland.

London, Jan 30 — A press report, dated Jan 28, states: A jury has awarded a Sunoco labourer \$9 million for injuries suffered when he fell from a ladder at the company's South Philadelphia refinery. Patrick Brown, 35, fell in October 2002 while climbing down a ladder between catwalks, banging his head and injuring his back and shoulder in the fall, court documents said. Brown's attorney, John T. Dooley, said they had originally demanded \$3 million in compensation for the accident, but

negotiated down to \$1 million. "The only offer" Sunoco "ever made was \$25,000," Dooley said. "They ended up with a \$9 million verdict against them." Brown's injuries included herniated disks, according to documents filed Dooley. The main factual dispute in the case was whether a safety cage was in place on the ladder when the accident occurred.

London, Feb 2 — A press report, dated Feb 1, states: A federal jury has awarded nearly \$2 million to a man who was struck on the head when a golf club came apart during a swing, but he will receive less because of state limits, his lawyer said. The lawsuit said David R. Price, 48, was injured in April 2002 at the Sunset Golf Course in Longmont when a pitching wedge made by Wilson Sporting Goods Co. came apart while his son was swinging it. The damage award was handed up yesterday. The company's lawyer, Richard Waltz, declined to comment. Price's lawyer, Ben Aisenberg, said Price would likely collect about \$1.1 million, not counting interest, because state limits on jury awards apply in federal court. The exact amount still must be calculated, he said. Witnesses testified Price lost his job and home in foreclosure because of his injuries. U.S. District Judge Wiley Daniel had ruled before the trial that Wilson was responsible for manufacturing a defective club.

REAL ESTATE FRAUD, CANADA

London, Jan 25 — A press report, dated Jan 24, states: The Law Society of British Columbia has approved \$32.5 million in payments to cover a multi-million dollar real estate fraud case involving a Vancouver lawyer. At a society disciplinary hearing in 2002, Martin Wirick acknowledged he had received funds to discharge titles on real estate transactions he was involved in with real estate developer Tarsem Singh Gill. The law society has estimated the payouts could reach more than \$80 million. The scheme allegedly involved homeowners buying property from Gill on the understanding Wirick would discharge their previous mortgages and register them as the new owners of the property. Last June, the case was assigned to a new RCMP and Vancouver city police team that investigates white-collar crime in the Vancouver area. A spokesman for the RCMP couldn't be reached for comment on the progress of the investigation. A law society audit of Wirick's books showed \$52 million had passed through the lawyer's trust accounts to Gill and the Vanview group of companies from 1998 to 2002. "It is clear in many of the subsequent property sales that, Martin Wirick, while acting for Mr. Gill or one of his nominees as vendor, received the money in trust and paid out that money as his client directed, in breach of his undertakings to discharge mortgages," the society said in The Benchers' Bulletin. More than 555

claims were laid alleging \$80 million in missing funds. By mid-December of last year, a special compensation committee had considered 495 applications and decided 347 of them, the society said in its year-end bulletin to lawyers in the province. Fifty-one claims were withdrawn while another 150 have been adjourned for further investigation. Wirick went bankrupt in July 2002. His application for a discharge in September 2003 was dismissed. In September 2004, B.C. Supreme Court judge Jon Sigurdson described the scheme as fraud as he sorted out the legal mess that resulted in people finding out they did not own proper title to the homes they paid for. Wirick, whose legal practice was mainly conveyancing, told Sigurdson he made one innocent mistake in calculating the amount owing on a second mortgage in 1999 which he mistakenly failed to pay out. The matter then got out of hand. Sigurdson said Wirick had breached the trust of his clients. "Mr. Wirick's undertakings were representations that the monies and document would be used in the manner entrusted to him. Clearly he was in breach of trust. At best, Mr. Wirick's representations were reckless, as he was careless whether they were true or false. That is a fraudulent breach of trust." In admitting the professional misconduct, Wirick agreed to the disbarment. Now, the members of the society are left to pick up the pieces. In order to cover the costs, for which the society was covered by insurance for \$15 million, the society had to increase its special compensation fund assessment to the province's lawyers from \$250 to \$600 a year.

ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENT, UNITED STATES

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated Jan 27, states: Ford Motor Co. was ordered to pay \$29 million today in the case of a 22-year-old woman who was partially paralyzed after the Firestone tyre on her Explorer failed and the vehicle rolled over. Firestone previously paid an undisclosed settlement in the case. Plaintiff attorneys touted the case as the first Ford-Firestone case to go all the way to a verdict since Firestone tire recalls started in 1999. "You have a situation where all the parties agreed there was a tyre defect, but the question was who's ultimately responsible for the accident," Corpus Christi plaintiff attorney Roger S. Braugh Jr. said. Attorneys for plaintiff Rose Maria Munoz argued that the vehicle had a problem known as a rear axle "skate" that led to the driver's inability to handle the vehicle after a de-tread. Attorneys also said Ford had a role in designing Firestone tyres. Ford spokeswoman Kathleen Vokes said the case would be appealed. "Our concern goes out to Ms. Munoz, but this accident was caused by driver error," she said. Braugh said the case also brought

attention to the issue of tyre aging and what automobile manufacturers needed to let consumers know. "How do you age your tyre? When is a tyre old?" he said. He said the manufacturers have been aware of the problem since the late 1980s, but failed to provide information. The vehicle in question was using an original spare tyre sold with the vehicle that was more than 10 years old. The accident occurred in 2002 near Poteet, Texas. Munoz was one of four occupants of an Explorer that had been sold as a 1999 Mazda Navajo. The left rear Firestone tyre on the Navajo de-treaded, and the vehicle rolled several times. Munoz, who was ejected from the vehicle, was the only one seriously injured.

London, Jan 30 — A press report, dated Jan 29, states: A multiple-fatality wreck blamed on a driver choking on a cup of coffee led to an \$8.7 million jury verdict last week in U.S. District Court. The head-on collision on June 6, 2002, on Interstate 75 in Grant County was triggered when the driver of a northbound tractor-trailer carrying milk lost control of his rig, crossed the median and crashed into southbound traffic. Truck driver Kenneth Chandler, 43, of Bryan, Ohio, told investigators he passed out after choking on coffee. Heather McNay of Erlanger; her 10-month-old son, Evan Embry; and McNay's mother, Norma J. Young of Covington, were killed. Two others were injured. Chandler was never criminally charged. On Thursday (Jan 26), the jurors awarded \$2.7 million to each of McNay's two older children for the loss of their mother. The children were 7 and 3Ω at the time of their mother's death. Jurors also awarded the estate of the 10-month-old son \$1.8 million for his lost earnings. The father of the 10-month-old, Edmond Embry, was awarded \$1.5 million. The defendants in the suit were Chandler, GEO Transportation and Dairy Farmers of America. The company's insurance carriers have filed suit against each other in a dispute over who is responsible for paying the claim.

VIOLATION OF CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT, UNITED STATES

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated Jan 30, states: J.D. Byrider of Louisville has agreed to pay \$7.1 million to settle a lawsuit in which the Kentucky attorney general accused the dealership of selling shoddy cars and trucks at exorbitant prices. The settlement will provide \$500 in restitution to each of 14,400 people who bought vehicles at the Louisville dealer from Jan. 1, 2000, through Dec. 31, 2004. The dealer's parent company, J.D. Byrider Systems Inc. of Carmel, Ind., which will contribute an additional \$300,000 to the settlement, also announced yesterday that it is cancelling the Louisville store's franchise and won't let it use the Byrider name. "We

sincerely regret that customers in Louisville did not receive the satisfaction they deserve," said Steven Wedding, executive vice president and chief financial officer of Byrider Systems, which has 123 stores in 28 states. Marc Maguire, who owns the franchise with his father, James "Scotty" Maguire, said in a statement that the dealership settled because the litigation was too expensive to continue. The Maguires' lawyer, Thomas Clay, said they have not decided whether they will continue to operate the store under another name. Both the local and parent companies denied any fault or wrongdoing. The settlement — the largest ever with an auto dealer in Kentucky — ends a lawsuit filed by the attorney general in December 2004, six months after The Courier-Journal reported that the dealer sold high-mileage cars that often broke down, sometimes as customers were driving them home. The settlement requires the franchise to inspect its cars and trucks and provide consumers with a maximum price for each vehicle. That's intended to end a practice in which salesmen allegedly tried to extract whatever they could from each customer. "We think this settlement provides substantial relief for consumers who were misled and harmed by the practices of J.D. Byrider and sends a strong message to the industry that those practices are not going to be tolerated," Todd Leatherman, the director of the attorney general's Consumer Protection Division, said in an interview. The lawsuit accused the dealer of violating the state Consumer Protection Act by falsely claiming vehicles were inspected. It also accused Byrider and its finance company of forcing credit customers to buy life insurance and a \$1,095 service warranty, and then illegally including those charges in the amount financed — for which customers had to pay 24.9 percent interest. As part of the settlement, the local franchise agreed to inspect a specific list of items before selling vehicles and to ensure they meet standards set in the settlement. The dealer must provide the inspection report to customers on request. The dealer has stopped selling credit life insurance and service contracts. But if it resumes, it must post signs saying that the insurance is optional and that the dealer can't charge a deductible for repairs on defects that existed when the customer bought the car, Leatherman said. Kentucky State Police are still investigating allegations that Bob Winlock, former head of the attorney general's Louisville consumer office, went easy on Byrider in exchange for favorable deals on personal cars he bought and sold at the lot. Maj. Mike Sapp said the investigation is ongoing.

WORK RELATED ILLNESS, UNITED STATES

London, Jan 25 — A press report, dated today, states: A former popcorn factory worker has settled a lawsuit

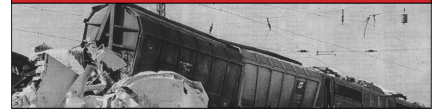
blaming his lung disease on fumes from a butter flavoring used in a microwave variety. Terms of the out-of-court settlement with Eric and Cassandra Peoples were not released. The settlement ends the company's appeal of a \$20 million jury verdict awarded the couple. The agreement, revealed Monday (Jan 23) in a court order, was reached with International Flavors & Fragrances Inc. and its subsidiary, Bush Boake Allen Inc. Eric Peoples, 34, was among 30 current or former workers at a Jasper popcorn factory who sued the companies, claiming they suffered lung damage because they breathed fumes from the butter flavoring used to make microwave popcorn. Jasper Popcorn Co. and Glistler-Mary Lee Corp., which bought the popcorn factory in 1999, were not defendants in the lawsuits. The lawsuits said the manufacturers should have known the chemical diacetyl was hazardous and should have informed employees of the danger. Most of the cases were settled out of court for undisclosed amounts. Verdicts in three cases remain under appeal by the companies.

WRONGFUL CONVICTION, UNITED STATES

London, Jan 28 — A press report, from Chicago, dated Jan 27, states: The city reached a \$9 million settlement today to resolve a lawsuit filed by a man who served more than 11 years in prison before being cleared by DNA tests, the latest development in a state already haunted by a history of wrongful convictions. The case has sparked a probe into the city's former crime lab. Chicago's police department has also wrestled with allegations of police torture, and Lafonso Rollins said Friday that he confessed to the crime after being struck and threatened by police. At a City Hall news conference, Chicago Police Superintendent Philip Cline said he has asked for an investigation into Rollins' case and wants Cook County prosecutors to review cases of defendants who were convicted before the police department regularly started using DNA testing. An examination is also planned into the city's former crime lab, which merged with the Illinois State Police lab in 1996, because of documents unearthed in connection with Rollins' lawsuit, officials said. When he was 17, Rollins, now 30, was arrested for the 1993 sexual assault of an elderly woman in Chicago. He was found guilty and sentenced to 75 years in prison, but was freed 4,193 days later after being cleared by DNA. Gov. Rod Blagojevich pardoned Rollins in January 2005. The settlement still needs to be approved by the City Council. The internal investigation will examine how the five detectives in Rollins' case got a written confession, Cline said. Three of the detectives are retired and two are still active, he said. Officials also have new questions about the way the police department's former crime lab handled the evidence, according to a

city Law Department news release. When Rollins was arrested in 1993, Chicago's lab did not conduct DNA tests, Cline said, although detectives collected samples of his blood and saliva. Witnesses had also picked Rollins out of a lineup, but his lawyers said they were not reliable.

Railway Accidents



AMAGASAKI, JAPAN

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated Jan 25, states: West Japan Railway Co has reached an agreement over compensation with some family members of the 106 people who died in the derailment of a rush-hour commuter train in Amagasaki, Hyogo Prefecture, last April, family members who attended a meeting with JR West executives said yesterday. In a first revelation of the agreement, JR West Chairman Shojiro Nanya was also quoted as saying the company had reached agreement on compensation with about 40% of about 550 people injured in the accident nine months ago. Nanya answered questions about the state of compensation talks during the closed-door meeting, but did not mention the sum of the compensation or the number of bereaved relatives who had agreed to accept payments, they said. A JR West executive said that all of the agreements were reached earlier this month. JR West has said it will pay the highest amount ever for a train accident in Japan to the victims. JR West President Takeshi Kakiuchi said on Dec 27 that the company began compensation talks with some of the relatives of the victims, but said none of them were finalised. Kakiuchi will stay on as a director on the board in charge of compensation talks even after he steps down at the end of the month. Along with Nanya, JR West Vice President Masao Yamazaki, who will succeed Kakiuchi as president on Feb 1, was present at the meeting. To the residents of a condominium into which the JR express train crashed in the accident, JR West has offered the purchase price of the condominium plus moving fees. Thirty-eight of 49 households had agreed to the proposal as of Jan 18. In the Apr 25 accident, an express train on the JR Fukuchiyama Line running at more than 100 kph derailed at a curve before crashing into a condominium, killing 106 passengers and a driver.

BIOCE AREA, SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO

Bar, Jan 24 — A local passenger train between Bijelo Polje and Podgorica derailed with four compartments and more than 200 passengers and fell into a chasm 30 metres deep at 1603 yesterday. Up to now 44 people are reported dead and

190 persons injured and taken to the Medical Centre in Podgorica. It is supposed that the cause of the accident was damage to the brake system. — Lloyd's Agents.

CARROLLTON, NEW YORK, UNITED STATES

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated Jan 27, states: A Western New York & Pennsylvania Railroad train of at least 40 cars derailed yesterday morning in Carrollton. According to personnel at the Cattaraugus County Emergency Dispatch Centre, no one was injured. Also, the derailment of the 40 cars, which were carrying coal, did not cause any road closures. The eastbound train derailed in the area of the former Lackawanna Railroad line near the Great Valley/Carrollton line, reports indicate. The centre was notified of the derailment between 0800 and 0900 hrs, yesterday, the dispatcher said, and the railroad officials told them at that time the incident had occurred "a couple of hours earlier." Some reports indicate the incident took place at 0400 hrs. It will take crews at least a week to clean up the site, the dispatcher said.

CENTRAL SQUARE, NEW YORK STATE, UNITED STATES

London, Jan 26 — A press report, dated Jan 25, states: A broken rail caused 28 cars of a CSX freight train to jump the tracks in November in New York state, train company officials said. Six of the derailed cars were tankers carrying toxic chemicals. Sodium hydroxide leaked from one tanker but no one was injured. A break in a rail at a welding point caused the Nov 19 derailment 20 miles north of Syracuse, but the cause of the track separation is still being investigated, said CSX spokesman Bob Sullivan. The faulty track has been sent to a lab for further analysis, he said. The train had 122 cars. "It's really rare, an unusual one," he said. "We know what happened. Now we're going to look at it to see what caused it." Sullivan said the tracks are inspected at least twice a week and several more times a year with special X-ray and alignment equipment. However, derailments happen occasionally in a nation-wide transit system that runs more than 1,000 trains a day, he said.

CHENZHOU CITY AREA, HUNAN PROVINCE, CHINA

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated today, states: A freight train derailed in central China's Hunan Province Monday (Jan 30) morning, but no casualty was reported. The derailment affected transportation on the Beijing-Guangzhou Railway, one of the trunk lines of the country, local sources said on Tuesday. At 0700, Monday, a freight train at Jiedong Station, a small station to the north of Chenzhou City in Hunan Province, went out of control and four cars of the train derailed. Some passenger trains on the Beijing-Guangzhou

Railway were delayed because of the accident. The No. T29 passenger train from Beijing to Guangzhou was delayed for about nine hours. Normal operation of the railway resumed on Monday afternoon, and the cause of the accident is still under investigation.

CHICUALACUALA REGION, MOZAMBIQUE

London, Jan 25 — A press report, dated Jan 24, states: Once again rail traffic on the Maputo to Zimbabwe railway through the Limpopo valley has been suspended, this time owing to a derailment last Friday (Jan 20) night, according to the Maputo newspaper "Noticias". The line had reopened earlier that day after flooding caused washaways and mudslides. The derailment occurred in the Chicualacuala region nearly 500km from Maputo and the line is only expected to be reopened later this week.

DOMELI, PUNJAB, PAKISTAN

London, Jan 29 — A press report, dated today, states: Dozens of people are feared to have been killed in a train accident in Pakistan, officials said. Initial reports suggest that six coaches derailed and plunged down an embankment at Domeli, near Jhelum city in eastern Punjab province. Rescuers are at the site of the accident and officials said there are many casualties. Hundreds of people were thought to have been on the train. The high-speed train was travelling to the city of Lahore from Rawalpindi. Troops have been sent to join rescue operations, while hospitals have been alerted and ambulances rushed to the area. Rescue workers were using whatever equipment was available to pull out the survivors. The railway authorities said they will launch an inquiry after the rescue effort is complete.

London, Jan 29 — A press report, dated today, states: At least two people were killed and 30 injured in a train crash in Pakistan's eastern Punjab province this evening, Interior Minister Aftab Ahmed Sherpao said. Six carriages of the non-stop passenger train derailed at Domeli, about 100 kilometers south-east of Islamabad, and plunged down into a 50-foot ravine, Sherpao said. Five of the injured are in critical condition, the minister said, adding that about 100 persons were on board the coaches derailed. Army spokesman Major General Shaukat Sultan said that army rescue teams and cranes were sent to the crash site to pull out the coaches. The high-speed train was heading to the eastern city of Lahore, the capital of Punjab from Rawalpindi, some 30 kilometers south of Islamabad. Sultan said that hospitals in the area have been alerted and ambulances rushed to the area. Witnesses said that they were facing problems in rescue operation due to darkness. There was no immediate word on the causes of the crash and the railway authorities had

ordered an enquiry.

London, Jan 30 — A press report, dated today, states: Pakistani authorities say they suspect yesterday's train crash in eastern Punjab was the result of sabotage. At least three people died and up to 40 were injured when a train travelling to Lahore from Rawalpindi plunged down an embankment near Jhelum city. Federal railway minister Ishaq Khakwani says that there was evidence to suggest that sabotage caused the train to go off the tracks. He was, however, unclear about who could have been responsible. The minister said that the nuts and bolts from one of the tracks near a sharp bend had been removed with the intention to cause maximum casualties. There were over 600 passengers on the ill-fated train - one of Pakistan's fastest. Mr Khakwani said it was a sheer miracle that most of them survived. The minister said "internal or external elements" could be involved in tampering with the railway track. The train toppled from the tracks in a remote mountain area and troops had to use another train to access the site. There have been several attempts in recent months to blow up railway tracks and other state installations in the troubled province of Balochistan, but it is the first time in many years that a passenger train has been targeted in any other part of the country.

Karachi, Jan 30 — According to local press news a train carrying over 600 passengers from here to Lahore derailed and six of its coaches fell into a deep ravine at Domaili near Jhelum, railway and police sources have said. According to initial reports, four passengers were killed and nearly 40 injured. — Lloyd's Agents.

DUNSANDEL, CANTERBURY, NEW ZEALAND

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated today, states: A railway track buckled by heat is suspected to have caused a major freight train derailment that sent 27 wagons tumbling into the dry Selwyn River bed in Mid Canterbury yesterday. Freight services on the main trunk line between Invercargill and Christchurch are not expected to return to normal before midday tomorrow. About 16 services are affected, but the line no longer carries passenger trains. Toll New Zealand, Ontrack and its contractor, Transfield Services, were working today to repair the track after the derailment at the southern end of the Selwyn River Bridge about 1515 hrs. Twenty-seven wagons - 17 of which were empty - toppled off the bridge into the riverbed near Dunsandel, but the locomotive and 17 other wagons managed to cross the bridge. The locomotive driver was unhurt. Toll spokeswoman Lisa Gibbison said today workers toiled through the night to lift the wagons from the riverbed and remove them from the site. None of the wagons contained dangerous goods, but she was unable

to say what freight was being transported by the northbound train. Wagons that were still on the rails had been moved off the bridge and materials to repair the track and bridge had been taken to the site, she said. Ontrack has sent senior track engineering staff to investigate the incident. Ontrack chief operating officer William Peet said today track misalignment caused by heat was one of a number of possible causes. Temperatures in Mid Canterbury yesterday soared to about 30degC.

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated today, states: The main south railway line, closed following a derailment south of Christchurch, reopened last night. Twenty-seven wagons plunged into the dry Selwyn River bed yesterday after the locomotive had crossed the bridge. The train driver was uninjured. The cause of the accident is being investigated. On-Track, which manages the rail infrastructure, says a 10km/h speed restriction is in place. Work on the recovery of the derailed wagons will continue today.

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated today, states: Freight trains are moving again on the main trunk line south of Christchurch after track repairs following a major derailment on Monday (Jan 30). Ontrack spokesman Kevin Ramshaw said today the track was cleared by about 2000 yesterday. A 10kph speed restriction was in place at the derailment site at the southern end of the Selwyn River Bridge, near Dunsandel in Mid Canterbury. Ontrack, the agency responsible for railway track maintenance and safety, is investigating the cause of the derailment about 1515 on Monday but heat buckling of the rails is one of the prime suspects. While the track had been inspected just two hours before the derailment, which sent 27 wagons tumbling into the dry Selwyn River bed, Mid Canterbury had been sweltering in temperatures of 30degC that afternoon. Toll New Zealand, Ontrack and its contractor, Transfield Services, worked late last night to repair the track. Twenty-seven wagons, 17 of which were empty, toppled off the bridge into the riverbed but the locomotive and 17 other wagons managed to cross the bridge. Mr Ramshaw said work to recover the wagons from the riverbed was continuing today. Ontrack senior engineering staff were likely to take some weeks to determine the cause of the accident. Toll spokeswoman Lisa Gibbison said full freight services had resumed on the line and Toll was grateful temporary repair work had been completed ahead of schedule. The line had been expected to remain closed until about midday today. "There's still a lot of maintenance work to do, mostly sleeper work," she said. Ms Gibbison said a number of the derailed wagons had been empty and damage to freight was minimal.

EASTERN WASHINGTON STATE, UNITED STATES

London, Jan 29 — A press report, dated today, states: An Amtrak train derailed early yesterday in eastern Washington State, stranding 86 passengers. No one appeared to have been seriously injured in the crash, the Spokane Spokesman-Review reported. The train, bound from Portland to Chicago, left the track just west of Sprague at 0105 hrs, Gus Melonas, a spokesman for the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway, said the engine and all four cars remained upright. Sprague High School gave temporary shelter to 92 passengers and crew. The passengers were then transferred to a hotel in Spokane, about 25 miles east of Sprague. They were expected to leave for Chicago early today. The rail company was working to get the train cars back on track, Melonas said.

NETRAKONA AREA, BANGLADESH

Karachi, Jan 23 — Train communications between Mymensingh and Mahanganj in north-east of Bangladesh remained suspended for 16 hours from 2 am yesterday, as five goods-carrying compartments of a passenger train of Bangladesh Railway, derailed at a place about one kilometre west from Netrakona rail station. It is said the train was proceeding towards Mahanganj rail station from Mymensingh rail station when the accident took place. No one was hurt. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

ODEROLAL AREA, PAKISTAN

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated Jan 27, states: Three bogies of a Karachi-bound goods train coming from Lahore derailed between Oderolal and Palijani stations early this morning. Due to the derailment, Bahauddin Zakaria Express, Tezgam, Night Coach and other passenger trains were not allowed to leave their stations. Relief engines were called from Kotri, Rohri, Mirpurkhas and Karachi to restore railway traffic. After almost nine hours, the traffic was restored around 1600 hrs on the up-track and trains from both sides started moving on the same track. A divisional engineer of railways said that traffic on both tracks would be restored in six to eight hours. He said an inquiry would reveal the cause of the incident.

RICHARDS BAY AREA, SOUTH AFRICA

London, Feb 2 — A press report, dated Feb 1, states: Spoornet spokesman confirmed yesterday that another derailment had taken place on the Richards Bay Coal Line during the past week. He said the derailment involved about ten wagons but was not considered a major mishap and the line had been cleared up and returned to service the next day.

TANDO ADAM, PAKISTAN

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated Jan 27, states: A report from

Karachi states that a Karachi bound goods train derailed near Tando Adam this morning, resulting in suspension of rail traffic, railway sources said. Three bogies of a goods train that was traveling from Lahore to Karachi derailed between Udero Lal and Paleejani stations near Tando Adam resulting in suspension of up and down track railway traffic, sources said. Faisalabad and Tezgam Express arriving from Punjab have been stopped at Tando Adam railway station till clearance of the track.

WOOTTON BASSETT, WILTSHIRE, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Jan 30 — A press report, dated today, states: Rail passengers travelling between Bristol and London are facing severe delays today after a train derailment in Wiltshire. A spokeswoman for First Great Western said that the engineering freight train came off the track at Wootton Bassett in the early hours. "There will be severe disruption, cancellations, diversions, delays up to 30 minutes," she said. "It will impact on services for most of the day."



CONVICTION OF HACKER FOR "BOT" ATTACKS, UNITED STATES

Los Angeles, Jan 24 — A 20-year-old accused of using hundreds of thousands of hijacked computers, or "bot nets," to damage systems and send massive waves of spam across the Internet, pleaded guilty to federal charges yesterday. Jeanson James Ancheta, who prosecutors said was a well-known member of the "Botmaster Underground" — a secret network of hackers skilled in "bot" attacks — was arrested in November in what prosecutors said was the first case of its kind. The Los Angeles area man pleaded guilty to charges of conspiracy, damaging computers used by the US government and fraud. He had been scheduled to stand trial later this year on a 17-count indictment. Ancheta faces a maximum sentence of 25 years in prison, although prosecutors say federal guidelines recommend between five and seven years. "Mr Ancheta was responsible for a particularly insidious string of crimes," US Attorney's spokesman Thom Mrozek said. "He hijacked somewhere in the area of half a million computer systems. This not only affected computers like the one in your home, but it allowed him and others to orchestrate large scale attacks." A bot is a program that surreptitiously installs itself on a computer so it can be controlled by a hacker. A bot net is a network of such robot, or "zombie," computers, which can harness their collective power to do considerable damage or send out huge amounts of

junk e-mail. Prosecutors say the case was unique because Ancheta was accused of profiting from his attacks by selling access to his "bot nets" to other hackers and planting adware, software that causes advertisements to pop up, into infected computers. Among computers he attacked were some at the Weapons Division of the US Naval Air Warfare Centre in China Lake, California, and at the US Department of Defence. In entering the guilty pleas, Ancheta admitted using computer servers he controlled to transmit malicious code over the Web to scan for and exploit vulnerable computers, which he then controlled as "zombie" machines. As part of the plea, he agreed to pay some \$15,000 in restitution to the military facilities and forfeit the proceeds of his illicit activities, including more than \$60,000 in cash, a BMW automobile and computer equipment. — Reuters.

Miscellaneous



AEGEAN SUN (Greece)

Piraeus, Feb 1 — Ro/ro *Aegean Sun* remains at Piraeus under detention. — Lloyd's Agents.

ALLEGED CONTAMINATED CARGO ON BELIZE VESSEL AT MAPUTO

Maputo, Jan 25 — General cargo *Orbit* was allowed to discharge its cargo at Maputo and completed discharge at 1030 hrs, Jan 21. The vessel sailed for Beira at 1530 hrs, same day, berthing at Beira at 1530 hrs, Jan 23. Discharge at Beira commenced at 1500 hrs, Jan 25. Cargo was considered by the local health authorities to be suitable for human consumption and accepted by the client, Messrs Delta Trading, as sound. — Lloyd's Agents.

BOVINE SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHY, CANADA

London, Jan 24 — A press report, dated Jan 23, states: A cow from an Alberta farm has tested positive for mad cow disease, officials said today, raising fears for a beef industry still struggling to recover from a US decision in 2003 to ban cattle imports. Dr Brian Evans, Canada's chief veterinary officer, said the disease was found in a six-year-old animal that did not enter the human food or animal-feed systems. The positive test could be a blow to Canadian ranchers who were hard hit after the United States banned Canadian cattle imports in May, 2003, following the country's first case of mad cow disease. The US border reopened in July to Canadian cattle younger than 30 months. US officials said the latest case will not prompt a similar ban on Canadian beef imports. "I am confident in the safety of beef and in the safeguards we and our approved

beef trading partners have in place to protect our food supply," US Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns said in a statement. Canadian officials and ranchers were worried, however, about the ramifications of the latest case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy, or mad cow disease, a degenerative cattle nerve illness linked to the rare and fatal human nerve disorder, variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease. Industry officials said the cow's age meant it could have contracted the disease by eating feed left over after a 1997 ban on the use of cattle parts in feed. Evans said an extensive investigation was underway. He said the experiences of other countries show that very small amounts of feed purchased before the ban can remain or be retained on farms and lead to infection many years later. "The fact that this animal would have been infected after the 1997 introduction of our feed ban is notable, but it is also consistent with the experiences observed around the world where BSE has been detected and where feed bans have been implemented," Evans said. Eby said Canada has tested 87,000 cattle and that four cases of mad cow disease have been found in Canada since May, 2003. Another cow exported to the United States also tested positive.

COCOA LADEN VESSEL DELAYED AT NEW YORK, UNITED STATES

London, Jan 25 — A press report, dated today, states: Port of Albany officials have offered to take at least 5,000 tons of an 18,000 ton load of cocoa sitting in New York Harbor with nowhere to go. Since Jan 17 general cargo *DS Freeway* has been trying to unload \$20 million worth of cocoa, but the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey has refused to allow the ship to be unloaded at the Red Hook Container Terminal. The pier that American Stevedoring, the company responsible for unloading the ship, wants to store the cocoa at is due to be turned into residential apartments and the Port Authority doesn't want to let the company use the empty warehouses. The stevedoring company has overbooked its space, a port spokesman told the Daily News. The Port of Albany, though, will be happy to take as much of the cocoa as it can, said Port Chairman Robert Cross. He saw an article on the standoff in the New York Times on Jan 20, and port manager Frank Keane was on the phone that day offering space in Albany's warehouses. The Port of Albany can take 71,000 of the 144-pound cocoa bean bags, Cross said. The chartering company owners have listened, but not yet made a commitment, he said. "They said no decisions have been made. We spoke to them as late as yesterday (Jan. 24)," Cross said. The Port of Albany was named as a cocoa Exchange port by the New York Board of Trade last year. This allows merchants to store cocoa at the Port while the sale is negotiated. The designation, Cross said, makes Albany an important

entry point for cocoa sales. The port could normally handle more of the cocoa sitting in New York Harbour, but the warehouses are currently filled with other goods. There are still 10,000 tons of wood pulp waiting to be shipped out of the port and 4,000 tons of steel coil recently shipped to the port from Sweden which need to be moved, Cross said. The cocoa sitting on general cargo *DS Freeway* is owned by Blommer Chocolate, one of the country's largest cocoa processors. The company is headquartered in Chicago.

London, Jan 26 — A press report, dated today, states: The decision by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey to prevent general cargo *DS Freeway* from unloading its cargo could be the death knell for Brooklyn's container port. A major chocolate company is close to pulling \$25 million worth of cocoa beans out of New York harbour as it ponders a proposal from the authority and the city that would keep its cargo at bay for yet another week. *DS Freeway* has been idled for 11 days at the Red Hook Container Terminal. It had arrived from the Ivory Coast only to find that the warehouse administered by the Port Authority had run out of space. American Stevedoring, which has a contract to unload ships at the pier, claims the lack of space is part of the authority's plan to drive the company out of the port. Negotiations with the city and the Port Authority to lease a vacant pier nearby had led to an agreement earlier this week, but the city reversed a deal at the last minute. Now, while the city says it can have a pier at 39th Street near Sunset Park ready within a week, the shipping and chocolate companies may strike a deal with another East Coast port as early as tonight. "The ship owner and I are actively pursuing other ports," the head of Blommer Chocolate, Karl Walk, said last night. Mr. Walk said he is waiting to hear from officials at the four other nearby ports capable of containing cocoa - Philadelphia, Camden, N.J., Baltimore, and Albany. He said he has already rerouted a ship slated for New York to Baltimore and that *DS Freeway* could leave the East River by tomorrow morning. The negotiations with city and Port Authority officials had centred on two vacant piers in Red Hook. The city said one of them, Pier 11, was not available because it would be used for a planned cruise ship terminal. The sides then reached an agreement for Pier 6 to the north, and \$1.2 million changed hands before city officials squashed the deal, saying the pier was tied to the development of Brooklyn Bridge Park, sources close to the negotiations said yesterday. We spent a week and a half negotiating for a pier that was never an option," Mr. Walk said. A spokeswoman for the city's Economic Development Corporation, Janel Patterson, yesterday touted the offer of the pier at 39th Street, but Mr. Walk said the chances that the cocoa would stay in New York are "very small." Mr. Walk also expressed uncertainty that the

facility could accommodate the more than 12,000 tons of cocoa that needs to be unloaded from *DS Freeway*. "We haven't seen the facility in years," he said. Ms. Patterson blamed the current situation on American Stevedoring's "mismanagement of its facilities in Red Hook." A spokesman for the company, Matt Yates, called the charges "unfounded," citing the shrinking of the ports in recent years as the city focuses on residential development and building up the cruise ship industry on the Brooklyn waterfront.

London, Jan 30 — General cargo *DS Freeway* is still at New York.

COLLAPSE OF BUILDING, NAIROBI, KENYA

London, Jan 23 — A press report, dated today, states: A building under construction in downtown Nairobi has collapsed, killing at least four people and injuring at least 70. "I can confirm that four people are dead," Farid Abdulkadir, the director of disaster response for the Red Cross in Kenya, said. "Our team has seen their bodies, but there could be many more dead," he said. "Our team on the ground is having problems accessing the site of the collapse because of the confusion." Earlier, police officials told AFP that about 200 people had been wounded in the collapse. Mr Abdulkadir says so far two people have been pulled out of the rubble alive. He says others have been heard calling for help. Rescue teams, including bulldozers and Red Cross ambulances, are at the site.

London, Jan 25 — A press report, dated Jan 24, states: The owner and contractor of a building that collapsed in Kenya's capital, killing at least 14 people, were rushing workers to complete the structure before the concrete on lower levels had set, the government said today. "They were not being allowed to spend the normal 21 days to let the concrete set. It was taking much less before they were building another layer," government spokesman Alfred Mutua said. "We have been looking for the owner, the contractor, the superintendent; the people who are directly involved in this." Police said detectives have opened a criminal investigation and were looking for the building's owner and general contractor. Investigators were examining conflicting reports about the building's plans and progress, but workers appeared to have been working on most of the five planned floors when the building tumbled to the ground. Still-wet concrete could be seen falling off floor slabs' metal reinforcing bars as wreckage was hauled off the site today. Relatives said at least 10 people were missing, but rescue workers did not know how many people were still trapped in the rubble, Health Minister Charity Ngilu said. Rescuers pulled four survivors from the rubble as military rescue teams from the United States, Britain and Israel arrived in Nairobi to help. The foreigners brought power tools to

cut through concrete and iron rods, which dramatically sped up the rescue effort 30 hours after the collapse. The Israelis also used high-tech detection equipment to look for survivors. "The rescue effort is very very complicated. There is very narrow space to work there. There's lots and lots of rubble," US Army Col Donald Zimmer said at the site. President Mwai Kibaki returned early from an African Union summit in neighboring Sudan. Israeli Maj Gen Yitzhak Gershon, leader of a 140-member team of soldiers and other rescuers, said he was confident more would be rescued. "If there are holes or air pockets, we can save many people," he said before his team pulled out two survivors. Two other survivors were pulled out just before dawn today. Ten bodies were recovered from the rubble. Hospital officials say four people died while being treated for critical injuries. About 280 construction workers were at the site in central Nairobi when the building came down, survivors said. Officials have accounted for 106 people, including the dead and injured. No one has been able to provide authorities with a detailed list of who was at the site, police said, and it was unclear how many workers fled in the moments before the collapse.

London, Jan 25 — A press report, dated today, states: An Israeli rescue team pulled three more bodies from a collapsed building early today, bringing the death toll to 17 as hopes faded that survivors trapped for a third day beneath the rubble would be pulled out alive. Police also stepped up their search for the owners of the building, who allegedly rushed construction workers to put up new floors, even before concrete on the lower level had set properly. Rescuers from the United States and Britain helped Kenyan workers in their search for survivors possibly trapped in air pockets.

COLLAPSE OF TRADE HALL ROOF, KATOWICE, POLAND

Chorzow, Poland, Jan 29 — A roof collapsed at an exhibition hall in Poland packed with hundreds of people, killing at least 60, and officials said today they feared the death toll could rise. As temperatures plunged to minus 15 Celsius overnight, rescuers using floodlights battled through snow and debris to try to find survivors from yesterday's disaster in the southern city of Chorzow. About 140 people were also injured when the metal roof of the modern building, the size of a soccer field, collapsed during a gathering of pigeon enthusiasts from across Europe. "I can confirm that 60 people have died and we are afraid that this might not be the final figure," fire brigade spokesman Jaroslaw Wojtasik said. Officials said the dead included foreigners and identified one as a Belgian. Hospitals said five Germans, a Czech and a Belgian were injured. The fire brigade and police said the weight of snow on the roof caused the

collapse but the building's manager told Polish television that snow had been regularly cleared from the roof. "We heard something snap like a match breaking and people started to panic right away, realising what was happening," one unnamed witness told the TVN24 television station from hospital. "I started to run and something fell on me, others trampled over me and I was able to crawl out on hands and knees." Dog rescue team head Jan Woloszyn told TVN24 today: "Trained dogs have found no trace of life under the rubble." Another rescue official, Leszek Suski, told a news conference: "With such a low temperature the chances of finding someone alive are slim but we still have hope. We estimate that under the debris there still might be a dozen or even several dozens of people." Earlier, some of those trapped under the wreckage used mobile phones to contact rescuers. Rescuers blew hot air into the collapsed structure in hopes of helping survivors. Prime Minister Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz visited the site and said rescue operations would go on through the night. The exhibition of racing pigeons, one of the largest in Europe, attracted participants from Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Ukraine and Poland, the event's website said. Nearly 1,000 police, firefighters and soldiers were involved in the rescue operation and workers from local mines were also called in. Heavy cutting equipment and thermal imaging gear were brought in. — Reuters.

DRUGS FOUND ON COLOMBIAN FLAG VESSEL

London, Jan 25 — A press report, dated Jan 24, states: The Colombian Navy and the U.S. Coast Guard impounded 2.3 tons of cocaine on a vessel in Pacific Ocean waters off Colombia's southwestern coast and arrested 12 crew members, official sources reported. A Colombian navy spokesperson said that the confiscation, the year's biggest, took place some 180 kilometres from the port of Tumaco. The source added that the drug, with an estimated street value of roughly \$50 million, was hidden inside the fuel tank of the Colombian-flag fishing *Angie Mar* (69 gt, built 1951), with a crew of 12, all of whom were taken into custody. The operation was carried out in accordance with a bilateral maritime agreement.

INDIAN FISHING VESSELS APPREHENDED FOR ILLEGAL FISHING IN PAKISTAN WATERS

Karachi, Jan 27 — Pakistan's Maritime Security Agency (MSA) said its vessel apprehended four Indian fishing boats with their 37 crew members on Wednesday (Jan 25) for fishing illegally in Pakistani waters. According to the release, the MSA vessel, *Nusrat* was on a routine patrol in the eastern maritime region when it spotted the boats operating about 45 kilometres inside Pakistan's

Exclusive Economic Zone. The detained Indian fishermen were handed over to the Docks police for further legal action. — Lloyd's List Correspondent.

OUTBREAK OF "BIRD FLU"

Beijing, Jan 23 — China's Ministry of Health announced the country's 10th human case of bird flu infection today after a 29-year-old woman from the southwest of the country was diagnosed with the H5N1 virus. The woman, surnamed Cao, ran a dry goods shop in a farm goods market in Jinhua Town in Sichuan Province, a notice on the ministry's website said. Jinhua lies in the rural outskirts of Chengdu, the provincial capital, which has a total population of close to 10 million, including many farmers. She was the province's second human case of bird flu this month, after the Chinese health ministry announced on Wednesday (Jan 18) that a 35-year-old woman from there died of it on January 11. Cao fell ill with a fever on January 12 and is now in a critical condition in a Chengdu hospital. She tested positive to tests for the H5N1 virus given by the provincial disease control center, and the national center confirmed this. To date, six of the 10 Chinese people officially confirmed to have contracted bird flu have died. The latest fatal infection was in Dazhu County, Sichuan, 300 kilometers east of Chengdu. The announcement came as the senior Chinese official in charge of fighting bird flu warned the country faces a growing threat over coming weeks. Vice Premier Hui Liangyu told a conference of Chinese officials charged with fighting bird flu that they "must fully grasp the grave trends for avian flu in the Lunar New Year and early spring season," the official Xinhua News Agency reported. Hui said that many Chinese are travelling for the traditional Lunar New Year holiday starting January 29. Many families will eat poultry as part of the celebrations, and birds will start breeding and migrating as winter ends, he said. — Reuters.

Jakarta, Jan 25 — An Indonesian chicken seller in Jakarta is in hospital after being infected with the H5N1 bird flu virus according to local test results, a senior Health Ministry official said today. Hariadi Wibisono, director of control of animal-borne diseases at the ministry, said the 22-year-old man was being treated in a Jakarta hospital designated for bird flu patients. Indonesia has had 14 confirmed deaths from bird flu and five cases where patients have survived. Drawing attention to the threat posed by traditional markets in Indonesia, the WHO on Wednesday urged that hygiene and sanitation standards be improved. "Massive interaction between humans and live poultry takes place every day in wet, traditional markets here and it might be a potential transmission of avian influenza," Alexander von Hildebrand, the WHO's Southeast Asia regional adviser for environmental health, said

in a statement. The WHO said preventive measures included limiting contact between humans and poultry in markets, as well as having better access to water and improved waste management. Sanitation in many traditional markets in Indonesia is poor, with dirty or drainage water used to wash produce and stalls. — Reuters.

Beijing, Jan 25 — A Chinese woman infected with bird flu has died, the World Health Organisation said today, and Indonesia treated a chicken seller suspected of contracting the virus. The victim, a 29-year-old woman, was the seventh person to die from bird flu in China since November. The WHO said the woman died on Monday (Jan 23) after falling ill with a fever on Jan 12. It said she worked in a shop selling dry goods and added it had no evidence of exposure to diseased birds, but was investigating. Bird flu has killed at least 83 people since it reemerged in late 2003, according to WHO figures. Experts believe the H5N1 virus is contracted through close contact with sick birds, but fear that as the virus spreads it will mutate to enable it to spread easily from human to human, sparking a pandemic that could claim many millions of lives. The death is the second in the Sichuan province this month. The victims lived in prefectures around 150 km apart. The WHO said it was concerned that no outbreaks of bird flu in poultry had been confirmed in areas where they lived. "WHO recommends that, in China, testing for possible H5N1 infection should be undertaken in all cases of severe respiratory disease having no alternative diagnosis, even when no poultry outbreak has been reported in the patient's area of residence," it said. Chinese officials have said the high number of small family farms, a lack of well trained officials and the world's biggest poultry population would make it hard to contain the disease. Asia remains the epicentre of the fight against bird flu, although the virus has this month killed children in Turkey as it spreads westwards to the edges of Europe. The WHO highlighted the threat posed by traditional markets in Indonesia, after local tests showed a chicken seller was infected with the H5N1 virus. Hariadi Wibisono, director of control of animal-borne diseases at the Health Ministry, said the man was being treated in a Jakarta hospital for bird flu patients. The WHO called for preventive measures included limiting contact between humans and poultry in markets, as well as better access to water and improved waste management. "Massive interaction between humans and live poultry takes place every day in wet, traditional markets here and it might be a potential transmission of avian influenza," Alexander von Hildebrand, the WHO's South-east Asia regional adviser for environmental health, said in a statement. A Japanese group helping defectors from North Korea

said a woman in Pyongyang was infected with bird flu last month after chickens carrying the disease were found in the capital. Lee Young-wha, head of Rescue the North Korean People! Urgent Action Network, said the woman was reported to have been admitted to a Red Cross hospital in December. North Korea's state media said in November it was stepping up its efforts to counter an outbreak of bird flu, but no cases of human infection had been reported. — Reuters.

Shanghai, Jan 28 — China has lifted the quarantine on the last of 33 areas that had reported outbreaks of bird flu, the official Xinhua news agency said. The Ministry of Agriculture approved the ending of quarantine yesterday in an area of southwestern Guizhou Province after no new cases were reported for 21 days. No poultry had been allowed into or out of the area during the quarantine period. Markets had been closed and infected birds, or those suspected of being infected, culled. A Chinese woman died of bird flu this week, the seventh person to die from the disease in the mainland since November. No outbreaks of bird flu in poultry have been confirmed in the area of Sichuan Province where this latest victim lived. In Hong Kong, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department said it was conducting further tests on a dead oriental magpie robin to confirm a suspected case of H5 avian influenza.

London, Jan 30 — A press report, dated Jan 29, states: The lethal H5N1 bird flu strain has been detected in birds in northern Cyprus - the island's first cases - the European Commission says. The commission has ordered an immediate freeze on the transfer of live animals or animal products across the island's Green Line border or to the EU. A mass cull of poultry has taken place near Famagusta, eastern Cyprus, where the infected birds are believed to have originated. The World Health Organization has not confirmed the positive test results, which were carried out at a specialist laboratory in Weybridge, UK.

SUSPENSION OF COAL PRODUCTION, WEST VIRGINIA, UNITED STATES

London, Feb 2 — A press report, dated Feb 1, states: The governor of the US state of West Virginia has ordered that all coal production be halted following more deaths in the industry. Governor Joe Manchin told companies not to "mine another lump of coal" until full safety checks had been made. Two miners were killed in separate accidents today. Twelve miners died in an explosion last month that drew US Senate criticism over safety. Two more workers died in a fire at another mine three weeks later. Mr Manchin said today: "We're going to check for unsafe conditions and we're going to correct any unsafe conditions before we mine another lump of coal." Last week US senators

strongly criticised mining officials over the deaths of the 12 miners in the explosion at the Sago mine on January 2. The senators accused officials of failing to comply with their own safety regulations. Senator Robert C Byrd, chairman of the hearing, said the deaths had been "entirely preventable". The criticism was rejected by the acting head of the government agency responsible for mine safety. Last week, West Virginia legislators passed a series of measures aimed at improving mine safety. The proposals include a rapid response system and updated tracking devices.

Fires & Explosions



APARTMENT BUILDING, NEW YORK, UNITED STATES

London, Feb 2 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: Fire roared through a six-story apartment building this morning, injuring 31 firefighters and leaving more than 50 families homeless, fire and Red Cross officials said. The blaze erupted on the Bronx building's third floor around 0630 hrs and quickly spread, said Fire Department spokesman John Criscuoli. No serious injuries were reported among the tenants, who were evacuated. Red Cross spokeswoman Annie Lazar said dozens of apartments were damaged. The injuries to the 31 firefighters ranged from smoke inhalation to "minor bumps, burns and bruises," Criscuoli said. The preliminary source of the fire was a severed wire found under a stove in a third-floor apartment.

BUS GARAGE, WEST LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated Jan 27, states: A 15-year-old boy has appeared in court charged with setting fire to 12 buses, which caused an estimated £2m damage at a west London garage this week. The boy, who cannot be named for legal reasons, appeared at the West London Youth Court. Originally, three buses originally caught fire in the bus garage arson but explosions caused it to spread.

CHEMICAL PLANT, NORTH CAROLINA, UNITED STATES

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: An explosion at a chemical plant this morning injured at least 16 workers and set off an intense blaze spewing thick smoke that led officials to temporarily evacuate nearby residents. Windows were blown out as much as a third of a mile away and a house across the street from the plant was moved off its foundation. The fire was mostly extinguished by mid-afternoon and all workers at the Synthron Inc. plant

were accounted for. The cause of the blast hadn't been determined, police Capt. Ronnie Rector said. Officials also allowed residents who had voluntarily evacuated because of the smoke to return to their homes. They were advised to keep their windows closed and ventilation systems turned off, said police Sgt. Scott Rogers. Synthron is a subsidiary of Paris-based Protex International, which produces specialty chemicals in the United States, Europe, Asia and North Africa. Two victims were flown to different hospitals after the 1130 hrs explosion, a hospital spokesman said. One was in serious condition with a head injury and the other's condition was not released. Fourteen others were treated for lesser injuries, officials said.

FACTORY, MEADVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA, UNITED STATES

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated Jan 27, states: The federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives has determined arson to be the cause of a fire that gutted a 50,000-square-foot factory in Meadville, Crawford County, on Monday (Jan 23). ATF spokesman John Hageman said the building housing Chipsco Mold and Design was destroyed. The ATF is working with Pennsylvania State Police arson investigators to determine a motive and locate suspects, Hageman said. Damages were in excess of \$15 million. Investigators found no bodies inside the ruins after the fire was extinguished. Chipsco produces plastic resin molds for a variety of products, including medical devices and bottle caps. All the equipment — including expensive milling, manufacturing, fabricating and grinding machines — was destroyed. Fourteen different fire companies eventually brought the fire under control, Hageman said. No firefighters were injured. Chipsco is owned by Blair and Brian Lean, who have been questioned by investigators. The ATF is investigating whether an arsonist has been active in the area, if the Leans had enemies or if there was a financial incentive to burn down the factory, all standard lines of investigation in arson cases, Hageman said. Hageman declined to say what led investigators to conclude arson was the cause.

FIRECRACKER WAREHOUSE, LINQI, HENAN PROVINCE, CHINA

Beijing, Jan 29 — An explosion in a firecracker warehouse killed 16 people in central China today, Chinese New Year, the official Xinhua news agency said. The firecrackers were ignited by fireworks, it added. The victims had all been attending a temple fair nearby in Linqi town, Henan Province, and were killed on the spot. A number of injured were taken to hospital, Xinhua said. China marked the start of the Lunar New Year today, with many people setting off fireworks and firecrackers which are

believed to scare off evil spirits and attract the god of wealth to people's doorsteps. — Reuters.

HOSPITAL, MOSCOW, RUSSIA

London, Jan 25 — A press report, dated today, states: A fire broke out at a Moscow hospital building today, forcing the evacuation of hundreds of patients, an emergency official said. The blaze broke out just before 1000 hrs, 1230, IST, at the Oncological Center in a southern district of the Russian capital, said Viktor Beltsov, of the Emergency Situations Ministry. He said the fire appeared to have started in the basement, filling a 23-storey building at the large complex with smoke and forcing firefighters to evacuate some 500 people. No casualties were reported, and no smoke or fire was visible from the outside of the building. Ekho Moskvyyi radio reported that gas canisters had begun to explode in the building, hindering efforts to extinguish the fire. Firefighters brought the blaze under control about an hour later, Russian news reports said. "During repairs of a pipe and welding, heat insulation on one of the pipes was ignited from a spark," Yevgeny Chernyshov, head of Moscow Fire Service, said in televised comments.

MINE, SASKATCHEWAN, CANADA

London, Jan 30 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: Officials were optimistic but not certain about the status tonight of nearly half of a group of 70 miners trapped by an underground fire at a potash mine in southeastern Saskatchewan. Marshall Hamilton, a spokesman for Mosaic Company, the U.S.-based firm that operates the mine, said they had not been able to establish radio contact with one of two groups of workers. "We are in regular contact with approximately 40 of them," Hamilton told CTV News. "There are 30 of them that are in an area where the communication link, we believe, was destroyed by fire, so we believe they're safe." Hamilton said the fire broke out around 0300 hrs nearly a kilometre underground. The miners reported smoke and then headed for safe refuge rooms while they waited for firefighters to quench the blaze and air quality in the mine to improve.

Toronto, Jan 30 — A group of Canadian miners, trapped by a fire in a potash mine for 24 hours in central Canada, were finally brought to the surface after the mine was cleared of fire and smoke, a mine official said today. The fire, which broke out at 0300 hrs, yesterday at the mine in Esterhazy, Saskatchewan, had forced 70 miners to rush to safety in emergency refuge rooms. It was unclear whether all 70 miners had been brought to the surface or just the first group. The mine is owned by Minnesota-based Mosaic Co and is near the provincial border with Manitoba. The miners had been pinned in several safe rooms as firefighters battled the blaze and then

focused on clearing the smoke from the mine so the workers could be safely evacuated. Company spokesman Marshall Hamilton said a rescue team had reached the refuge rooms, seen the miners and sealed them back in the safe rooms until the fire was being extinguished. The fire was finally put out and rescuers began the task of ventilating the mine, a process made slower by the size of the mine, about 18.6 miles by 12 miles. Hamilton said the miners were trained to seek safety in the refuge stations, specifically built and designed for such incidents. — Reuters.

MINE, SHANXI PROVINCE, CHINA

Beijing, Feb 2 — A gas explosion at a Chinese mine has killed at least 23 miners, state media reported today, in the latest accident to hit the world's deadliest mining industry. Another 53 people were "sickened" by the blast that happened yesterday in the northern province of Shanxi, the official Xinhua news agency said, without giving details. — Reuters.

OIL DEPOT, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD, UNITED KINGDOM

London, Jan 30 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: Victims of the Buncefield fuel depot explosion have launched legal action at the High Court in a bid to gain compensation from the oil industry. The group wants the court to decide who was liable for the blast, which devastated parts of Hemel Hempstead. A Health and Safety probe into the fire, which began on 11 December and lasted several days, has been launched. Total and Texaco, which jointly run the Hertfordshire depot, said they had actively sought to help those affected. Lawyer Des Collins said an application for a Group Litigation Order was lodged at the High Court on Friday (Jan 27) against Hertfordshire Oil Storage Limited, the joint venture company operated by Total and Texaco which runs the depot. It was lodged on behalf of 40 victims, but this could increase to about 150. The case was likely to take around 18 months, he said. Several homes in the surrounding area were badly damaged in the explosion which also affected firms including brewer Scottish & Newcastle, which lost wines and spirits valued at around £10m.

WAREHOUSE, EL PASO, TEXAS, UNITED STATES

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated today, states: Fire and city inspectors today will continue to assess the cause of an explosion that injured nine people and left part of a South-Central El Paso neighbourhood looking like a war zone yesterday. The 1500 hrs. explosion crumbled walls and ripped the roof off a building at Copia and Frutas streets used by Excel Apparel Group, a company that manufactures denim products. The blast shattered windows and rattled homes and businesses blocks away.

The victims, six civilians and three firefighters whose names were withheld, suffered non-life-threatening injuries. A fire inspector said the company had a good record. The cause of the explosion, which littered nearby streets and sidewalks with broken glass, chunks of aluminum roofing and other debris, remained unknown late yesterday. Excel Apparel Group is a family-owned business that has manufactured denim products for nearly 30 years. It employs about 350 people. The business has several buildings on the property where the explosion occurred, said Jose Luis Ortega, the company's chief operations officer. He said two workers were in the building where the blast originated. The employees were shaken but did not seem to have serious injuries. Twenty-five firetrucks and more than 70 firefighters responded to the blast, which sparked a fire. Besides battling a blaze, firefighters tested the air and water in the area to determine whether they were contaminated. "Preliminary testing from our HazMat crews tells us that the water and air are safe," Hernandez said.

London, Jan 29 — A press report, dated Jan 27, states: Fire Investigators say preliminary investigations show that a massive explosion in South Central El Paso yesterday may have just been an accident. The Excel Apparel Group is the jeans manufacturing company that runs the building where the explosion happened. The owners are working with the fire department to determine an exact cause. El Paso fire investigators say when it comes to permits and code standards, Excel has been compliant.

WILDFIRES, AUSTRALIA

London, Jan 25 — A press report, dated today, states: Agricultural investment company Timbercorp Ltd today said fires had entered some of its eucalypt plantations in Victoria and Western Australia on Jan 22 and 23. But the fires were not expected to materially impact earnings in the current financial year or future years. Timbercorp said according to initial reports the fire in the Grampian Ranges in central-western Victoria had burnt through two plantations of about 350 hectares that formed part of the 1998 and 1999 Timbercorp Eucalypt Projects. The company said up to 25-50% of the plantations may have been damaged. A fire in the Darling Ranges in Western Australia's southwest had damaged about nine hectares. The company said its eucalypt plantations were covered by fire insurance. (See issue of Jan 26.)

London, Jan 25 — A press report, dated today, states: The South Australia Country Fire Service says crews have reinforced containment lines for a blaze in the Ngarkat Conservation Park in preparation for warmer weather expected today. The fire has burnt about 80,000 hectares of scrub in the upper south-east of the

state since the fires were ignited by lightning on Friday (Jan 20). About 25 firefighters will remain on the scene today, but the CFS says it is confident the blaze will remain under control. Meanwhile, authorities have emphasised that smoke blanketing Adelaide and eastern parts of the state has come from Victoria's bushfires, and does not indicate a further bushfire risk in SA. The CFS says the smoke has drifted west and will probably linger for several hours. The Adelaide Fire Service is being inundated with calls about smoke from interstate fires descending upon the metropolitan area. It says dozens of people have called to raise concern about smoke that can be seen right across the city and in the north-east suburbs.

London, Jan 26 — A press report, dated today, states: High temperatures and strong northerly winds have intensified the four major bushfires burning across Victoria. In total 27 homes have been lost, most of them in the Grampians in western Victoria and the fires are now covering almost 150,000 hectares. Large bushfires are still burning out of control in the Grampians, at Moondarra in the east, the Brisbane Ranges in the south-west, and near Kinglake, north-east of Melbourne. Firefighters are preparing to protect homes as strong northerly winds continue to push all the blazes towards communities south of the fire fronts. The Department of Sustainability and Environment's Rachael May says the Grampians fire has intensified the most. "We're asking residents in the Mirrantwa, Victoria Valley, Glen Isla, Dunkeld, Willaura and Glenthompson to immediately activate their bush fire plans," she said. Large flames are now within 500 metres of the centre of Halls Gap but are climbing uphill, away from the township. And patients from the Willaura Hospital are being evacuated as fire crews fight the Grampians blaze. John Davies, from the Hospital, says 18 patients are on their way to the Ararat Hospital. On the northern edge of the Moondarra blaze in Gippsland, fire is again threatening the towns of Erica and Moondarra. A breakaway fire near Tyers Junction jumped containment earlier this week and has continued to cause problems. While most of the Moondarra fire is being pushed by north-west winds, the breakaway fire is defying the pattern and being pushed towards Erica by a localised south westerly. Incident controller, Ben Rankin, says the Country Fire Authority (CFA) strike teams have been sent in this afternoon. Smaller spot fires have also started in grassland and pine plantations near Moondarra. Residents in towns including Mirranatwa, Dunkeld and Glen Isla are being warned to put their fire plans into action. Meanwhile, livestock and fences has been lost in a 55-hectare grassfire near Avenel in Victoria's north-east this afternoon. It took 14 tankers an

hour to bring the Upton Road blaze under control. Fire authorities are treating the fire as suspicious.

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated today, states: Thunderstorms and winds gusting up to 100 kph threatened to further hamper the fight against Victoria's bushfires last night, with many homes under threat. The weather bureau issued a thunderstorm warning for six districts, which could affect firefighters battling the massive Grampians fire, west of Melbourne, and big blazes at Kinglake and Moondarra, north-east and east of Melbourne. Houses at Kinglake were under direct threat from a large bushfire advancing from Kinglake National Park. A south-westerly wind change was due late last night, but if wind gusts were severe it was feared it could increase the danger. Sandra Frawley, a resident, said burning gum leaves were falling as she packed on Wednesday night. "There were embers five inches long & they had blown nine kilometres from the fire." Firefighters were losing the battle against the Grampians blaze, with spot fires threatening to establish a new front. About 200 New South Wales volunteers were fighting the Gippsland fire, and another 100 were battling the Kinglake blaze.

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated Jan 27, states: Fire crews have contained a bushfire at Anakie, near Geelong. The 7300 ha fire destroyed three houses at Anakie earlier this week and broke containment lines several times yesterday when pushed by a gusty northerly wind. Fire crews were able to quickly extinguish the outbreaks and were assisted by rain in the area last night. Roadblocks remain in place at several places and the Brisbane Ranges National Park has been closed until further notice.

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated today, states: Rainfall and cooler temperatures have helped Victorian firefighters strengthen containment lines around three bushfires. A large backburning operation was completed in the Glenthompson area in the Grampians last night. Fire crews were also able to slow down the blazes at Moondarra in Gippsland. Department of Sustainability and Environment spokesman Duncan Pendrigh says weather conditions over the next week will determine whether the fires can be brought under control. "The Grampians in particular poses a threat because there hasn't been much rain at all there and the expected rain for next week is now not due until Wednesday," he said. The Country Fire Authority has reassured residents at Halls Gap in the Grampians, that smoke today is likely to be from a proscribed burn. The fire that had been threatening Kinglake to Melbourne's north-east has been contained. DSE state duty officer Phil Beasley says the situation at Kinglake could have been much worse. "In terms of losses, the fire crews have confirmed only two losses of

outbuildings - a shed and that sort of building," he said. Lightning has also sparked a series of fresh small fires, but authorities are relatively unconcerned about them. Firefighters will now zero in on the two major fires, in the Grampians region and the Moondarra-Erica area.

London, Jan 29 — A press report, dated today, states: Firefighters are trying to strengthen containment lines on a major bushfire in the west of Victoria. Three-quarters of the 128,000 hectare blaze in the Grampians has now been contained. A small amount of rain did little to douse the flames, but forced firecrews to suspend backburning operations. A fire at Moondarra in Victoria's east is also yet to be contained. It has burned through more than 15,000 hectares.

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated today, states: Steady rain throughout the day has helped firefighters battling two large bushfires in Victoria, the last remaining blazes from last week's fire crisis. Department of Sustainability and Environment said the bushfire in the Moondarra State Park, near Erica, in the state's south east, had been contained. DSE Incident Controller, John McDonald, said steady rain today helped firefighters battling the blaze, which had burned through 15,211ha of forest, pine plantations and grassland. Mr McDonald said: "We used spotter planes and the Forward Looking Infra-Red (FLIR) system, supported by ground crews in vehicles and on foot to find, access and suppress the spot fires and hot spots in the area. We've got to a stage now where we can call the fire contained and we may not have to resort to backburning after all." Moondarra State Park and Tyers Regional Park remained closed. DSE said the Mt Lubra fire has burnt 130,000ha of bush and farmland, and the perimeter of the fire was about 400km long. Most of the Grampians fire perimeter has now been contained. DSE said firefighters were working to build a 17km fire break in difficult terrain and on steep slopes. Forty-seven firefighters from Tasmania helped the firefighting effort today by building a control line near Mt Difficult. Department of Primary Industries recovery teams were working in the Grampians region, mostly targeting the south and west of Willaura, where significant stock losses have been reported.

WILDFIRES, SOUTH AFRICA

Cape Town, Jan 27 — A British woman has died in a devastating fire that swept across South Africa's Table Mountain and another British tourist has been charged with starting the blaze, Cape Town police and fire officials said today. Dozens of fire fighters brought the fire under control after battling through the night as strong winds howled around the country's most famous landmark, threatening to engulf residential areas on its slopes. "One elderly woman has died — she was walking

on the mountain when the fire engulfed it," Philip Prins, fire and technical manager for Table Mountain National Park, told Reuters. Police spokeswoman Tumi Golding said the 65-year-old woman, who was walking with her daughter, died of smoke inhalation. Fire officials said the daughter ran to get help when her mother collapsed, but it arrived too late. No one else had to be rescued from the mountain and a 36-year-old British man from London — who was also a tourist — had been charged with starting the fire. Golding said British national Tony Cooper had appeared in court on charges of arson and culpable homicide. He was granted bail of 3,000 rand. Fire officials said Cooper had admitted to starting the fire and witnesses had seen him discard a cigarette butt, although Golding could not confirm that this was the cause of the blaze. Fires are common in Cape Town at this time of year, when the weather is hot and dry. But officials said the fire, which spread over an area of 6 square kilometres, was one of the worst they had seen. — Reuters.

London, Jan 29 — A press report, dated Jan 28, states: The flare ups on Table Mountains have been contained since the mountain blaze broke out on Thursday (Jan 26) afternoon, SABC reported today. A spokesperson for the Cape Town fire department said firefighters contained various "hot spots" early this morning after strong winds started fuelling the flames again last night. Various fire fighting teams were today still monitoring about eight areas from the Cape Town city bowl to Cape's Bay. Residents in the area told SABC that the fire had caused them some anxious moments.

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated today, states: A bush fire that started in the Stanford area of the Southern Cape yesterday had by this afternoon travelled some 10 km and was burning on a two-kilometre front. "It's totally out of control: at the moment we're just protecting houses," said Overberg district municipality fire chief Reinard Geldenhuys. He said the fire, which was heading towards the Stanford-Gansbaai road, was threatening several farmhouses in the area. A ground team, backed by seven firefighting vehicles and local farmers and their labourers, was fighting the fire. Helicopters were on standby. The land that had been burned was all farmland, much of it used for wildflower picking. The fire was "crushing" the wildflower economy in the area, Geldenhuys said. Also this afternoon, a helicopter was waterbombing a bush fire on the lower slopes of Table Mountain, just above the Cape Town suburb of Oranjezicht. Table Mountain National Park spokesperson Fiona Kalk said a park firefighting team had been despatched to the area. The fire is on the edge of the area ravaged by last week's blaze.

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated today, states: A bush fire which started on the lower slopes of Table

Mountain, above the Cape Town suburb of Oranjezicht, had been brought under control this afternoon. City fire department spokesperson Boebie Harris said at 1730 hrs that eight firefighting vehicles were on the scene, and a helicopter was still waterbombing the area. The cause of the fire, which did not damage any homes, was unknown. Meanwhile, a bush fire which started yesterday afternoon south of Stanford in the Southern Cape was burning on a two kilometre front this afternoon and had destroyed some 10 km of veld. A ground team, backed by seven firefighting vehicles and local farmers and their labourers, was fighting the fire. Helicopters were on standby. Several other smaller fires in the area were demanding firefighters' attention.

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated Jan 27, states: The fire that ravaged the lower slopes of Table Mountain's Camps Bay side since yesterday afternoon was mostly contained by this morning, but the wind was the key to winning the final battle, officials said. "Yes, it is under control," city emergency services director Pat Adams told reporters at the foot of the mountain. "There is no area under immediate threat." The fire, which broke out around 1600 hrs, has so far destroyed 700 hectares of vegetation from Table Mountain's Platteklip Gorge to Lion's head and Signal Hill, stopping just before the Twelve Apostles. Table Mountain National Park deputy manager Xola Mkefe said there was still some fire towards the top of Table Mountain this morning, and firefighters were doing their best to stop it going over to the other side. Two fire-bomber helicopters have been fighting the blaze since 0600 today, after calling it quits at nightfall yesterday. Some 500 people have been involved in the firefighting effort, including the city fire team, SA National Parks, the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, SA Air Force helicopters, and numerous volunteers. The man accused of starting fire appeared briefly in the Cape Town Magistrate's Court today. He is alleged to have flicked out a burning cigarette while travelling. Mkefe said the true extent of the damage had yet to be calculated. Conservation area manager Dalton Gibbs said an estimated 40 to 50% of the world's Silverleaf tree population, found only on Lion's Head and in Newlands, had perished. Three cars were known to have been damaged. No permanent evacuations of residential properties were required.

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated today, states: A big fire was burning out of control in the Gansbaai area, the Overberg district municipality said today. Fire chief Reinard Geldenhuys said the blaze was threatening several towns including De Kelders and Baardskeerdersbos. "Several farm houses and holiday resorts are also threatened," Geldenhuys said. The bush fire apparently started on

Monday (Jan 30) afternoon south of Stanford. Yesterday a ground team, backed by firefighting vehicles and local farmers and their labourers, were fighting the fire.

YACHT CLUB, COLUMBIA RIVER, UNITED STATES

London, Jan 26 — A press report, dated today, states: A fire has destroyed three boat houses and the multimillion-dollar yachts they housed along the Columbia River. Portland Fire and Rescue Lieutenant Allen Oswald says a fourth yacht, worth about \$2.5 million was towed away in time. The fire was at the Columbia River Yacht Club, which houses about 60 vessels in 40-by-80-foot metal boat garages. Fire officials are still waiting for a cause. The three yachts sank, which raised the possibility of fuel or other pollutants getting into the river. Oswald says booms were set up, minimizing contamination. The fire broke out around 0630 hrs. At least 75 firefighters were called. Oswald says the yachts were worth at least \$1 million each.



C-FTJO

London, Jan 27 — At 1200 hrs, Jan 15, C-FTJO, an Air Canada Airbus A320, was struck by a Loader during the passenger baggage loading operation at Lester B. Pearson International airport, Toronto. The aircraft skin was sustained considerable damage in the area of the aft cargo door. The aircraft was repaired and returned to service. There were no associated injuries.

C-GRXZ

London, Jan 25 — A press report, dated Jan 24, states: The engine continues to be the focus of the Transportation Safety Board's investigation into what caused Saturday's (Jan 21) fatal aircraft crash involving a Sonicblue Airways Cessna (Cessna 208B Grand Caravan C-Grxz) near Port Alberni. TSB investigator, Bill Yearwood says they have determined the aircraft did not run out of fuel. "The pilot did re-fuel the aircraft before he left Vancouver and the accident site smelled like fuel so we are at this time somewhat comfortable in saying that it was not a fuel exhaustion problem," Yearwood said. Yearwood says they are looking into the possibility a mechanical problem may have been preventing fuel from reaching the engine. Yesterday, Transport Canada revealed Sonicblue Airways had been the focus of maintenance and safety concerns in the past. Yearwood says the investigation will look at whether plane maintenance played a role in the accident.

CRASH, DANNEVIRKE, NEW ZEALAND

London, Jan 31 — An aircraft crashed at Dannevirke yesterday afternoon has left two occupants in hospital with back injuries. Eye witnesses reported the aircraft crashed from about 20-metres in the air just after takeoff. It was seen to be descending and banking to the left before striking the ground. The two occupants were able to free themselves from the wreckage. The 51-year-old pilot was flown to Palmerston North Hospital by the Square Trust Rescue Helicopter with back injuries, while the passenger was transported to hospital by road. It is not known what caused the accident.

CRASH, KETCHIKAN AREA, ALASKA, UNITED STATES

London, Jan 26 — A press report, dated Jan 25, states: The pilot of a small jet aircraft that crashed into a mobile home park in Ketchikan, Alaska, was found dead this afternoon, still strapped to his seat about 100 yards away from the crash site, officials said. Searchers found the body across a ravine from the crash, said Alaska State Troopers spokesman Greg Wilkinson. No one else was on board the aircraft, and there were no reported injuries on the ground, he said. It was not immediately known whether the pilot attempted to deploy a parachute. The aircraft hit one mobile home, triggering a fire in the trailer. No one was home at the time and residents there had all been accounted for, Wilkinson said. The aircraft was a Czech-made L39 two-seater training jet that was owned by USA Air Inc of Las Vegas, Wilkinson said. The aircraft crashed into the mobile home park behind the Alaska & Proud Supermarket, said Mylene Nedzwecky, the front desk clerk at the Best Western Landing Hotel & Restaurant. The plane left Sitka, bound for the Lower 48 without filing a flight plan, Wilkinson said.

CRASH, KETCHIKAN, UNITED STATES

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated today, states: A small, military-style jet crashed into a mobile home park Wednesday (Jan 25), killing the pilot, who was found strapped to his seat 100 yards from the site, authorities said. The aircraft hit one trailer, triggering a fire. No one was home at the time and all residents had been accounted for, said Alaska State Troopers spokesman Greg Wilkinson. But at least five people on the ground were treated for minor injuries from flying debris. The aircraft was a Czech-made Albatros L39 two-seat training jet owned by a Las Vegas company, Wilkinson said. The aircraft left Sitka and was bound for the lower 48 states. No flight plan had been filed. Searchers found the pilot's body across a ravine from the crash. No one else was aboard the aircraft, Wilkinson said.

**CRASH, PARKES AREA,
NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA**

London, Feb 2 — A press report, dated today, states: Up to three people are feared dead in a fiery helicopter crash near the NSW central west town of Parkes. NSW police have confirmed one person died in today's crash, but emergency services at the scene say another body has been located and they are searching for a third. The chopper came down in bushland about 23km east of Parkes on Orange Road about 0950, AEDT. NRMA Careflight director Ian Badham said a medical crew had been called to the accident, which is believed to have occurred when the chopper hit power lines and crashed to the ground on fire. Police at the scene believe there were three people on board, he said. "We understand that two bodies have been recovered and they are now searching the wreckage because there could have been a third on board," Mr Badham said. "(The helicopter) hit power lines and crashed on fire so there's lots of wreckage plus the fire, and they think there might be a third one in there somewhere. "It's been hard even to identify what type of helicopter it was because of the total destruction." An Australian Transport Safety Bureau spokesman earlier said there was debris on the road and some wreckage in the trees. Emergency crews were extinguishing a fire at the scene and Orange Road was closed in both directions. The chopper, believed to be a Bell Jetranger, is thought to have been involved in weed eradication, possibly for Parkes Council.

EC-JOG

London, Feb 2 — Robinson R44 helicopter, EC-JOG, crashed approximately six nautical miles from Lorca, Spain, at 1200, UTC, Jan 27. The pilot and two passengers were killed and the helicopter was destroyed.

**EMERGENCY LANDING,
AHMEDABAD AIRPORT, INDIA**

London, Jan 26 — An Indian Airlines aircraft carrying JD(U) leader George Fernandes made an emergency landing at Ahmedabad airport today. The flight IC 165 from New Delhi to Mumbai took off at 1020 hrs carrying 103 passengers. Airline officials said the aircraft developed a technical snag but landed safely in Ahmedabad Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport at 1130 hrs. Maintenance engineers were inspecting the aircraft, the officials said.

**EMERGENCY LANDING,
HAMBURG, GERMANY**

London, Jan 30 — A press report, dated Jan 28, states: Lufthansa passenger aircraft was forced to make an emergency landing in the northern German port city of Hamburg this morning after reporting undercarriage problems following take-off, DPA reported. Emergency vehicles and ambulances stood by as the Lufthansa

Airbus touched down safely on the tarmac, according to Hamburg airport spokeswoman Stefanie Koall. The domestic flight, with 95 passengers and five crew members on board, was en route to Munich.

**EMERGENCY LANDING,
NOI BAI INTERNATIONAL
AIRPORT, HANOI, VIETNAM**

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated today, states: Mechanical problems forced an Air India flight from Shanghai to make an emergency landing at a northern Vietnam airport yesterday, an official said. No one was seriously injured when Air India flight 349 to Bangkok was forced to land at Hanoi's Noi Bai International Airport, according to Minh Hoa, an immigration officer working at the airport. "The plane made an emergency landing after midnight and there were more than 100 passengers on board," the New Kerala newswire quoted Hoa as saying. "Some of them were put on other flights, but there are still 78 passengers spending the night at the airport," Hoa said. The Air India flight was about two hours into its journey to Bangkok when Hanoi air traffic controllers received a call asking for permission to land for repairs. The aircraft was still in Hanoi last night, Hoa said.

**EMERGENCY LANDING, O'HARE
INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT,
CHICAGO, UNITED STATES**

London, Jan 30 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: United Airlines Express aircraft made an emergency landing at O'Hare International Airport in Chicago today after reports there was smoke in its cabin. United spokesman Jeff Green said the Chicago to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania plane returned to O'Hare about 40 minutes after taking off. The aircraft landed safely and no one was injured. Green said officials are investigating the incident. The aircraft, which departed O'Hare around 1300 hrs, was carrying 37 passengers and three crew members.

**EMERGENCY LANDING,
PIARCO INTERNATIONAL
AIRPORT, TRINIDAD**

London, Feb 1 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: A private aircraft which landed at the Piarco International airport on Sunday (Jan 29) morning remains grounded pending repairs. The aircraft landed at 0420 hrs and entered Trinidad airspace without communication between its crew and air traffic control. An Airports Authority officials said that the W-W 24 Westwing Aircraft carrying two passengers and two crew members was on its way to Barbados from Fort Lauderdale, Florida when its communication system failed. The pilot could not maintain communication with air traffic control from Bridgetown and landed at Piarco. The passengers have since gone to Barbados but the crew remains in Trinidad.

**EMERGENCY LANDING,
TAMPA INTERNATIONAL
AIRPORT, UNITED STATES**

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated today, states: An America West jetliner with 179 people aboard made a "precautionary" landing at Tampa International Airport yesterday evening after a piece of fiberglass fell off the wing near the fuselage, airport spokesperson Brenda Geohagen said. Flight 882 landed safely. There were no injuries. The Boeing 757 was on a flight from Fort Lauderdale to Phoenix when a "wing ferring" fell off, leaving a hole in the wing, she said. An America West spokesman said the piece was not structural. The flight was diverted to TIA and landed safely shortly after 2000 hrs. It taxied to an airside for routine passenger disembarkment. Arrangements were being made to put passengers up in hotels for the night. The airlines planed to bring another aircraft to TIA and resume the flight in the morning.

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated Jan 27, states: An aircraft bound for Phoenix made an emergency landing after the pilot realised there was a hole in its wing. U.S. Airways flight 822 was flying from Fort Lauderdale to Phoenix when it made an unscheduled landing in Tampa. The aircraft landed safely. 179 people were on board. Investigators are still trying to figure out what may have caused that hole in the aircraft's wing.

**INCIDENT AT BRISBANE,
QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA**

London, Jan 25 — A press report, dated today, states: A tyre on an Air Zealand Boeing 747 has disintegrated at touchdown at Brisbane Airport. Brisbane Airport Corporation spokesman Jim Carden said today the tyre burst when the aircraft from Auckland landed at 1012 hrs. Air New Zealand believes the tyres may have been damaged when the aircraft took off from Auckland Airport and the incident is being investigated.

**INCIDENT AT MELBOURNE
AIRPORT, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA**

London, Feb 2 — A press report, dated today, states: Two passenger aircraft have clipped wings on the runway at Melbourne Airport, sparking an air safety investigation and delaying passengers. A Qantas Boeing 767, carrying 155 passengers and 11 crew, and a United Airlines 747, carrying 99 passengers and 14 crew, were both due to leave the airport when the incident occurred about 1330, AEDT. Both airlines said no passengers were injured and alternative flights were being arranged. Investigators from the Australian Transport Safety Bureau were this afternoon on their way to investigate. Qantas flight 434 was bound for Sydney, a Qantas spokeswoman said. She said the aircraft "was clipped by a Boeing 747 operated by another airline at a taxiway at Melbourne Airport". United released a statement this

afternoon, saying its flight 840 from Melbourne to Los Angeles via Sydney "reported a wingtip touch with a Qantas aircraft as it taxied". An ATSB spokesman said he could not provide information on the incident until an investigation had occurred.

N104XX

London, Jan 27 — Aero Vodochody L-39MS N104XX crashed into a residential area in Ketchikan, Alaska at 2150, Jan 25. The aircraft was destroyed. The one person on board was killed.

N250AG

London, Jan 31 — EADS Socata TB-20 Trinidad, N250AG, owned by Aircraft Guaranty Title LLC, of Houston, Texas, crashed approximately five kilometres northwest of Chambéry/Voglans Airport, Bordeaux, France, while in a departure climb to an en route altitude for a flight to the Toussus-le-Noble Airport, Toussus, France, at approximately 1820, UTC, Jan 16. The pilot and his three passengers were killed, and the aircraft was destroyed by the ground impact and the resultant fire.

N35588

London, Feb 3 — Piper J5A, N35588, crashed under unknown circumstances in the desert, 5 miles north of Horseshoe Dam, Carefree, Arizona, wreckage located Jan 31.

N38510

London, Feb 1 — Piper PA-32R-300, N38510, operated by Burton Brothers Management Co Inc., crashed under unknown circumstances at 1934, local time, Jan 28. Wreckage located eight and-a-half miles from Camden, Alabama. There were two persons on board, one was fatally injured and one sustained unknown injuries.

N3946W

London, Jan 25 — A press report, dated Jan 24, states: Rescue workers say a man survived a single-engine aircraft crash during a morning snow shower in Michigan this morning. They say the aircraft, which was bound for Sandusky (Ohio), had engine trouble. The pilot radioed Jackson County Airport for help before the crash around 0900 hrs. Detroit-area radio station W-W-J reports the aircraft was heading to Ohio after taking off from Lansing. The pilot had no severe injuries, and there were no other passengers. The Jackson Citizen Patriot reports that a utility company helicopter crew assisted in the rescue after spotting the plane near a home.

London, Jan 26 — Piper PA-32-260 (Cherokee Six) N3946W crashed near Jackson, Michigan, at 1347, Jan 24, while on a flight from Lansing, MI, to Sandusky, Ohio. The aircraft sustained substantial damage. The one person on board was seriously injured.

N4791C

London, Jan 26 — Cessna T210N (Centurion II) N4791C crashed near Mariposa, California, at 1745, Jan 24, while on a flight to Sacramento, CA. The aircraft sustained substantial damage. One of the two persons on board suffered minor injuries.

N55CW

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated today, states: A single-engine plane registered to a flight school crashed at an airport today, killing both people aboard, federal aviation officials said. The fixed-wing Bellanca crashed at Oakland County International Airport, said Elizabeth Isham Cory, a spokeswoman for the Federal Aviation Administration. She said she did not know what might have caused it. The plane is registered to Sutton Aviation, a flight school in Lapeer, about 30 miles north of the airport. David Hingst, airport manager at Dupont Lapeer Airport, where the school is based, said he had no information about the crash. He said the school keeps one plane at the Oakland County airport.

London, Jan 29 — A press report, dated Jan 28, states: The tower gave clearance for the aircraft to land and seconds later, at 0926 yesterday, the small single-engine aircraft plummeted to earth, killing the two men on board. Both were rated as commercial pilots. "The aircraft was reportedly making a tight turn at a low altitude and perhaps went into a stall," VanderVeen said. An investigation by the National Transportation Safety Board is expected to take about nine months, Federal Aviation Administration officials said. Officials have not determined the cause of the crash, but there is no indication there was a mechanical failure, VanderVeen said. FAA spokeswoman Elizabeth Cory said the aircraft appeared to be "doing touch and goes," aviation-speak for practicing landings and takeoffs. Airport officials said they did not know when the aircraft first took off that morning, but said the aircraft probably was not in the air more than 30 minutes before it crashed. Airport officials said the pilot of the aircraft did not indicate to the tower that there was any trouble before it crashed.

London, Feb 1 — Bellanca 7ECA, N55CW, operated by Sutton Aviation Inc, crashed under unknown circumstances at Waterford, Michigan, at 1426, local time, Jan 27. The two persons on board were fatally injured. The aircraft was destroyed.

N761ZV

London, Jan 30 — A press report, dated Jan 29, states: Officials said a Cessna plane crashed into a fenced area at the Murfreesboro Municipal Airport in a fiery crash, this afternoon. Officials said the Cessna plane took off from Smyrna and was trying to land at Murfreesboro municipal airport just short of the

runway around 1500 hrs this afternoon. One person, the pilot, was on board. He was life flighted to Vandy Medical Centre. The pilot has not been identified.

London, Feb 1 — Cessna T210M, N761ZV, reported electrical problems, and crashed short of the runway at Murfreesboro, Tennessee, at 2045, local time, Jan 29. Damage was substantial.

N79Y

London, Jan 30 — A press report, dated Jan 29, states: The pilot of a small plane died yesterday when he crashed into a vineyard after taking off from Santa Ynez Airport, officials said. The pilot, who was the only person on board, crashed about 25 minutes after take-off from the airport, said Diana Joubert of the Federal Aviation Administration. No one on the ground was hurt. The cause of the crash was under investigation.

London, Feb 1 — Lancair 360, N79Y, crashed under unknown circumstances at Santa Ynez, California, at 2134, local time, Jan 28. The one person on board was fatally injured. The aircraft was destroyed.

N8335Y

London, Feb 3 — Piper PA-28-181, N8335Y, operated by L.B. Insurance Agency Inc., crashed under unknown circumstances 10 miles south of Point Pleasant, West Virginia, at 1522, local time, Jan 31. The one person on board was fatally injured. The aircraft was destroyed.

N86CE

London, Jan 27 — A press report, dated Jan 25, states: Investigators today recovered the cockpit voice recorder of a business jet that crashed and burst into flames near McClellan-Palomar Airport, killing all four people on board, officials said. The Cessna 560 Citation V (N86CE) crashed early yesterday after a flight from Friedman Memorial Airport in Hailey, Idaho, near the Sun Valley ski resort. Officials with the National Transportation Safety Board said during a press conference at the accident site that the cockpit voice recorder appeared to be in good shape. It could take federal investigators up to six months to sort through evidence, including crew radio transmissions. An NTSB official said the aircraft's landing gear was down as the pilots attempted to land. The aircraft went about 150 yards beyond the runway, crashed through a scaffolding holding airfield equipment and rammed into a commercial storage facility. The victims included Frank H. Jellinek Jr, chairman emeritus of Fisher Scientific International, a Hampton, New Hampshire, company that provides products and services for labs and clinics. He was flying into San Diego County to attend Fisher Scientific business meetings, a company spokeswoman said.

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated Jan 26, states: Investigators continued to hone in on what caused the twin-engine Cessna 560 Citation V (N86CE) to overshoot the runway. "At this point all there is really (is) wreckage recovery," said Debra Eckrote, the National Transportation Safety Board acting regional director in Seattle. "They're starting to review the radar data, (air) traffic communications. Now it's a matter of looking at the data as it's coming in and evaluating that." Investigators have found the aircraft's cockpit voice recorder, still to be analyzed, and noted that there didn't appear to be anything unusual about the engines so far. However, there was no explanation yet for why the aircraft's landing gear was down but the thrust reversers that would have slowed the Cessna for a landing were still stowed away. Authorities said it could take up to a week to clear the crash site and four to six months for an investigation report. Terry Williams, NTSB spokesman in Washington, D.C., said the main fuselage of the light jet will be taken to a facility near Lancaster for further examination. The aircraft's engines will be shipped out for inspection and teardown, probably back East, he said. Cessna may be involved in that to provide technical expertise, Williams said, "but our people will be taking the lead on that."

N875JX

London, Jan 25 — A press report, dated Jan 24, states: A string of pilot errors caused the deadly crash of an aircraft (BAe Jetstream 31 N875JX) in north-east Missouri, and the crew's non-stop joking and expletive-laden banter in the cockpit didn't help, federal investigators said today. The two-man crew and 11 of 13 passengers on board were killed in the Oct 19, 2004, accident. The National Transportation Safety Board said the crew failed to follow established procedures for landing at night without precision instruments and descended too low before they could see the ground clearly. The pilot focused too much on looking outside the cockpit window instead of monitoring flight instruments as the aircraft approached Kirksville Regional Airport, the board said. Based on a transcript of the cockpit voice recorder, investigators also found that the pilot and his co-pilot "lacked a professional tone" in the cockpit. A steady stream of quips, laughter and more than 45 expletives distracted the crew from focusing on the flight, investigators said. "The discipline in that cockpit didn't seem to exist, which really created an environment for mistakes to be made," said NTSB Acting Chairman Mark Rosenker. "This was extremely disappointing to hear what we heard on that cockpit voice recorder," said Rosenker, who described the recording as one of the most unprofessional he's ever heard. The NTSB found no mechanical failure or maintenance problems with the twin-engine

turboprop and no fault with training procedures at Smyrna, Tenn.-based Corporate Airlines, now called RegionsAir. The crew had little warning of any problems until the final seconds of the flight that originated in St. Louis. Seconds before it was supposed to land, the aircraft clipped treetops and stalled before crashing in a field one mile short of the runway. Pilot fatigue also was a factor, said NTSB investigator Malcolm Brenner, as the pilots had been on duty for more than 14 hours at the time of the crash.

N90Q

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: An Alexair tour helicopter pilot and four passengers escaped serious injury yesterday morning when the aircraft made a hard landing in a sugar cane field shortly after takeoff. The incident marks the third forced landing this month of a tour helicopter on Maui. None of the accidents resulted in a fatality. Shortly after 0900, yesterday, the Alexair helicopter took off from the Kahului Airport heliport for a 45-minute tour, Maui police said, and minutes later the aircraft went down about six miles from the airport and a mile below Omaopio. A Federal Aviation Administration official said the pilot reported a possible mechanical problem before the hard landing. An FAA official is expected to inspect the helicopter as early as today. The National Transportation Safety Board also is investigating the incident. The aircraft was identified as an AS350D Astar manufactured by SNIAS of France and registered to Steven Alexander of Las Vegas. A Sunshine Helicopter pilot who was flying nearby heard a distress call and located the downed aircraft, police said. The pilot landed in a field nearby and took passengers, two at a time, from the disabled aircraft back to the Kahului heliport. Police said they were not notified of the accident until the Alexair passengers were at the heliport. On yesterday afternoon, police had secured the accident scene, which can be reached only by private Hawaiian Commercial & Sugar Co. dirt roads. The helicopter's tail broke off, and its pieces were scattered nearby. Pieces of the tail rotor were strewn ahead of the helicopter, and one piece was at least 150 feet away. No apparent damage could be seen to the inside of the helicopter, including to passenger seats and windows.

London, Feb 1 — S.N.I.A.S., AS350D Astar, N90Q, made a hard landing in a cane field, after engine failure, five miles south-east of Kahukui, Hawaii, at 1910, local time, Jan 29. Seven persons on board no injuries. Substantial damage to aircraft.

N9183Y

London, Jan 30 — A press report, dated Jan 29, states: A single-engine aircraft that witnesses said was shaking and rattling crashed nose-first yesterday into a barn near

Lancaster, critically injuring one of the four people onboard. Pilot Donald Belsky, 51, of Womelsdorf, Berks County, was in serious condition and his wife, Diane, 52, in critical condition yesterday at Lancaster General Hospital, a nursing supervisor said. Their son, Matthew, 21, and a 16-year-old foreign-exchange student, whose name was not released because of his age, were treated and released. The four were returning to Lancaster Airport after a day trip to Cape May. Inspectors from the Federal Aviation Administration were investigating the accident, which occurred next to the Anderson Pretzel Bakery in East Lampeter.

London, Feb 1 — Piper PA-28-161, N9183Y, operated by Murphy Air LLC, shortly after departure, reported engine failure and crashed into a barn, at Smoketown, Pennsylvania, at 2245, local time, Jan 28. Damage was substantial.

N920MC

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: Authorities say four people are dead after an aircraft crash in west suburban Wheeling. The FAA says a twin engine Cessna was coming in for a landing when it crashed and caught fire one and a half miles south-west of Palwaukee Airport. There was a substantial post-impact fire that completely consumed the aircraft. The crash in the 300 block of Alderman Court near Wolf Road was reported to Wheeling's police department at about 1830 hrs. The aircraft crashed into the staging yard of a concrete company. No employees were here at the time. There were no injuries on the ground. The Federal Aviation Administration says the Wheeling Fire Department is reporting four fatalities. The aircraft is registered to H K Golden Eagle Inc. of Dover, Del.

London, Jan 31 — A press report, dated today, states: Four people were killed when Cessna 421B (N920MC) crashed and burst into flames as it was preparing to land at Palwaukee Municipal Airport last night. The aircraft, inbound from Olathe, Kan., went down about 1830 hrs in a fiery flash in the storage yard of DeGraf Concrete Construction Inc. in the 300 block of Alderman in Wheeling. Federal investigators were trying to determine why the Cessna 421 crashed. A Cessna 421 was inbound toward Palwaukee Municipal Airport when it crashed in the yard of a construction business near the airport. A surveillance camera captured the aircraft hitting the ground at a 45-deg angle. There were no survivors. Authorities knew of no distress call. There were no survivors. The aircraft departed from Johnson County Executive Airport in suburban Kansas City, said an airport contractor there, Tom Cargin. The aircraft, registered to a Delaware corporation, was readying to land on Palwaukee's Runway 34 at the time of the accident, said Federal Aviation Administration spokeswoman

Elizabeth Isham Cory. The National Transportation Safety Board is leading the probe into the crash.

London, Feb 1 — Cessna 421B, N920MC, operated by H.K. Golden Eagle Inc., on a flight from Olathe, Kansas to Palwaukee, Illinois, crashed while inbound to land at 0029, local time, Jan 31. The four persons on board were fatally injured. The aircraft was destroyed.

RPC-1379

London, Jan 30 — A press report, dated today, states: NAlA general manager Alfonso G. Cusi said a PA-32-R-300 with tail number RPC-1379, was flying from Plaridel, Bulacan when it developed engine trouble. Capt. Benjamin Rivera, the pilot, immediately called the Manila Control Tower for emergency landing. At 1300 hrs, the aircraft successfully landed at runway 13/13 of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport. Rivera's two other companions were also safe. Meanwhile, the Air Transportation Office-Aircraft Accident Investigation Board is still investigating what caused the trouble. It also ordered the grounding of all light aircrafts of RACSI Aviation Company to determine its air worthiness.

V5-HSL

London, Jan 25 — Robinson R22B helicopter, V5-HSL, an instructional flight, crashed near Mariental, Namibia, at approximately 0900, UTC, Jan 15. The instructor was fatally injured, and the student pilot received serious injuries. The helicopter was substantially damaged.

VH-WZJ

London, Jan 26 — Cessna 208B Grand Caravan, VH-WZJ, operated by Aero-Tropics Air Services, pilot was reportedly distracted by another aircraft in the corner of his eye when landing and overshot the runway by about 250 metres, Jan 25. It ran through a fence, sustaining about AUS\$40,000 worth of damage. The pilot had been undertaking a test flight before he was due to fly the aircraft to its new owners, LIP-Air (dba Aero-Tropics), in Cairns that afternoon.

ZS-FUN

London, Jan 27 — Learjet 24F ZS-FUN, operator SOS Air Ambulance, sustained serious damage to the undercarriage on landing at runway 06, Kinshasa-N'Djili Airport Jan 13.

Product Recalls



BABY TEETHERS, UNITED STATES & CANADA

London, Jan 28 — A press report, dated today, states: A Massachusetts company yesterday recalled 500,000 liquid-filled baby teethers distributed

in the United States and Canada because of a possible bacterial contamination that could cause serious illness. Six styles of teethers may be contaminated with the *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* or the *Pseudomonas putida* bacteria in the liquid, manufacturer The First Years Inc. said in a statement. If the teether is punctured and the liquid ingested, the bacteria can cause serious illness in children. No illnesses have been reported, the company said. "FDA would like to caution consumers that *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* is a bacteria that can cause serious illness, particularly in people with compromised immune systems and in infants who are still developing their immunity as well as children who are born with immune deficiencies," FDA spokeswoman Julie Zawisza said. Three of the products affected feature popular cartoon characters. The Disney Days of Hunny Soft Cool Ring Teether, bearing style number Y1447, and the Disney Soft Cool Ring Teether, bearing style number Y1470 or Y1490, feature Winnie-the-Pooh characters. The Sesame Beginnings Chill and Chew Teether, style number Y3095, features Sesame Street characters. The other teethers recalled are The First Years Cool Animal Teether (style number Y1473) and The First Years Floating Friends Teether (style number Y1474). These feature fish and other animal graphics. Major retailers, including grocery, drug and specialty stores, sold the product nation-wide and in Canada from July 2005 through January 2006.

BABY WALKERS, UNITED STATES

London, Feb 2 — A press report, dated yesterday, states: Three separate manufacturers are recalling more than 50,000 baby walkers. The recalled baby walkers are manufactured by the companies Ace Han, Bike Pro and Suntome Trading. The walkers have been recalled because they can fit through a standard doorway and are not designed to stop at the edge of a step, posing a falling hazard. Ace Han recalled about 1,000 walkers. They were sold at independent retail stores in New York and Pennsylvania from April 2004 to October 2005. Bike Pro has recalled some 50,000 walkers. They were sold at independent discount stores in California, Arizona, Texas, Michigan, Colorado, New York and Missouri from January 2000 through January 2006. And Suntome Trading recalled some 600 baby walkers. All sold at retail toy stores nationwide from March 2001 through January 2006.

CHILDRENS CLOTHING, UNITED STATES

London, Jan 26 — A press release, dated today, states: The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in co-operation with Steve & Barry's University Sportswear, of Port Washington, N.Y.,

today announced a voluntary recall of About 334,000 children's upper outerwear with drawstrings. The garments have a drawstring through the hood, posing a strangulation hazard to children. In February 1996, CPSC issued guidelines to help prevent children from strangling or getting entangled on the neck and waist of drawstrings of upper garments, such as jackets and sweatshirts. CPSC was alerted to this hazard by the state of Wisconsin. No incidents/injuries have been reported. The recalled garments are various colour jackets, coats, and sweaters sold in youth sizes up to size 12 with drawstrings through the hood. Many of these garments have the names of colleges and universities written on them. A tag sewn on the garment reads, "Steve & Barry's Quality Athletic Goods." The style numbers are 15178, 16105, 16168, 16230, 16231, 16257, 16509, 17197, 17285 and 18346, which is written on a collar or side label. Manufactured in China, India, Pakistan and Macau the products were sold at Steve & Barry's University Sportswear stores nationwide from January 2004 through to December 2005 for between \$6 and \$10.

HEATERS, UNITED STATES

London, Jan 26 — A press report, dated today, states: The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in co-operation with King of Fans Inc., of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., today announced a voluntary recall of about 75,000 Maxi-Heat Dream Tower Heaters. The wires inside the oscillating heater can short circuit and spark, posing a fire hazard to consumers. King of Fans has received 31 reports of heaters smoking or sparking, and one report of a house fire. There have been no reports of injuries. The recalled model is CH920. The ceramic portable electric heaters are the oscillating tower type. They are grey and have a control panel attached to the top of the unit. "Maxi-Heat" is printed on the control panel. The model number is printed on the ETL label on the bottom of the back side of the unit. Manufactured in China, the products were sold at Wal-Mart stores nationwide from August 2005 through to December 2005 for about \$40.

LAWN MOWERS, UNITED STATES

London, Jan 24 — A press report, dated today, states: Country Home Products are recalling some Cordless Electric Lawnmowers. They are voluntarily recalling about 16-thousand 2005 Neuton Cordless Electric Lawnmowers. When the handlebar is released, the motor could continue to run causing the blade to spin. There is also excessive heat build up in the wire coil inside the housing and safety key. The mowers were sold between February and June 2005, for about 400 dollars. The company is sending all registered owners instructions on how to fix the problem.

PORTABLE PROPANE CONVECTION HEATERS, UNITED STATES

Washington, DC, Feb 1 — The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in co-operation with DESA Heating Products, of Bowling Green, Ky., today announced a voluntary recall of about 54,500 “40-80,000 BTU Portable Propane Convection Heaters.” Consumers should stop using recalled products immediately unless otherwise instructed. The burners on these heaters can “flashback,” which is when fire burns inside the burner tube rather than out the end. This can cause the lower portion of the burner tube to get hot enough to ignite combustible material under the heater. DESA has received 40 reports of incidents possibly caused by the flashback hazard, including six reports of fires. The other 34 reported incidents involved minor property damage, including scorching of the flooring under the heater. There have been no reports of injury. DESA 40-80,000 BTU Portable Propane Convection Heaters generate from 40,000 to 80,000 BTUs an hour. The following model names and number are involved in this recall: Reddy Heater (RCP80VC), All-Pro (SPC-80CC), MASTER (TC80VC), Universal (80-CC), and Dayton (6BY73). These heaters have serial numbers between 017390000 and 017632220. The model and serial numbers are on the carton and on labels attached to the heater. The designation “Made in China” is on the carton and model label attached to the heater. Sold at home centers and hardware stores nation-wide from August 2005 through December 2005 for between \$100 and \$130. Manufactured in China. Consumers should stop using this heater immediately and return it to the store where purchased for a free replacement, refund or store credit. — Consumer Product Safety Commission.

REPAIR ROUTERS, UNITED STATES

London, Jan 25 — A press release, dated Jan 24, states: The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in co-operation with Porter-Cable, of Jackson, Tenn, today announced a voluntary recall of approximately 70,000 Porter-Cable 890 Series Routers. The motor coil insulation can be worn away by vibration from the motor, which could pose a shock hazard. However, no incidents or injuries have been reported. The recalled Porter-Cable routers are tools used in conjunction with various bits to cut and shape wood. The model and serial numbers are printed on the nameplate on the top of the router. Manufactured in the United States, the product was sold at major home improvement stores and

hardware stores nationwide from September 2003 through to December 2005 for between \$180 and \$269.

VOLVO MOTOR VEHICLES, UNITED STATES

London, Jan 26 — A press report, dated today, states: Swedish bus and truck maker AB Volvo said today it was recalling 42,000 trucks in North America because of defective inlet pipes that could cause fires in the engine compartment. The recall, concerning Volvo’s VN and VHD models, comes after what the company said was “a number of cases of heat damage” in engine compartments as a result of inlet pipes that could crack or break. Volvo said two cases of fires had been reported, but that no one was injured in the incidents. “If these pipes are not repaired or replaced, components in the engine compartments may be exposed to hot exhaust gases. This might lead to a fire,” the company said in a statement. Volvo Trucks North America will replace any damaged parts and also install a heat shield on all trucks, the company said.



AUSTRALIA

See *Hyundai Island* under “Marine.”

BANGLADESH

Karachi, Jan 29 — Due to poor navigability in and outbound Dhaka about 55 vessels, including 10 laden with rice and seven carrying fuel, remain stranded in the Jamuna at Shahjadpur in Pabna in Bangladesh after 15 days. According to local media report, the situation has arisen as dredging work at a three-kilometre channel of the river from Mohonganj to Penchakola in Nakalia, Shahjadpur, remains suspended due to strong current in inland rivers. Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) officials were not sure when they would be able to clear the channel. As a result, ten Dhaka-bound vessels carrying about 10,000 tonnes of rice were seen stranded at Baghabari port. Forty-five Baghabari-bound vessels carrying goods and oil remain stranded for about 15 days. Thirty vessels, some of which are carrying about 15,000 tonnes of fertilisers, have been stranded at different points over the 20 kilometres between Penchakola and Latifpur. Five vessels carrying 2,000 tonnes of wheat and three vessels carrying 1,800 tonnes of cement have also been stranded. — Lloyd’s List Correspondent.

IRAQ

London, Feb 2 — Tankers waiting to load at Basra oil terminal are facing delays of at least a week due to a backlog of vessels waiting to berth, a port agent said today. Operations at the terminal were disrupted for much of last week after poor weather conditions halted loadings. “At the moment the delays are around six to seven days, and there is no way of telling how long before we see this improve, the tankers just keep coming,” the port agent said. There are currently seven tankers in anchorage waiting to berth and commence loading operations, the agent said. A total of 12 vessels are expected to load about 18.7million barrels of crude oil over the next 15 days, he said. The current flow rate at the terminal is at 70,000 barrels per hour. The terminal has been trying to clear a backlog of oil exports caused by months of power cuts, insufficient storage and bad weather. Iraqi crude oil exports fell in December to 1.08m barrels per day, the lowest level since the US-led invasion in March 2003. They rose marginally to 1.11m bpd in January, according to data compiled by Reuters. Iraq has also recently pledged to supply 1.57m bpd of Basra Light crude oil for the first half of this year. Earlier this week, Iraq’s Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Chalabi said the country was committed to meeting its export target as it implemented new security measures to protect the Iraq-Turkey pipeline.

ITALY

Genoa, Jan 30 — Port situation: Genoa: One vessel awaiting berth. Average berthing delay one to two days. Savona: No vessels awaiting normal berths. One vessel awaiting special berth. La Spezia: No vessels awaiting berths. — Lloyd’s Agents.

MALTA

See “Malta” under “Weather & Navigation.”

RUSSIA

Novorossiysk, Feb 2 — Yeisk harbour master office has reported that several vessels are currently frozen in the harbour and roads. An ice breaker is trying to improve the situation, however there have been no ship movements since Jan 22. — Lloyd’s Agents.

SOUTH AFRICA

See South Africa” under “Weather & Navigation.”

SYRIA

Lattakia, Jan 28 — The waiting period for Lattakia port is currently 24 hours and for Tartous it is four days. — Lloyd’s Agents.

Port Delays

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

Country/Port	Date of report	No. of vessels waiting and/or days delay
Australia		
Albany	01-Feb-2006	Grain: 6 vessels due by 28/2, all to load unknown grain; up to 11 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Brisbane	02-Feb-2006	Feb 2: Coal: Fisherman Island coal berth; Six vessels due by 20/2; up to 2 days delay expected. Feb 1: Grain: 3 vessels due by 12/2, all to load wheat; up to 3 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Dalrymple Bay Esperance	01-Feb-2006	Coal: Two vessels loading at berth; 14 vessels arrived; 30 vessels due by 20/2. Feb 2: Iron ore: Two vessels due by 17/2. Feb 1: Grain: 3 vessels due by 17/2, 1 to load barley, 2 other grain; up to 1 day's delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Geelong	01-Feb-2006	No. 3 bulk grain pier: 1 vessel berthed to load barley; 5 vessels due by 15/2, 1 to load wood-chips, 1 wheat, 3 barley; up to 5 days delay expected due to berth and cargo availability.
Geraldton	01-Feb-2006	Grain: 3 vessels due by 10/2, 1 to load lupins, 1 wheat, 1 other grain; 1-4 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability; terminal maintenance started 26/1 and will continue until 3/2.
Kwinana	01-Feb-2006	Grain: 1 vessel waiting to load wheat; 9 vessels due by 27/2, 8 to load wheat, 1 other grain; up to 5 days delay expected due to berthing congestion.
Newcastle	02-Feb-2006	Feb 2: Coal: Kooragang 4, 5 and 6: Two vessels loading at berth; 11 vessels off port awaiting berth; 41 vessels due by 20/2; 5-8 days delay expected; Dykes 4+5: 1 vessel loading at berth; 7 vessels off port awaiting coal; 13 vessels due by 18/2; 6-7 days delay expected. Five vessels due by 29/1, 4 to load wheat, 1 barley; up to 8 days delay expected due to berth congestion. Feb 1: Four vessels due by 10/2, 3 to load wheat, 1 barley; up to 4 days delay expected due to berth congestion and cargo availability.
Port Adelaide	01-Feb-2006	Grain: No. 27 berth: 7 vessels due by 16/2, 3 to load barley, 3 wheat, 1 canola; up to 5 days delay expected due to berthing congestion. Grain: No. 27 berth: 6 vessels due by 12/2, 3 to load barley, 3 wheat; up to 5 days delay expected due to berthing congestion and cargo availability.
Thevenard	01-Feb-2006	Grain: 1 vessel due 1/2 to load wheat. Grain: 1 vessel due 1/2 to load wheat; up to 1 day's delay expected due to berthing congestion and cargo availability.
Bulgaria		
Bourgas	30-Jan-2006	Ten vessels in port operating, of which 7 loading (3 coils, 1 lead, 2 profiles, 1 wheat), 3 discharging (1 sugar, 1 reinforced concrete, 1 billets); 5 vessels in roads, all to load, of which 2 coils, 1 wheat, 1 steel sheets, 1 empty vessel; 18 vessels due, of which 10 to load (1 profiles, 1 copper concentrate, 1 barley, 1 equipment, 1 containers, 2 sunflower seeds, 1 steel sheets, 1 reinforced concrete, 1 wheat), 8 to discharge (1 equipment, 2 coal, 1 iron ore, 1 iron ore pellets, 1 billets, 1 containers, 1 gasoil).
Varna	30-Jan-2006	Varna East, Varna West, Electrical Power Station, Balchik: Conditions 23-29 January: Twenty-three vessels in port operating of which 12 loading (1 bulk wheat, 1 bulk maize, 1 sunflower seeds, 6 soda, 1 bulk cement, 1 bulk silica sand, 1 sunflower seed meal), 7 discharging (1 gypsum board on pallets, 1 soya bean meal, 2 bulk coal, 1 equipment in packing cases, 1 raw phosphate, 1 bulk copper concentrate), 4 discharging/loading (3 containers, 1 containers /small consignments); no vessels waiting in roads.
Chile		
Antofagasta	30-Jan-2006	Three vessels berthed, 4 berths vacant; 20 vessels due this week to load/discharge concentrates, bulk copper, containers and general cargo.
Arica	30-Jan-2006	Four vessels berthed, 3 berths vacant; 21 vessels due this week.
Iquique	30-Jan-2006	Three vessels berthed, 4 berths vacant; 22 vessels due this week.
Lirquen	30-Jan-2006	Four vessels at terminal, 2 berths vacant; 23 vessels due this week.
Puerto Montt	30-Jan-2006	Two vessels at terminal, 1 berth vacant; 8 vessels due this week.
Punta Arenas	30-Jan-2006	Five vessels at terminal, 2 berths vacant; 14 vessels due this week.
San Antonio	30-Jan-2006	Six vessels berthed, 3 berths vacant; 23 vessels due this week.
San Vicente	30-Jan-2006	Two vessels berthed, 3 berths vacant; 20 vessels due during the week; Steel pier: 1 vessel at terminal, 1 berth vacant; 2 vessels due this week; Coronel pier: 2 vessels at terminal, 2 berths vacant; 6 vessels due this week; Oil terminal: 1 tanker at terminal, 1 berth vacant; 1 tanker due this week.
Valparaiso	30-Jan-2006	Four vessels berthed, 4 berths vacant; 3 vessels anchored; 20 vessels due this week.
Cyprus		
Larnaca	31-Jan-2006	Two conventional vessels discharging at berth; 1 conventional vessel due 1/2; no delays expected.
Limassol	31-Jan-2006	Eight container vessels loading/discharging at berth, 2 conventional vessels discharging at berth; 3 container vessels, 3 conventional vessels due 1/2; no delays expected.
Egypt		
Adabiya	30-Jan-2006	Eight vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 3 general cargo, 4 bulk carriers, 1 livestock carrier.

Port Conditions

Alexandria	30-Jan-2006	Thirty-six vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 24 general cargo, 5 bulk carriers, 4 tankers, 3 container vessels; 19 vessels dry-docked; 26 vessels at inner anchorage, 16 at outer anchorage.
Damietta	30-Jan-2006	Nineteen vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 14 general cargo, 3 bulk carriers, 1 tanker, 1 reefer; 4 vessels at outer anchorage, none at inner anchorage.
Dekheila	30-Jan-2006	Six vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 5 bulk carriers, 1 container vessel; no vessels at outer anchorage.
Port Said	30-Jan-2006	Six vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 2 general cargo, 1 bulk carrier, 4 containers.
Suez	30-Jan-2006	Ten vessels berthed (loading/discharging), of which 4 general cargo, 2 reefers, 4 passenger vessels; 3 vessels dry-docked.
Suez Canal	30-Jan-2006	Eighteen vessels transiting Northbound, 17 Southbound.
Estonia		
Tallinn	30-Jan-2006	Paljassaare (formerly Kopli): 1 coal vessel loading at berth; no vessels waiting at anchorage; 2 vessels due, with 7 days berthing delay expected.
India		
Kolkata	30-Jan-2006	9 vessels operating at berth of which 2 vessels loading General Cargo, 7 vessels discharging (Containers-3, Timber Logs-2, Pulses, General Cargo), 3 vessels working at midstream to discharge (Crude, Pulses, Timber Logs); 1 vessel working at midstream waiting to load Fly Ash; 3 vessels under repair.
Haldia	30-Jan-2006	15 vessels operating at berth of which 5 loading (Iron Ore, Butadian, Steel-2, Thermal Coal), 9 vessels discharging (Coke-2, Met Coke-2, Crude-2, POL, Rock Phosphate, Fertilizer), 1 vessel loading and discharging Containers; 5 vessels awaiting berth (3 to discharge, 2 to load); 2 vessels waiting at anchorage (1 to discharge, 1 to load); 7 vessels due (Crude, POL-2, Soya, Coke, Phosphoric Acid, Steel).
Paradip	30-Jan-2006	8 vessels operating at berth of which 4 vessels loading (Thermal Coal, Iron ore, Chrome Concentrate-2), 4 vessels discharging (Coking Coal, NC Coal-2, Ammonia); 4 vessels awaiting berth (1 to discharge, 3 to load).
Visakhapatnam	30-Jan-2006	12 vessels operating at berth of which 3 loading (Iron ore-2, S.M.Ore), 8 vessels discharging (Coking Coal-2, Crude Oil, General Cargo, MOP, Urea, Ammonia Nitrate, Alumina); 1 vessel loading and discharging Containers; 11 vessels not ready to work and waiting at anchorage (5 to discharge, 6 to load); 1 vessel under repair; 28 vessels due (Iron Ore-3, Iron Steel-2, Granite Blocks-3, Soya, POL Tanker-4, Sulphur, Methanol, Urea-2, Coking Coal-4, Caustic Soda-2, Petroleum Coke, General Cargo, POL Tanker-3).
Chennai	30-Jan-2006	14 vessels operating at berth of which 3 loading (Sugar, IOL, HSD), 8 vessels discharging (St. Plate-2, S.Coal-2, Crude Oil, Met Coke, DAP, General Cargo), 3 vessels loading and discharging (S.Coil/ Granite Blocks, General Cargo, Granite Blocks/Project Cargo); 1 vessel awaiting berth to discharge; 2 vessels not ready to work and waiting at anchorage to load; 3 vessels due (Felspar, HSD, Granite Blocks).
Tuticorin	30-Jan-2006	6 vessels operating at berth of which 4 vessels loading General Cargo, 2 vessels discharging (Rock Phosphate, Thermal Coal); 2 vessels waiting at anchorage (MV Shahad after completion of cement loading operations for repair work, MV Corali after discharging Timber for orders of Agents).
Cochin	30-Jan-2006	5 vessels operating at berth of which 3 discharging (Defence, Soda Ash, Furnace Oil), 2 vessels waiting to loading General Cargo; 1 vessel awaiting berth to load and discharge.
New Mangalore	30-Jan-2006	2 vessels operating at berth of which 1 loading Iron Ore Pellets, 1 vessel discharging POL Crude; 4 vessels waiting at anchorage (1 to discharge, 3 to load); 17 vessels due (Timber, LPG-2, POL Product-5, Iron Ore(F)-2, POL-2, Phosphoric Acid-2, Molasses, POL Crude, Granite Stone).
Mormugao	30-Jan-2006	3 vessels operating at berth of which 2 vessels loading (Iron ore, Alumina), 1 vessel loading and discharging Containers; 6 vessels working at mid stream and loading Iron ore; 2 vessels awaiting berth to discharge; 1 vessel waiting at anchorage to load; 5 vessels under repairs/dry docked; 7 vessels due (Soft Coking Coal, Iron Ore-6).
Mumbai	30-Jan-2006	17 vessels operating at berth of which 6 loading (Bagged SBM-3, Steel Cargo, Containers/Steel/ General Cargo/ vehicle, Vehicles), 9 vessels discharging (Steel Cargo-2, Wooden Logs, Steel Billets, Rock Phosphate, Rock Phosphate/Containers, Containers, POL-2), 2 vessels loading and discharging (General Cargo/ Machines/ Heavy Lifts, Machines/Project Cargo); 4 vessels awaiting order to discharge; 3 vessels waiting at anchorage (1 to discharge, 2 to load and discharge; 7 vessels under repairs/dry docked, 5 vessels under arrest, 1 vessel waiting (under laid up berths not required for cargo operations); 27 vessels due (Containers-3, Oil-2, Fertilizer (RM), General Cargo-21).
Kandla	30-Jan-2006	14 vessels operating at berth of which 6 discharging (POL, Phosphoric Acid, Timber Logs-2, MOP, St. Pipes), 7 vessels loading (Agriculture Product-5, Salt, Chemical), 1 vessel loading and discharging Containers; 3 vessels (***) not ready to work and waiting at anchorage (2 to discharge, 1 to load); 1 vessel under repair.
Ennore	30-Jan-2006	2 Thermal Coal vessels due. (MV Rani Padmini, MV Tamil Anna).
Israel		
Ashdod	30-Jan-2006	No labour problems. Two general cargo vessels loading at berth, 9 vessels discharging at berth (7 general cargo, 2 bulkers), 1 container vessel loading/discharging at berth; no vessels waiting at anchorage; 1 vessel awaiting orders; 18 vessels due, with 2-3 days delay expected.

Port Conditions

Eilat	30-Jan-2006	No labour problems. No vessels berthed; 1 general cargo vessel waiting at anchorage to discharge; 1 vessel due, with no delays expected.
Haifa	30-Jan-2006	No labour problems. Five vessels discharging at berth (3 general cargo, 2 bulkers), 7 vessels loading/discharging at berth (5 containers, 2 tankers); 3 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (2 general cargo, 1 bulker), 2 container vessels waiting at anchorage to load/discharge; 6 vessels under repairs/dry-docked, 1 awaiting orders; 20 vessels due, with 2-3 days delay expected.
Kazakhstan		
Aktau	27-Jan-2006	Oil products: Four vessels at berth of which 2 loading crude oil, 2 completed loading crude oil; 11 vessels in roads, all to load; 5 vessels due by 28/1, all to load.
Mozambique		
Maputo	31-Jan-2006	Nine vessels in port operating, of which 5 loading (1 bagged cashew nuts, 1 scrap, 1 bagged sugar, 1 ferro chrome, 1 posts), 3 discharging (1 containers, 1 petrol, 1 general cargo), 1 loading/discharging containers; 1 vessel due to berth 31/1 to load aluminium; 23 vessels due by 22/2 of which 4 to load (1 bagged sugar, 1 aluminium, 1 ferro chrome, 1 unknown cargo), 13 to discharge (1 containers, 1 petcoke, 1 clinker, 1 bulk maize, 2 bulk aluminium, 1 vegetable oil, 1 petrol, 1 frozen fish, 1 bricks, 2 bagged rice, 1 bulk wheat), 5 to discharge/load (4 containers, 1 containers/steel rolls), 1 other vessel.
Pakistan		
Karachi	31-Jan-2006	Six vessels loading at berth (1 naphtha, 1 MOL, 4 rice), 5 discharging at berth (1 crude oil, 1 palm oil, 1 urea, 2 soya bean meal), 5 container vessels loading/discharging at berth; 1 container vessel waiting at anchorage to load, 4 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (1 containers, 2 general cargo, 1 crude oil); no vessels bunkering, none under repairs/dry-docked, 1 awaiting orders; 2 vessels due (1 containers, 1 crude oil), with no berthing delays expected.
Port Qasim	30-Jan-2006	One rice vessel loading at berth, 3 vessels discharging at berth (1 palm oil, 1 wheat, 1 fuel oil), 2 container vessels loading/discharging at QICT berth; 1 rice vessel waiting at anchorage to load, 6 vessels waiting at anchorage to discharge (1 jute, 1 wheat, 1 palm oil, 1 iron ore, 1 acetic acid, 1 VCM).
Russia		
Novorossiysk	30-Jan-2006	Seventeen vessels in port operating, of which 16 loading (1 cement, 2 bulk urea, 1 scrap, 1 slabs, 1 steel billets/pipes, 1 pig-iron, 1 steel billets/copper, 3 wheat, 1 steel sheets/steel billets/slabs, 1 coils/slabs/steel billets, 1 aluminium, 2 oil), 1 discharging citrus; 23 vessels waiting in roads of which 21 to load (1 coils/steel billets/tin plate/pipes, 5 steel billets, 1 WRIC/steel billets, 2 aluminium, 2 wheat, 2 coils, 1 slabs, 1 bulk urea, 1 bulk NPK, 1 pipes, 2 copper, 1 steel sheets, 1 oil), 2 to discharge bulk sugar; 87 vessels due, of which 82 to load (8 bulk urea, 7 steel billets, 1 steel billets/other, 7 oil, 3 scrap, 2 steel billets/WRIC, 7 coils, 3 pig-iron, 5 aluminium, 1 pipes/wire rods, 1 lead, 1 cellulose, 7 bulk NPK, 4 steel sheets, 1 steel sheets/coils/H-beams, 2 pipes, 4 copper, 3 slabs, 1 diesel oil, 1 cement, 5 HBI, 1 tin plate, 1 bulk ammonium nitrate, 3 wheat, 1 cars, 1 oranges, 1 UAN solution), 2 to discharge (1 bulk sugar, 1 oil), 3 to discharge/load containers; Oil terminal: 5 tankers berthed, all loading, of which 1 diesel oil, 2 crude oil, 2 fuel oil; 5 tankers in roads, all to load, of which 4 crude oil, 1 fuel oil; 10 tankers due, all to load crude oil.
Slovenia		
Koper	30-Jan-2006	Port working normally. Nine vessels berthed of which 1 discharging/loading containers, 4 discharging bulk cargo, 1 loading bulk cargo, 3 loading sawn timber/general cargo; no vessels waiting at anchorage; 21 vessels due over the next 2 days of which 3 to discharge/load containers, 1 car carrier to discharge/load vehicles, 2 tankers to discharge liquid cargoes, 8 vessels to discharge bulk cargoes, 5 to load bulk cargoes, 2 to load sawn timber/general cargo.
Spain		
Bilbao	30-Jan-2006	Twenty-seven vessels operating (7 tankers, 20 other vessels), of which 9 loading, 12 discharging, 6 loading/discharging.
Sagunto	30-Jan-2006	Seventeen vessels in port operating, of which 3 loading (1 cement, 2 bulk fertiliser), 11 discharging (10 steel products, 1 anhydrous ammonia), 3 loading/discharging (2 general cargo, 1 fruit); no vessels outside commercial wharf; no berthing delays at present.
Sri Lanka		
Colombo	30-Jan-2006	Berthing/unberthing (pilotage) delays being experienced on breakbulk/conventional vessels. Delays to conventional vessels are due to the fact that container/feeder vessels are given priority at breakbulk berths if there is container congestion. Conventional cargo vessels at BQ 1 and 2 are facing navigation delays. Six container/feeder vessels loading at berth, 15 discharging at berth (10 containers/feeders, 1 bagged fertiliser, 2 bulk palm oil, 2 bulk cement); 1 container/feeder vessel waiting at anchorage to load, 1 container/feeder vessel waiting at anchorage to discharge; 5 vessels dry-docked; 7 vessels due (6 containers/feeders, 1 bulk cement), with no delays expected.
Turkmenistan		
Aladja	27-Jan-2006	Oil products: One vessel in roads to load crude oil.
Turkmenbashi	27-Jan-2006	Oil products: One vessel discharging crude oil at berth; 1 vessel in roads to load kerosene.

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Port Conditions

Ukraine

Ilichevsk	30-Jan-2006	Eight vessels in port operating, of which 7 loading (3 steel products, 1 grain, 1 sunflower seed oil, 1 gasoline, 1 ore), 1 discharging ore; 3 vessels in roads, all to load, of which 2 sunflower seed oil, 1 steel products; 23 vessels due, of which 12 to load (9 steel products, 2 grain, 1 cake), 3 to discharge ore, 8 to discharge/load containers.
Mariupol	30-Jan-2006	Nine vessels in port operating, all loading, of which 4 steel, 1 sulphur, 3 coal, 1 fire-clay/kaolin; 7 vessels in roads, all to load, of which 4 steel, 1 coal, 1 coke, 1 sulphur; 54 vessels due, of which 48 to load (25 steel, 11 coal, 4 sulphur, 2 fire-clay, 2 pitch, 2 sunflower beans/busks, 1 wheat, 1 equipment), 2 to discharge equipment, 4 to discharge/load (1 equipment/coal, 1 containers/fire-clay, 2 containers).
Odessa	30-Jan-2006	Twenty-two vessels in port operating, of which 11 loading (2 scrap, 7 metal, 1 oil, 1 pig-iron), 8 discharging (1 luggage, 3 bananas, 1 citrus, 1 general cargo, 1 equipment, 1 sand), 2 loading/discharging containers, 1 passenger vessel; 9 vessels in roads, of which 4 to load metal, 2 to discharge (1 sugar, 1 citrus), 3 to load/discharge containers; 63 vessels due, of which 33 to load (23 metal, 2 pig-iron, 2 timber, 3 wood, 1 barley, 1 corn, 1 general cargo), 9 to discharge (1 metal, 3 oil, 1 fish, 3 citrus, 1 ore), 21 to discharge/load containers.

United States

Galveston, TX	31-Jan-2006	No new restriction in draft (normal 39 ft. 6 ins. BW max. channel draft reported - 40 ft. 0 ins. with ideal conditions). Channel open under normal traffic. ADM-Farmland terminal: 1-2 days delay expected.
Houston, TX	31-Jan-2006	Channel open under normal traffic. Low 44 ft. 11 ins. FW max channel draft reported (up to Shell Terminal); low 39 ft. 11 ins. FW max channel draft reported above Shell Terminal to 610 Ship Channel bride; Normal 36 ft. 0 ins. FW max channel draft reported above 610 Bridge to turning basis area. LDC Dreyfus terminal: 3-4 days delay expected; Cargill terminal: 2-3 days delay expected.
Kalama, WA	31-Jan-2006	Kalama export terminal: 7 days delay expected; United Harvest terminal: 2 days delay expected.
New Orleans, LA	31-Jan-2006	Mississippi River terminal berthing delays Cenex-Harstates/Myrtle Grove: up to 1 day's delay expected. Cargill-Westwego: 2-3 days delay expected. ADM/Ama: 2-3 days delay expected. Bunge/Destrehan: 1 day's delay expected. ADM/ Destrehan: 2-3 days delay expected. ADM/Reserve: 2-3 days delay expected. Cargill/Reserve: 1 day's delay expected. ADM/Paulina: 2-3 days delay expected. Zen-Noh/Convent: 1-3 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: 2 days delay expected; Mile 158.0 Myrtle Grove Midstream terminal: no delays expected; Mile 180.0 Cooper (America) - Darrow: 7 days delay expected.
Portland OR	31-Jan-2006	Columbia Grain terminal: 5 days delay expected; CLD Irving terminal: 2 days delay expected; CLD, O Dock terminals: no delays expected.
Seattle, WA	31-Jan-2006	Louis Dreyfus (Pier 86) terminal: 2 days delay expected.
Tacoma, WA	31-Jan-2006	Temco terminal: 2 days delay expected.
Vancouver, WA	31-Jan-2006	United Harvest terminal: 5 days delay expected.

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